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# Locomotive

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## Sorrow assumes Presidency, becoming 22nd chief of BLET

**P**aul T. Sorrow became the 22nd Chief Executive of the oldest rail labor union in North America concurrent with the resignation of Edward W. Rodziewicz as BLET National President on November 13. Rodziewicz, who had been on a leave of absence since October 15, also resigned as President of the Teamsters Rail Conference and intends to retire.

Upon assuming office, President Sorrow said "I look forward to serving the

BLET membership as National President. Our Advisory Board and our staff, who are second to none in their ability and dedication, make for one heck of a team, and we are well prepared to face the challenges that lie ahead." President Sorrow also thanked former President Rodziewicz for his service to the Brotherhood.

Sorrow was elevated to the Presidency from the BLET's second highest office, to which he was elected on April 8, 2008. Prior to becoming First Vice President, Sorrow served for nearly 17 years as a

Vice President, including a stint as Chief of Staff at the BLET National Division headquarters for several years during the mid 1990s. Before being elected to national office, Sorrow served for six years as Chairman of the CSX Transportation Eastern Lines General Committee of Adjustment.

President Sorrow's railroad career began in 1965, with the Seaboard Air Line Railroad. One year to the day after he went firing for the railroad, he earned his promotion to locomotive engineer in 1966.

He joined the BLE in 1972, and served as local chairman of his Abbeville, S.C. local division from 1979-83. In 1983, he was elected to the office of Vice General Chairman for the Eastern Lines GCA.

The BLET Advisory Board will be convened in Cleveland on December 17 to fill the vacant office of First Vice President. @@

SEE ALSO

PRESIDENT SORROW'S MESSAGE  
TO ALL BLET MEMBERS. PG 2

“OUR ADVISORY BOARD AND OUR STAFF, WHO ARE SECOND TO NONE IN THEIR ABILITY AND DEDICATION, MAKE FOR ONE HECK OF A TEAM, AND WE ARE WELL PREPARED TO FACE THE CHALLENGES THAT LIE AHEAD.”

— PAUL T. SORROW



## Let it Snow

**This photo of a New England Central train** by frequent BLET contributor Gary Knapp was recently judged to be one of the 100 greatest railroad photos of all time by the editors of Trains Magazine. The photo was published in a special collector's edition of Trains published in late 2008.

"What a great honor to be included amongst the famed railroad photographers 'best photos' to be enjoyed within this book," Knapp said.

The photo was shot in South Royalton, Vt., on Jan. 20, 2007.

"I was all set-up for this photo, and it was so quiet I heard (train number)

324 blowing for crossings up in Randolph, then Bethel," he explained. "Then Mother Nature smiled and silently started the snow. It quickly covered the ground and produced my favorite conditions — at night in the winter, with reasonable temperatures and heavy snow falling." @@



### Brotherhood Elections

Cole Davis reelected at NS; Vince Verna in Arizona. **pg 3**

### NMB Reform

BLET, Teamsters fighting to update Mediation Board rules. **pg 5**

### North American Railway Foundation

NARF continues giving back to Rail Labor. **pg 6**





## BLET PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## IT'S ALL ABOUT TEAMWORK!

**B**rothers and Sisters, it is a distinct honor and a special privilege for me to serve as your National President. While I am not at all happy over the conditions surrounding my elevation to President, I am fully prepared to do everything within my abilities to lead this great Organization forward. To this end I solicit your understanding, your support and – most of all – your prayers.

We should never overlook or forget the fact that we are all in this together. This is not my Union nor does it belong to any individual or group of individuals. It is our Union and we are all entrusted with a responsibility to act in its best interest. We can do nothing and I suppose that the Organization will continue to exist as an institution, although an ineffective one. Or we can work together in solidarity, always striving to cultivate a positive outlook and grow the BLET into a stronger and more effective Labor Union that will better serve the needs of our members. My Presidency

**“This is our union and we are  
all entrusted with a responsibility  
to act in its best interest”**

will be about charting this second course as we prepare to celebrate our 150th Anniversary in 2013.

Any successful organization, whether it be an army, a sports team or our very own Brotherhood, is successful in direct proportion to its ability to work together. Teamwork will be the cornerstone of this administration. If we all pull together in the same direction there are no limits to what we can achieve, and there is no better time to start than right here and now! Attaining our goals will require hard work and effort, but such hard work and effort must be channeled into a single, positive direction.

We have a long and great history that we are all proud of, and from which we

can draw upon for strength when needed. But we can't focus on the past. While we can learn from the lessons of the past, we must focus on the present and what lies ahead of us in the future. As they say change is the only thing that is constant, and unless we constantly prepare for such change there is no way we can succeed in shaping it to our liking or benefit.

To be successful we must do right things in the right way and at the right time. Therefore I am calling on each and every BLET Member to join with me in a new and positive effort to revitalize our Union. Placing this Union in the hands of the membership doesn't require any sweeping change or large sacrifice on anyone's part. All it requires

is more involvement and keeping in mind that – like any team effort – neither democracy nor unionism is a spectator sport. Return the surveys, cast your vote in the ratification process and elections, know and defend your agreement, and actively participate in your Division. This is how you make your voice heard in the Union, and this is the most effecting way of telling us what you want and how you feel. Moreover, it gives you control over your future and the progress we will make in the months and years ahead.

I will be using this space to communicate with you on a regular basis during my Presidency. I will share with you my vision for our great Brotherhood and hope to engage you in a dialogue that moves our Union forward to a better tomorrow.

