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HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

BLET member Robert E. (Bobby) Davis ran the 2015 CSX Santa Train on November 21. For more details on this 73rd annual holiday tradition, please see Page 5. Photo: Chase Gunnoe



BLET members ratify new contract with DM&E

Members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) ratified a new hourly-rate collective bargaining agreement with the Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railway (DM&E) on November 30, 2015.

The agreement governs rates of pay and work rules for approximately 300 locomotive engineers, assistant engineers, conductors and brakemen. It runs through December 31, 2019. The contract provides general wage increases between 30 and 50 percent dependent upon craft and assignment, as well as overtime rates and general holiday rates. The contract also provides for a Guaranteed Extra Board weekly rate of pay.

The hourly agreement provides all covered employees, including Guaranteed Extra Boards and Pools, with two consecutive days off in

“The overwhelming percentage by which the agreement was ratified shows that the BLET leadership on the property is well in tune with the members’ needs.”

— DENNIS PIERCE

their scheduled work week. The agreement also provides for up to 11 personal leave days and up to five weeks’ vacation.

Under the new agreement, employees will have the ability to participate in the Employee Share Purchase Plan and will receive a company match. For those who maximize their participation in the plan,

the company match equates to an approximate additional 2 percent annual value.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce thanked the negotiating team of General Chairman Pete Semenek and Vice President Cole W. Davis for a job well done. He also thanked the DM&E membership for their participation in the voting process.

“I want to congratulate our membership on the 80%+ participation rate in the ratification vote,” President Pierce said. “The overwhelming percentage by which the agreement was ratified shows that the BLET leadership on the property is well in tune with the members’ needs.”

The Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad is a Class II subsidiary of the Canadian Pacific Railway. It operates across Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, and extending into Kansas City, Mo. @@

SIGN UP REQUIRED FOR NEW BLET NEWS FLASH EMAIL SERVICE

The BLET National Division encourages all members to sign up for its new automated News Flash email alert system. In early September, our previous system was replaced and contact information from the old system could not be imported into the new system. As a result, previous subscribers will need to sign up again and confirm their email address in order to receive our emails.

If you have not previously subscribed, then this would be an excellent opportunity to sign up and have our News Flashes delivered automatically to your inbox. An informed membership is a strong membership, and our News Flash email alert system helps to keep you informed regarding the business of the Brotherhood. @@

TO AUTOMATICALLY RECEIVE BLET NEWS FLASHES VIA EMAIL, PLEASE VISIT THE FOLLOWING LINK AND PROVIDE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS:
WWW.BLE-T.ORG/NEWSFLASH

CORRECTION: BLET EASTERN REGIONAL MEETING IS JULY 11-14, 2016

An incorrect date for the BLET’s 2016 Eastern Regional Meeting in Chicago was published in the October/November 2015 issue of the *Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen News* as well as the Summer/Fall 2015 issue of the *Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal*. The correct date is July 11-14, 2016 (not June 11-14). We regret this error and any inconvenience it may have caused. @@



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BLET PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY DENNIS R. PIERCE

STATE OF THE UNION 2015

I am proud of our Brotherhood's many accomplishments throughout the year 2015 and we have much to be thankful for. While many significant challenges may lie ahead, I have every confidence that our Brotherhood will continue to grow and become stronger in the year 2016 — our 153rd year as an organization.

Like the brave men who founded our Brotherhood in 1863, our goal remains the same: to improve the wages and working conditions of our members. Because of the important part they play in maintaining our nation's economy, locomotive engineers and trainmen have a justifiable pride in their jobs. BLET members are instrumental in keeping the lifeblood of our economy flowing through the arteries of steel that lace the North American continent. BLET members have a right to stand tall and look with pride at their accomplishments. Ceaselessly day or night, winter or summer, BLET members get the job done.

With that pride comes the satisfaction that our pay and benefits are among the best in the nation. The BLET has worked tirelessly in 2015 to defend these well-earned benefits in the face of hostile adversaries at the negotiating table. This year alone, BLET members have ratified on-property contract agreements with Norfolk Southern, Long Island Rail Road, Indiana Southern, CP Rail-U.S. (Soo Line), and the Dakota, Minnesota and Eastern. These contracts maintain and improve the pay, benefits and quality of life our members deserve.

On the national level, we continued to negotiate jointly for a national contract as a member of the Coordinated Bargaining Group (CPG). In addition to the BLET, the CPG consists of the SMART Transportation Division, the American Train Dis-



President Pierce addresses BLET members during the closed session of the 77th and final Eastern Union Meeting Association (EUMA) convention in Boston, July 27, 2015.

patchers Association, the National Conference of Firemen and Oilers/SEIU, the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen, and the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers. Jointly, the participating unions represent more than 85,000 railroad workers and comprise over 58 percent of the workforce who will be impacted by national negotiations. Although a final agreement is not yet in sight, significant progress has been made throughout 2015 identifying the issues of greatest importance to both sides. Serious discussions are ongoing and both parties believe that a voluntary agreement is the desired outcome. Additional meetings are set for the first quarter of 2016, and updates will be made available when appropriate.

Working together with our fellow Brothers and Sisters in other unions gives us the best chance to come out ahead in ne-

gotiations. It makes our position stronger. The same can be said of issues like two-person crews. For the second year in a row, the BLET worked with our counterparts in the SMART Transportation Division to advance a two-person crew bill on the national level. Similar legislation was also advanced in at least 14 states during 2015, including Washington, Nebraska, Minnesota, Wyoming, Iowa, Utah and North Dakota. On September 8, rail labor scored a major victory for rail safety when California Governor Edmund G. (Jerry) Brown signed a two-person crew bill into law. This represents a major victory for all of organized labor, especially our hard working engine and train crews. While the advancement of technology such as Positive Train Control can make the workplace safer, technology cannot replace the trained eyes and ears of experienced professionals inside the cab of the locomotive.

