Yes to IBT! Yes to national contract

81% majority votes in favor of Teamsters merger; Merger effective January 1

The following joint statement by IBT General President James P. Hoffa and IBT President Don M. Hahs was issued on December 5:

December 5 was an historic day for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE).

By overwhelmingly approving a merger with the IBT, members of the BLE will now share in the strength of the Teamsters while maintaining their autonomy and proud traditions. Our two great unions are now united in building on our strong legacies, and creating an even more powerful future for transportation workers.

The merger will strengthen our efforts to ensure that our members maintain a strong political voice at the national and international levels and continue aggressive representation at the local level. We will share knowledge, expertise and resources to give all of our members the necessary support they need to negotiate contracts, organize new members and expand political action on their behalf.

Our two unions share a common purpose of transporting goods from manufacturers to consumers. We are creating a seamless transportation union. By joining together, we will strengthen our ability to represent workers across the transportation spectrum.

We hope that the decisive vote by BLE members will encourage other transportation and rail unions to wish to affiliate with the Teamsters to ensure that transport workers win the dignity and respect they deserve.

See IBT Merger, Page 7
See New Contract, Page 8
Amtrak sets record for yearly ridership

More than 24 million passengers traveled on Amtrak in Fiscal Year 2003, which ended September 30, the highest annual ridership ever experienced by the nation’s intercity passenger rail service in its 32-year history.

Despite a number of adverse conditions this year, including a lagging economy that has hurt the travel industry overall, the Iraq war, the President’s Day blizzard, the Northeast blackout and Hurricane Isabel, Amtrak’s ridership topped the previous record of 23.5 million passengers set in 2001 and was 2.7 percent better than last year’s result of 23.4 million.

Long-distance trains showed substantial improvement over last year, with those in the Eastern region of the country improving ridership by 3.8 percent and those in the Western region improving by 6.0 percent. The most substantial increases were experienced by the Pennsylvania (up 64%) due mostly to a change in routing; the Texas Eagle (up 29%); the Silver Metrorider (up 15.2%); and the City of New Orleans (up 14.5%).

Amtrak attributed the overall positive results largely to its “back-to-basics” approach to winning over passengers, begun earlier this year.

Ridership on shorter distance routes in the West increased by 11.7 percent over last year. (From Amtrak.com.)

SEPTA budget cuts derail holiday train

Think of this as Christmas trimming, SEPTA-style.

‘Tis nearly the season for the Magical Holiday Railroad to be making its run around the whirl of Christmas spirit since spring from $54 million to a still-formidable $26 million. To forestall fare hikes and severe service reductions on real trains and buses, the agency has scavenaged for economies, from halving tuition reimbursement for employees to shrinking cleaning crews at Center City stations.

Amtrak attributed the change in routing; the Texas Eagle (up 29%); the Silver Metrorider (up 15.2%); and the City of New Orleans (up 14.5%). The savings for budget-crunch SEPTA: $40,000. A SEPTA spokesman said $40,000 “is the cost of paying a bus driver for a year.”

The five-year-old Magical Holiday display is the latest sacrifice to SEPTA’s fiscal 2004 deficit, which has been whittled since spring from $54 million to a still-formidable $26 million. To forestall fare hikes and severe service reductions on real trains and buses, the agency has scavenaged for economies, from halving tuition reimbursement for employees to shrinking cleaning crews at Center City stations.

That measure also will clear the way for a 2.2 percent pay raise for members of Congress, bringing their salaries to more than $158,000 a year.

House and Senate bargainers have agreed to give Amtrak $1.22 billion for the new year, close to what railroad officials said they need to keep trains running and maintenance projects on track.

The money was to be included in a compromise $500 million bill for transportation programs, the Treasury Department and several lawmakers that anything less would “seriously jeopardize the availability of service and continued operation of the national system.”

The final compromise between the two Republican-run chambers underlined the cloud wielded by Amtrak supporters. Though its busiest line runs from Boston and Washington, Amtrak serves 508 communities in 46 states.

Fatality at LIRR

A 17-year employee of the Long Island Railroad was struck and killed by an east-bound train outside Copiague on October 20 while working on the tracks.

Joseph Boyd, 41, of Babylon, was an electric traction employee who worked as a flagman alerting his fellow crew members to oncoming trains. His crew was about to start work on the third rail on the tracks east of the Copiague station when he was accidentally struck. He was a member of IBEW Local 589.

MBTA to proceed with fare hikes

Following a unanimous vote by its Board of Directors, MBTA will increase bus, subway, commuter rail, and boat fares by an average of 25 percent beginning in January.

In a last-minute gesture, the board also promised not to hike fares again for at least two years. An MBTA official said the fare hikes will raise an estimated $49.1 million in additional revenue annually and were necessary to maintain existing service.

(From the Philadelphia Inquirer.)
Burlington Northern Santa Fe

Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad posted a third-quarter profit of $203 million, up from $152 million for the period ended Sept. 30 last year. The higher profit was attributed to increased truckload shipments, increased agricultural shipments, and some rate increases.

Freight revenues for the third quarter increased $83 million to a record of $2.37 billion compared with 2002 third-quarter revenues of $2.29 billion. Third-quarter freight revenues included increased fuel surcharges of $22 million compared with the prior year. Consumer Products revenues increased $48 million to a record $829 million, reflecting continued growth in the international, truckload and perishables sectors. Coal revenues decreased $24 million to $551 million.

