



Happy Holidays!

Thousands turn out for annual CSX Santa Special

Thousands of children and families turned out on November 17 for the 65th annual CSX Santa Claus Special. The annual train follows a 110-mile stretch in the rural mountain communities of Eastern Kentucky, western Virginia and Northeast Tennessee, and is one of Appalachia's most anticipated holiday traditions.

Santa himself rode in the caboose and was part of the team that distributed more than 15 tons of toys at 14 stops along the route.

Another major player on the team was locomotive engineer Alf Peoples, a CSX engineer and member of Division 781 in Erwin, Tenn. Brother Peoples worked as locomotive engineer of the Santa Claus Special this year.

Brother Peoples is a veteran Santa Train engineer, and involvement with the program runs in his family.

"I was the engineer of the Santa Train once before in 1990 on the 48th annual Special," said Brother Peoples, who first joined the Brotherhood on December 1, 1980. "My father was a fireman on the Santa Train years ago."

According to Brother Peoples, the

train left Erwin, Tenn., on November 16 and traveled to Kingsport, Tenn., where the toys and food for the needy were loaded on the train. They then traveled to Shelby, Ky., for the night, and on November 17, the Santa Train began its run from Shelby, Ky. to Kingsport, Tenn.

Country singer Patty Loveless was the special guest on the train this year. Brother Peoples said that including Shelby, one of the 14 stops along the route caters to children with special needs.

As important as the locomotive engineer is on the Santa Train, a team of volunteers make sure everyone stays safe along the route.

"There are many BLET and UTU members all along the 110 mile route to keep the crowds out of the track as the train arrives," he said.

The route concludes in Kingsport, Tenn., with a large parade.

"When we arrive in Kingsport Santa gets off the train to be in the Kingsport Christmas Parade," Brother Peoples said.

"This has been called the world's longest Christmas Parade." •



Santa waves goodbye to the crowd at Starnes, Va. Photo courtesy of Ray Poteat.



Crowd at Fort Blackmore, Va. Volunteers from the BLET and UTU help keep crowds at a safe distance as the train approaches. Photo courtesy Dustin Grizzle.



The Santa Train near Dante, Va. Photo courtesy Dustin Grizzle.

Notice about BLET's Disability & Welfare Benefit Trust Fund

A summary of the annual report for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen Disability and Welfare Benefit Trust Fund appears on Page 6 of this issue.

The summary contains important information about your rights under the plan and the Act, which should be read and retained for future reference. •

BLET FOCUS

10 years of safety SENSE

Groundbreaking safety program at CSX launched in 1997

Railroading is, and always has been, a dangerous occupation. But the years 1996 and 1997 were particularly deadly for members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen. During that span 12 BLET members lost their lives in on-the-job accidents.

The Union Pacific Railroad, in 1997, was plagued by its takeover of the Southern Pacific and faced a fundamental breakdown in the safety of its train operations. But the problems weren't limited to UP — BLET members at CSX Transportation also endured their share of unsafe work practices, injuries and death.

Out of this wreckage was born a program that has dramatically improved safety and has saved many lives.

SENSE, or Structured Employee Network for Safety Empowerment, was formed on the CSX property by the BLET in response to unsafe working conditions and fatal accidents.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the SENSE program. Safety has improved dramatically at CSX over the past decade, thanks in part to SENSE. BLET members are now taking the opportunity to reflect on the past 10 years, in hopes of furthering the program for years to come.

History

On August 20, 1996, CSX locomotive engineer and BLET Member Tom Shay was killed in an on duty accident. Less than a year later, on June 7, 1997, BLET member Kelvin N. Winters was killed in another CSX fatality. Just prior to the June 7 fatality, CSX had been investigated and fined by the Federal Railroad Administration for violating federal safety laws.

On June 12, 1997, just five days after the Winters fatality, the BLET put its Mobilization Network into action and called a system-wide Safety Strike at CSX. More than 4,300 locomotive engineers walked off the job to protest the Winters fatality and countless other safety violations and practices.

Following the Safety Strike, BLET leaders proposed the SENSE safety program to CSX officials in Jacksonville, Fla. The program was immediately adopted and gradually put into effect across the entire CSX system. SENSE went into effect on January 23, 1998.

Now, 10 years later, safety has improved dramatically at CSX thanks to the BLET and the SENSE program.

"I am certain SENSE has saved untold lives," said Bud Morse, SENSE Safety Coordinator on CSX's Chicago Division. "Maybe it's just one, and maybe it's more than a dozen. But even if it's just one, it's worth it."

Seeing Results

Because of the daily hard work of many BLET SENSE leaders across the system, the following improvements have been achieved for BLET members:

- Following the acquisition of Conrail, from 2000 to 2006 FRA-reportable injuries to locomotive engineers at CSX have improved 43 percent, with a combined reduction of 53% for all engineers, conductors and trainmen.
- All Locomotive Engineer Injuries, including FRA-reportable injuries, improved over 27 percent during the same time period. Year-to-date in 2007, the number of locomotive engineer injuries has declined over 50 percent over the year 2000.
- During the same time frame, FRA human factor train accidents declined over 10 percent, while all human factor train accidents (including FRA reportable) declined over 29 percent.

The program gives front-line locomotive engineers the ability to address safety concerns and recommend improvements through a network that ultimately reaches CSXT senior management.

"Management finally recognized that the people out here doing the jobs are the ones they need to be listening to," said John Claytor a Locomotive Engineer with 40 years service and a member of BLET Division 34 in Columbus Ohio. "That's one of the reasons why it's a successful program. CSX knows the BLET is not fooling around with safety."

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How SENSE works

SENSE uses employee mentoring to create the environment for an accident-free workplace, replacing confrontation with communication and trust.

Safety issues and concerns are channeled through union representatives to front-line field supervisors. Issue resolutions are reported back through the SENSE channels to employees.

Each BLET division is broken down into groups of 10 with one appointed SENSE Safety Team Captain. Members report safety concerns to the Team Captains. A Division Contact, appointed by members of the division, handles the concern with a local design-



CSX engineers in Russell, Ky.

nated carrier officer. If the issue is not resolved at the local level, the Division Contact takes the concern to their BLET Division Safety Coordinator.

