



PUBLISHED BY THE BLET, A DIVISION OF THE RAIL CONFERENCE, INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS



2019 Scholarship Directory

SEE PAGES 4-5 FOR LIST OF FINANCIAL AID OPPORTUNITIES



BLET Advisory Board installed

MARK WALLACE, ALAN HOLDCRAFT ARE NEWEST VPS; DICK CROW ELECTED TRUSTEE

On January 1, 2019, a new Advisory Board began its four-year term of office for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET). National President Dennis R. Pierce convened the Advisory Board on January 1 while retired National Vice President Gil Gore administered the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Oath of Office to all newly elected Officers. The BLET National Division term of office began on January 1, 2019, and runs through December 31, 2022.

"The Oath is an integral part of any

new officer assuming his or her new responsibilities," said President Pierce. "The Oath serves as a reminder to all who hold office in our great union that we are but caretakers when it states that it is 'the members who put me here and it is the members whom I will serve.'"

Newly installed officers include National Vice President Mark L. Wallace, National Vice President J. Alan Holdcraft and National Division Trustee R.E. Dick Crow.

"These fine Brothers are all part of a strong and united Advisory Board," Pierce said, "and I am confident that

they, along with the full Advisory Board, will represent our membership to the best of their ability."

The Advisory Board is composed of the 14 highest-ranking elected officers in the Organization, and is the chief policy making body of the BLET between conventions. The Board has the authority to make decisions and perform acts and duties on behalf of the National Division that are not in conflict with or otherwise provided for in the IBT Constitution, the Rail Conference Bylaws, or the BLET Bylaws.

In addition to President Pierce, the

BLET Advisory Board members include: First Vice President and Alternate President E. Lee Pruitt; National Secretary-Treasurer Stephen J. Bruno; Vice President & National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman; Vice President Marcus J. Ruef; Vice President Michael D. Twombly; Vice President Michael D. Priester; Vice President Richard C. Gibbons; Vice President James P. Louis; Vice President Wallace; Vice President Holdcraft; National Division Trustee David P. Estes; National Division Trustee William P. Lyons; and Trustee Crow. @@



Snowy Cleveland

On its way from Chicago to Buffalo, Norfolk Southern train 206 traverses the former Nickel Plate Road main line through Cleveland, Ohio, on December 16, 2017.

Photo: Brother Richard C. Bartela Jr., a member of BLET Division 382 in Buffalo, N.Y.



BLET President's Message

Moving forward
in the new year **pg. 2**

Contract Ratified

Members OK new engineer,
trainman deals with W&LE **pg. 3**



RRB Changes

Bragg new RRB Labor Member;
Walt Barrows retires **pgs. 6**




BLET PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY DENNIS R. PIERCE

MOVING FORWARD IN THE NEW YEAR

As with any New Year, the month of January gives us a chance to assess the year gone by and to recalibrate our priorities for the year ahead.

In 2018 we convened our successful Fourth National Convention. Delegates from our nearly 500 Local Divisions reviewed and updated the rules that govern our Union and also set the course for the future of our Brotherhood and its membership. I am proud of how delegates from all parts of the country performed those duties at our 2018 Convention. They were presented with a multitude of proposed changes to our Bylaws, and our delegates made our Brotherhood stronger by their collective actions.

In the year ahead, the National Division will continue to improve upon our Education & Training Department. As this publication goes to print, the Department is preparing an announcement regarding expansion of the training classes we offer. We are proud to continue our long-standing tradition of providing the best education and training opportunities anywhere in organized labor, with the goal of having the best trained and educated union membership in the United States.

The National Division will also continue our preparations for the next round of national contract negotiations in 2019. In the previous round of national bargaining, the BLET served Section 6 notices in November of 2014 and began negotiating in January of 2015. Nearly three years later, an 88 percent majority of voting BLET members ratified a new five-year agreement in December of 2017. Part of our bargaining success can be cred-



President Pierce addresses delegates at the BLET's Fourth National Convention.

ited to the solidarity of working together with five other unions as part of the Coordinated Bargaining Group (CBG). How and where BLET bargains in any national negotiations is governed by BLET's Bylaws, and those internal rules will again determine the process used in the upcoming round of negotiations.

Returning to 2018, it is clear that it was a very political year, culminating in November's elections. As in any political election, BLET issues endorsements to its membership recommending support for those politicians who support the issues of working class Americans. That includes those politicians who are willing to support and say the word "Union," as our very way of life is tied to a strong Union movement that protects our work-

place interests. Our economic issues and safety issues are common issues to all BLET members, regardless of political affiliation and our fight to protect these interests form the foundation for our Brotherhood. As Union members, we have much more in common than we often realize, and our goal moving forward is to unite our Brotherhood to make for a stronger Union.

We can ill afford not to pay attention to what our elected government officials in Washington D.C., or in a particular State are doing, because not protecting our interests allows for legislation that can harm us. As proud American trade unionists, we must not only make sure that politicians who will support the working middle class are elected, but we must also be

on constant guard to ensure that those we elect actually are doing the job we that they were elected to do and that the middle class is, indeed, protected.