**PAUL SORROW**

## BLET, UTU challenge new HOS interpretations

**T**he Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 made the first significant amendments to hours of service laws in nearly 40 years. In response, the Federal Railroad Administration issued an interim statement of agency policy and interpretation, which poses significant problems for train and engine service employees with regard to employee safety and earnings.

The BLET and the UTU now have jointly asked the FRA to reconsider portions of their interim statement of agency policy and interpretation. The new rules would impact more than 85,000 train and engine service employees who are members of the BLET and UTU.

Significantly, the BLET and the UTU are asking the FRA to revisit its interpretation of how to determine whether an employee has received the statutorily required amount of off-duty time as prescribed by the Rail Service Improvement Act (RSIA).

The RSIA amended the statutory off-duty period by eliminating the option of eight consecutive off-duty hours, and required that the minimum statutory off-duty period be 10 consecutive hours in all cases (except in intercity passenger and commuter service).

The BLET and UTU assert that, “on its face, this change did nothing to force FRA to change is longstanding interpretation of how sufficient off-duty time is determined.”

Under the existing FRA method, a railroad is required to look back 24 hours at the employee's on duty time and determine if the employee had 10 hours of undisturbed rest in that window. If the answer is ‘yes,’ then the employee can work a full 12 hours. That approach is called the “fresh start look back” analysis.

But the FRA, in its interim statement of agency policy and interpretation, propose to scrap the “fresh start look back”



analysis and substitute what is called a “continuous look back” analysis.”

A “continuous look back” analysis would require the railroads to look back at every moment during a duty tour to determine if the employee has had 10 consecutive hours of undisturbed rest in the 24 hours prior to that particular moment.

This new “continuous look back” approach would prohibit an employee from working the full 12 hours that are permitted by the law if they were to have more than a two hour call.

The FRA's proposed “continuous look back” approach not only adversely impacts an employee's earnings, but interferes with a railroad's need to maximize employee productivity.

In fact, the “continuous look back” approach also could result in more employees being forced to remain at away-terminal locations rather than returning home, which adversely impacts family life and imposes greater costs on a railroad.

For example, if an employee has a three

hour call — and this is generally of necessity in large metropolitan areas where commute times are long — the employee could only work 11 hours, because when the first minute of the 12th hour arrives, the railroad could not look back 24 hours and find 10 consecutive hours undisturbed hours off duty. (11 work + 3 hour call + 10 hours rest = 24 hours) Thus, the longer the call time, the less work the employee can legally perform.

For assignments with an interim period of rest, the most an employee could ever work is 10 hours. For an unassigned (extra board) employee who is working on call, the call time further reduces the amount of work time proportionally. If they get the typical two hour call the interim period of release is rendered moot.

The better solution would be to require a 10-hour call, which would permit 12-hour on-duty shifts, said the BLET and the UTU. “It is obvious that an employee who is aware that they will be required to report for work in 10 hours is best able to schedule their rest so that

they arrive at work in the most alert condition possible.

“The best medical evidence available establishes what the labor organizations have known for years: that employees will be most alert just after they wake up,” the BLET and the UTU told the FRA. “We contend that an employee who sleeps or naps as close to their reporting time as possible, within reason, is the best rested employee and therefore the safest.”

In the joint statement signed by BLET National President Paul Sorrow and UTU International President Mike Futhey, the FRA is asked to “reaffirm the long-standing ‘fresh start look back’ interpretation, which has served both safety and the industry well, and decline to adopt the proposed ‘continuous look back.’” @@

**TO READ THE JOINT BLET/UTU  
SUBMISSION TO THE FRA,  
ON THE LINK, BELOW:**  
[HTTP://WWW.BLE-T.ORG/PR/PDF/  
CONTINUOUSLOOKBACK.PDF](http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/continuouslookback.pdf)





## ELECTION 2009

## Cole Davis reelected Norfolk Southern general chairman

Cole W. Davis was reelected to his third term as General Chairman of the BLET's Norfolk Southern-Northern Lines General Committee of Adjustment at quadrennial meetings in Cleveland on September 30-October 2.

Brother Davis is a member of BLET Division 86 in Moberly, Mo. He first joined the BLET on January 1, 1984. This is his second full term as General Chairman, winning elections in 2005 and 2009. He served a partial term after 2001.

First Vice-Chairman Bob Linsey was reelected by acclamation, as was Secretary-Treasurer Jerry Elmore. This is the third full term on the General Committee for Brother Linsey, who first began serving the BLET as a Local Chairman in 1986. Also reelected by acclamation was Vice General Chairman Stephen Fogle, Division 292, who represents members on the Wheeling & Lake Erie property.

Also elected were: 2nd Vice Chairman Rodney Cutlip, Division 385; 3rd Vice Chairman Ron Couch, Division 83; 4th Vice Chairman Dewayne Dehart, Division 548; and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Brian Mills, Division 273.

Thirty-three Local Chairmen were as session representing the various Divisions and Local Committees of Adjustment on the Norfolk Southern-Northern Lines GCofA.