Operating expenses of $1.97 billion were $76 million, or 4 percent, higher than the same period in 2002. Increases in operating expense were primarily driven by a $45 million, or 21 percent, increase in fuel expense compared with the third quarter of 2002. BNSF’s operating ratio was 81.5 percent compared to 81.6 percent for the same period in the prior year.

Canadian Pacific Railway

Canadian Pacific Railway reported a 45 percent increase in net income to $95 million in the third quarter of 2003, compared with $65 million in the same period last year (all figures in Canadian dollars).

Total revenues were $904 million in the third quarter of 2003, compared with $891 million in the third quarter of 2002. Coal, automotive and intermodal revenues were $372 million, $90 million and $234 million, respectively.

Grain revenue increased $15 million, reflecting strong U.S. volumes and movement of a substantially larger Canadian crop. Intermodal revenue increased $6 million, driven by solid West Coast imports. Sulphur and fertilizer revenues were up $5 million, reflecting strong exports of sulphur and potash.

Operating expenses were $868 million in the quarter, up marginally over the same period of 2002, including the beneficial impact of foreign exchange. CPR’s operating income was $209 million, down 7 percent from the same period last year. Its operating ratio was 79.6 percent, compared with 78.5 percent in the same quarter of 2002.

Kansas City Southern

Kansas City Southern reported net income of $4.3 million for the three quarters of 2003, compared to net income of $10.6 million for the third quarter of 2002. Consolidated revenues for the third quarter of 2003 were $141.3 million, compared to $135.9 million for the comparable 2002 period, a 5 percent increase. Operating income more than doubled to $14.9 million compared to $6.2 million during the third quarter last year. Consolidated KCS results were negatively affected by lower earnings from Grupo Transportation Ferroviaria Mexicana, S.A. de C.V. (Grupo TFM), a reduction in rail service and a reduction in other income.

KCS’s equity earnings from Grupo TFM for the first nine months of 2003, decreased by approximately $21.4 million, in part caused by a period to period reduction of $18.4 million related to deferred tax benefits recorded by Grupo TFM. Also affecting the nine-month period was a $9.0 million decrease in fuel costs related to Grupo TFM.

KCS’s third quarter operating ratio was 87.5 percent compared with 94.3 percent for the comparable 2002 period.

Union Pacific Corp.

Union Pacific said its third quarter earnings fell 27 percent and acknowledged congestion bottlenecks, primarily on the West Coast. UP Chairman Dick Davidson told the Fort Worth Star Telegram that UP was too slow in replacing approximately 2,000 workers who retired or quit this year, leaving it short of train crews throughout the system. The result was $15 million to $20 million in extra costs during the third quarter, Davidson said, primarily to pay extra for recalled train crews and also late charges to customers. He told the newspaper that UP planned to hire at least 1,000 train-crew workers by the end of this year and up to 2,000 more by the end of 2004.

For the third quarter, UP reported operating income of $592 million compared to $619 million for the same period in 2002. Revenue was a record $3.0 billion, up 4 percent versus 2002.

“As in the first half of the year, fuel prices continued to be a drain on earnings, adding nearly $50 million to third quarter expenses,” said Davidson in news release. “On the plus side, revenue improved by about $219 million compared to the third quarter last year.”

Operating expenses for the quarter remained unchanged at $2.28 billion, up 4 percent versus 2002. Revenue fell to $2.96 billion from $3.04 billion a year earlier. Surface Transportation revenue, which includes CSX’s rail and intermodal units, was $1.82 billion, up two percent from a year ago. Revenue and volume improved in all of the company’s merchandise markets. Coal, auto and intermodal revenues were basically flat on a year-over-year basis. Total CSX revenues for the quarter were $1.88 billion versus $2.06 billion last year. The decline in Surface Transportation operating income essentially resulted from an overall lack of network fluidity, which drove increased equipment, employee, fuel and related service costs.

For its first nine months, Union Pacific had net income of $1.03 billion, a 7 percent increase to $963 million compared to the same period a year earlier. Coal revenues improved slightly to $372 million. Third-quarter general merchandise revenues declined one percent to $511 million compared to the same period of 2002. Automotive revenues decreased 11 percent, primarily due to slowed manufacturing and model changeovers, while agricultural, paper and forest products and chemicals reported increases.

Operating expenses for the quarter remained unchanged at $81.9 billion compared to third quarter 2002. For the quarter, the railroad operating ratio remained unchanged at 80.5 percent compared to the same period of 2002. For the first nine months, the operating ratio rose from 81.4 percent to 82.5 percent.

Norfolk Southern

Norfolk Southern Corp. reported third-quarter net income of $137 million compared with net income of $128 million in the third quarter of 2002. Third-quarter railway operating revenues of $1.60 billion, up two percent from the same quarter a year earlier. Coal revenues improved slightly to $372 million. Third-quarter general merchandise revenues declined one percent to $511 million compared to the same period of 2002. Automotive revenues decreased 11 percent, primarily due to slowed manufacturing and model changeovers, while agricultural, paper and forest products and chemicals reported increases.

Operating expenses for the quarter remained unchanged at $81.9 billion compared to third quarter 2002. For the quarter, the railroad operating ratio remained unchanged at 80.5 percent compared to the same period of 2002. For the first nine months, the operating ratio rose from 81.4 percent to 82.5 percent.

Canadian National Railway

Canadian National posted a net income for third-quarter 2003 of $248 million, an increase of $34 million over net income of $214 million in the comparable quarter of 2002. Operating income for the quarter declined six percent to $454 million. Revenues of $1.413 billion were six percent lower than the year-earlier period, reflecting the significant strengthening of the Canadian dollar, continued weakness in coal shipments and a slowdown in the automotive sector. Operating expenses declined six percent to $809 million, due to the translation impact of the stronger Canadian dollar on U.S. dollar-denominated expenses, and lower expenses for purchased services and material, and equipment rents. Partially offsetting the decrease were higher casualty and other expenses.