As railroaders, we are all confronted with balancing the needs of our families with a demanding job, and we all deserve to be treated with respect in the workplace. The new leadership in the U.S. House of Representatives for the 116th Congress now has the responsibility to help us achieve the workplace safety standards and family life BLET members deserve. In early 2019, Representative Peter DeFazio was elected chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. A good friend to the BLET for decades, Rep. DeFazio has been a committee member since he first came

to Congress in 1987. I am confident that he will bring stability and leadership to the Committee he now chairs, which has important oversight of BLET members' jobs and the rail industry.

Working people proved something on Election Day: when they fight, they can win against far wealthier corporate — and anti-worker — power. But reaping the rewards of an electoral win requires fighting the fight every day. As you know, a large portion of the federal government was shut down for most of January and there was no one to oversee aviation or rail safety, and nearly a million federal workers either were furloughed or forced to work for no pay. During the shutdown, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) did not dispatch investigators to two fatal railroad accidents. The NTSB did not gather evidence to determine if an investigation was warranted in a third rail fatality. This is unacceptable.

It is time for all elected officials from all political parties to come together to make sure this does not happen again. The gridlock in Washington must end. And then the new Congress and the President must work together chart a new course for this nation, one that prioritizes workers by strengthening their rights to fight for better pay, respect and safety on the job, and a secure retirement. You will play an important role in the coming months, as we continue to move forward together.

Thank you very much.

DENNIS R. PIERCE
BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

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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 policy 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

STATE, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS LEAD WAGE HIKE CHARGE

Elected lawmakers who oppose minimum wage hikes often belittle their effectiveness. But the more than 5 million workers who saw their pay go up recently due to local and state increases probably see it a lot differently.

The 19 states that raised their wage floors lifted pay for some 5.3 million workers nationally. Some will see their income rise by as much as \$2 an hour or \$4,160 a year. Eight of the increases reflect automatic adjustments for inflation, while six were due to state laws approved by lawmakers. The final six are the result of ballot measures backed by voters.

Meanwhile, workers in 24 U.S. cities and counties also experienced a wage hike with the dawning of 2019. Taken together, the minimum wage now surpasses the abysmal \$7.25 an hour federal standard in 29 states.



The country's local and state governments are laboratories of democracy and ones where elected officials can fine tune ideas and policies. One of the best that

started there is the \$15 minimum wage that took off after a handful of cities adopted it.

Seattle stands at the forefront of this experiment, and faced

criticism after one report made it seem workers were being hurt by the new policy. But an updated document issued late last year said city residents at the low end of the pay scale were doing better than they were before the minimum wage hike was instituted, even if working fewer hours. And that is not likely to change now that many are making \$16 an hour under increases which took effect on Jan. 1.

Of course, Capitol Hill must get involved to fix the wage floor nationally. Although it is likely a difficult lift, House Democrats must lead the push in Congress to raise the federal minimum wage. The spending power of minimum wage earners has fallen 40 percent in the past five decades. As the National Low Income Housing Coalition detailed in a recent report, full-time minimum wage workers would need to work 2.5 full-time jobs in or-

der to afford a one bedroom apartment in most of the U.S.

Meanwhile, corporate America continues to pocket huge profits while hardworking Americans see their paychecks remain flat or worse. While economy boosters like to point to the nation's low unemployment rate, that doesn't mean much when workers can't pay their bills.

Cost-of-living projections show that by 2024 workers nationwide will need at least a \$15 an hour full-time job to afford life's basics. It's time for Congress to take up legislation that would allow more than 40 million workers to have more money to keep food on the table and a roof over their heads.

Fraternally,

JAMES P. HOFFA
TEAMSTERS GENERAL
PRESIDENT

66 As the National Low Income Housing Coalition detailed in a recent report, full-time minimum wage workers would need to work 2.5 full-time jobs in order to afford a one bedroom apartment in most of the U.S. 99

BLET members ratify new contracts with W&LE

Members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) overwhelmingly ratified two new collective bargaining agreements with the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway (W&LE) — one for the craft of locomotive engineer and one for the craft of trainman. Each seven-year agreement governs work rules, rates of pay, and health & welfare issues for approximately 75 locomotive engineers and over 130 trainmen. Ballots were counted on January 18.

A 79 percent majority of voting members ratified the engineer contract, while an 80 percent majority of voting members ratified the trainman contract.

The agreements run through 2026 and provide significant signing bonuses based on years of service. The engineer's agreement provides general wage increases of 65.4 percent over the life of the agreement while the conductor's agreement provides a 62.9 percent general wage increase.

Most significantly, the agreement contains no harmful work rule changes to either craft.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce thanked recently retired National Vice President Cole W. Davis, NS-W&LE General Chairman Randy Fan-



W&LE locomotive 3102 on May 28, 2015.

Photo: Brother Cory Rusch, a member of BLET Division 659 in Buffalo, N.Y. Brother Rusch is a conductor with Norfolk Southern.

non, and their negotiating team for bringing the negotiations to a successful conclusion.