Numerous BLET National Division officers were in attendance, including: National President Paul Sorrow; National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert; Vice President & National Legislative Representative John Tolman; National Vice President Dennis Pierce; National Vice President and Arbitration Direc-



**Front row (kneeling, from left):** Pat Maher, Div. 607; Steve Fogle, Div. 292; John Lemmert, Div. 292; Rudy Bonney, Div. 2; Mark Czup, Div. 260; Jim Murray, Div. 735; and Mike Price, Div. 641. **Second row:** Brian Mills, Div. 273; Dewayne Dehart, Div. 548; Rodney Cutlip, Div. 385; General Chairman Cole Davis, Div. 86; First Vice Chairman Bob Linsey, Div. 659; Ron Couch, Div. 832; Jerry Elmore, Div. 120; and Kathy Hellensmith, GCA Office Manager. **Third row:** Jason Shannon, Div. 86; Ralph Schall, Div. 1; Jody Thomas, Div. 155; Jack Russell, Div. 144; Troy Parkhurst, Div. 155; Chuck Gardner, Div. 54; Rick Munoz, Div. 537; Bob Salyers, Div. 590; and Gary Rowland, Div. 306. **Fourth row:** Mark Birch, Div. 255; John Hill, Div. 565; Tom Vanderlee, Div. 551; Jim Kresse, Div. 155; Chris Denoyer, Div. 354; Brian Davis, Div. 234; and Jim Hershberger, Div. 348. **Fifth row:** Randy Fitzgerald, Div. 302; Carlos Lizarraga, Div. 106; Kevin Barker, Div. 106; Darnion Wilson, Div. 537; Lonney Schindley, Div. 447; and Terry Rooks, Div. 537.

tor Marcus Ruef; and National Vice President Willard Knight.

Also in attendance were: General Chairman Jim Louis, Conrail SAA/CSX Northern District; General Chairman Rick Finamore, CSX Northern Lines; General Chairman Kevin Peek,

Norfolk Southern-Eastern Lines; 1st Vice Chairman Bill Thompson, Norfolk Southern-Southern Lines; and Ohio State Legislative Board Chairman Tim Hanely. Ken Kroeger, Coordinator of the BLET Education and Training Department and Special Represen-

tative, and Dan Cook, BLET Director of Benefits, were also in attendance.

Brother Doug Davidson, BLET Assistant Arbitration Director, worked with Vice President Ruef to conduct a Section 3 Arbitration workshop for the delegates.

Retired General Chairmen Larry Sykes and Joe Frailey were also in attendance. "I appreciate all those who attended," said Brother Davis.

Representatives from railroad management also attended the meeting, including: Joseph Burley, Director of Human Resources, Wheeling & Lake Erie; Steve Budzina, Vice President of Labor Relations, Norfolk Southern; Mark Manion, Executive Vice President & Vice President of Operations, NS; John P. Rathbone, Executive Vice President, Administration, NS; and Donald Seale, Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing Officers.

"I thank the outgoing officers and look forward to working with the incoming officers on our Executive Committee," Brother Davis said.

Also in attendance were: Michael Burns and Paul Nowakowski of Merryl Lynch; Woody Taylor, who gave a presentation of the Short Term Disability Plan; and Carol Sincebaugh of the Wabash Hospital Association.

The BLET's Norfolk Southern-Northern Lines General Committee of Adjustment represents more than 2,600 members from 30 different BLET Divisions. The membership consists primarily of locomotive engineers and trainmen on the Norfolk Southern and Wheeling & Lake Erie railroads who live and work in Ohio, Indiana, New York, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. ©©

## Vince Verna elected Arizona Legislative Board Chairman

Vince Verna was elected by acclamation to serve as Chairman of the Arizona State Legislative Board during Triennial Meetings on October 5.

Brother Verna is Local Chairman of BLET Division 28 (Tucson, Ariz.). He joined the Brotherhood of August 1, 1995.

"I would like to thank our Board for allowing me continue to represent the members in our state on legislative and regulatory issues related to safety," Brother Verna said.

Also during the meeting, Nick Johnson was elected Vice Chairman and Steve Whitman was reelected by acclamation to the office of Secretary-Treasurer. Brothers Johnson and Whitman are both members of BLET Division 28.

The following Legislative Representatives were in attendance as delegates: Dick Kolomitz, Division 134 (BNSF, Winslow, Ariz.); Shawn Turley, Division 647 (Phoenix, Ariz., BNSF); and Kevin Onembo, Division 123 (Phoenix, UP).

The meeting was well-attended by several BLET officers, including: Vice President & National Legislative Representative John Tolman; California State Legislative Board Chairman Tim Smith; North Dakota State Board Chairman Mike



**From left:** Steve Whitman, Secretary-Treasurer (Div. 28, Tucson, Ariz.); Kevin Onembo, Division 123 (Phoenix, UP); Arizona Congressman Ed Pastor; Sereena Hogan, BLET Auxiliary VP and National Legislative Representative; Vince Verna, Chairman of the Arizona State Legislative Board (Div. 28, Tucson, Ariz.); Dick Kolomitz, Div. 134 (BNSF, Winslow, Ariz.); Shawn M. Turley, Div. 647 (Phoenix, Ariz., BNSF); and Nick Johnson, Vice Chairman of the Arizona State Legislative Board (Div. 28, Tucson, Ariz.).

Muscha; Union Pacific (Western Lines) General Chairman Bill Hannah; BLET Special Representative Ken Kroeger; and BLET Auxiliary National Legislative Representative Sereena Hogan.

U.S. Congressman Ed Pastor from Arizona's 4th District addressed the attendees.

"On behalf of our board, I want to thank

all of the great guests we had at the meeting for taking time out of their busy schedules," Brother Verna said. "Their contributions helped make our meeting a productive and educational one. I think our members have a lot to be proud of in their Legislative Representatives in Arizona."

In January of 2008, Brother Verna was serving the Board as Vice Chairman when

he was promoted to the Chairman's job following the resignation of Brother Rob Svob, who resigned to prepare for retirement. Following Verna's promotion, Brother Johnson elected to fill the Vice Chairman's job.