When the program first started in 1997 there were three BLET Regional Safety Coordinators who covered huge regional territories. These were Curtis Driggers, Richard Taylor (deceased) and Don Miller. Larry James provided support from the National Office through the Education & Training Department. Their territories were so vast, that on many occasions multiple events occurred that required their attendance on the same day and it became very difficult to cover all activities and provide the support needed in the time frame established.

To better serve the membership and enable the BLET SENSE Coordinators to become more involved on a localized scale, the three Regional BLET SENSE Coordinator positions were converted into BLET SENSE Division Safety Coordinator's. CSXT has 10 Operating Divisions. Each CSXT Operating Division has a BLET SENSE Safety Coordinator in place. One of the primary goals of the SENSE Division Safety Coordinator is to communicate regularly with each BLET SENSE Division Contact on their territory and participate in as many one on one contacts with BLET members as possible. SENSE representatives want to hear their concerns and input and will communicate these issues to CSX with the goal of timely resolution and reporting

back to the member who conveyed the concern.

"It's a good program," said John Claytor. "The way it's set up with Teams and Captains, it keeps everyone involved and on board."

The results of this change have been very positive, both in accident reduction, personal injury reduction, elimination of unsafe conditions and providing education to the BLET membership on a large variety of issues. These include rule compliance and application, technology, decertification events, many issues associated with locomotives and equipment, as well as many Federal mandates that are sweeping the railroad industry that effect BLET members.

BLET SENSE has also provided input that led to positive changes and improvements to certain operating rules on CSXT.

BLET SENSE representatives over the past 10 years have been actively involved and provided volumes of input to improve working conditions for BLET members through SAC-P projects and RSAC Meetings with the FRA.

The BLET Division Safety Coordinator addresses all concerns not resolved at the local level with the designated division level carrier officer. If the concern is not resolved here, it goes on to the respective BLET General Chairman for handling with the carrier's Chief Executive Officer.



A SENSE form collection box. Members of the SENSE team use posters, flyers and sickers and decals, like these, to help members remember that safety is the top priority.

BLET FOCUS

The network follows a seven-step process to target and correct safety issues. It creates a process where safety concerns are documented and filed.

"It puts supervisors on alert," said Tim Love of Division 781 in Erwin, Tenn. "They have to act because our safety issues are put into writing, not by word of mouth. It holds the supervisors' feet to the fire."

Over the years, the program has resulted in many positive improvements, and has truly empowered the workers.

"For our members, it has opened their eyes and they see what the union can do, and that it does get things done," Love said.

Florence Division

Roger Peace, current Coordinator of the Florence Division, credits Curtis Driggers for establishing SENSE on the Division.

"Curtis was instrumental in starting things with SENSE here," Peace said. "He laid a solid foundation for us to build on."

Peace said SENSE has addressed numerous issues over the years and continues to be a driving force for safety improvement on the Florence Division.

Baltimore Division

Marty Crouthers, Eastern Coordinator for the Baltimore Division, said SENSE has really improved safety in his area.

"We are hands-on correcting safety issues, and it works out really well," Crouthers said. "If we have a recurring problem, then we'll hold a Safety Blitz to correct it."

Crouthers said now that the Summer Spike is over, SENSE is focusing on slips, trips and falls. He says engineers are currently being urged to stay focused on the task at hand during the holiday season.

Sonny Hamm, Coordinator for the entire Baltimore Division, said safety is a total team effort.

"SENSE is a wonderful, wonderful program," Hamm said. "We have made so many advances and gains over the last few years."

Also working on the Baltimore Division is Bill Rominski (Western Division Coordinator) and Gary Cage (Southern Division Coordinator). Hamm thanked his Division Contacts as well: John Shifflet, Baltimore;



SENSE Safety Coordinators from the various regions at a recent safety meeting, from left: Sonny Hamm, Baltimore Division; Bud Morse, Chicago Division; Larry James, Huntington Division East; Rick Koch, Louisville Division; Roger Peace, Florence Division; Charlie Otten, Albany Division; Rick Skidmore, Huntington Division West; Gary Burton, Atlanta Division; Bill Sauer, Great Lakes Division; and Mike Wicks, Nashville Division. Present but not pictured is Max Tillman, Jacksonville Division.

Kendall Gordon, Brunswick; Tom Danner, Cumberland, Ted Doorley, Connellsville; Mike Humbert, Pittsburgh, Gary Cage, Richmond; and Marty Crouthers and Denny Simon, Philadelphia.

"When it comes to SENSE and safety, we are all team players," Hamm said. "Without them, the SENSE program wouldn't be successful."

Atlanta Division

Gary Burton of Division 498 (Abbeville, S.C.), represents the Atlanta Division. He credits SENSE for making his workplace safer.

"SENSE allows us to go home to our family the same way we left them," he said. "We do the job right, 100 percent all the time. Not only do we tell co-workers when they do something wrong, but also when they do something right."

He says the Atlanta Division has had a major turnaround since the implementation of SENSE. "We've reduced injuries greatly and our FRA decertifications have gone down," he said. "We're one of the top Divisions on CSX systemwide."

Looking toward the future, he says SENSE will only make things better as time goes by.

"SENSE will only get better as we bring more people into the program," he said.

Jacksonville Division

Max Tillman of BLET Division 309 represents the Jacksonville Division. He says the strength of SENSE lies in the creation of accountability.

"Forms are filled out by employees, which creates a paper trail," he said. "Issues and problems are documented, which creates accountability. From what I can see, most of the problems are addressed on the local level because local managers don't want it to go higher. If a local manager doesn't take care of something that he can take care of, then it generally only happens once."

"Every issue is not settled," he continued. "It's an ongoing battle. But every safety issue where there's a real chance someone can get hurt, it's handled quickly."

One of the current major issues that SENSE is helping resolve is the location of locomotive horns on the exterior of the cabs. On older locomotives, the horns were positioned above the engineer's head and were so loud that many blamed horns for causing hearing damage. Thanks to SENSE and the Cab Committee, horns are now being located further back on the locomotive, protecting the hearing of locomotive engineers and conductors.