"This is a significant victory for our members and for our Brotherhood," President Pierce said. "I am proud to thank Brother Davis and Brother Fannon for their leadership and thank our W&LE members for their perseverance and for taking the time to vote during

the balloting process."

The negotiating process began over seven years ago when the BLET served Section 6 notices on January 5, 2012.

"I want to thank our Brothers for the solidarity they have shown throughout this lengthy process," General Chairman Fannon said. "They have remained united and steadfast through the mediation, the strike, and the fight."

Headquartered in Brewster, Ohio, the W&LE incorporates approximately 840 miles of trackage in Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Maryland. The W&LE handles over 140,000 carloads annually and interchanges with three Class I railroads (CSX, Canadian National and Norfolk Southern) and 16 regional, short line and switching railroads. ☺☺

2019 BLET SCHOLARSHIP DIRECTORY

Each year, the BLET National Division compiles a list of scholarship opportunities available to the children of BLET members. Numerous financial aid opportunities are published here in the 2019 BLET Scholarship Directory.

The scholarship opportunities vary widely. The following comprehensive list provides members and their families with contact information for each scholarship program. The BLET National Division does not maintain its own scholarship program, so interested parties are advised to contact the individual scholarship providers listed below for additional information.

Those aware of additional scholarship opportunities not included in this Directory are urged to contact the BLET Public Relations Department at: Bentley@ble-t.org.



The 2019 BLET Scholarship Directory is as follows:

James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund

The James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund (JRHMSF) is now accepting applications, and the deadline is March 31, 2019.

The application process is completely online again this year. All applications must be completed through the online portal found on the Fund's website: <http://www.jrhmsf.org>. This JRHMSF website outlines eligibility requirements and application procedures, and applicants must complete a brief registration process in order to access the registration area. Please use the "Key" JRHMSF to begin the process.

There are two types of scholarship applications available: Academic Scholarships, which range up to \$10,000, and Training/Vocational Scholarships, which range up to \$2,000. Full details and eligibility requirements for each type of scholarship are available on the JRHMSF website at the link above.

In 2018, 48 BLET families were awarded JRHMSF scholarships, including eight \$10,000 scholarships, 36 \$1,000 scholarships and four vocational scholarships. The \$10,000 scholarships are the highest amount awarded by the JRHMSF.

James R. Hoffa became a Teamster member in 1934 and served as General President for 14 years, and, in recognition of his tireless service to the union and its members, was honored as General President Emeritus for life. At the November 1999 General Executive Board meeting, then-General Secretary-Treasurer C. Thomas Keegel presented a resolution to establish the new scholarship fund. Assisting the sons, daughters and financial dependents of Teamster mem-

bers with their educational goals is a tradition that we are proud to continue.

The James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund is an independent organization established and registered as a tax-exempt entity under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Fund is established solely to provide scholarships to the child or dependent of a member of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, and contributions to the Fund are deductible as charitable contributions to the extent permitted by law.

FOR GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE JAMES R. HOFFA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND, PLEASE CALL (855) 670-ISTS (4787) OR EMAIL: CONTACTUS@APPLYISTS.COM.

BLET Auxiliary and LECMPA Scholarship Programs

Established in 1991, the BLET Auxiliary Scholarship Program provides \$1,000 scholarships to qualifying students who wish to pursue higher education. The Auxiliary also offers two \$2,500 scholarships annually in collaboration with Locomotive Engineers and Conductors Mutual Protective Association (LECMA). The two \$2,500 scholarships are fully funded by LECMPA.

To apply for an Auxiliary Scholarship award, the applicant must be a son, daughter, stepson, or stepdaughter of a BLET Auxiliary member and a Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineer and Trainmen member (living or deceased), with each being a member at least one year. An exception has been made for those children of single-parent BLET members with at least one year of membership in the BLET and at least one year of membership as a

BLET Auxiliary Associate Member. To qualify for the LECMPA-funded scholarships, the BLET member in the family must also be a member of LECMPA for no less than one year. Children of an unmarried BLET member who has been an Associate Member of the BLET Auxiliary for at least one year are also eligible.

In addition, applicants must be accepted for admission by an accredited university, college, trade school, or institute of higher learning. Recipients are chosen on the basis of academic record, leadership, character, and personal achievement.

Important: For high school seniors entering an institute of higher learning for the first time, a copy of ACT or SAT scores and a current copy of cumulative grade point average (GPA) must accompany the application. For graduate students or students returning to an institute of higher learning, a copy of last term's (or most current) GPA must accompany the application. Applications submitted without these documents will not be considered.

The LECMPA-funded scholarships will be awarded to the two applicants who score the highest amongst those who qualify (by having one parent who is an Auxiliary member for at least one year, and one parent who is a BLET member and LECMPA member for at least one year). If an applicant meets the eligibility requirements for the LECMPA-funded scholarships but is not selected for one of the two \$2,500 scholarships, he/she will still be eligible for a \$1,000 scholarship.