Speaking of technology, our own Education and Training Department achieved a significant milestone this year. On August 31, our Brothers and Sisters in Wisconsin were able to network with our Brothers and Sisters in Cleveland via the Internet using video and audio equipment. Our Wisconsin members were able to participate in real time with the classroom presentation being offered to our members in class at the Training Center in Cleveland. This was a small, but an important step, helping move us closer to realizing the vision established by our 2010 delegates.

In December, our Education and Training Department hosted the final workshop at our Training Center in Cleveland. As you will recall, the BLET purchased a new headquarters building in the Cleveland suburb of Independence, Ohio, earlier this year. Construction has been moving along quickly as we prepare to relocate to our building in the

spring of 2016. Our new headquarters location will provide ample room for our National Division officers and staff in a more modern work environment, and we will also use the opportunity to continue and expand our state-of-the-art Education and Training Center.

The BLET has been headquartered in Cleveland since the 1870s, and the BLET constructed its original headquarters building, the Engineers Building, 1910. The Brotherhood's second office building, the Standard Building, was dedicated in 1924. The Brotherhood sold the Engineers Building to developers in 1989, and the building was demolished. We moved into the Standard Building at the time, and have been here ever since.

While the 22-story Standard Building is a significant part of the Brotherhood's heritage, it had reached a point where considerable assets are necessary to repurpose the building. The Advisory Board made the decision to sell the building in order to better focus our efforts on representation of members as opposed to working as commercial property managers.

But before we turn out the lights on the old headquarters and make the move to our more modern facility, it must be said that what matters most is not the building, but the people. The building may change, but the people haven't and our mission hasn't — and won't. We intend to keep offering the best representation and the best contracts to the best railroaders that America has to offer.

As we move into 2016, let us reflect on our achievements in 2015 and let us work together in solidarity and Brotherhood throughout the New Year. Happy Holidays to you and your family!

DENNIS R. PIERCE
BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

66 BLET members are instrumental in keeping the lifeblood of our economy flowing through the arteries of steel that lace the North American continent. BLET members have a right to stand tall and look with pride at their accomplishments. 99

BLET NATIONAL DIVISION ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Official communications between BLET members and the National Division require a hard copy of the correspondence, bearing 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.

The volume of e-mails received makes it impossible for the National President to answer all unofficial communications. Therefore, it is the policy of the BLET that e-mails addressed to the National President will be reviewed and forwarded to

the appropriate officer or staff for a timely response; however, an e-mail message is not considered an official communication.

Moreover, anonymous e-mails and e-mails that do not provide sufficient information concerning the sender to enable National Division staff to confirm the sender's membership status will not receive any reply or acknowledgement. This poli-

cy is intended to allow the National President to be aware of the opinions and suggestions of the membership, while at the same time providing a timely response to the member's unofficial communication, if a response is necessary, without needlessly expending limited BLET resources.

ADOPTED AT CLEVELAND, OHIO ON JULY 22, 2010. ©©



GENERAL PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY JAMES P. HOFFA

TPP A PUNCH TO THE GUT OF U.S. WORKERS

The much-awaited text of the 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) was finally released for public consumption in November. But sunshine and scrutiny of the pact isn't making the deal look any brighter for workers around the country.

As the Teamsters and others long suspected, the TPP text contains many of the most controversial items included in past lousy trade agreements that will continue to encourage job outsourcing and lower wages for U.S. workers. But it goes even further. Frankly, it makes clear why everyday Americans were kept in the dark about this Pacific Rim deal for so long.

Take the beloved "Buy American" procurement program, which has been around for more than 80 years. It was created to give U.S. firms a leg up in securing federal government contracts that keep dollars in this country and Americans working.

But language included in the TPP procurement chapter jeopardizes Buy American. It would give companies operating in any of the 11 other Pacific Rim member countries equal access to many of the U.S. government contracts that now go to local businesses that build and provide upkeep to key infrastructure in our communities. And that would

lead to fewer jobs at home.

Other language in the trade deal would also lead to jobs being shipped overseas. For example, because the TPP ends U.S. tariffs with other member nations, competitors there will have open access to the American market while other countries will slowly phase out their own tariffs in place. The result could be devastating for U.S. workers especially when it comes to competition with Vietnam, which would still have tariffs in place and pay their workers much lower wages.

The effects of the tariff provision could also be exacerbated by language included in the TPP rules of origin chapter that would allow a product to be called American-made even if only 45 percent of its content comes from this country. Under NAFTA, 62.5 percent of content must be from the U.S. to be considered "Made in the USA."

It's impossible to address all the matters contained in the deal given that it spans more than 6,000 pages. But it's bad. And it leaves Congress with just one option when it comes to considering TPP — just say no.

Fraternally,

JAMES P. HOFFA
TEAMSTERS GENERAL PRESIDENT



66 As the Teamsters and others long suspected, the TPP text contains many of the most controversial items included in past lousy trade agreements that will continue to encourage job outsourcing and lower wages for U.S. workers. But it goes even further. Frankly, it makes clear why everyday Americans were kept in the dark about this Pacific Rim deal for so long. 99

CP Rail makes \$28.4 billion offer to take over Norfolk Southern

On November 17, 2015, the Canadian Pacific Railway (CP Rail) made an unsolicited \$28.4 billion bid to acquire Norfolk Southern (NS). The takeover bid was met by a chilly response from Norfolk Southern's management, however, who called it a "low-premium" offer. NS also rejected a second offer by CP Rail on December 8.

Activist investor William Ackman, head of Pershing Square Capital Management LP, said NS's continued resistance to the merger efforts could lead to a proxy fight and a hostile takeover. Ackman led a group of activist investors in a hostile takeover of the CP Rail in 2012, which led to the installation of E. Hunter Harrison as CEO at Canada's second largest railway.