The company’s operating ratio for the quarter was 67.9 percent compared with 67.8 percent for the same period in 2002. Net income for the first nine months of 2003 was $780 million compared with net income of $774 million for the same period of 2002.

CSX Transportation

CSX reported a net loss of $101 million compared with net income of $127 million a year earlier. The latest results included a $145 million charge from a change in the company’s estimate for injury liabilities as well as a charge of $87 million for settle-
Remote control fatality in San Antonio heightens worker safety concerns

On December 7, a 37-year-old employee in San Antonio was struck and killed by one of the two remote control locomotives he was operating. This tragedy comes despite persistent warnings about the potential dangers of remote control technology and lack of training to operate the technology in the United States from the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers.

"We extend our heartfelt sympathy to Brother Herstart’s family and friends," said Don Hahn, President of the BLE. "Jody Herstart had been a switchman at Union Parcile for only five years. Our hearts go out to his grieving wife, Sara, and two children."

While the National Transportation Safety Board will determine the specific causes of this accident, we hope that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and rail companies will heed our warnings before another tragedy occurs," he added.

The fatality came two days after an overwhelming majority of BLE members voted to reject the Federal Railroad Administration’s proposed remote control regulations.

"This senseless death underscores the need for enforceable regulations to be adopted by the FRA to make remote control operations safer," said James P. Hoffa, General President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

"What we have here is 21st Century technology used on a 19th Century infrastructure and 20th Century locomotives which carry tons of explosive and hazardous materials through our communities. One life lost, is one too many."

So far, 44 cities and counties across the United States have passed resolutions calling on the Federal Railroad Administration to adopt enforceable regulations to make remote control operations safer. •

Push for remote control safety continues

As this issue of the Locomotive Engineer Newsletter goes to press, 44 communities have enacted remote control safety resolutions, each calling for improvements in safety regulations to govern the operation of remote control locomotives.

The most recent are: Allen Park, Mich.; Berkeley, Calif.; Beaverton, Ore.; Redford Township, Mich.; River Rouge, Mich.; St. Louis, Mo.; and Wamac, Ill. In all, 33 cities and 11 counties have enacted remote control safety resolutions.

Allen Park, Mich.
The Allen Park resolution asks the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to conduct a review of the safety of the technology.

Berwyn, Ill.
The Berwyn resolution, passed on August 12, bans the use of remote control within the city limits. BLE Division 32 (Berwyn, Ill.) member John Parypinski was instrumental in the passage of this resolution.

Irvington, Ill.
The resolution, passed by the Village President and Board of Trustees of Irvington, asks for the FRA to develop comprehensive regulations for the use of remote control locomotives.

BLE Illinois State Legislative Board Chairman C.E. Way thanked BLE Division 24 (Centraria, Ill.) Legislative Representative Brad Pearson for his work on the resolution. Chairman Way also thanked William Irwin, Village Clerk of Irvington, and Mike Gainon, Village President, for their help.

Melvdalne, Mich.
On November 5, the Melvdalne City Council unanimously passed a resolution calling for the FRA to conduct a review of the safety of remote control. Michael D. and Millie Legislative Board Chairman Greg Powell thanked the following people for their assistance in the passage of the Melvdalne resolution: Brother Frank Bittaglia, Legislative Representative of BLE Division 1 (Detroit); Ray Hernandez, Legislative Representative of BLE Division 311 (Detroit); the BLE members who were involved; and the Melvdalne Mayor, City Council and Fire Chief.

Redford Township, Mich.
On November 11, the Township of Redford passed unanimously a resolution calling for a remote control safety review.

Chairman Powell thanked Brother Bittaglia for his work in getting the Redford Township resolution passed. In addition to Bittaglia, he thanked the other Legislative Representatives and members in the area for their support. He also thanked Kevin Kelly, the Township Supervisor, and the members of the Township Council for their efforts.

River Rouge, Mich.
The resolution, which unanimously passed on November 5, calls on the Federal Railroad Administration to conduct a review of the safety of remote control operations.

Greg Powell, Chairman of the BLE’s Michigan State Legislative Board, thanked Brother Frank Bittaglia, Legislative Representative of BLE Division 1 (Detroit), and Dan Cook III, a member of Division 1, and all the members of Division 1, for working to get the resolution approved. Chairman Powell also thanked the Mayor of River Rouge and the City Council for supporting this measure.

Wamuc, Ill.
The resolution passed by Wamuc, Ill., calls upon the FRA to develop comprehensive regulations for the use of remote control trains.

The effort to pass the resolution was spearheaded by Brad Pearson, Legislative Representative of BLE Division 24 (Centraria, Ill.). BLE Illinois State Legislative Board Chairman C. Edward Way commended Brother Pearson for his work. He also thanked Wamuc Mayor Edward McHie and City Clerk Marrian Suh.

The resolution stated that the city of Wamuc took action to ensure the public safety of its citizens, and seeks to prohibit railroads from using remote control locomotives to transport hazardous materials.

St. Louis, Mo.
The Board of Aldermen in St. Louis, Mo., approved a remote control safety resolution on October 15. The Aldermen cited the amount of hazardous materials moving through their city as one of the reasons that they adopted the resolution. The resolution asks the FRA to review their policies regarding remote control locomotives.