Completed applications must be received by BLET Auxiliary Secretary Lawana Poss (lew2007@bellsouth.net) no later than April 1, 2019. Applications received after that date will not

be considered.

APPLICATIONS, INSTRUCTIONS FOR SCHOLARSHIPS, AND MAILING ADDRESS FOR SUBMISSION MAY BE FOUND ON THE AUXILIARY WEBSITE AT WWW.BLETAUXILIARY.NET/SCHOLARSHIPS.

BLET UP-Southern Region GCA

The BLET's Union Pacific-Southern Region General Committee of Adjustment (UP-SR GCA) offers annual scholarships ranging from \$750 to \$2,000. Applicants must be the son, daughter, financial dependent or ward of a UP-SR GCA member in good standing per the BLET Bylaws starting with the 2019-2020 school year. The deadline for applications is March 1, 2019.

THE RULES AND APPLICATION CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.BLETSR.ORG OR BY CONTACTING UP-SR GCA SECRETARY-TREASURER SCOTT PIEKARSKI AT UPSRGCAST@HOTMAIL.COM.

California State Legislative Board

The BLET's CSLB will award a \$1,000 scholarship to a graduating high school senior attending a college/ trade/ vocational school in 2019. The applicant's parent or guardian must be a member in good standing in a BLET division represented by CSLB.

Rules, applications and deadline information are available on the Board's website, <http://www.cslb.ws/2019-scholarship>. The deadline is May 1, 2019.

ALL APPLICATIONS SHOULD BE MAILED TO THE CSLB HOME OFFICE ADDRESS: CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATIVE BOARD, BLET/IBT, 1207 FRONT ST., SUITE 20, SACRAMENTO, CA 95814.

Illinois State Legislative Board

The BLET's Illinois State Legislative Board is currently accepting applications for its Don Little Memorial Scholarship Fund, which was established in 2013.

One \$1,000 and two \$500 scholarships will be awarded to applicants whose parent or guardian is a BLET member in good standing with a BLET Local Division represented by the Illinois State Legislative Board. Applicants must be 26 years of age or younger.

Brother Don Little was a locomotive engineer with Metra commuter rail in Chicago and a proud member of BLET Division 294 (Bensenville, Ill.) for 35 years. Brother Little served for more than 10 years on the Executive Committee of the Illinois State Legislative Board and always had a dream of establishing a scholarship program for the family members of fellow Brothers and Sisters who belonged to divisions chartered in Illinois. Unfortunately, Brother Little passed away before his dream was realized.

In 2013, Paul Piekarski (Chairman of the Illinois State Legislative Board), Timothy Dunn (former Secretary-Treasurer of the Board), and several others helped make Brother Little's dream a reality.

Scholarship applications and all accompanying documents must be received by May 1, 2019. Specific eligibility requirements, detailed instructions and application forms are available for download from the BLET National Division website (PDF), http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/Illinois_SLB_Scholarship_2019.pdf.

FOR QUESTIONS OR ASSISTANCE IN COMPLETING THE APPLICATION, CONTACT JOYCE A. PIEKARSKI, ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY, AT (630) 963-6099 OR JOYCE.PIEKARSKI@GMAIL.COM.

Wyoming State Legislative Board

The BLET's Wyoming State Legislative Board (WYSLB) is again offering a scholarship program for the upcoming school year. First offered for the 2014 academic year, the scholarship deadline for 2019 is June 1, 2019.

Wyoming State Legislative Board Chairman Cory Runion said the Board will award either two \$1,000 scholarships, or, in the event of a single applicant, one \$1,000 scholarship each year to an immediate family member of a BLET member in good standing and holding membership in a Division chartered within the state of Wyoming. The scholarships will be awarded based on the application, along with the requested documentation, by the WYSLB scholarship committee.

Scholarship applications and all accompanying documents must be received by June 1 of each year. Specific eligibility requirements, detailed instructions and application forms (PDF) are available for download from the BLET National Division website, or can be requested from your Division Legislative Representative. Currently, the BLET has nine Divisions chartered in Wyoming — Division 31 (Bill); Division 207 (Casper); Divisions 44, 103 and 115 (Cheyenne); Division 94 (Gillette); Division 869 (Greybull); Division 142 (Rawlins); and Division 624 (Sheridan).

For questions of assistance in completing the application please contact your Division Legislative Representative.

INFORMATION AND APPLICATION FORM AVAILABLE HERE (PDF), WWW.BLE-T.ORG/PR/PDF/WYO_SLB_SCHOLARSHIP_APP.PDF.

BLET Division 269

BLET Division 269 (Jamaica, Long Island, N.Y.) offers two \$500 scholarships to the children of BLET members who are already enrolled in college. Participation is limited to members of Division 269 only.

Winners are picked at random at the Division's Christmas party.

FOR DETAILS, WATCH YOUR DIVISION 269'S MOBILE APP OR CONTACT DIVISION VICE PRESIDENT KARL BISCHOFF (516) 426-9117.

BLET Division 622

BLET Division 622 (Alliance, Neb.) will award two \$500 scholarships in 2019. Only the children or dependents of Division 622 members are eligible to apply. Scholarship winners will be chosen at random during a Division meeting in August. Applications must be received by July 31, 2019.