A merger of the two railroads would create the largest transcontinental railroad in North America. CP Rail characterizes is as an "end-to-end" merger of the two railroads, with CP Rail

maintaining control of the merged system. It would form a railroad with 33,000 miles of track and would reach ports in Vancouver, New York, New Jersey, as well as oil fields in the Dakotas and Canada and key refineries in the Eastern United States.

Regardless, NS remained hostile to the takeover bid. NS all but rejected CP Rail's offer in a press release, calling its November 17 "low-premium" and its December 8 offer "grossly inadequate." NS also warned that a merger of two large railroads would face significant regulatory hurdles.

Any such merger or takeover would face the scrutiny of the U.S. Surface Transportation Board and the Canadian Transportation Agency, in addition to foreign investment reviews, and shipper reviews. Media reports indicate that the regulatory review process would take two years or longer.

CP Rail touted "\$1.8 billion in annual operating" savings over the next

several years, predicting that the merged companies would be able to improve rail service and relieve congestion for all carriers by skirting around Chicago. Subsequent analysis by the media reported that the merged railroad would also save several billion dollars annually by filing taxes in Canada instead of the United States. CP Rail also predicted a "huge cash flow" by selling surplus land owned by NS.

In the fall of 2014, CP Rail abandoned takeover discussions with CSX after it became clear CSX was not interested.

This is a fluid situation and events are changing rapidly. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen will continue to monitor the situation and its potential impact on our membership. For the latest information, please monitor the National Division's Facebook page, www.Facebook.com/BLETNational. @

TEAMSTER STATEMENT ON 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ENDORSEMENT

In late September, the General Executive Board of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters decided to not endorse a presidential candidate at this time.

Prior to making an endorsement, the Teamsters plan to meet with Hillary Clinton, Sen. Bernie Sanders and any other candidate, regardless of party affiliation, who is committed to improving the lives of America's working families. In addition to meeting with the candidates, the union plans to survey its leaders and membership as well.

The Teamsters' "Let's Get America Working!" campaign encourages both Democratic and Republican lawmakers to work together to focus on creating good jobs through investment in our nation's infrastructure.

"It's long past time for Republicans and Democrats to put aside their differences and work together for the good of our country," said Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa. "The Teamsters will work with and support any candidate who puts the needs of America's working families above the deep pockets of their corporate donors." @

VOICES OF HOLIDAYS PAST

A LOOK BACK AT HOLIDAY MESSAGES FROM THE BROTHERHOOD'S 152-YEAR HISTORY

Brotherhood leaders have traditionally shared holiday messages with the membership throughout the long and distinguished history of our great organization. These messages of peace and good will date to 1869 — two years after the Locomotive Engineers Monthly Journal was first published.

Today, BLET members take pride in the deep roots of our organization. And it is with deepest appreciation of our treasured past that we take a look back on holiday greetings from past years.

The Brotherhood, founded on May 8, 1863, is the oldest labor union in the Western Hemisphere. The Journal, first published in January of 1867, is the

oldest rail union publication in the world.

Today, members of the BLET Executive Committee continue this tradition in several ways, including the mailing of holiday cards, Internet postings and holiday greetings in the various Brotherhood publications.

Happy Holidays!

40 YEARS AGO

"The old year is gone and a brand new one is starting to unfold. None of us knows what 1975 will hold for us, but I am sure there will be new challenges for us to meet and overcome. We must continue to stand united in our determination to meet and overcome the challenges with which we will be faced. The same qualities of courage and dedication that have been the hallmark of the BLE ever since the first beginnings in Marshall, Michigan, back in 1863 will be needed as we confront the events that await us, unknown and unpredictable."

— JANUARY 3, 1975

B.N. WHITMIRE, PRESIDENT
THE LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEER

50 YEARS AGO

"The holiday season is a family time. The delight on our children's and grandchildren's faces the best present anyone could give us. It is the wonder and excitement in young eyes that makes Christmas ever new and joyful for all."

— DECEMBER 17, 1965

PERRY S. HEATH, GRAND CHIEF ENGINEER
THE LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEER

60 YEARS AGO

"It was hoped that this first message of the New Year could be devoted to comments of a pleasant note. But once again a holocaust has occurred on a railroad crossing leaving the locomotive engineer severely injured and his fireman painfully burned. This needless catastrophe happened near Fond du Lac, Wisc., November 16, 1954, and involved a truck hauling inflammables and a Chicago & North Western passenger train. The time was broad daylight, the weather was clear and the visibility was perfect. The truck driver attempted to negotiate the crossing with the oncoming train in plain sight. Why? Perhaps the answer is contained on one word: carelessness."

— JANUARY 1955

PAUL M. SMITH, EDITOR
LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS JOURNAL

70 YEARS AGO

"Awakening this Christmas season in the manger of a new atomic world, Mankind finds a war-weary people, most eager to hear again the blessed words, 'Peace on Earth, Good Will toward Men.' Despite the fact that this year is hailed as 'the Victory Year' with our armies victorious over stubborn and treacherous enemies in both Europe and the Far Pacific, the final victory of lasting peace, contentment and prosperity for all, is yet to be won. Just as the peace-loving nations of this world demand a wise and sane handling of a new and mighty force — atomic power — so do the locomotive engineers and other railroad employees demand foresight and wisdom of their employers and our government on matters pertaining to their daily jobs, wages and working conditions in the new era that has dawned upon us."