Huntington Division

Tim Love is the Assistant Chairman on the Huntington Division and is based in Erwin, Tenn. He said members on the SENSE Huntington Division worked hard and got inspired to improve air filters on locomotives. They took photos and documented the conditions of locomotives, including items such as the quality of the seats, air quality, and cab cleanliness. As a result, A Locomotive Cab Committee task force was established to make conditions better on all CSX locomotives systemwide.

"It's one of the biggest things we accomplished," Love said. "It went all the way to the top at CSX in Jacksonville, and it was all started through the SENSE program."

The Locomotive Cab Committee was formed on CSXT in late 2006 to address locomotive related issues. The BLET SENSE program is assisting the Cab Committee in gathering data and input from the field on locomotive issues that the Locomotive Cab Committee "LOGIC" is currently addressing or will be addressing in the future. "LOGIC" is an acronym for Locomotive Operations General Improvement Committee.

According to Steve Casto, BLE Division 481, SENSE has been a great success in the Parkersburg, W.Va., area of the Huntington Division.

"We've handled hundred of forms, and it has improved working conditions, safety and quality of life," Casto said.

Some of the recent issues handled include improvements to steps and walking conditions in the yard and new operating rules on defect detectors.

Casto, who has been with the SENSE program since its inception, takes pride in the mentoring and critical incident response portions of SENSE.

"Every time a group of new hires come in, I go in and spend time with them in class," he said. "I take the time to introduce myself and let them know what I do and what the Brotherhood does. That's what we do as a Brotherhood."



Job briefings in crew rooms give SENSE representatives the opportunity to discuss members' safety concerns in a face-to-face environment.

BLET FOCUS

SENSE

Continued from Page 3

Rick Skidmore, Huntington Division Safety Coordinator said that SENSE safety has handled in excess of 100 issues on every sub division of his territory on an annual basis.

“The documentation contained on the SENSE form requires accountability by management once the unsafe practice or unsafe condition is brought to their attention,” Skidmore said.

Brother Skidmore also said that a project was implemented to identify all highway crossings by milepost location and DOT number. All locomotive engineers were issued a laminated card by the SENSE committee for ready reference in case of an emergency. These cards eliminate any confusion to exact crossing location for emergency responders. “A few seconds or minutes can save a life,” Skidmore said.

Chicago Division

Bud Morse represents about 3,500 engineers on CSX’s Chicago Division. Through SENSE, he has worked at hazmat peer instructor safety seminars at the George Meany Center. He has also worked with first responders to railroad crashes, teaching fire fighters and others how to shut down locomotives and other important safety responses.

“It benefits our members if ever they are involved with an accident,” Morse said. “They know how to make the equipment safe so first responders can do their jobs.”

As a SENSE Coordinator, Morse works with new employees and/or older employees who need some extra assistance in particular areas. He spends time working with them one-on-one for as long as it takes in order to make them safer workers and more informed.

“It’s important to meet with the trainees and attend hiring sessions,” Morse said. “I also speak with them during on-the-job training programs. Afterwards I feel good about their safety awareness and abilities, and am proud to say I had a small part in their training. If they work safely and according to the rules, they’ll have successful careers. It’s rewarding to see them following and applying the training.”

In his mind, SENSE is about protecting each and every operating employee at CSX.

“I want to make sure every operating employee goes home safe and healthy so they can have a quality of life with their family,” he said. “Injury and loss of income has a terrible affect on operating employees. Keeping people healthy and safe on the job keeps them in a positive state of mind. Working safely takes care of every else. By working safe, they can enjoy all other parts of their life.”

Albany Division

Charlie Otten represents the Albany Division of the SENSE network. He’s been involved in SENSE since 1997.

“We’ve accomplished a lot of things



here,” Otten said. “We have a good group of people here across the whole division.”

The SENSE network in Albany worked with local officials to reduce trespasser hotspots, where pedestrians were parking too close to the tracks and then walking across railroad property. He also said SENSE has played a role in enhancing lighting at crew change points.

“A lot of our crew changes are at night, and enhanced light makes it a win-win for everyone,” he said, noting that a tower near Selkirk is being taken down and replaced by a light tower.

He also said SENSE is working on improved paving in the Syracuse area to improve walking conditions and to cut down on slips, trips and falls. He said the success in boosting safety is



the result of group efforts, not of any single group or individual.

“I’m proud to be out here helping people get home safe,” Otten said. “You have to believe in safety, and I believe in it 110 percent — probably 120 percent now that I’m a full time Safety Coordinator.”

Louisville Division

Rick Koch said constant education is a main focus of SENSE on the Louisville Division.

As System Coordinator, Koch has regular meetings and phone conversations with his Division Coordinators. In 2008, Koch is planning a major retraining and reeducation session for at least 16 SENSE Division contacts and Local Chairmen.

One of the major accomplishments on the Louisville Division was the publication of books that noted all railroad crossings with mile post information. The books provide grade crossing details across the entire Louisville Division.

The books are given to train crew members to help them identify crossings, which makes it easy to refer to specific crossings when reporting problems to dispatchers.

He said there are between 20-30 crossings in some small towns, and that

it’s impossible to know the names of them all. In putting the book together, he discovered that some of the crossings had more than one name.

Great Lakes Division

Bill Sauer, System Coordinator of the Great Lakes Division, is proud of the positive impact SENSE has had over the years.

“Our safety is second to none,” Sauer said. “We’re number one on all the railroads in the United States.”

Sauer said there were 33 injuries on the Great Lakes Division in 2005, 21 in 2006, and thus far, only seven in 2007.

“We have a great group of people here,” he said. “Our Division Contacts work hard for me and safety is always their number one. I keep in touch with them, which is one reason why our team does such a good job.”

Much like his counterpart on the Louisville Division, Rick Koch, Brother Sauer has provided engineers with a book that provides information on all grade crossings across his entire division.

“Engineers know when they’re coming to a grade crossing,” Sauer said. “They know the name of the crossing in case the gates aren’t working they can refer to the book and notify the dispatcher.”

Through SENSE, the Great Lakes Division has also tackled crew transport issues. Sauer said that cab companies have switched from large, 15-passenger vans to mini vans in the Crestline, Ohio, area. Problems quickly arose due to overcrowding, leading to unsafe conditions.