FOR MORE SPECIFICS, PLEASE VISIT THE DIVISION 622 WEBSITE ([HTTP://WWW.BLET622.COM](http://WWW.BLET622.COM)) AND CLICK ON "SCHOLARSHIP" OR EMAIL NEILBURRI@GMAIL.COM.

BR&CF Scholarship Program

The Brotherhood's Relief and Compensation Fund (BR&CF) is pleased to

provide opportunities for the sons and daughters of BR&CF members to participate in the Luther G. Smith Scholarship Program.

Children, including adopted and step-children, of BR&CF members who are in "Good and Regular Standing," are eligible. Applicants must be 27 years of age or younger. Applicants may be current high school students who have applied for admission as full-time students in accredited post-secondary schools or may be attending or enrolled as full-time students in accredited post-secondary schools.

International President Jesse Taylor advises that 20 scholarships of \$1,000 each are awarded every year.

The BR&CF's 2019 scholarship program commenced on October 1, 2018, with applications due on March 1, 2019.

THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION IS AVAILABLE BY VISITING BR&CF'S WEBSITE AT WWW.BRCF.ORG.

Union Plus Scholarships

Union Plus awarded \$150,000 in scholarships to 115 students in the 2018 Union Plus Scholarship Program. Individual awards ranged from \$500 to \$4,000. The deadline is January 31 each year.

Rising education costs are making it difficult for many union families to afford the cost of tuition. That's one reason Union Plus, which provides important consumer benefits to union members and retirees, offers a unique scholarship program. It has distributed more than \$4.3 million in scholarships to over 2,900 union members and their children since 1991. Recipients are selected based on academic ability, social awareness, financial need and appreciation of labor. A GPA of 3.0 or higher is recommended.

The students selected for university, college, trade or technical school scholarships represent a wide sampling of backgrounds, union affiliations, goals and accomplishments. The selection process is very competitive since Union Plus receives over 5,000 applications each year. The Union Plus Scholarship Program is offered through the Union Plus Education Foundation, supported in part by contributions from the provider of the Union Plus Credit Card. You do not need to be a Union Plus Credit Card holder to apply for this scholarship.

VISIT THE UNION PLUS WEBSITE TO LEARN MORE: WWW.UNIONPLUS.ORG/SCHOLARSHIPS. @

The James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund

<<< 2019 Academic or Vocational Training Program Scholarships >>>



..... is the Foundation of the Future



File Your Application TODAY for an Academic or Vocational Scholarship!

..... Deadline: **March 31, 2019** | www.jrhmsf.org

For the sons, daughters and financial dependents of Teamster members. Academic scholarship awards ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000 for high school seniors planning to attend a four-year college or university and Training/Vocational program awards of up to \$2,000 for use at community colleges and trade schools.

BLET congratulates new RRB members, salutes outgoing Labor Member Walt Barrows

On January 2, 2019, the U.S. Senate confirmed the nominations of three new members to the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board: Erhard R. Chorle, Chairman; Thomas Jayne, Management Member; and Jonathan Bragg, Labor Member.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce congratulated Chorle, Jayne and Bragg on their confirmations and expressed

the Organization's optimism at continuing its good working relationship with the Railroad Retirement Board, especially with Labor Member Bragg.



Jonathan Bragg

A native of Hinton, West Virginia, Bragg began his railroad career 18 years ago with CSX Transportation as a freight conductor at Pinoca Yard in Charlotte, North Carolina. He subsequently transferred to the Signal Department and was elected Local Chairman and Northeast General Committee Trustee for the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (BRS). In May 2008, Bragg was appointed as a BRS Grand Lodge Representative.

Immediately prior to his confirmation, Bragg served as Vice President NRAB for



RRB Labor Member Walt Barrows who retired in late-2018

the BRS. He was elected to that position in 2011 and was reelected by acclamation in 2014 and 2018. Bragg has held several key positions with the BRS, including Director of Research — a position that works jointly with the Federal Railroad Administration to craft railroad safety regulations. Prior to becoming Vice President NRAB, Bragg served as Local Chairman of BRS Local 89 from 2005 to 2008. "Brother Bragg is a good friend of the BLET and to all of Rail Labor. He is well qualified and I have every confidence will serve admirably in this important post," Presi-

dent Pierce said. "On behalf of the BLET, I offer congratulations to Brother Bragg on his well-deserved confirmation."

As a career railroader, Bragg has gained an invaluable level of experience, knowledge, and understanding of the needs of rail workers, retirees, and their families.

Bragg served as the BRS representative before the National Railroad Adjustment Board (NRAB) in Chicago where he became acquainted with BLET National Vice President Marcus Ruef, who serves as Chairman of the full NRAB.

"Brother John Bragg has spent many

years serving as the Brotherhood of Railway Signalmen's Labor Member of the Third Division of the National Railroad Adjustment Board (NRAB), where he's spent years advancing Rail Labor's interests in arbitration," Vice President Ruef said. "While John will be missed at the NRAB, everyone can rest assured that he will work tirelessly to protect railroad employees' hard earned retirement."