— DECEMBER 1945

PAUL M. SMITH, EDITOR
LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS JOURNAL

90 YEARS AGO

"Before the next issue of the Journal appears, Christmas will have come and gone. I want to take advantage of this opportunity to tender my sincerest thanks to the officers and members of all our divisions for the loyal support they have given



Frost in the air: A Central Vermont Railroad steam locomotive (4-8-2 configuration) pulls a milk train up Roxbury Summit in Roxbury, Vt., during the winter of 1948-1949. Photo: BLET archives

en me during my short time in office. I want to let them know that it is appreciated, and I desire to wish for them and theirs that they may have the merriest of Christmases and a truly joyous New Year. I ardently hope that this coming year will be one of pleasure and profit to all of you, and with your continued cooperation, I am sure that we can also make it the most successful in the history of this Brotherhood."



Alvanley Johnston

— DECEMBER 1925

ALVANLEY JOHNSTON,
GRAND CHIEF ENGINEER
LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS JOURNAL

100 YEARS AGO

"The year just passed (1914) has not been as fruitful as usual, and many of our members have suffered financially through lack of opportunity to work, but the indications for 1915 are much brighter. The Interstate Commerce Commission has conceded an advance in rates to the railroads, and small though it is, it will add much to the gross income of these great properties which, commercially speaking, are the greatest distributors of money, and every terminal city will feel its influence. Confidence, we believe, will gradually take the place of doubt, and business will move on toward a normal condition when our members will again find opportunity to work and earn as in the past. This seems to us the outlook for 1915."

— JANUARY 1915

C.H. SALMONS, EDITOR
LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS MONTHLY JOURNAL

110 YEARS AGO

"To our fifty-two thousand, five hundred readers the Journal extends hearty greetings, wishing one and all a most Happy New Year and all the year 1905."

"Thanksgiving for all the bountiful blessings that came to most of our readers during 1904, and Christmas with its tokens of love, ought to glorify

fy the old year and put all in a mood to give a most hearty welcome to the new. And if each one is inspired with faith, hope, charity and loyalty; with these essentials of the Gold Rule, forming the basis of our pledge 'to do those things which we ought to do,' we may consistently look into the future with pleasant anticipations, and if we practice these principles, little assurance is needed that 1905 will be all that we could wish, in material benefits, in multiplied fellowship and broadened sympathies, essentials of peace and happiness."

— JANUARY 1905

C.H. SALMONS, EDITOR
LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS MONTHLY JOURNAL

120 YEARS AGO

"To the Fraternity, and all readers of the Journal, we extend hearty greetings as we enter the portals of the New Year, wishing one and all prosperity and happiness. We trust that Christmas has been fruitful of tokens of love and esteem, that the outstretched hand and grasp of good fellowship has been the rule, and where needed a word of sympathy and encouragement has been spoken that so often turns despair into hope, and reanimates a desire for better life and better conditions, so that the New Year may bring with it the highest attainments of 'good will to all mankind.'"

"As the prosperity of our organization, like that of any well-regulated community, depends upon the enlightenment, character and energy of those who compose it, we hope that every one will remember his obligation to himself and to his associates and at the opportune time, as the bells ring the New Year in, resolve, that though we have done much, we shall put forth renewed efforts to do more and better things in 1895 than in 1894."

— JANUARY 1895

C.H. SALMONS, EDITOR
LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS MONTHLY JOURNAL

130 YEARS AGO

"We hope much for the year that is before us. The past year has been a disastrous one to business interests and everyone has felt the effects of the depression. Those who prophesy predict better times with a change of party. We shall see. But this we do know, be the times what they may and the party do the best it can, prosperity and well being will never come to the idle. So be up and doing, remembering that if you act the part you ought you will have but little time to spare. Wisely improve the present, that when old age creeps on it may bring with its silvery locks the satisfaction of a life well spent. To each may this be a Happy New Year."

— JANUARY 1885

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS MONTHLY JOURNAL

140 YEARS AGO

"The record of the year 1874 has closed, no more to be opened on this side of eternity. Not all its hopes nor all its fears have been realized, and yet, in presenting you this, our annual greeting, we congratulate you that so much has been accomplished, that so much progress has been made in the great work that is before us. Not all that we hoped for, nor yet so little as we feared, has come to pass. It is a world of change and progress."

— JANUARY 1875

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS MONTHLY JOURNAL

"Hoping that '76 holds in store for us more of joy than sorrow — more of real happiness and less of care and mockery: that some of the ships we have sent to sea, laden with brightest hopes and pleasant anticipations, may return safely to harbor: we bid the engineers God speed in their undertakings. May the good angels watch over the knights of the foot-board, protect them from danger, and help them to lead sober, true and moral lives! We close, wishing for each and every engineer a right Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!"

— DECEMBER 1875

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS MONTHLY JOURNAL

145 YEARS AGO

"Another year of our existence as an organization has passed away, and God in His infinite goodness and mercy has removed from our midst many of our number since we last met in convention. Yet, we should not forget to praise God of His goodness and mercy to us in sparing our lives and permitting us again to assemble in convention, and while we are thus permitted may we in all our actions have an eye single to the honor and glory of God."

— DECEMBER 1870

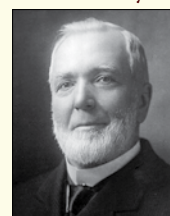
P.M. ARTHUR,
SECOND GRAND
CHIEF ENGINEER
LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS MONTHLY JOURNAL

146 YEARS AGO

"In presenting you with this our first number of the Monthly Journal for the year 1869, we most respectfully wish you, one and all, a Happy New Year."

— JANUARY 1869

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS MONTHLY JOURNAL



P.M. Arthur

Annual Santa Train makes 73rd running

BY CHASE GUNNOE
SPECIAL TO THE BLET

The annual CSX Santa Train completed its 73rd running the Saturday before Thanksgiving, safely and on time. The 110-mile route, beginning at Shelby Yard in Pikeville, Ky. and running south to Kingsport, Tenn. made 14 stops in rural communities in eastern Kentucky, southwest Virginia, and eastern Tennessee.