Missouri State Legislative Board Chairman Mickey Gage presented the BLE’s position on remote control locomotives to the Alderman. He was assisted by David Grimes, local chairman of BLE Division 42 (St. Louis). Chairman Gage’s daughter, Sarah, also assisted with the presentation.

Total

Also, 11 counties have passed similar remote control resolutions. They are: Douglas County, Wis.; West Baton Rouge Parish, La.; Point Coupee Parish, La.; Cayahoga County, Ohio; Huron County, Ohio; Calcasieu Parish, La., Ohio; Whiterley County, Ky.; Union County, Tenn.; Contra Costa County, Calif.; Knox County, Tenn.; and Clinton, Iowa, Ohio.

On the Internet
For a complete list of all state, county and AFL-CIO resolutions, visit the BLE website at: http://www .ble.org/remotecontrol •

10th AFL-CIO State Federation enacts RCO safety resolution

Wisconsin, Georgia pass resolutions in October

A total of 10 AFL-CIO State Federations have enacted remote control safety resolutions as this issue of The Locomotive Engineer Newsletter goes to press, the latest being Wisconsin and Georgia.

Wisconsin
Wisconsin AFL-CIO adopted a resolution calling for the State of Wisconsin and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to end the use of unregulated remote control locomotive operations within the state.

The Wisconsin AFL-CIO passed the resolution on October 23. It states, in part, that, “employees with as little as two weeks of training” as remote operators are controlling the movement of hazardous materials in “close proximity to our homes, schools, places of work, and hospitals.”

Wisconsin AFL-CIO President John Taylor said, “This resolution enacts the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers in their campaign to seek the end of the unregulated use of remote control locomotives.”

Georgia
In late October, the Georgia State AFL-CIO unanimously passed a remote control safety resolution at its 47th annual convention in Savannah, Ga.

The resolution was submitted by Brother Raymond Taylor, Chairman of the BLE Georgia State Legislative Board.

As a result of the resolution, Georgia State AFL-CIO President James P. Hoffa and AFL-CIO Vice-President Allan Rutte, which read in part, “In addition to normal safety concerns of having an unstaffed multi-ton vehicle moving through traffic and rail yards, a major concern is that such vehicles can more easily become the targets of a terrorist.”

Also at the convention, Brother Taylor was re-elected to the office of Vice-President, 4th District, of the Georgia State AFL-CIO.

10 State Federations
In addition to Wisconsin and Georgia, eight other AFL-CIO state federations have passed remote control resolutions. They are Arizona, Texas, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Missouri, North Dakota and Nebraska.
BLE, Tex-Mex sign landmark remote control agreement

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers has reached a landmark con-
tract agreement with the Texas-Mexi-
can Railway that allows for the safe implemen-
tation of remote control op-
erations and provides major pay raises.

“It’s a good agreement,” said BLE
Tex-Mex General Chairman George
Leyendecker. “There’s nothing like it in
the land.”

The agreement, ratified by an 81
percent majority of workers, gives re-
 mote control assignments to both loco-
 motive engineers and conductors. Job
 protections are written into the con-
 tract for both crafts, assuring that no
current employees will lose their jobs or be furloughed due to remote control
implementation.

“Not only did we reach an agree-
ment with management regarding the
 implementation of remote controls,
it is our opinion that we estab-
lished an operation that is vastly su-
 perior to the agreement that the Class One carriers con-
ducted with the Texas-Mexican Rail-
way and the United Transportation
Union,” BLE International Vice-Presi-
dent Merle Geiger said.

The BLE has taken some very grave
concerns over the manner in which re-
 mote control locomotive operations have been introduced into the indus-
try,” he continued. “The Organization
still believes that the Federal Railroad
Administration has not done its duty in
setting forth regulations regarding the
operations. It is the responsibility of the
 carrier to retrain their remote control
operators. This Organization will con-
 tinue in its endeavor to convince
the carrier to do its job and to not
continue to sit on the sidelines on this
most important matter.”

Geiger and Leyendecker were part
of a successful negotiating team that also included Lamey Garza Jr. and David Snow — members of BLE
Division 244 (Laredo, Texas) who work as yardmasters.

“With three conductors and two lo-
comotive engineers on the Negotiating
Committee, this was a total team ef-
c ort,” Brother Leyendecker said. “All
credit and accolades should go to the
negotiating committee as a whole.”

Vice-President Geiger explained, the BLE/Tex-Mex agreement, which will allow remote control assignments to be handled much more efficiently than on Class One railroads.

“What the BLE was able to accom-
 plish in the Tex-Mex agreement is to
return to the historic manner in filling
 these assignments,” Vice-President
Leyendecker summarized the pay issue
by stating that some crew members could receive pay increases of 45 per-
cent when they go into remote control
operations. Vice-President Geiger ex-
plained in more detail.

“In exchange for the additional flexibil-
ity that the BLE Agreement gives the Tex-Mex, the carrier agreed to compensate the engineer and the conductor as though they were work-
 ing conductor-only assignments under
the UTU Crew Consist and TSE Agree-
ments including all Crew Consist pay-
ments, Foot Board Yardmaster pay-
ments and Air Pay. The BLE has tapped
into the UTU Consist allowances for
engineers,” Geiger said.

“Payments will be based on the en-
 gineer and conductor seniority date.
For Pre-85 employees that equates to
approximately an additional $100 per
day in addition to the basic day. For Post-
85 employees it equates to ap-
proximately $40.00 in addition to the
daily basic rate of pay and the Lead
Operator position will receive the En-
gineer Certification Allowance.”

Vice-President Geiger also ex-
plained the superior job protections
outlined in the Tex-Mex agreement.