Too many crew members inside the small van overloaded the vehicles, leading to the possibility of a tire blowout. And more crews would be out of service in the event of an accident. In addition, the crew’s luggage had to be stacked in the back of the van, obscuring the driver’s visibility.

“Now, thanks to SENSE, only one crew at a time is transported by minivan,” Sauer said. “It’s definitely a safety improvement.”

Nashville Division

Mike Wicks is System Coordinator on the Nashville Division. He and other dedicated SENSE representatives meet with crews day and night to talk about safety issues.

He said that when they notice a crew member doing something wrong, they must be reminded that not only can they get into trouble for breaking a rule, but more importantly, they can get hurt — or worse.

Continuing education regarding safety and rules is a big part of the SENSE program on the Nashville Division. SENSE trainers provide crews with classroom and field training to make sure they are always focused on safety.

Wicks said trainmen are also included in their safety efforts.

“We have a ‘T’ in BLET now, so we have a vested interest in trainmen issues,” Wicks said.

Conclusion

“The BLET is fortunate to have such a great network of dedicated members who work very hard each and every day for all employees,” said Larry James, BLET System SENSE Coordinator. “Their timely communications, documentation and input especially on the local level allow us to strive to resolve their issues in an expeditious manner. It’s a total team effort. The National Division and the BLET-CSXT General Chairmen: Don Moates, Rick Finamore, Tony Smith and Tom Roberts have also provided valuable support and assistance.”

The Division Safety Coordinators conduct a monthly call to compare notes, pass along information and assistance to other Division Coordinators that may help resolve an on-going issue on their respective territory.

Over and above normal housekeeping issues, in the past few years BLET SENSE members have been involved in various SAC-P projects with the FRA, have been very involved in taxi and van safety issues, have had input in development or changes to Operating and Safety Rules, improvement to train line-ups, most every issue associated with locomotives and locomotive safety and wayside signals just to name a few.

Additionally, an annual review of locomotive engineer decertification events is conducted in an effort to get to the root cause or any associated issues involved and work on developing safeguards to keep a similar type of event from happening to another member. •

New Auditors will assist BLET Divisions

Four part-time Auditors recently hired by the BLET National Division completed two days of training at BLET headquarters in early December.

Brothers John Bove, Roland P. Kleinsorge, Jim Thompson and Chuck Warder will work for the National Division on a part time basis to help BLET Divisions stay current with their monthly reports.

BLET Bylaws stipulate that divisions must have an audit when they change Secretary-Treasurers. The high turnover in the ST office following the Triennial Division elections prompted the need to hire the part-time assistance.

“Our new auditors will help Divisions stay current,” said Bill Walpert, BLET National Secretary-Treasurer. “Everyone knows our Division STs are not trained Certified Public Accountants. Between their family life and work on the railroad, they sometimes need help staying current with their union responsibilities.”

During their training at National Division headquar-

ters, the Auditors were trained on aspects of the BLET’s online filing of reports (BLETST). Special emphasis also was placed on a close examination of the books and records to verify the accuracy of the information filed on the LM Reports. They also were trained to determine that all government reports are correctly filed, including forms for the Department of Labor, Internal Revenue Service and Railroad Retirement Board.

“The Auditors will depend on this training when conducting audits in the field on behalf of the National Division,” Walpert said. “They will be able to assist STs who were not able to attend training workshops sponsored by the Education & Training Department.”

Training for the Auditors was provided by: NST Walpert; Dr. Elaine Reese, Director of Tax Compliance; Ken Kroeger, Special Representative & Coordinator of the BLET Education & Training Dept.; Walt Schmidt, Director of Online Service; and Bob Broka, BLET Director of Records.

Walpert said each new Auditor is assigned to a different region of the country. Brother Bove, Secretary-Treasurer of the Long Island Rail Road General Committee of Adjustment and member of Division 269 (Long Island, N.Y.), will assist Divisions in Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Brother Kleinsorge, Secretary-Treasurer of the BNSF (ATSF) General Committee of Adjustment and member of Division 298 in San Bernardino, Calif., will assist Divisions in Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Utah and Washington.

Brother Thompson, Secretary-Treasurer of the Union Pacific (Eastern District) GCofA and member of Division 115 in Cheyenne, Wyo., will assist Divisions in Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Wisconsin and Wyoming.



The four new Auditors, who will assist BLET Divisions with timely filing of reports, at their training session at National Division headquarters in early December. Seated, from left: Chuck Warder and Jim Thompson. Standing, from left: Roland Kleinsorge and John Bove.

Brother Warder, Secretary-Treasurer of BLET Division 190 in Huntington, W.Va., will assist Divisions in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia and Washington, D.C.

National Secretary-Trea-

surer Walpert said General Chairmen would be advised if the new Auditors are given an assignment on their property. He also said the Auditors are available to lend assistance with any other unit that would need help, such as a State Legislative Board or General Committee of Adjustment. •

‘A Sirius Christmas’ for BLET member in Iowa

Division 6 member David Lahner writes, distributes children’s book

David Lahner, a member of BLET Division 6 in Boone, Iowa, celebrated the holiday spirit by writing, publishing and distributing his own children’s book for Christmas.

Titled “A Sirius Christmas,” the book is about a 12 year-old-boy who goes hunting in Iowa and has a magical encounter with Santa Claus.

“It’s a heartwarming story,” Brother Lahner said.

The book gets its name from the star Sirius, which Lahner says is the brightest star in the Northern hemisphere. The book’s main character sees the star in the sky at night and, along with other groupings of stars, reminds him of the Star of Bethlehem.

“The book has Santa Claus in it, but it really conveys the true meaning of Christmas,” Lahner said.

The book is illustrated by Sarah Kudron, the daughter of BLET Division 6 member Joe Kudron. Lahner said he originally asked Brother Kudron to illustrate the book, but he deferred to his daughter.

“They both have a real talent for art and drawing,” Lahner said. “Joe is really proud of his daughter and she did a great job illustrating it.”