BLET Division 781 Brother Robert A. (Bobby) Davis, a 34-year member of the BLET with more than 41 years of railroading, was the engineer on the 2015 Santa Train. This was his third time running the annual holiday train and his second consecutive year. In 2014, as a senior member of the Division, Davis bid on the Santa Train job. He had also run the train once in the late 1990s.

The 2015 Santa Train was bittersweet for Davis, though. While the trip went well and his family enjoyed the experience, the shutdown of Erwin, Tenn. terminal and the loss of 300 jobs announced by CSX in October changed the work atmosphere of what is typically a cheerful tradition. Davis said others were expected to run the train, but workforce cutbacks made him eligible to be the engineer once again.

"The biggest reason I went was for my family and the kids. My family was able to throw gifts out and meet people on the train," Davis said. "We got Santa Claus to Kingsport right on time."

"We really enjoyed it," said Davis' wife Tressa. "Throwing out gifts with Santa and seeing how appreciative all of the people were. Seeing all of the little kids and all of their faces light up. It's wonderful," she added.

Davis used to work at the recently



The 73rd annual CSX Santa Train at the Copper Creek Viaduct in Clinchport, Va., on Nov. 21, 2015. Photo: Doyle Massey

closed Erwin, Tenn. terminal, but is now working between Kingsport, Tenn. and Bostic, N.C. on a long distance crew run. He intends to retire in May or June of 2016 with 42 years of railroading under his belt.

"The railroad has provided me any my family a good living," Davis said. "I've never regretted it."

Brother Davis began his railroad career on the Clinchfield Railroad in 1974 and became a locomotive engineer in 1980. He stayed with the railroad through various mergers and acquisitions over the years, which included the Seaboard, L&N, Family Lines, Chessie

System, and eventually CSX.

CSX Transportation, Food City, Dignity-U-Wear, and the Kingsport, Tenn. Chamber of Commerce sponsor the annual train. Together, volunteers distribute more than 15 tons of plush toys, clothing, fresh foods, backpacks, and other amenities to thousands of anxious children excited to catch a glimpse of Santa

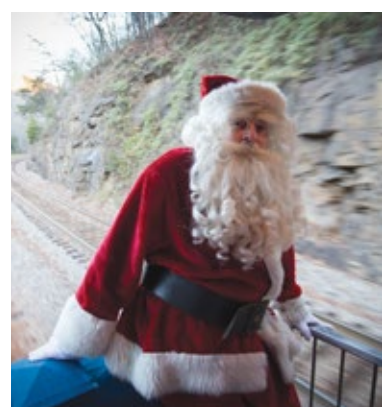
and his helpers.

In addition to volunteers, celebrity guest Meghan Linsey, a rising pop star and "The Voice" season 8 runner-up helped distribute gifts.

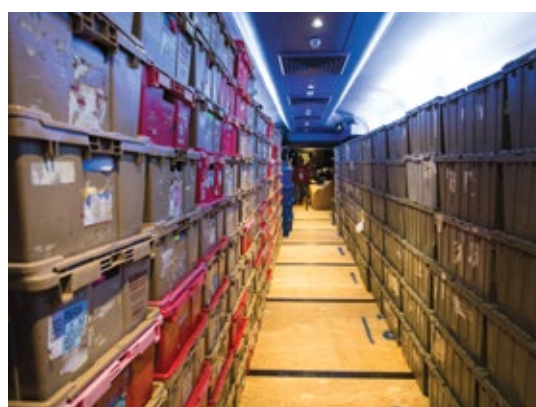
In previous years, celebrity guests have included Amy Grant, Patty Loveless, Travis Tritt, the Judds, and several other notable governors and U.S. senators. ©©



Crowds surround the rear platform of the Santa Train in Fort Blackmore, Va.



Santa Claus stands on the rear platform of CSX business car "West Virginia."



Plush toys and clothing stacked in crates from floor to ceiling in one of CSX's business cars.



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Transportation workers protecting each other since 1910.

Photos: Chase Gunnoe

AMTRAK FUNDED AT \$10 BILLION OVER 5 YEARS IN NEW TRANSPORTATION BILL

PTC funding, locomotive cameras also a part of new legislation

On December 4, President Obama signed a 5-year, \$305 billion transportation bill that contains provisions of specific interest to BLET members. Congress overwhelmingly approved the bill on December 3.

Unveiled on December 1, the bill is primarily written to increase spending to address the nation's aging and congested highways and transit systems.

The bill boosts highway spending by 15 percent and transit spending by 18 percent over its duration. Of note to BLET members is that it also authorizes \$10 billion over five years for Amtrak and \$12 billion for mass transit. Also, the bill earmarks \$200 million to help commuter railroads install Positive Train Control technology by the new deadline of December 31, 2018.

Additionally, the liability cap on passenger rail accidents is raised from \$200 million to \$295 million. Damage awards from the derailment of Amtrak train 188 earlier this year, which killed eight people and injured about 200, are expected to



exceed the current cap. The bill contains a provision mandating that all controlling passenger locomotives shall have working alerters.

Of significant note is that the bill mandates that all passenger locomotives shall be fitted with inward- and outward-facing video and audio recording devices, to be installed not later than two years after passage of the bill.

The cameras will have a 12-hour continuous recording capability, be crash and fire proof, and will be accessible post-accident. The U.S. Secretary of Transportation is prohibited from disclosing any image or recording or oral transcript of employees related to an accident or an incident. Rail carriers may not use audio or video images to retaliate against employees. @@

FRA report a guide to the future of the Northeast Corridor

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) in November released a Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for NEC FUTURE, FRA's long-term investment framework for the Northeast Corridor (NEC) between Washington, DC and Boston, Mass.