“The BLE has established true em-
 ployee protection based solely on the
implementation of remote control on
the property,” he said. “All employees
on the roster at the time of signing re-
 ceive said protection. Prior to any pro-
tected operating employee being be-
furred, said employee will have the
right to mark up as a brakeeman to one
of these Remote Control assignments.
When an employee marks to brake-
eman position, the Remote Control As-
signment automatically reverts to a
regular TSE and the assignment re-
 mains as such until the employee fill-
 ing the brakeman position is able to
hold a job elsewhere at which time the
assignment will automatically revert to
a Remote Control Assignment.”

Vice-President Geiger recognized
Tex-Mex General Manager James
Radek and Labor Relations Officer Lynn
Lambert for their efforts.

“For if not for their vision and cour-
age in the face of pressure from other
 carriers, we would not have been suc-
 cessful in reaching this landmark agree-
 ment,” he said. “There were cer-
tain people within the NCCC who stated
that it would be a waste of time on the
part of Tex-Mex management because
they would never be able to reach an agree-
ment with the BLE on remote con-
trol. Obviously we have proven that el-
ement wrong.”

In addition to Brothers Clark,
Leyendecker, Garza and Snow, Vice-
President Geiger also thanked Tommy
Brooks, Regional Director, who was
helping to get the agreement ratified.

“His hard work in this endeavor proves,
again, his value and commitment to our
Organization,” Geiger said.

Brother Miller, who helped to orga-
nize the Tex-Mex property last year,
said unity was the key to success.

“This is what happens when we can
be successful in the BLE process and
together toward one common cause for
the benefit of everyone,” he said. “We
have one of the best agreements in the
industry, and I thank everyone for par-
ticipating in the meetings to explain the
agreement in Houston, Laredo and Cor-
pus Christi.”

BLE conduct three Local Chairman workshops throughout 2004

The BLE Education & Training Department will
conduct three Local Chairman Workshops in 2004
with the first scheduled for January 19-25.

The January workshop will take place on the cam-
pus of the George Meany Center in Silver Spring, Md.
The other classes are scheduled for March 21-26 on
the campus of the University of Illinois in Champaign,
Ill., and April 4-9 at the American Airlines Training &
Conference Center in Dallas/Fort Worth.

Upon successful completion of the course, every
one will qualify for an $85 per day stipend from the
North American Railway Foundation. The stipends
will be paid directly to the Secretary-Treasurer of the
respective divisions.

Among other assignments, the workshops will in-
clude instruction in the BLE structure and functions
representing members at disciplinary and decerti-
fication hearings, union leadership skills, claim
and grievance handling, and writing and editing skills.

Further, the BLE Education Department will
use the BLE arbitration database. A highlight of the work-
shops is when attendees participate in a simulated
disciplinary hearing.

These classes are not just for new Local Chair-
men, and the BLE encourages all Local Chairmen to
attend one of these workshops.

For the first time, Local Chairmen will have the
opportunity to register for the 2004 workshops online
through the BLE website at: http://www.ble.org.

Also new for 2004 is a room reservation require-
ment. Members will have to sign up for their rooms
in advance and provide a credit card number to re-
serve the room. Those who do not show up will be
charged the first night’s stay.

And, because of the overwhelming response to
past workshops, the 2004 workshops will be made
available to all Local Chairmen for members of the
Local Committee of Adjustment.

The BLE Education & Training Depart-
ment presents these workshops with the staff
of the George Meany Center and BLE
will include BLE General Secretary/Treasurer Will-
iam C. Walpert, BLE Vice-President Richard R.
Radek, Assistant Director of the BLE Arbitration
Department Marcus Ruel, Special Representative
Ken Kroeger, and BLE Arbitration Department Man-
ger Greg Ross. In addition, Donald Spatz, an adjunct
professor from the George Meany Center, will instruct
at the workshops.

The BLE pays the costs of books, equipment, tu-
ition and a Thursday evening graduation banquet.

BLE members who attend are responsible for the cost
of room and board, which varies based on the loca-
tion of the workshop.

• January 18-23, 2004: George Meany Center (Sil-
ver Spring, Md.)
$152.50 per day for single room and board
$107.50 per day for double room and board

• March 21-26, 2004: University of Illinois
$108 per day for single room and board
$107 per day for double room and board

Registration for the 2004 workshops is on a first
come, first served basis with class size limited to the
first 25 who register through the BLE website.
For more information, please contact Ken Kroeger of
the BLE Education & Training Dept. at (216) 272-0986 or
Ken@ble.org.
BLE, Grand Trunk reach tentative agreement

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers has reached a tentative contract agreement with Grand Trunk for locomotive engineers on CN’s Grand Trunk Western lines. If approved, the contract would become effective February 2, 2004. Across the board, engineers would receive a raise of approximately $12 per hour, bringing wages to $33 per hour.

BLE International President Don Hahs recognized the efforts of International Vice-President Paul Somor and BLE National Organizer John Karakian. Karakian said the BLE has been in negotiations with the carrier for the past year and a half, and said the success was a team effort.

The contract provides protection for remote control operations, and stipulates that locomotive engineers must be used if a train is operated by remote control outside of existing switching limits or any existing existing switching limits at a rate higher than the speed. It also provides that if a train is operated outside of existing switching limits by any mode of operations (on board or off board computer, including GPS) then it must be operated by a locomotive engineer.