Bragg is replacing outgoing Labor Member Walter A. Barrows on the three-member board. Bragg will fulfill the remainder of a five-year term expiring August 28, 2019, and will assume an additional five-year term expiring August 28, 2024. President Pierce thanked outgoing RRB Labor Member Walt Barrows, who retired in late 2018.

"Brother Barrows devoted a lifetime of service to railroad workers and their families," President Pierce said. "He has helped countless railroaders during his term as Labor Member. I am proud to offer my best wishes to Brother Walt Barrows for a long, happy, and healthy retirement. You have earned it, Brother!"

The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board, headquartered in Chicago, Ill., administers a federal retirement benefit program and other benefits for the nation's railroad workers. ©



Brotherhood's Relief and Compensation Fund

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BR&CF Monthly Dues	\$45.00	\$67.50	\$90.00	\$112.50
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Railroad Retirement and unemployment insurance taxes in 2019

The amounts of compensation subject to railroad retirement tier I and tier II payroll taxes will increase in 2019, while the tax rates on employers and employees will stay the same. In addition, unemployment insurance contribution rates paid by railroad employers will continue to include a surcharge of 1.5 percent.

Tier I and Medicare Tax — The railroad retirement tier I payroll tax rate on covered rail employers and employees for 2019 remains at 7.65 percent. The railroad retirement tier I tax rate is the same as the social security tax, and for withholding and reporting purposes is divided into 6.20 percent for retirement and 1.45 percent for Medicare hospital insurance. The maximum amount of an employee's earnings subject to the 6.20 percent rate in-

creases from \$128,400 to \$132,900 in 2019, with no maximum on earnings subject to the 1.45 percent Medicare rate.

An additional Medicare payroll tax of 0.9 percent applies to an individual's income exceeding \$200,000, or \$250,000 for a married couple filing a joint tax return. While employers will begin withholding the additional Medicare tax as soon as an individual's wages exceed the \$200,000 threshold, the final amount owed or refunded will be calculated as part of the individual's Federal income tax return.

Tier II Tax — The railroad retirement tier II tax rates in 2019 will remain at 4.9 percent for employees and 13.1 percent for employers. The maximum amount of earnings subject to railroad retirement tier II taxes in 2019 will increase from \$95,400 to \$98,700. Tier II tax rates are

based on an average account benefits ratio reflecting railroad retirement fund levels. Depending on this ratio, the tier II tax rate for employees can be between 0 percent and 4.9 percent, while the tier II rate for employers can range between 8.2 percent and 22.1 percent.

Unemployment Insurance Contributions — Employers, but not employees, pay railroad unemployment insurance contributions, which are experience-rated by employer. The Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act also provides for a surcharge in the event the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Account balance falls below an indexed threshold amount. The accrual balance of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Account was \$118.1 million on June 30, 2018. Since the balance is less than the indexed threshold of \$150.1 million, a 1.5 percent sur-

charge will be added to the basic contribution rates for 2019, but will not increase the maximum 12 percent rate. There was also a surcharge of 1.5 percent the previous four years, with no surcharge in 2013 and 2014.

As a result, the unemployment insurance contribution rates (including the 1.5 percent surcharge) on railroad employers in 2019 will range from the minimum rate of 2.15 percent to the maximum of 12 percent on monthly compensation up to \$1,605, an increase from \$1,560 in 2018.

In 2019, the minimum rate of 2.15 percent will apply to 81 percent of covered employers, with 7 percent paying the maximum rate of 12 percent. New employers will pay an unemployment insurance contribution rate of 2.75 percent, which represents the average rate paid by all employers in the period 2015-2017. ©©

LAVEING NEW CHAIRMAN OF PENNSYLVANIA STATE LEGISLATIVE BOARD

Brother Tim M. Laveing was elected by acclamation to serve as Chairman of the BLET's Pennsylvania State Legislative Board at its fourth quadrennial meeting in Hershey, Pa., on September 10, 2018.

A Norfolk Southern locomotive engineer, Brother Laveing is a member of BLET Division 325 (Wilkesburg, Pa.). He hired out with Conrail in 1998 and worked for NS following the merger with CSX. He attended locomotive engineer training school in 2000 and earned promotion to locomotive engineer in 2001. Brother Laveing was elected Alternate Secretary-Treasurer at the Board's 2010 quadrennial meeting, and began serving as Secretary-Treasurer in 2014.

Also elected by acclamation during the meeting were: 1st Vice Chairman James J. O'Neill, Division 483 (Philadelphia, Pa.); 2nd Vice Chairman Jeff W. Johnson, Division 71 (Philadelphia, Pa.); Secretary Treasurer Rob F. McLean, Division 325 (Wilkesburg, Pa.); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Don W. Byers, Division 287 (Altoona, Pa.). Brother O'Neill has served the Board with distinction for many years. In 2010, he was elected to his third consecutive term as 2nd Vice Chairman, and was elected to the office of 1st Vice Chairman in 2014 and again in 2018.