Over the next 30 years, it is expected that an additional six million people will live along the NEC. The report represents different plans and investment strategies to keep passengers moving safely, quickly and efficiently as ridership expands. The goal is to develop a long-term vision that will prioritize rail investments to ensure the future viability the northeast region and the nation.

The Tier 1 Draft EIS includes alternative visions for investment in the NEC. The visions range from maintaining the current level of investment and service to significant additional investment, which would dramatically increase rail's role in transportation for the Northeast. FRA will hold 11 public hearings to gather input and feedback from stakeholders that will inform FRA's decision on a preferred investment program.

The NEC is the nation's busiest rail corridor, with more than 700,000 passengers traveling each weekday through eight states and the District of Columbia. The NEC contributes more than \$100 million every day to the Northeast's economy, but it currently operates on outdated infrastructure, much of it built more than 100 years ago, with capacity constraints that cannot accommodate future growth. Choke points and aging infrastructure often disrupt the system's reliability and performance. Some NEC trains traverse bridges built before 1910 and travel through tunnels built just after the Civil War.

The Tier 1 Draft EIS, which outlines the various visions, is now available for download and review by the public at www.necfuture.com

FRA considered a broad range of alternatives for the NEC, beginning in 2012 with a public scoping process and analysis of travel markets. In 2013, the FRA consolidated nearly 100 initial concepts into 15 visions (Preliminary Alternatives) that varied by level of investment, service, and route. In 2014, the FRA evaluated the Preliminary Alternatives and identified three distinct Action Alternatives; these have been refined and analyzed in the Tier 1 Draft EIS. Each Action Alternative represents a different long-term vision for improving passenger rail service that will enhance mobility options, improve performance, and better serve existing and future passengers in the study area. @@



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SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM THE BLET AUXILIARY

BY SEREENA HOGAN
BLET AUXILIARY PRESIDENT

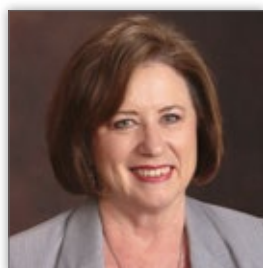
Greetings to all our BLET and Auxiliary Sisters and Brothers! As 2015 draws to a close, I find myself reflecting back to the beginning of the year when the newly elected national officers of the BLET Auxiliary adopted the slogan "on the verge of a surge" for the launch of our new administration. I am happy to report that the optimism behind that slogan has helped us to evolve our prime objective for the organization — to grow the membership. We recruited over 150 new members and organized nine new auxiliaries this year. I have long been a believer in the power of positive thinking and the use of visualization for turning dreams into reality: dream it and it will happen! Of course nothing happens without putting forth some effort and moving one's feet, and we certainly did a lot of that throughout this year! We realized that we needed "all hands on deck" by all of our national officers, even our alternates, and every one of them, including our past president, rose to the occasion to keep us moving forward. We have every intention of keeping up the momentum in 2016.

In the spirit of maintaining an "attitude of gratitude," I want to extend my deepest gratitude to all who helped us in so many ways during the year — the Legislative Department of the BLET National for helping with travel expenses to attend meetings and organize new auxiliaries; the State Legislative Board Chairmen and Local Chairmen who worked with us to start up new Auxiliaries in their areas; the spouses who stepped up to take positions as officers of newly formed Auxiliaries; the Chairmen of the four regional conventions who welcomed us and helped us coordinate our meetings and fundraisers at their conventions; all who supported our fundraisers; and all the new members and associate members who joined the Auxiliary this year, as well as our long-time members who remained loyal to the organization in 2015.

I am especially grateful to all of our national officers, particularly those who are members of the Executive Council — Susie Burrola, Kathleen Bisbikis, Lawana Poss, and Terri Fleming. Thank you sisters for your dedication and hard work over this past year to help the Auxiliary rise to new heights... and of course many thanks to each of our husbands who encourage and endorse the work that we do and for their belief in, and support of, the Auxiliary. And finally, I am grateful for all that the union has provided for us as BLET families. Thank you President Pierce and all of the union officers from the national level to the local level for the work that you do every day on behalf of the members, and in turn, their families. We are fortunate indeed to belong to such a great organization!

From all of our BLET Auxiliary National Officers to all of our BLET and Auxiliary Brothers and Sisters across the nation, we wish you a safe and joyful holiday season with family and friends and all the best in the coming year. We look forward to seeing many of you at the two regional meetings next summer in Chicago, Illinois, and Long Beach, California. Happy New Year!!! ©©

2015 AUXILIARY NATIONAL OFFICERS:



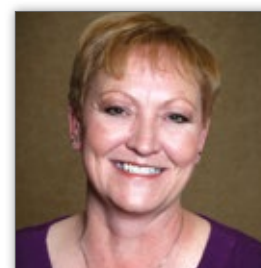
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Photo of the Month: December 2015

SNOW COVERED LANDSCAPE It was a wintry scene in February of 2015 as Amtrak train 3 rounded the curve at Dick Wootton Ranch at Raton Pass near the Colorado-New Mexico border. **Photo:** Christopher Rinker, BLET Division 474 (Blue Island, Ill.).



Are you a photographer? The National Division's Public Relations Department, which produces the Newsletter each month, has received numerous inquiries lately from BLET members volunteering to contribute their

images to the "Photo of the Month" section of the Newsletter. If you'd like to submit a photo for consideration, you may call Editor John Bentley at (216) 241-2630, ext. 248, or you can email: Bentley@ble-t.org.

Please note only high resolution images can be used. Members are also encouraged to review their employer's policies regarding the use of cameras and other electronic devices while on duty.