Karakian recognized all GTW Local Chairmen, especially Terry Tindol (Division 33, Battle Creek, Mich.), Jerry Tittle (Division 122, Port Huron, Mich.); Vice-General Chairman Marty Tyler (Division 650, Durand, Mich.); Danny Harris (Division 122, Detroit); G.N. Faford (Division 550, Flat Rock, Mich.); and Dave Butler (Division 920, Pontiac, Mich.).

“This contract was the result of a lot of hard work and a lot of not backing down,” Karakian said. The contract provides protections for remote control operations, and stipulates that locomotive engineers must be used if a train is operated by remote control outside of existing switching limits or any existing switching limits at a rate higher than the speed. It also provides that if a train is operated outside of existing switching limits by any mode of operations (on board or off board computer, including GPS) then it must be operated by a locomotive engineer.

The agreement also contains a shortfall/lease protection clause. In the event that GTW or any of its lines are sold or leased, employees cannot be furloughed. The company is obligated to absorb employees and provide jobs to the nearest terminal.

While the proposed contract does not provide for back wages, the company has agreed to pay the tab for all retroactive health and welfare expenses. As part of the proposed agreement the GTW members will fall under the national health and welfare contract and will begin making monthly health and welfare payments.

The contract also contains an opt-out clause, where the BLE can back out of the agreement by December 1, 2004.

President Hahs applauded Vice-President Sor- row and General Chairman Karakian and everyone else involved for bringing the negotiations to a successful conclusion.

Judge approves strike by Amtrak employees

Thousands of Amtrak employ- ees are legally entitled to walk off the job for one day to protest President Bush’s lack of support for passenger rail service, a federal judge ruled on December 11.

The unions “have not reached an accord on what they will do,” said Richard Edelman, an attorney with O’Donnell, Schwartz and Andrews, who represented the unions. He said the unions had won a significant victory with the ruling itself. “We are vindicated on the legal issues. We have the right to go.”

However, Amtrak spokes- man Cliff Black said Amtrak attorneys had filed a notice of appeal with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Co- lumbia, and would ask the court for an emergency stay if the unions set a date for the walkout.

“We have the hammer, and now it’s a question of whether or not we want to swing it,” said Richard Edelman, an attorney with O’Donnell, Schwartz and Andrews, who represented the unions. He said the unions had won a significant victory with the ruling itself. “We are vindicated on the legal issues. We have the right to go.”

Van de Water confirmed at NMB

Read Van de Water was unanimously confirmed on De- cember 9 by the United States Senate to serve as a Member of the National Mediation Board. Ms. Van de Water was nominated by President George W. Bush and will re- place Frank Diggs.

Ms. Van de Water served as the Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Af- fairs at the Department of Transportation from 2001- 2003. She previously was the founder of Carson King Con- tinental, which she managed from 1986-2001. From 1997 to 1999, she was the legislative counsel for international trade and investment with The Busi- ness Roundtable and, from 1991 to 1997, she was legisla- tive counsel and director of government affairs for North- west Airlines. She also was employed on Capitol Hill as an appropriations associate and legislative assistant to Congres- sman Tom DeLay (Texas) from 1987-1991.

BLE President Don Hahs congratulated Ms. Van de Water on her appointment and said he was looking forward to working with her.

A native of Charlotte, N.C., Ms. Van de Water graduated from the University of the South (Sewanee) in 1986. She received a master’s degree from The George Washington University and her J.D. from The Georgetown University Law Center. She was sworn in on December 11.

(IBT/IBLE scores another organizing win over UTU)

The International Brother- hood of Teamsters/In- ternational Brotherhood of Locomo- tive Engineers Rail Operating Employees Council (IBT/IBLE) scored another joint victory as it successfully organized em- ployees at the New York & At- lantic Railway.

A majority of workers chose the IBT/IBLE over the United Transportation Union as their designated collective bargaining representative. The National Mediation Board cer- tified the election results on November 20.

The New York & Atlantic is the latest in a string of shortline victories for the IBT/ IBLE, which has successfully organized more than 600 new members since last year.

In addition to the New York & Atlantic, the IBT/IBLE has organized six other shortlines since August of 2002, includ- ing the Great Western Railway of Colorado, St. Lawrence & At- lantic Railroad; Utah Railway; the Iowa, Chicago & Eastern Railroad; the Indiana Southern Railroad; and the Texas-Mexi- can Railway.

Brother John Tolman, Assis- tant to the International President, helped coordinate the New York & Atlantic orga- nizing drive. He thanked Bob Evans, Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) General Chairman; Mickey Quinn, LIRR Vice Chairman; and Gary Locke, Division 289 Local Committee of Adjustment. Don Carman is the Local Chairman on the New York & Atlantic property.

“This victory would not have been successful without the diligent and persistent ef- forts of Local Chairman Don Carman,” IBT/IBLE President Don M. Hahs said. “I welcome the new members and sincerely appreciate the efforts of everyone involved, particu- larly Brother Carman.”

The New York & Atlantic operates 269 route miles and is headquartered in Glendale, N.Y. It operates mainly in New York State, specifically Nassau and Suffolk counties, Brook- lyn, and Queens. It connects with the Canadian Pacific Rail- way, CSX Transportation and Norfolk Southern. Its major commodities include lumber, paper, building materials, plas- tic, food products and recyclables.

IBT/IBLE scores another organizing win over UTU

BLE Job Bank

Amtrak

Amtrak, the National Railroad Passenger Corp., is recruiting Locomotive Engineers to work out of the following locations: Lincoln, Neb.; Denver, Colo.; Carbondale, Ill.; and Little Rock, Ark.