The BLET's Arizona State Legislative Board represents more than 550 members. ©©



# BLET FELA Directory

As of November 13, 2009



Our union has designated attorneys who are qualified to serve as counsel for BLET members in accordance with the Federal Employers' Liability Act (FELA) governing workplace accidents. In the event of an injury or death and before reaching any settlement with a railroad, members or surviving families should contact an attorney listed to get

competent advice concerning their legal rights under the FELA. In addition, if you or any members of your family have questions concerning medical malpractice, product liability or other types of injury cases, please don't hesitate to contact one of these law firms for a consultation concerning your rights and remedies. @@



Photos: International Brotherhood of Teamsters

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# BLET, Teamsters support reform to National Mediation Board voting process

**T**eamsters General President Jim Hoffa applauded the National Mediation Board's proposal to reform the voting process for union elections at airlines and railroads.

The NMB is proposing that a union be certified if a majority of the employees who vote support it.

The rule now requires a majority of all airline or rail workers to vote in favor of union representation to be certified as a union.

"This reform lets workers choose a union the same way they choose the president of the United States," Hoffa said. "Whichever side gets the most votes, wins."

"This reform brings union elections up to modern standards of democratic election law. It gives workers the right to sit out an election if they choose, just as they can sit out the presidential election. They currently don't have that right because sitting out an election is the same as a "no" vote.

"Anyone who's been involved in an organizing campaign at a railroad or an airline knows that the deck is stacked against workers who want to form a union," Hoffa said. "The current voting process is an obstacle that was deliberately created to discourage workers from exercising their right to form a union."

The NMB is a federal agency created in 1934 under the Railway Labor Act to oversee National Mediation Board, the federal agency established in 1934 under



Photo: iStock

## >> FEDERAL EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY ACT (FELA)

# What you should know about your spouse's rights to stop railroad harassment

An important message to the spouses of all railroad workers

**Y**ou are no doubt aware of the harassment, intimidation and threats made by railroad supervisors against employees who have been injured; who have filed an injury report; who have sought medical attention; or who have reported unsafe tools, equipment, or conditions. Many of your spouses have been victims in the past of this harassment and intimidation. Your spouses may have been removed from duty for a period of time or even fired for exercising their legal rights. Individuals have been reluctant to speak up "on the record" concerning safety violations or unfair treatment for fear of being fired, disciplined or otherwise being retaliated against by the railroad. Now, Federal law provides railroad workers with tangible legal protections and remedies for certain types of harassment and retaliation.

### What types of activities does the Statute protect?

The legislation was passed in August 2007. It provides specific Whistle-Blower protections for railroad workers pursuant to Title 49 U.S.C. Section 20109. The law provides that a railroad may not discharge, demote, suspend, reprimand, or in any other way discriminate against an employee for assisting in any investigation or providing information as outlined in Section 20109.

This protection extends to

any railroad worker providing information to a supervisor or other person who has the authority to investigate, discover, or stop the conduct in question. The federal protection also extends to a worker who refuses to violate, or who refuses to help violate, a railroad safety requirement.

Most significantly, this law also protects workers who report a work-related illness or injury or, taking it a step further, file a lawsuit for personal injuries pursuant to the Federal Employers' Liability Act, or agrees to testify in such a suit. Finally, the new protections also apply when a worker refuses to work in what he or she believes to be a hazardous situation or reports that hazardous condition.

### What are your legal rights if your spouse has been a victim of railroad harassment?

If an employee believes that his or her rights pursuant to this new law have been violated or that they have been a victim of railroad harassment and intimidation, there is a procedural requirement that first must be met. Before allowing a suit to be filed, the law requires that a complaint be filed with the Secretary of Labor within 180 days of the alleged violation. The complaint will be forwarded to the Whistleblower Department of OSHA. This requirement is absolute and, if it is not adhered to, no suit will be allowed.

The Secretary of Labor will have an opportunity to investigate and/or rectify the situation within 210 days. If this matter cannot be administratively resolved within 210 days, the employee may then file a federal lawsuit and is entitled to a jury trial. A worker may seek a "right to sue letter" from the Secretary of Labor before the expiration of 210 days, which would bestow upon them the right to sue.

### What damages are available?

Damages include:

- a. reinstatement with the same seniority status that the employee would have had, had he or she not be discriminated against;
- b. any back pay with interest; and
- c. damages including compensation for any special damages sustained as a result of the discrimination, including litigation costs, expert witness fees, and reasonable attorney's fees; damages may include punitive damages in an amount not to exceed \$250,000.00.

Your spouse would be entitled to a jury trial and the jury would be allowed to consider all evidence germane to this issue, including the past conduct of the railroad and the consideration of all other instances of job intimidation and harassment contrary to the Statute. With this legislation, no railroad worker should be afraid or reluctant to file a Report of injury or pursue

his or her remedies under the law.

### How to legally protect your spouse:

1. If your spouse is injured and needs assistance in filing out a Personal Injury Report, immediately call his local chairman and one of the attorneys designated by the BLET.
2. If you wish to prevent the railroad from interfering in the medical treatment of your spouse, please contact one of the designated attorneys immediately.
3. If your spouse believes that he or she is a victim of any type of threat, harassment, or intimidation by the railroad for pursuing certain rights as set out by the Statute, please call one of the designated counsel for an immediate consultation to see if the Act applies, and if suit could be filed.

Members of the BLET and attorneys on your list of Designated Legal Counsel worked diligently to pass this Federal Act. It is in place for the benefit of your spouses and every railroad worker in the country. It is important for you to have knowledge of this new remedy and to utilize when necessary.