An illustration from the book “A Sirius Christmas” written by David Lahner, a member of BLET Division 6 in Boone, Iowa. It is illustrated by Sarah Kudron, daughter of BLET Division 6 member Joe Kudron.

Lahner didn’t write the story for money. He donated all money generated by the book’s sale to his home town school system in Sheffield, Iowa. He donated about 1,000 books to the Sheffield-Chapin Community School. All of the books sold were and the money was used to buy new playground equipment, Lahner said.

Lahner has donated countless copies to various public libraries in Iowa, primarily

along U.S. Highway 30. He most recently gave a copy to the Ericson Public Library in Boone.

Lahner children Nathan, Amy and Holly, and grandchildren Jacob and Molly “loved the book.” It is written in memory of his late father, Dale Lahner, and with love to his mother, Luella Lahner. It is also dedicated to his former teachers James Cuvelier, Richard Heimer and Hank Stoffer. •

Angel Tree tradition continues at BLET National Division



BLET National Division staff continued their annual tradition of generosity and goodwill by participating in the Salvation Army’s “Angel Tree” program. Every year, BLET employees donate gifts of toys, clothing and candy for underprivileged children in the Cleveland area. In most instances, the presents donated by the BLET staff are the only Christmas presents the children receive. The gifts are wrapped and placed under the tree in the reception area of National Division headquarters prior to pick up by Salvation Army volunteers. Dr. Elaine Reese coordinated the 2007 Angel Tree effort. As evidenced by the photo above, employees cheerfully gave to help those less fortunate.

BLET NEWS

BLET Auxiliary Update

Lending a helping hand
 Auxiliary assists at Locomotive Engineers Exposition in D.C.

By Diane Shifflett
 BLET Auxiliary Virginia State
 Legislative Representative

On November 15, 2007, my husband Danny and I had the privilege of representing the BLET Auxiliary at the 4th Annual Locomotive Engineers Exposition at Union Station in Washington, D.C. The Expo was hosted by the District of Columbia State Legislative Board (DC SLB). Herb Harris, Chairman of the DC SLB, invited the Auxiliary to participate to help spread the word about our organization’s mission and purpose. We became acquainted with Herb during the Transportation Labor’s Day of Action in May, and have been working together, along with other State Legislative Boards, to promote the rail safety and security bills currently before Congress.

The Expo provides a one-day forum where locomotive engineers and rail labor members can interact, obtaining useful information from the BLET, Amtrak, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), state agencies, and others. This year, approximately 375 were in attendance.

The invitation was too good an opportunity to pass up, and Danny, Legislative Representative for BLET Division 217, accompanied me to show his support for the work the Auxiliary does on behalf of BLET members. Since he was in a very serious accident, we understand better than most, the ordeal faced by those hurt on the job. Because of our experiences, we are in a good

position to talk with railroaders, spouses, and their families about the importance of educating ourselves before an incident occurs.

We handed out over 140 packets to fellow railroaders interested in learning more about the Auxiliary and the kind of help we can provide to them in promoting safety issues. Many of those who visited our table thanked the Auxiliary for the work we do, and others were surprised to learn we existed.

The Expo started bright and early at 6:00 a.m. and there were many opportunities to get vital information from the various Exhibitors. In addition to the Auxiliary, David Maynard, an investigator for Willard Moody & Associates discussed on the job injuries and the importance of the Federal Employers Liability Act; Brian Hontz, Deputy Regional Administrator joined his colleagues from the FRA to answer regulatory questions; Mark Robb, President of BRCF, and Ron Enos, Marketing Director for LE&CMPA provided information about the importance of job insurance; and the National Labor College talked with attendees about degrees available for union members. The expo was scheduled to last until 4:00 p.m. but because President Bush had other plans, we wrapped up around 3:00 p.m.

To allow Herb and his Board to do their jobs as hosts, Danny and I helped work the BLET’s table passing out information on issues such as dealing with harassment, event downloads, and vacation for Amtrak workers, just to name a few.

Holiday message from Auxiliary President Schneider

Dear BLET Auxiliary and BLET Brothers and Sisters:

On behalf of the BLET Auxiliary, we extend to all our BLET Brothers and Sisters our best wishes for a happy, safe, and healthy holiday season. Even though the railroad often takes you away from family and friends during the holidays, we appreciate the time we do have together. If anything, the spouses and families of railroaders understand the meaning of “flexibility.”

Special thoughts and prayers go out to all who have suffered injury or lived through tragedy. During this holiday season, we ask everyone to remember those who have lost their lives in the line of duty, especially the families of our most recent casualties: Joe Artino and Jerry Walker.

May God Bless you all.

In solidarity and fraternally,



Becky Schneider
 National President

In addition to providing first-hand information on the many issues affecting the rail industry, this year’s expo provided a special exhibit area designated in support of rail labor solidarity. Representatives from other rail labor unions participated to distribute information and talk with their Amtrak members. It was great to get together with representatives from other rail labor unions, especially Leonard Parker, Jr., Legislative Director for the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen,

and Tony Padilla, Legislative Director for the Transportation Communications Union.

We had a wonderful time, and would like to express our deepest thanks to Herb Harris for the invitation. Opportunities such as this allow us to be seen and heard, and give all railroad workers the chance to communicate with us, and to encourage more families to get involved.

Working together, we can all make a difference. •

Summary Annual Report for
 Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen
 Disability and Welfare Benefit Trust Fund

This is a summary of the annual report for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Disability and Welfare Benefit Trust Fund, 30-0262584/501, for 01/01/2006 through 12/31/2006. The annual report has been filed with the Employee Benefits Security Administration as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

The plan has a contract with Metropolitan Life Insurance Company to pay certain temporary disability claims incurred under the terms of the plan. The total premiums paid for the plan year ending 12/31/2006 were \$6,653,459.

The value of plan assets, after subtracting liabilities of the plan, was \$3,233,305 as of 12/31/2006, compared to \$2,098,517 as of 01/01/2006. During the plan year the plan experienced an increase in its net assets of \$1,134,788. This increase includes unrealized appreciation or depreciation in the value of plan assets; that is, the difference between the value of the plan’s assets at the end of the year and the value of the assets at the beginning of the year or the cost of assets acquired during the year. The plan had total income of \$8,031,474, including employer contributions of \$7,724,000 and earnings from investments of \$307,474. Plan expenses were \$6,896,686. These expenses included \$135,946 in administrative expenses and \$6,760,740 in benefits paid to participants and beneficiaries.