Duties include the safe operation of diesel-electric locomotives, complying with train orders, wayside signals, railroad operating rules, special instructions, and federal, state and local regulations to transport passengers and equipment safely and efficiently.

Locomotive Engineers perform equipment and air brake tests as required. Job involves working alone and apart in physical isolation while integrating activities with others. Engi- neers must make timely and critical decisions under stressful situations to safeguard lives and property.

Candidates must have a current Class 1 Engineer Certificate and must currently be working as a Locomotive Engineer with one year of service. Any candidate whose driving record indicates a conviction for an alcohol or substance violation, or a refusal to submit to testing in connection with a moving violation within the past 30 months, will be automatically dis- qualified. Candidates must be able to report to their Crew Base within a 2-hour call.

Resumes may be forwarded to Amtrak Human Resources Department, 325 West Van Buren St., Chicago, IL 60607, faxed to (312) 880-5174, or e-mailed to Kosbourne@amtrak.com

Amtrak is an equal opportunity employer: EO E/M/IV
Members of the BLE participated in Detroit’s LaborFest, a celebration of labor’s heritage, on September 13. The event was organized by the AFL-CIO in lieu of a Labor Day parade and was held at Detroit’s Ford Field, the union-built home of the Detroit Lions football team.

“(LaborFest) is a new approach, and exciting new way for working families to celebrate our heritage, show our strength, and protect our future,” said Mark Gaffney, president of the Michigan AFL-CIO.

Representing the BLE at LaborFest 2003 was Michigan State Legislative Chairman Greg Powell, who set up a booth to educate members of the community about the railroads’ use of unmanned locomotives.

“Brother Powell stumped relentlessly on this issue. After listening to his presentation, more than a 1,000 attendees signed a petition favoring regulation of the controversial practice of operating locomotives by remote control. Many were flat out stunned that a locomotive would be operated by anyone other than an engineer in the cab. This is a terrible venue for educating the public,” Powell said. “In a believer trying to get comprehensive legislation and regulation enacted by Congress regarding unmanned locomotive operation. Our goal here was to educate the public and bring about this legislation.

There is obvious public support out there on this issue. In just a few short hours we collected over 1,200 signatures supporting this cause. This is truly a safety issue with the carriers acting in a reckless manner by implementing their measures without a comprehensive training and certification process in place. Every citizen in this state, all states, is entitled to safety when it comes to railroad operations.”

Community members who visited the BLE booth also heard a pitch for continued support of Amtrak. Members of TCU volunteered their time and effort to show solidarity in the issues of unmanned locomotive operations and Amtrak support.

“I want to thank everyone who participated and helped at our booth at LaborFest 2003,” Powell said. “Brother Dan Cook III (BLE Div 1) and his fiancé, Adrienne Davis, worked hard to inform LaborFest attendees and gather signatures, as did Brothet Frank Bataglia (BLE Div 1), Dave Fernald (BLE Div 2) and his wife Sue, Charlie Allen (BLE Div 19), TCU members Cliff Neumann and Terry Seska. We also had a real strong effort for Operation Lifesaver thanks to Sister Eileen Devine (BLE Div 296). I also want to give a very special thank you to my wife Kristy who helped not only at LaborFest but also for her unitilizing support and dedication.

“We look forward to participating in LaborFest 2004 and working on issues that bring about a safety and fair workplace and community.”

Many other issues were trumpeted at LaborFest, including the right of workers to organize, health care and Free Trade Agreements that affect workers in North America.

“We’re going to take advantage of this great gathering of working families in downtown Detroit to educate and agitate on the issues we care about, including the right to organize,” Gaffney said. “Millions of our members work in the health care field, and we see first hand the human tragedy caused by our nation’s health care crisis.”

Members with questions can contact Brother Bailey on his cell phone or by e-mail at: (505) 842-1234 or gb@sheglobal.net.

Regional meetings set for 2004

BLE and GIA members who are making vacation plans for next year may wish to consider attending one of the Brotherhood’s four regional meetings.

Whether its educational opportunities, hearing about the latest issues from International officers, or the pleasure of socializing with fellow railroaders, each 2004 regional meeting offers something for everyone.

BLE members can participate in hands-on workshops for Local Chairmen, Legislative Representatives and Secretary-Treasurers. GIA members may also attend one of the informative meetings planned with United Healthcare and the Railroad Retirement Board. In addition to these educational opportunities, various social activities will also be planned as part of each regional meeting experience.

Typically, a golf tournament and banquet are part of the festivities. While specific details are not yet finalized, the dates and locations of next year’s regional meetings are listed below.

SMA — June 13-17, 2004
The 77th annual Southwestern Meeting Association will be hosted by the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Greensville, Va.

JWC — August 17-22, 2004
Pat and Barbie Lynch and the members of BLE Division 446 (Gallup, N.M.) will host the 64th annual International Convention in Albuquerque, N.M. Reservations for the Hyatt Regency Albuquerque (301 West Tipton-NW, Albuquerque, NM 87102) can be made by calling: (505) 842-1234.

SWCM — The week of September 13, 2004
Local Chairman G.Y. Bailey and the members of BLE Division 62 will host the 65th Annual Southwestern Convention Meeting in The Woodlands, Texas, a suburb of Houston. His wife, Kathie Bailey, will serve as GIA chairperson for the event.

Reservations can be made by calling The Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel and Convention Center at: (281) 367-9737. The address: 1801 Lake Robbins Dr., The Woodlands, TX 77382.

Members with questions can contact Brother Bailey on his cell phone or by e-mail at: (251) 567-7263 or gb@sheglobal.net.