### Submitted by:

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2009

## Calendar & Events

**March 21-26, 2010**

**The Rail Workers Hazardous Materials Training Program** will conduct a hazardous materials transportation/chemical emergency response training program at the National Labor College, Silver Spring, Md. For registration details, call Henry Jajuga, (301) 439-2440, or email: [hjajuga@nlc.edu](mailto:hjajuga@nlc.edu).

**May 2-7, 2010**

**The Rail Workers Hazardous Materials Training Program** will conduct a hazardous materials transportation/chemical emergency response training program at the National Labor College, Silver Spring, Md.

**June 13-18, 2010**

**83rd Annual Southeastern Meeting Association, Cincinnati, Ohio**

Hosted by Jerry Sturdivant and the members of BLET Division 110, the 2010 SMA will be held at the Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza (35 West Fifth St., Cincinnati, OH 45202. Phone: (513) 421-9100. Rate: \$139). For details, contact Brother Sturdivant by email: [jpsturdivant@gmail.com](mailto:jpsturdivant@gmail.com).

**July 13-17, 2010**

**70th Annual International Western Convention, Bismarck-Mandan, N.D.** Co-Chairs Mike Muscha and Ron Huff and the members of BLET Division 671 and Division 746 host the 2010 IWC at the Radisson Hotel Bismarck (605 E. Broadway Ave., Bismarck, N.D. 58501. Phone: (701) 255-6000. Rate: \$89). For details, contact Brother Muscha by email: [locoeng671@mlgc.com](mailto:locoeng671@mlgc.com).

**August 8-12, 2010**

**72nd Annual Eastern Union Meeting Association, Pittsburgh, Pa.** Hosted by Tom and Sue Caruso, Division 335, the 2010 EUMA will take place at the Sheraton Station Square Hotel in Pittsburgh, Pa. (300 West Station Square Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15219-2000. Phone: (412) 261-2000. Rate: \$155). For details, contact the Carusos at: [EUMA2010@verizon.net](mailto:EUMA2010@verizon.net).

**September 12-16, 2010**

**75th Annual Southwestern Convention Meeting, San Antonio, Texas.** Hosted by Russell Elley, Local Chairman of Division 197, the 2010 SWCM will take place at the Hyatt Regency San Antonio, on the River Walk at Paseo del Alamo (123 Losoya St., San Antonio, Texas, 78205. Phone: (210) 227-1234. Rate: \$139). For details, contact Brother Elley by email: [relley@gvec.net](mailto:relley@gvec.net).



# The North American Railway Foundation

## Giving back to rail labor

**T**he North American Railway Foundation (NARF) is a non-profit operating foundation which was formed by the Brotherhood's Relief & Compensation Fund (BR&CF).

NARF's mission is to give back to BR&CF members, organized rail labor and citizens at large by engaging in projects with other non-profit organizations and/or endeavors that nurture and support rail technology, safety, education and history in the United States and Canada.

Examples of the projects that NARF has engaged in include:

- An annual computer equipment project that supports leaders of organizational units (Divisions, Locals, State Legislative Boards and General Committees within the organized rail labor community) by providing some of the computers and related equipment they need to accomplish their work;
- Supporting organized rail labor educational classes involving leaders of organizational units by providing a "per diem" amount to help offset meals and lodging costs for participants;
- Supporting Rail Hazmat and Radiological training classes taught by the National Labor College for the benefit of all

organized rail labor crafts;

- Supporting various long term exhibits within rail museums across North America to encourage rail education within an expanded audience of visitors and to emphasize the role of rail labor in the history of railroading;

- Supporting high speed rail educational initiatives through various media avenues; and

- Many other projects such as grade crossing improvements, preservation of historic rail photos, documents and artifacts and exhibitions depicting the history of rail labor and equipment.

NARF funds projects, like those above, with the investment earnings it generates from a permanently restricted endowment. It must spend the majority of these earnings on an annual basis and NARF must not use these funds to engage in any political or lobbying activities. NARF



does its best to select projects that satisfy the application requirements and offer the most benefit and positive results for everyone involved.

Some of the benefits that BLET members can see from NARF's projects above include:

- Assisting with computer equipment to organizational unit leaders which frees up some of the unit's resources, reduces the amount of dues necessary to provide this equipment and helps the unit's leaders with efficiency, security and logistics;
- Offsetting meals and lodging costs associated with attending leadership training classes makes the decision to

attend these classes a little bit easier, freeing up a unit's resources and/or leader resources while obtaining the training and networking necessary to help their unit's efficiency and effectiveness;

- Helping to keep members educated and aware of HAZMAT and Radiological dangers that they face every day and how they can handle dangerous situations safely, if they do occur;

- Enhancing the public's understanding of the roles that railroading and railroaders play in their daily lives; and

- Preserving the rich history of railroading and railroaders for future generations.

NARF will continue fulfilling its mission for generations to come ... trying to make a positive difference to BR&CF members, organized rail labor and citizens across the United States and Canada.

**PHILIP J SULLIVAN II, CPA**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
NORTH AMERICAN  
RAILWAY FOUNDATION

## Electronic Communications Policy

**T**he policy currently in effect is that official communications between BLET members and the National Division require a hard copy of the correspondence — with a signature — being received by the National President — to be considered an "official communication."

This is to provide that the actual question(s) are addressed, and ensures that when official interpretations are made they have reference to a specific request and can be used in future correspondence.

Due to the volume of e-mails it would

be impossible for the President to answer all unofficial communications. Therefore, it is the policy of the BLET National Division Office that e-mails addressed to the National President will be reviewed and forwarded to the appropriate officer or staff for a timely response. In other words, an email message is not considered an official communication.