Your Rights to Additional Information

You have the right to receive a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, on request. The items listed below are included in that report:

- 1. An accountant’s report;
- 2. Financial information, and information on payments to service providers;
- 3. Assets held for investment;
- 4. Transactions in excess of 5% of plan assets; and
- 5. Insurance information, including sales commissions paid by insurance carriers.

To obtain a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, write or call the office of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Disability and Welfare Benefit Trust Fund, who is Plan Administrator, at 1370 Ontario Street, Standard Building Mezzanine, Cleveland, OH, 44113-1702, (216) 241-2630. The charge to cover copying costs will be \$2.75 for the full annual report, or \$0.25 per page for any part thereof.

You also have the right to receive from the plan administrator, on request and at no charge, a statement of the assets and liabilities of the plan and accompanying notes, if any, or a statement of income and expenses of the plan and accompanying notes, if any, or both. If you request a copy of the full annual report from the plan administrator, these two statements and accompanying notes, if any, will be included as part of that report. The charge to cover copying costs given above does not include a charge for copying of these portions of the report because these portions are furnished without charge.

You also have the legally protected right to examine the annual report at the main office of the plan at 1370 Ontario Street, Standard Building Mezzanine, Cleveland, OH, 44113-1702 and at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington DC, or obtain a copy from the U.S. Department of Labor upon payment of copying costs. Requests to the Department should be addressed to: Public Disclosure Room, Room N-1513, Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington DC 20210. •

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Local Chairmen complete advanced training

Plans for 2008 workshops will be announced at www.ble-t.org

Several BLET members recently completed an Advanced Local Chairman Workshop sponsored by the BLET Education & Training Department. The workshop was at the National Labor College/George Meany Center in Silver Spring, Md., from November 11-16.

This workshop was one day longer than the regular Local Chairman's workshop and went into greater detail on writing, claims handling, and investigations. Among other assignments, the students were given a topic to research and report back to the class. Also, there were sessions on Duty of Fair Representation (DFR) and the Railway Labor Act (RLA). Workshop attendees also wrote several appeal letters for cases that were studied in class. A highlight of the workshop was when attendees participated in a simulated disciplinary hearing.

Upon successful completion of the course, attendees qualified for a \$107 per day stipend from the North American Railway Foundation. The stipends will be paid directly to the Secretary-Treasurers of the respective divisions.

Similar workshops are planned for 2008. Dates and locations for next year are yet to be determined, but please visit the BLET website, www.ble-t.org, for details. When meetings are finalized for next year, details will be announced on the BLET website.



Attendees are pictured here. Front row, from left:: Don Hill, LC Div. 31, UP Northern Region; David Bowen, Vice General Chairman CSX Western Lines; Teresa Bryant, LC Div. 30, CSXT Western Lines; Rick Radek, Vice President & Director of Arbitration; William Walpert, NST & Director of Education & Training; and Ken Kroeger, Coordinator of Education & Training and Special Representative.

Second row, from left: Ben Blissett, Coordinator, BLET Safety Task Force; Steven Leyshon, LC Div. 766, UP Western Region; Alan Holdcraft, LC Div. 776, BNSF Santa Fe; James Thomas, LC Div. 87, CP(D&H) DH/ST; and Doug Davidson, Assistant Director of Arbitration / Labor Member – National Railroad Adjustment Board.

Third row, from left: Richard Crow, LC Div. 404, UP Northern Region; Bruce Carlson, LC Div. 290, BNSF/MRL; Garry Tutor, LC Div. 249, BNSF ATSF; Mark Birch, Div. 255, NS Northern Lines; and Jeremy McFather, LC Div. 446, BNSF Santa Fe.

STs complete Education & Training workshop

Approximately 35 BLET Secretary-Treasurers completed a four-day Education & Training Department workshop in Cleveland, Ohio, from December 2-5, 2007.

First row, from left: David Torgerson, MT SLB S/T; Jeff Hiiivala, S/T Div 27; Roger Adams, S/T Div 124; James Rosas, UP SR GCA S/T; Rob Armstrong, OR SLB S/T; Dave Cook, S/T Div 165; Chad Colucci, S/T Div 292; Ken Kroeger, Coordinator of Education & Training & Special Representative; Richard Conner, S/T Division 578; William Walpert, NST & Director of Education and Training; Walt Schmidt, Webmaster; Sue Caruso; Thomas Caruso, S/T Div 335.

Second row, from left: Gregory Lund, President Div 421; Thomas Brewer, S/T Div 103; Norman Mc Sween, S/T Div 521; Eddie Perez, S/T KCS Tex-Mex; Scott Schrader, Alternate S/T Div 537; Gerry Pack, S/T Div 316; William Gould, S/T Div 213; Royce Chambers, S/T Div 727.

Third row, from left: Edward Travis III, S/T Div 421; Justin Sterling, S/T Division 3; David Lewis, S/T Div 886; William Brooks, S/T Div 426

Last, from left: Mark Anderson, Minn. SLB S/T; Phillip Fullerton, S/T Div 336; Chris Noren, S/T Div 92; Bruce, Galloway, S/T Div 286; Chad Matthews, S/T Div 370; John Chaliff, S/T Div 199; Pedro Mendoza, S/T Div 129.



BLET NEWS

A message from Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa

America doesn't need another so-called 'free trade agreement'

George Washington, protectionist, made it a point to wear an American-made suit to his first inauguration.

The father of our country understood that America has to protect its ability to make things important to Americans. Today, that means things like steel. Brake drums. Airplane parts. Computer chips. Locomotive engines. Safe toys. Food that doesn't kill us.

What America doesn't need right now is another so-called "free-trade agreement" that kills that ability.

Sadly, President Bush recently signed the latest NAFTA-style trade deal with Peru. More deals — with Colombia, Panama and South Korea — are in the pipeline.