IBT Merger

Continued from Page 1

On February 26, 2002, the BLE Advisory Board unanimously approved a motion that allowed the BLE Executive Committee to explore a possible merger with the Teamsters. On September 6, 2002, the BLE and IBT announced the appointment of four joint committees charged with the task of drafting a Merger Agreement, and formal discussions began on October 3.

“I thank all members of the joint committees for their diligent work in preparing the merger documents,” President Hahs said. “None of this would have been possible without their hard work on creating documents that were acceptable to the membership.”
IBT Merger

Continued from Page 1

The four committees were Constitution & Bylaws, Legislative, Finance, and Canada.

The Constitution & Bylaws members were: Ed Rodzwicz, First Vice-President; Alternate President (Committee Co-Chair); Leo McCann, President; American Train Dispatchers Department, BLE; Paul T. Sorove, Vice President; Dale McPherson, Vice President; Larry Sykes, General Chairman, Norfolk Southern; Tony Smith, General Chairman, CSX; Gil Gore, General Chairman, Unison Pacific; Rick Gibbons, General Chairman, BNSF; Mark Kerno, General Chairman, Amtrak; and Bob Evers, General Chairman, Long Island Rail Road.

The Legislative Committee members were: Raymond Holmes, BLE Vice-President; & U.S. National Legislative Representative (Committee Co-Chair); Jim Keene, Kansas State Legislative Board Chairman; George Newman, Massachusetts State Legislative Board Chairman; and Tim Smith, California State Legislative Board Chairman.

The Finance Committee members were: Bill Walpert, General Secretary-Treasurer.

Treasurer (Committee Co-Chairman); Paul Wingo, International Vice-President; Jim Nelson, Secretary-Treasurer BNSF-Northern Lines General Committee of Adjustment; and Steve L. Christian, Secretary-Treasurer, Arkansas State Legislative Board.

The Canada Committee members were: Gaille Halle, BLE Vice-President & Canadian Director (Committee Co-Chairman); and George Hacker, BLE Vice-President & National Legislative Representative-Canada.

Our combined effort as we look for.

and it was made possible through the

first BNSF system-wide agreement

were hopeful our members will realize

like they should be paid.

THE LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEER NEWSLETTER
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers
Since 1863, a Tradition of Forward Thinking

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Holding of 6% of their annual earnings for

members have the right

years for 2004 and a maximum of 8% for 2005 and thereafter. Members have the right to opt out of the profit sharing after the first year.

numbers member they’ll get paid like they should be paid.”

In the first year of the BNSF alternative compensation contract, members would see a maximum profit sharing of 0% of their annual earnings for 2004 and a maximum of 8% for 2005 and thereafter. Members have the right to opt out of the profit sharing after the first year.

January 18-23, 2004... Local Chairman Workshop at George Mearcy Center, Silver Spring, Md. Convened by representatives of the BLE’s Education & Training Department and staff members from the George Mearcy Center. See page 5 of this issue for more details.

February 8-11, 2004... Secretary-Treasurer Compensation Class, Kansas City, Mo. At the Four Points Sheraton near the Kansas City Country Club Plaza. Hotel reservations can be made by calling (816) 753-7400. Register for the course online at www.ble.org or contact Ken Knegert at: Knegert@ble.org or call (216) 272-0986. During the three-day seminar, members will learn proper record keeping techniques, computer applications, and minute-taking. They will also learn methods for filing various Department of Labor and Railroad Retirement reports, as well as Federal tax returns.

February 22-25, 2004... Secretary-Treasurer Compensation Class, George Mearcy Center At the George Mearcy Center in Silver Spring, Md. Room reservations are automatic when you register for the course. Register online at www.ble.org or contact Ken Knegert at: Knegert@ble.org or call (216) 272-0986.

March 7-10, 2004... Secretary-Treasurer Compensation Class, Dallas, Texas At the American Airlines Training and Conference Center in Dallas. Call (800) 777-4464 for hotel reservations. Register for the course online at www.ble.org or contact Ken Knegert at: Knegert@ble.org or call (216) 272-0986.

March 14-17, 2004... Secretary-Treasurer Compensation Class, Chicago, Ill. At the Chicago City Center Holiday Inn. Call (312) 787-6100 for hotel reservations. Register for the course online at www.ble.org or contact Ken Knegert at: Knegert@ble.org or call (216) 272-0986.

March 21-26, 2004... Local Chairman Workshop at University of Illinois, Champaign, Ill. Convened by representatives of the BLE’s Education & Training Department and staff members from the George Mearcy Center. See page 5 of this issue for more details.

April 4-6, 2004... Local Chairman Workshop in Dallas/Fort Worth To be held at the American Airlines Training and Conference Center and conducted by representatives of the BLE’s Education & Training Department and staff members from the George Mearcy Center. See page 5 of this issue for more details.

Upcoming 2004 Regional Meetings... SBA, IWC, SWCM, and EURMA See Page 7 of this issue for dates and locations.

Advisory Board November Activity

By action of the delegates of the FIFTH Quincentennial Convention, summaries of BLE Advisory Board members’ activities are published monthly.


General Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walpert. General supervision of BLE financial, record, staff, office duties, Bill Education & Training. BLE National Advisory Board (NAE), BLE National Advisory Board (NAF), BLE National Advisory Board (NAS), BLE National Advisory Board (NAF), BLE National Advisory Board (NAK), BLE National Advisory Board (NAO), BLE National Advisory Board (NAK).

The BLE Advisory Board unanimously approved the merger documents. Ballots were mailed on October 25.

Founded on May 8, 1983, the BLE is the senior rail labor organization in North America.