This will allow the President to be aware of the opinions and suggestions of the membership, while at the same time providing a timely response to the member, if a response is necessary. ©



**The North American Railway Foundation (NARF)** gives back to organized labor in many ways, including the sponsorship of educational workshops like this training class for BLET Local Chairmen. NARF provided a "per diem" for these BLET Local Chairmen to help offset their meals and lodging costs. The BLET Education and Training Department conducted the workshop, which was held November 8-13, 2009, at the National Labor College in Silver Spring, Md.

**Front row, from left:** William Walpert, NST & Director of Education & Training; Ken Kroeger, Coordinator of Education & Training & Special Representative; Scott Berger, Local Chairman Div. 489 (CSX Western Lines); Jon Toumanian, Local Chairman Div. 398 (BNSF-AT&SF); Eric Stumpf, Local Chairman Div. 20 (Amtrak); Dan Salcido, Local Chairman Div. 197 (UP-Southern Region); Neal Schipper IV, Local Chairman Div. 940 (BNSF-CB&Q/GN/NP/SP&S); and Marcus Ruef, Vice President and Director of Arbitration.

**Second row:** Sereena Hogan, BLET Auxiliary 1st Vice President and Legislative Representative; Harvey Benn IV, Local Chairman Div. 169 (CSX-Conrail); Richard

Reeves, Local Chairman Div. 238 (BNSF-CB&Q/GN/NP/SP&S); Charles Blankenship, Local Chairman Div. 301 (NS-Eastern Lines); Nathan McCallister, Local Chairman Div. 101 (CSX-Western Lines); Gerald Stakely, Local Chairman Div. 375 (NS-Southern Lines); Kim Casagrande, Local Chairman Div. 480 (NS-Eastern Lines); and Jason Wise, Road Local Chairman Div. 435 (CSX-Eastern Lines).

**Third row:** Duane Lance, Local Chairman Div. 786 (NS-Southern Lines); Anthony Cerimele, Local Chairman Div. 234 (NS-Northern Lines); Kevin Barker, Local Chairman Div. 106 (NS-Northern Lines); Richard McGowan, Local Chairman Elect Div. 867 (CSX-Conrail); Ray Letcher, Local Chairman Div. 349 (Union Pacific-Western Region); and Scot Ethington, Local Chairman Div. 374 (UP-Western Region).

**Fourth row:** James Wood, Local Chairman Div. 443 (UP-Western Region); Jon Boehlke, Local Chairman Div. 174 (WC); Kyle Donze, Local Chairman Div. 294 (Metra-CP); Michael Stout, Local Chairman Div. 155 (NS-Northern Lines); Michael Poirier, Local Chairman Div. 144 (Amtrak); and Doug Davidson, Assistant Director of Arbitration / Labor Member-NRAB.

**Photo:** BLET Education & Training Dept.

## Transportation Workers protecting each other since 1910



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## Happy Holidays from the BLET Executive Committee!

### DEAR BLET BROTHERS AND SISTERS:

During this festive time of year, we wish each and every member, officer and employee of the Brotherhood a safe, happy and healthy holiday, and we extend our best and most sincere wishes for nothing but the best in the coming year.

It has been a long and difficult year for our Brotherhood, but we have more than 146 years of history behind us. We can take comfort in knowing that our Organization has endured many other, more difficult trials over the years, and we have survived and prospered.

In looking ahead, let us look back upon our history for words to inspire us as we move into the year 2010.

Fraternally and sincerely,

PAUL T. SORROW  
PRESIDENT

and

WILLIAM C. WALPERT  
NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER

### 125 YEARS AGO:

"Attention, application, accuracy, method, punctuality and dispatch are the principal qualities required for the efficient conduct of business of any sorts. These at first sight may appear to be small matters, and yet they are of essential important to human happiness, well-being and usefulness. They are little things, it is true, but human life is made up of little acts which constitute not only the sum of human character, but which determine the character of nations."

— PETER M. ARTHUR,  
GRAND CHIEF ENGINEER,  
LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS JOURNAL, NOVEMBER 1884

### 100 YEARS AGO:

"In our great family of the B. of L.E. we have greater opportunities for good than most of us realize. Our institution is built upon the foundation of faith cemented with charity — faith that each will perform his obligated duty; that duty judged by the standard of right, tempered with charity. A little thought and a little kindness is often worth more than any other gift."

— CHARLES H. SALMONS,  
EDITOR AND MANAGER, LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS JOURNAL, DECEMBER 1909



Vintage Santa Claus rides a CP Rail steam locomotive.

Photo: BLET Archives

### 75 YEARS AGO:

"Every Brotherhood Engineer holds his membership sacred, because the name Brotherhood descends from divine heritage. And, in our birth, our very beginning, courageous engineers steeled with affection for their fellow men, clad in the armor of fraternity, strove to better the work day of their profession and occupation in this great realm of labor, taking unto themselves a title in the labor world, internation-

ally known as the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. There is no East or West, no boundary to the North or South — just Brotherhood. We live in the pride of our history, and with the sense of responsibility in the performance of our duty towards our Brotherhood."

— W.W. DORSEY,  
GRAND CHAPLAIN,  
LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS JOURNAL, JUNE 1934

## Merry Christmas from the BLET Auxiliary

AS THE CHRISTMAS SEASON APPROACHES we are reminded of the importance of family, friends, and loved ones in our lives. During this holiday season, please hold close in your heart those who cannot be with us — our loved ones who keep the railroads running, our family and friends who have departed this life, and our troops serving overseas. Even with all of life's trials and tribulations, we still have so much to be thankful for.