Elected by acclamation to serve on the Executive Committee were: Peter J. Fernandez, Division 757 (New Castle, Pa.); and Luke Titus, Division 259

(Easton, Pa.). Elected by acclamation to serve on the Audit Committee (Trustees) were: Brandon Bobolsky, Division 287 (Altoona, Pa.); Gary A. Trice, Division 370 (Pittsburgh, Pa.); and Mark F. Wuller, Division 353 (Philadelphia, Pa.).

"I am proud to offer my congratulations to Brother Laveing and all officers of the Pennsylvania State Legislative Board," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "I have every confidence that they will do an excellent job of representing our Brothers and Sisters throughout the great state of Pennsylvania." President Pierce also recognized and thanked outgoing Chairman Ken Kertesz for his many years of dedicated service to the Brotherhood.

Following the meeting in September, Brother Laveing and the members of the Pennsylvania SLB were active in Get Out The Vote efforts all throughout the state.

"We had a great meeting and I feel strongly about our team and I'm proud of how well we have we all worked together," Brother Laveing said. "I look forward to serving the membership."

The BLET Pennsylvania State Legislative Board represents more than 2,500 active and retired members from seven different railroads belonging to 16 different BLET Divisions. Brother Laveing is the fourth Chairman of the Pennsylvania State Legislative Board, which was founded in 1986. ©©

BLET members ratify new contract with CF&E

On December 27, members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) ratified a new collective bargaining agreement with the Chicago, Fort Wayne & Eastern Railway (CF&E). The agreement governs rates of pay, benefits and work rules for about 40 members.

The seven-year deal is retroactive to 2017 and runs through 2023. It provides a 26.6% wage increase over the life of the agreement. Members also receive a \$500

bonus upon ratification and are eligible for a \$2,000 retention bonus in 2023.

Health and welfare benefits, 401K and vacation days are now part of the union contract. Meal allowances are increased to \$30 and the boot allowance is increased to \$250.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce thanked Vice President Rick Gibbons and General Chairman Dewayne Dehart and their negotiating team for a job well done.

"Our short line Brothers and Sisters are an important part of our Brotherhood," President Pierce said. "I thank our CF&E members for participating in this all-important balloting process, which is so important to our strength and success as a labor union."

The BLET organized the CF&E property in 2005. The railroad operates over 323 miles of track from Crestline, Ohio to Tolleston, Ind., east of Chicago. It is a Genesee & Wyoming subsidiary. ©©

EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT ON BLET EDUCATION & TRAINING FUND

When delegates attending the BLET's Second National Convention in Reno, Nevada, established a dedicated fund for Education and Training in October of 2010, they stipulated that an accounting of funds be published in the first issue of the BLET's newsletter each year.

Specifically, members pay \$1 per month to fund and maintain a BLET Education and Training Department. Section 7 (g) — National Division Rules of the BLET Bylaws

(Pg. 27) reads as follows: "All members in active service, including those holding official positions with the carrier and those employed exclusively by the BLET, shall pay \$1.00 per month dues to establish and maintain an education and training fund, subject to the provisions of Section 29 — National Division Rules. Funds received from such dues shall be used for education and training classes and/or workshops for officers and members of the BLET." ©©

EDUCATION AND TRAINING FUND BALANCE REPORT FOR 2018

FUND BALANCE AT JANUARY 1, 2017			\$242,957
REVENUES			
EDUCATION AND TRAINING FUND DUES	\$368,352		
REIMBURSED EXPENDITURES	\$70,766		
TOTAL REVENUES		\$439,118	
EXPENDITURES			
WAGES, TAXES, AND BENEFITS	\$286,444		
BUSINESS TRAVEL AND EXPENSES	\$39,318		
INFORMATION SERVICES	\$15,295		
GENERAL OFFICE EXPENSES	\$648		
EQUIPMENT AND FURNITURE PURCHASES	\$0		
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		\$341,705	
NET REVENUES EXCEEDING EXPENDITURES			\$97,413
FUND BALANCE AT DECEMBER 31, 2018			\$340,369

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It is a great way to keep informed on the most recent issues impacting your job, your contract and your Brotherhood.



Locomotive Engineers And Trainmen News Brotherhood Of Locomotive Engineers And Trainmen

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Independence, Ohio 44131

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Photo of the Month: January 2019

SAN FRANCISCO PEAKS: A BNSF vehicle train travels through Darling, Ariz., on its way to Kansas City, Kan., from Richmond, Calif.

The mountains in the background are the San Francisco Peaks, which are located in the Coconino National Forest. **Photo:** Brother Gregory Weirich, a member of BLET Division 518 in Seattle, Wash.



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 November & December 2018 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, Independence, Ohio; 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; BLET LIRR General Committee of Adjustment annual retirement Dinner Dance, Woodberry, N.Y.; BLET Local Chairmen class, Cleveland, Ohio; BLET National Legislative Board mtg., Cleveland, Ohio; BLET Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland, Ohio; IBT General Executive Board mtg., Washington, D.C.; BLET/BNSF Kansas City Town Hall mtg., Kansas City, Mo.; BLET/UP Kansas City Town Hall mtg., Kansas City, Mo.; BLET Division Secretary-Treasurer Training Class, Independence, Ohio.