Advisory Board September 2015 Activity

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

NATIONAL PRESIDENT DENNIS R. PIERCE: National Division Office, Cleveland; General supervision of BLET activities; General office duties; Correspondence and telephone communications; Supervision of Office Administration; General Supervision of Special Representatives; President, Teamsters Rail Conference; Policy Committee, Teamsters Rail Conference; Minnesota State Legislative Board mtg., Minneapolis; National Bargaining, Monterey, Calif.; Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWCM), Tulsa, Okla.; Amtrak Western Regional mtg., San Diego, Calif.; Teamsters General Executive Board mtg., Charleston, S.C.; Vacation; National bargaining, Chicago; Tennessee State Legislative Board mtg., Nashville, Tenn.; UP-Central Region GCA mtg., Little Rock, Ark.; Legislative Representative class, Washington, D.C.; Rate renewal mtg., Washington, D.C.

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT E.L. (LEE) PRUITT: National Duties include but not limited to: Director, Passenger Dept.; Shortline Organizing Dept.; Trainmen's Dept.; National Publications Committee; National Legislative Board; Teamsters Rail Conference Policy Committee; PRAC; and National Negotiations; National bargaining, Monterey, Calif.; SWCM regional mtg., Tulsa, Okla.; National bargaining, Chicago; UP-Central Region GCA mtg., Little Rock, Ark; New York Dock negotiations, Houston.

NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER STEPHEN J. BRUNO: General supervision of Accounting Dept., Record Dept., Online Services Dept., Tax Compliance Dept.; Safety Task Force; PAC and FEC reports and filings; Implementation and training for BLET membership database; Pension, STD, 457 plan Trustee; Division, General Committee and SLB monthly Trustee reports; Mtgs. with vendors and financial institutions; Publications Committee; Passenger Dept.; National Bargaining Committee; IBT Human Rights Commission; Advanced Local Chairman class, Cleveland; Vacation; SWCM regional mtg., Tulsa; Secretary-Treasurer class, Cleveland; Trustee Audit, Cleveland; National bargaining, Chicago; PAC issues, conference call; Union Track mtg., Cleveland.

VICE PRESIDENT & NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE JOHN P. TOLMAN: Assigned to BLET Washington, DC office; General office duties, telephone and correspondence communications; Coordinate content of NLO website; Weekly PAC committee and legislative mtgs.; Amtrak labor roundtable, Washington, DC; OneRail mtg., Washington, DC; Transportation Research Board mtg., Cambridge, MA; IWC regional mtg., Denver; Missouri-Kansas-Nebraska Conference of Teamsters mtg., Lake Ozark, MO; Teamster Women's Conference, Boston, MA; Minnesota State Legislative Board mtg., Minneapolis, MN; Various mtgs. and functions with Representatives and Senators.

VICE PRESIDENT MARCUS J. RUEF: Vice Chairman, National Railroad Adjustment Board (NRAB); National Mediation Board (NMB) Arb. Adv. Forum; Department Head, BLET Arbitration Department; Assigned to Illinois Central, Wisconsin Central, Indiana Harbor Belt, Belt Railway of Chicago, Metra, GRR and Illinois RR; Advanced Local Chairman workshop, Cleveland; Assist GC Reynolds w/ disciplinary appeals, WC, Chicago; Prep for annual NRAB mtg. w/ 3rd Div. Chair K. Evanski, Chicago; Vacation; Conduct ROAR, NRAB labor-member forum, Chicago; NARR reception, Chicago; NARR panel member, Chicago; Referee Wesman, SEPTA deadlock list, NRAB, Chicago; NRAB administration, Chicago; Assist GC Cundari w/ IL RR negotiations, Chicago; Division 682 monthly mtg., IHB, Chicago; Make PLB 7154 arrangements, IC, Chicago; Assist GC Balonek w/ claim screening, Metra, Chicago; Study dockets for Ref. Benn, Nov. 9 hearing, Chicago; Assist GC Semenik w/ NYD arbitration submission, Chicago; Assist GC Reynolds prepare for LMRC, WC, Chicago; GC Short and LC Burns, orientation, IHB, Chicago; GC Balonek & LC McCleary claims review, Metra, Chicago; Mtg. w/ GC Cundari and Omnitrax VP Sabatini, IL RR, Chicago; Labor-Management committee mtg. w/ Metra and GC Balonek, Chicago.

VICE PRESIDENT MIKE TWOMBLY: Assigned to all Union Pacific GCAs (Eastern District, Northern Region (former C&NW), Western Lines (Pacific Harbor Lines), Western Region (Portland & Western), Central Region, Southern Region; Tacoma Belt RR, Utah RR, Longview Portland & Northern NO & Longview Switch, Portland Terminal; On duty at home office; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; SWCM regional mtg., Tulsa, Okla.; UP-Southern Region, UP-Western Region join conference, Fort Worth, Texas;

as; Vacation; UP General Chairmen update and Passenger Extra, San Antonio to Fort Worth, Texas; UP-Southern Region, UP-Western Region join conference, Fort Worth; UP-Central Region GCA mtg., Little Rock, Ark.; UP-Southern Region New York Dock Section 4 negotiations, Spring, Texas.