On behalf of the National Auxiliary, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and blessed holiday with best wishes for a bright and prosperous New Year!

Becky Schneider  
President

Sereena Hogan  
Vice President/  
National Legislative Rep.

Anita Caruso  
Secretary

Helen Brand  
Treasurer

Gina Forman  
1st Vice President

Diane Shifflett  
2nd Vice President  
Asst. National Legislative Rep.

Delaine Morris  
3rd Vice President

Linda Maher  
Chaplain

Kathy Yambra  
Alt. Secretary

Debbie Keele  
Alt. Treasurer

Onita Wayland  
Past President

## BNSF and BLET reach tentative agreement

"The tentative agreement reflects a great effort on the part of the General Chairmen and the BLET negotiating team."

— NATIONAL PRESIDENT  
PAUL SORROW

In early November, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and the BNSF Railway announced they had reached a tentative agreement on a five-year contract that would run through Dec. 31, 2014.

"It is an honor for me and for the four BLET general chairmen to be able to present to our members a proposal that gives them the security of a five-year agreement, additional income and additional time off without a single giveback or rule change," said National Vice President Steve Speagle.

The agreement would take effect

January 1, 2010, and would provide a general wage increase in each year of the contract. The tentative contract settles wage and work rule matters, but health and welfare issues will be addressed in upcoming industry-wide negotiations.

Specific details of the proposed contract will be released to members as part of the ratification process. The BLET National Division is currently in the process of printing and mailing the ballot information, and it is expected all ballots will be mailed by the middle of next week.

BLET President Paul Sorrow praised Vice President Speagle along

with General Chairmen Rick Gibbons (former STL-SF), Austin Morrison (former C&S/CRI&P/FWD), Pat Williams (former AT-SF) and Matt Wilson (BNSF-MRL) for their hard work in negotiating the agreement.

"The agreement reflects a great effort on the part of the General Chairmen and the BLET negotiating team to arrive at what we view to be a fair settlement of wage/rules in the midst of what is labeled by some to be the worst economic recession in American history since the Great Depression," Sorrow said. "We expect things to continue to improve going forward." ©©





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**Brotherhood Of Locomotive Engineers And Trainmen**  
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International Brotherhood Of Teamsters

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**DECEMBER 2009 PHOTO OF THE MONTH**



**CSX's Santa Claus Special** makes its annual trip through Appalachia, distributing toys, food and clothing to thousands of needy families. **Photo:** Dustin Grizzle

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at Cleveland, OH,

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**Advisory Board October Activity**

**In accordance with the BLET Bylaws, summaries of BLET**

**Advisory Board members' activities are published monthly:**

**National President Paul T. Sorrow** — Various duties as National President; Performed various duties in Office Administrator capacity; Various duties assigned to First Vice President; Various correspondence and telephone communications; General supervision of Special Representatives; NS-North Lines/W&LE GCoIA mtg.; Rail Conference policy mtg., Las Vegas; Advisory Board mtgs.; General Chairmen's mtgs., St. Louis, Mo.; CRIO negotiations, Washington, D.C.

**National Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walpert** — General supervision of accounting dept., records dept., online services dept., IT Dept., tax compliance dept.; public relations dept.; Education & Training Dept.; Internal Organizing, Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; Safety Task Force; Meetings with vendors and financial institutions; Standard Building operations oversight; NS-North Lines GCoIA mtg., Cleveland; Rail Conference mtg., Las Vegas; Examination of possible site for 2014 National Convention, Las Vegas; Mtg. w/ General Chairmen and State Legislative Board Chairmen, re: new Hours of Service law, St. Louis; Mtg. w/ General Chairmen, re: Section 6 notices, St. Louis; Advisory Board mtgs., St. Louis.

**Vice-President Merle W. Geiger Jr.** — Assigned to: Kansas City Southern; Texas Mexican Railway; MidSouth Rail; SouthRail; Gateway Western; CP Rail System/US; Utah Railway; Indiana Harbor Belt; Bell Railway of Chicago; Great Western Railway; and Panhandle Northern Railway; Mtgs. w/ GC Clark (Tex-Mex) and Div. 244, Houston, Corpus Christie and Laredo, Texas; Advisory Board conference calls; Advisory Board mtg., St. Louis, Mo.; RSJA and national contract mtgs., St. Louis, Mo.; Contract mtgs. w/ Great Western Railway; Windsor, Colo.

**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; General office duties; Mtg. w/ BNSF VP of Operations Fox, Fort Worth; Mtg. w/ BNSF General Chairman, Branson, Mo; Mtg. w/ BNSF GCs and BNSF VP Labor Relations; Mtg. w/ all GCs and SIBC, re: RSJA, St. Louis; Mtg. w/ All GCs, re: Section 6 notices; St. Louis; Advisory Board mtg., St. Louis; Mtg. w/ BNSF GC Matt Wilson, re: ID Service, Minneapolis; Vacation.

**Vice-President E.L. "Lee" Pruitt** — Assisted general chairman & members of: UP Western Lines; UP Western Region; UP Central Region; UP Southern Region; UP Tacoma Belt; UP Eastern District; Office duties and paper work, filing, correspondence, etc.; Work-rest pool negotiations w/ GC Doyton, Div. 443 mtg., UP-WR, Spokane, Wash.; EIRR negotiations, UPWR, system agreement negotiations, Twin Falls, Idaho; Advisory Board mtg., St. Louis, Mo.; RSJA mtg., St. Louis; National negotiations mtg., St. Louis; Las Vegas switching limits mtgs. w/ GC Doyton, UP-WR, Las Vegas.