American workers don't want these deals. They've seen through the false promises that "free trade" will create more exports, better jobs and better wages. Instead, NAFTA, CAFTA and PNTR brought trade deficits, shuttered factories, poisoned toothpaste and lead toys.

Free traders like to say labor unions are backward-looking protectionists. They love to dust off the old myth that Sen. Reed Smoot and Rep. Willis Hawley caused the Great Depression by passing the protectionist Smoot-Hawley Act.

What free-traders never tell you is that Smoot-Hawley became law in 1930, eight months after the Great Depression started. They don't tell you that Franklin Roosevelt's "free trade agreements" with 14 countries didn't do anything to help the American economy.

There's a reason free-traders always end up shouting "protectionist." They don't want you to hear that giant sucking sound from south of the border.

We heard that sucking sound in Cleveland, Ohio, where the Mr. Coffee plant shut down and moved to Mexico, throwing 400 Teamsters out of work.

We heard it in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where the Circle D plant packed up and left, and in Long Island City, N.Y., where the Swingline Stapler plant no longer employs hundreds of our members.

Where did those factories go? To Mexico, where they now sit in the slums of their own making.

Those slums are filled with poor Mexican farmers, wiped out when U.S. agribusiness flooded Mexico with cheap, subsidized grain. Many Mexican farmers immigrated to the U.S. In the first year after NAFTA took effect, 80,000 people were arrested in Arizona alone for trying to enter the country illegally, a 53 percent increase over the previous year.

American workers were promised something different. They were promised that illegal immigration would subside. They were promised that America would get richer by helping Mexico grow into a strong trading partner.

Those promises never made any sense. This is a world where capital circles the globe in seconds and assembly lines are shipped across borders in



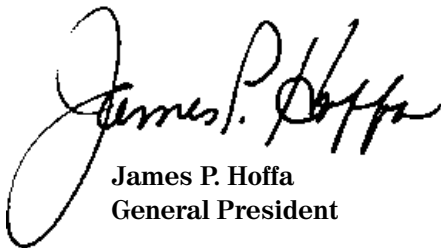
days. Eliminating trade barriers between a developed country and an undeveloped country can't possibly result in the free-traders' fantasy, where each country concentrates on what it makes best in the most efficient way.

Of course, these deals aren't just about tearing down trade barriers.

NAFTA was more about protecting foreign investment and giving U.S. corporations access to cheap Mexican labor. NAFTA was negotiated by a self-serving political elite in Mexico that feared the country was drowning in debt and needed to keep attracting foreign investment.

Ordinary Mexicans didn't agree to the deal — just as ordinary Peruvians didn't agree to the latest version of NAFTA.

Ordinary Americans aren't too happy about it either. Anyone who aspires to the office that George Washington once held had best understand that.



James P. Hoffa
General President

DECEMBER 2007 CALENDAR & EVENTS

JANUARY 27-30, 2008... Education & Training Dept. Workshop for LM-2 GCA Sec.-Treas.
The BLET Education and Training Department will conduct a workshop for all Secretary-Treasurers who file an LM-2 Report for their General Committee of Adjustment or Division. The workshop will be held in Madison, Wisc., at the School for Workers, University of Wisconsin-Extension, Pyle Center. The class will start at 7 p.m. on Sunday, January 27, and conclude at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, January 30. During the four-day session, GCA S-Ts will review LM-2 reporting, membership reporting, and filing reporting requirements, bond requirements, computer applications, and changes for 2008. To register, visit <http://www.ble-t.org/gcast>, or call Ken Kroeger, Coordinator of the Education & Training Department, (216) 272-0986.

JUNE 15-19, 2008... 81st Annual Southeastern Meeting Association, Montgomery, Ala.
Chairman Jason Popwell of BLET Division 495 will host the 81st annual SMA at the Embassy Suites in Montgomery, Ala. Details to come soon!

JULY 6-10, 2008... 70th Annual Eastern Union Meeting Association, Huron, Ohio
Arrangements Chairman Rodney Cutlip is planning the 2008 EUMA at Sawmill Creek Resort, which is a 45-minute drive east of BLET National Division headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio. Details to come!

AUGUST 17-20, 2008... 68th International Western Convention, San Luis Obispo, Calif.
Chairman Mike Galvani hosts the 2008 IWC at the Embassy Suites Hotel-San Luis Obispo. Details on More details to come soon!

SEPTEMBER 17-20, 2008... 73rd Southwestern Convention Meeting, St. Louis, Mo.
Chairman David Grimes and the members of Division 42 host the 2008 SWCM at the St. Louis Hilton at the Ballpark (One South Broadway, St. Louis, Mo.). More details to come!

Advisory Board October Activity

In accordance with the BLET Bylaws, summaries of BLET Advisory Board members' activities are published monthly:

National President Don M. Hahs—National Division office: General supervision of BLET activities; General office duties; Div. 488 mtg., Grand Junction, Colo.; NS-NW&LE GCA interim mtg., Cleveland; SWCM, Shreveport, La.; Mtg. w/ EWR, WCW, HV, re: pension adjustments, Cleveland; Conference call, FMLA, Cleveland.
First Vice-President & Alternate President Edward W. Rodziewicz—Assisted President in general operation of National Division Office; Vice President assignments; Organizing department; Shortline department; Passenger department; Various correspondence & phone calls; U.S.-Mexico cross border committee, NS-W&LE interim mtg.; Southwestern Convention Meeting, Shreveport.
National Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walpert—General supervision of BLET financial, record depts.; ND office; BLET Education & Training Dept.; Internal Organizing, Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; Safety Task Force; Meetings with vendors and financial institutions; Standard Building operations oversight; SWCM, Shreveport, La.; Local Chairman's Workshop, National Labor college, Silver Spring, Md.
Vice-President Paul T. Sorrow—Assigned to CSX, NS and GTW general committees of adjustment; Assist CSX-Northern Lines at mtg. w/ Division 937 and CSXT-Chicago Division officers; Assist Eastern Lines with various issues, including mtg. w/ Labor Relations; Assisted Western Lines with various issues, including but not limited to dispute resolution; Assisted Grand Trunk GCA with issues as called upon by General Chairman; Mtg. w/ President Hahs; General office duties, work on PLB cases, correspondence, telephone calls.
Vice-President Richard K. Radek—ND Office; BLET Decertification Helpline services; Director of Arbitration Dept; National Railroad Adjustment Board (NRAB); Illinois Central; Wisconsin Central; Indiana Harbor Belt; METRA; Belt Rwy. of Chicago; Chicago Central & Pacific; Iowa, Chicago & Eastern; URR arbitration consultation w/ VP Ruef & GC Linn, re: Remote control dispute, Cleveland; NS-North GCA Interim mtg.; Mock arbitration, training classes, NS-North; SWCM, Shreveport, La.; Local Chairman's Workshop; Amtrak deposition at Quarry-Harrow, re: Civil case involving engineer, Cleveland; CN-WC implementing agreement, Chicago, re: DWP-DMIR-WC coordination; Sec. 4, NY Dock mtgs., DMIR/DWP, Homewood, Ill.; CN-WC town hall mtgs., Green Bay and Kaukauna, Wisc.; Local Chairman's Training, Silver Spring, Md.; Semi-annual L/M cmte. mtgs., CN-IC, Des Plaines, Ill., Special mtg of GCA, EI&E, Highland, Ind., re: CN acquisition, negotiations, pending arbitration; PART 240.409 dockets this month: EQAL 00-84 (UP), EQAL 05-71 (CSX), as yet un-docketed, UP.
Vice-President Dale McPherson — CP Rail; Port. Term. RR; Longview Portland & Northern; Longview Switching Co.; Indiana RR; W&LE RR; Utah Railroad; UP Eastern Dist.; UP former CNW; DM&IR RR; Portland & Western RR; Great Western RR; Appalachian & Ohio RR; Public Law Boards 5604, 5681, 5721, 6040, 6281, 6449, 6558, 6589; SBA 585; UP work/rest projects; RSAC positive train control cmte.; National wage/rules; DMIR contract negotiations, Duluth, Minn.; Midwest Rail Craft Scholarship event, Lincoln, Neb.; Joint mtg. of Divisions 98 and 621, Lincoln, Neb.; Bereavement leave; Vacation; General office duties, correspondence, telephone.
Vice-President Merle W. Geiger Jr.—Assigned to: BLET Trainmen's Department; Kansas City Southern; Gateway Western; Midsouth Rail; Southrail; Texas-Mexican Rwy.; Springfield Terminal, Delaware & Hudson; Indiana & Ohio RR; Louisville & Indiana RR; St. Lawrence & Atlantic RR; Indiana Southern RR; Montreal, Maine and Atlantic RR; Contract mtgs. w/ GC Twombly and D&H (CP), Binghamton, N.Y.; SWCM mtg., Shreveport, La.; Executive session of PLB No. 6993 (MS/KCS); Mtg. w/ Shortline Director J.D. Mullen, Fort Worth; Advisory Board conference call; Correspondence, research, general office duties.
Vice-President Stephen D. Speagle—Assigned to Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Montana Rail Link, Pacific Harbor Line, Missouri & Northern Arkansas (M&NA), National Wage/Rule Committee; BNSF terminal consolidation mtgs. and attendance arbitration mtgs., Fort Worth; SWCM, Shreveport, La.; Wabash Hospital mtgs., Decatur; MRL mtgs., Missoula, Mont.; Retiree's health plan trust mtg., Decatur; Mtg. w/ all BNSF General Chairmen, Oklahoma City.
Vice-President E.L. "Lee" Pruitt — Assisted general chairmen & members of: UP-Western Lines; UP-Western Region; UP-Central Region; UP-Southern Region; UP-Tacoma Belt; New York Dock negotiations, assisting GC Rightnowar, Kansas City; Assisting GC Donnigan, Hannoh, Core, Rightnowar, re: alternative compensation, Omaha, Neb.; BLET Advisory Board mtg., Kansas City; Assisting President Hahs & GC Rightnowar, Division jurisdiction dispute, Divs. 442 and 42, Kansas City.
Vice-President & National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman — Assigned to BLET Washington, DC office; BLET Security Officer; General Office Duties, telephone, correspondence; Coordinate content of NLO website; Coordinated PAC contributions; Oklahoma State Legislative Board mtg., Oklahoma city; Coordinated Lobbying Days for BLET & Auxiliary members on Capitol Hill for S. 1889 and H.R. 2095, making over 80 office visits; Tennessee State Legislative Board mtg., Knoxville, Tenn.; Change to Win convention, Chicago; Minnesota State Legislative Board mtg., Minneapolis; Attended and participated in panel discussion at Rail Trends conference, New York City; SWCM, Shreveport; Testified before House Transportation & Infrastructure Cmte. regarding harassment & intimidation of injured rail workers; Attended full RSAC mtg.
Vice-President Marcus J. Ruef — Assigned to Amtrak Long Island Railroad; Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority; New Jersey Transit; Port Authority Trans Hudson; Norfolk Southern (Northern Lines/W&LE); Norfolk Southern (Eastern Lines); Norfolk Southern (Southern Lines); Union Railroad (URR); Allegheny Ludlum Steel Co.; and Birmingham Southern; URR mtg. in Cleveland w/ VP Radek and GC Linn, re: Art. 10 submission; NS/WLE GCA midterm mtg., Cleveland; Assist GC Browning, Birm. So.; Assisted LIRR, NS, WLE and A-L GCAs; Visit Div. 217, Elkton, Va.; Finalized NS agreement brochure w/ GC Davis and agreement endorsement letter, NS (all); Assisted NS(S) VGC Thompson with upcoming discipline arbitrations; Researched 49 CFR 236 for upcoming SEPTA case; A-L Steel negotiations, Brackenridge, Pa.; URR conference to discuss SPD, Prep Time and COLA disputes, Monroeville, Pa.; Assist with Education & Training/ Arb. Dept. Local Chairman Workshop, National Labor College, Silver Spring, Md.; LIRR Montauk Branch, LIRR retirement dinner, Babylon & Hicksville, N.Y.; PATH agreement codification mtg., Newark; Div. 444 mtg., NS-WLE, St. Louis.



LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND TRAINMEN NEWS

Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen

A Division of the Rail Conference, International Brotherhood of Teamsters

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