VICE PRESIDENT GIL GORE: Assigned to all CSX; Grand Trunk Western; Union Pacific-Southern Region GCA special assignment; Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) issues, CSXT; General office duties, paperwork, correspondence, emails, telephone calls, etc.; Holiday; BLET conference calls; Mtgs. w/ Divisions 64, 344 and 462 w/ BNSF GC Holdcraft, Wichita, KS; PLB 7542 w/ BNSF GC Thurman, Fort Myers, FL; Local Chairman's Workshop w/ BNSF GC Thurman and GC Wilson, Fort Worth, TX;

VICE PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. PRIESTER: Assigned to all BNSF (former ATSF, former C&S, CRI&P, FWD, former STL-SF, BNSF/MRL), Panhandle Northern, Missouri & North Arkansas, Montana Rail Link, Great Western; Texas Pacific; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; Mtgs. w/ BNSF labor relations and GC Wilson, Minneapolis and La Crosse; Mtgs. w/ BNSF crew management and GC Wilson and GC Thurman, Topeka; Mtg. w/ BNSF labor relations and GC Holdcraft, GC Brown and GC Thurman, Fort Worth; SWCM regional mtg., Tulsa, Okla.; National Association of Railroad Referees (NARR) mtgs., Chicago; Bobby Brown GCA mtg., Amarillo, Texas; Public Law Board, assist GC Brown, Chicago.

VICE PRESIDENT COLE W. DAVIS: Assigned to: Kansas City Southern (MidSouth Rail, South-Rail, Gateway Western, Illinois & Midland), Texas Mexican Rwy.; CP Rail System/US (Indiana Southern, Iowa, Chicago & Eastern, Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern); Springfield Terminal (St. Lawrence & Atlantic, Delaware & Hudson), Cedar River, Louisville & Indiana, Huron & Eastern; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; Huron & Eastern issues, assist GC Ladrig; Mid South issues, assist GC Craddock; CP issues and DM&E, assist GC Semenik; Springfield Terminal issues and D&H, assist GC Moore; Tex Mex issues, assist GC Ball; KCS issues, assist GC Parker; Soo Line ratification Division mtgs., Minneapolis, Minn., Thief River Falls, Minn., Harvey, S.D.; Enderlin, S.D.; Portage, Wisc.; Milwaukee, Wisc., and Chicago, Ill.; Midwest Rail Craft Scholarship Fund, Excelsior Springs, Mo.; Springfield Terminal contract negotiations, assist GC Moore; Louisville and Indiana issues, assist GC Hogan; Division 326 mtg. w/ GC Craddock, Shreveport, La.; Illinois Midland issues, assist GC Craddock; Tex Mex Division mtgs. w/ GC Ball, Laredo and Houston, Texas; IM RR negotiations, assist GC Craddock; PLB 7627 conference call, assist GC Semenik; Soo Line contract issues, assist GC Semenik; Louisville & Indiana issues, assist GC Hogan; Sign Soo Line agreement w/ GC Semenik, Chicago; DM&E negotiations w/ GC Semenik, Chicago; Vacation; PLB 7293 prep and conference call, assist GC Craddock.

VICE PRESIDENT R.C. (RICK) GIBBONS: Assigned to: All Norfolk Southern General Committees; Wheeling & Lake Erie; Chicago, Fort Wayne & Eastern; New York, Susquehanna & Western; New England Central; Connecticut Southern; Western New York & Pennsylvania; Indiana & Ohio; RSAC/RSIA Fatigue Management Group; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications; On duty at home office; SWCM regional mtg., Tulsa, Okla.; Division 37 benefit w/ VGC Fannon, Kingsport, Tenn.; Mtg. w/ NS and GC Wallace, GC Dehart and GC Peek, Atlanta, Ga.; Vacation; Dispute Committee issues, assist all NS General Chairmen; NS PWS mtgs., assisting all NS General Chairmen, Macon, Ga.; NECR/WNYP issues, assist GC Martin.

VICE PRESIDENT JAMES P. LOUIS: Assigned Amtrak; Long Island Rail Road; New York & Atlantic; Metro North; New Jersey Transit; PATH; SEPTA; Metra; Union Railroad; National Division Department Head, Education & Training Dept.; National Division Department Head, Internal Organizing, Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; Advanced Local Chairman workshop, Cleveland; E&T issues; LIRR issues, assist GC Sexton; 2016 regional meeting planning; Conrail reception and mtg., assist GC Driscoll, Philadelphia; NJ Transit issues, assist GC Decker; Amtrak issues, assist GC Kenny; SEPTA contract talks, assist GC Dixon; Amtrak Western GCA mtg., assist GC Kenny, San Diego; Secretary-Treasurer class, Cleveland; Union Track mtgs., Cleveland; NJ Transit contract talks, assist GC Decker; Local Chairman class, Cleveland; Legislative Representative class, Washington, D.C.; SEPTA/NMB A13798, Philadelphia.

Rail hazmat training available in early 2016

The Rail Workers Hazardous Materials Training Program is hosting three training sessions in early 2016. The dates are as follows: February 7-12; March 6-11; and April 24-29.

Each class will run on a Sunday through Friday basis, with an orientation session at 5:30 p.m. on Sunday and departure on Friday. All training will be conducted at the Houston Fire Department's Val Jahnke Training Facility, 8030 Braniff St., Houston, Texas, 77061.

This training addresses OSHA

and DOT required training in addition to procedures, different levels of response and worker protection in a hazardous materials emergency or release, weapons of mass destruction awareness, and the incident command system. The training also provides completion of the OSHA 10-Hour General Industry Outreach requirements. The programs are delivered using interactive classroom instruction, small group activities, hands-on drills and a simulated hazmat response in full safety gear.

The Rail Workers Hazardous

Materials Training Program is funded to provide this training by a federal grant from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS). These five-day hazmat training courses will provide rail workers the essential knowledge, skills, and response actions in the case of an unintentional release. These tools will allow rail workers to protect themselves, their co-workers and their communities.

The funding provides the following student expenses: travel, lodging and meals. In addition, an

incentive of \$175.00 per day is available to all training participants of these programs, except those who are able to secure regular pay through their employer, or are paid union officers.

Please use the following website to register: <http://railworker-trainingprogram.org>

Additional course dates and locations may be announced at a later date. For additional information, or to schedule a program at your location, please contact the Rail Workers Hazmat Training Program at (202) 624-6963. ©