**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; NS-North Lines, W&LE GCoIA mtg., Cleveland; Arizona SIB triennial mtg., Phoenix, Ariz.; Presented

**A message from**  
**Teamsters General President**  
**James P. Hoffa**

**Health Insurance Reform Without a Tax on Middle-Class Americans**

**As health insurance reform moves through Congress**, the Senate is proposing to pay for it, in part, by taxing insurance companies that offer comprehensive health plans. This tax would ultimately be passed on to workers. The bill just approved by the House does not include this tax.

The House would tax the wealthy to help pay for the uninsured. The richest Americans would give back some — not all

at Rail Trends conference, New York, NY; Attended Railway Age passenger trains on freight railroads conf., Washington, D.C.; Advisory Board mtg., St. Louis, Mo.; Participated in high speed rail 2009 conf., Washington, D.C.; TSA mtg., re: Rail security issues, Washington, D.C.; Rail labor security emergency training class, AFL-CIO headquarters, Washington, D.C.; Mtg. w/ Congressmen to discuss Railroad Retirement and other issues; Stakeholder's mtg. w/ Cong. Earl Blumenauer, re: infrastructure investments; Rail Labor Chiefs' conference call on occupational disability. Monthly SIBC conference call; 6th annual Locomotive Engineers exposition, Washington, D.C.; Monthly legislative mtg., Washington, D.C.; Attended numerous breakfast, lunch and dinner receptions w/ various U.S. Representatives, Washington, D.C.

**Vice-President Marcus J. Ruef** — Labor member-NRAB, Vice Chairman, First Division; Director of Arbitration Dept; Assigned to Amtrak; Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA); Long Island Railroad (LIRR); New Jersey Transit (NJT); Metrol; NS-North Lines, W&LE GCoIA mtg., Cleveland; Assist GC Moates, CSX-W, with PLB establishment agreement; Edit submission and draft MOU for PLB, Sept.; Sec. 4 came, working group, NRAB; Draft position on Common Law Damages for BDM, UP-N; Advisory Board conference call; Review proposed Bierg awards, NRAB; Advisory Board mtg., St. Louis; Hours of Service mtg. w/ GC & IC, St. Louis; Deadlock List No. 307, Referee Jarvis, prep. & hearings, NRAB, Washington-Dulles.

**Vice-President Dennis R. Pierce** — Assigned to all CSX General Committees — Eastern Lines, Western Lines, Northern Lines, Control (SAA/CSX-Northern District), CN/IC, CN/WC, CN/E&E; Gary Railroad, Indiana Railroad, and Alabama State Docks; Special Projects, BNSF GCoIAs; General office duties; NS-Northern Lines GCoIA mtg., Cleveland; Control GCoIA/CSX negotiations, Buffalo, N.Y. and Baltimore, Md.; Advisory Board conference calls; PLB 6913 hearing, Chicago; General Chairmen mtg., re: rail safety and national negotiations, St. Louis; Advisory Board mtg., St. Louis; Vacation.

**Vice-President Mike Twombly** — Assigned to Delaware & Hudson; Springfield Terminal; St. Lawrence & Atlantic; Montpelier, Maine & Atlantic; Union Railroad; Birmingham Southern; Huron & Eastern; Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range; DM&IR-Two Harbors; South Buffalo Rwy; Iowa, Chicago & Eastern; Indiana & Ohio; Indiana and Southern; Louisville & Indiana; Meridian Southern; Talleysrand Terminal RR; PJS/RSAC Committee; Talleysrand Terminal contract negotiations, Jacksonville, Fla.; Mtg. w/ DMR General Chairman, Minneapolis, Minn.; New York Dock Section 4 mtgs. w/ DMR and CN, Minneapolis, Minn.; Mtg. w/ DMR members in Duluth, Proctor and Two Harbors, Minn., w/ GC Clark; MM&A negotiations, Bangor, Maine; General Chairmen mtg., St. Louis; Advisory Board mtg., St. Louis; Mtg. w/ STR GC Moore & mtg. w/ Springfield Terminal, Billerica, Mass.; Louisville & Indiana negotiations, Louisville, Ky.; Mtg. w/ GC Moore and GC Foley, St. Lawrence & Atlantic, Plaistow, Mass.

**Vice-President Willard E. Knight** — Assigned to: All Norfolk Southern General Committees; Wheeling & Lake Erie; New York, Susquehanna & Western; New England Central; Connecticut Southern; Western New York & Pennsylvania; NS-North Lines GCoIA mtg., Cleveland; WNYP contract mediation, Amherst, NY; Advisory Board conference call; Hours of Service arbitration process mtg.; Section 6 notice mtg.; Advisory Board mtg., St. Louis; Mtg. w/ NS General Chairman, re: 401K and Short Term Disability policy; St. Louis; SBA 1063; PLB 7234, Chicago; General office duties.

cover workers in dangerous occupations, or because they're in regions where insurers have near-monopoly power, or because they cover a group that's older than the general population. For whatever reason, this tax will fall on fully one-third of Americans in 10 years. The overage affected household will pay \$7,600 more in taxes between 2013 and 2019.

The Teamsters Union strongly supports health insurance reform, but we oppose the financing plan being considered by the Senate. It is not in our members' interest.

Congress should adopt the more sensible plan passed by the House — one that increases coverage of the uninsured, reduces health care costs, and does not impose a new tax on the middle-class.

Fraternally,

*James P. Hoffa*

**James P. Hoffa**

TEAMSTERS GENERAL PRESIDENT