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT E.L. (LEE) PRUITT: National Duties include but not limited to: Shortline Organizing Dept.; Trainmen's Dept.; National Publications Committee; National Legislative Board; Teamsters Rail Conference Policy Committee; PRAC; and National Negotiations; National duties, Independence, Ohio; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; Holiday; BLET National Legislative Board mtg., Cleveland, Ohio; BLET Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland, Ohio; Vacation.

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/Union Track; Pension, STD, 457 plan Trustee; Division, General Committee and SLB monthly Trustee reports; Mtgs. with vendors and financial institutions; Union Track issues, testing, status updates, etc.; Triennial election oversight duties; Short Term Disability mtg., Cleveland; BLET Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland; ND Election report to IBT, Cleveland; Vacation and holidays.

VICE PRESIDENT & NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE JOHN P. TOLMAN: Assigned to BLET Washington, DC office; General office duties, telephone and correspondence communications; Swearing-in ceremony of Jennifer Lynn Homendy as the 44th Member of the National Transportation Safety Board, Washington, D.C.; OneRail lunch mtg., Washington, D.C.; Transportation stakeholders mtg./ post-election wrap/ new Congress infrastructure agenda setting, Washington, D.C.; BLET National Legislative Board mtg. and BLET Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland, Ohio; Complimentary donor appreciation events, Washington, D.C.; Mtg. w/ NS, UP, BNSF government affairs, Washington, D.C.; Mtg. w/ Short Line Safety Institute, Washington, D.C.; Mtgs. w/ new members of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Election events, Washington, D.C.; Multiple mtgs. w/ U.S. Senators working on our rail issues; Numerous receptions and office visits with members of Congress and the leadership of both the GOP and Democratic parties, Washington, D.C.

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, CN-Cedar River, Indiana Harbor Belt, Illinois Rwy., Belt Railway of Chicago, METRA, GRR, and Union Railroad; Holiday; Assist GC Reynolds w/ various issues, WC, Chicago; Prepare for DL 443, 447, 446, NRAB, Chicago; Vacation; PLB 7154, Referee Moreland, IC, Chicago; Assist VGC Lough w/ discipline appeals/ submission, Metra, Chicago; BLET Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland, Ohio; NRAB hearings, Referee Bass: DL 443, DL 446 and DL 447, Chicago; Assist GC Burns w/ discipline appeals, IHB, Chicago; Visit Division 520, WC, Chicago; Assist GC Reynolds /w new Local Chairmen orientation, WC, Chicago; Study DL 438, Referee Simon, NRAB, Chicago; Assist Metra GCA w/ draft Section 6 notice, Chicago; Holiday.

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.; UP-Western Region conference, Avondale, La.; UP-Eastern District Local Division 183 mtg., Omaha, Neb.; UP-Eastern District agreement modernization mtg.,

Omaha, Neb.; UP-Western Lines, Pacific Harbor Lines PLB 7820, Estero, Fla.; BLET Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland, Ohio; UP-Western Region PLB 7228, Chicago; UP-Eastern District PLB 7282, Chicago; Utah Railway Section 6 negotiations, Salt Lake City, Utah.

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; Vacation; BLET Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland, Ohio; ASD neg.; Paperwork, office duties, assist CSXT GTW GCAs; DRC arbitration, tentative dates w/ Twomey PLB 7265 Cases 23-26; IRR negotiations, Indianapolis.

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; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; M&NA contract talks assisting GC Thurman, Division 178, Carthage, MO; M&NA contract talks assisting GC Thurman, Divisions 116 and 178, Mountain Home, AR; M&NA contract talks assisting GC Thurman, Division 116, Batesville, AR; PLB 7477, assisting GC Holdcraft, Chicago; Vacation; BLET National Legislative Board mtg. and BLET Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland, Ohio; 1st Division arbitration w/ GC Holdcraft, Chicago; Vacation; BLET Town Hall mtgs. w/ President Pierce and GC Holdcraft, Kansas City, Mo.

VICE PRESIDENT COLE W. DAVIS: Assigned to: Kansas City Southern (MidSouth Rail, SouthRail, Gateway Western, Illinois & Midland), KCS-Louisiana Arkansas Rwy., Texas Mexican Rwy.; CP Rail System/US Soo Line (Indiana Southern, Iowa, Chicago & Eastern, Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern); Springfield Terminal (St. Lawrence & Atlantic, Delaware & Hudson), New York, Susquehanna & Western (Connecticut Southern, New England Central), Louisville & Indiana, Huron & Eastern, Wheeling & Lake Erie Rwy.; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; St. Lawrence & Atlantic, D&H and Springfield Terminal issues, assist GC Moore; MidSouth issues, assist GC Evans; CP, Soo Line, Indiana Southern and DM&E issues, assist GC Semenek; PLB 7866 Article 6 issue, assist GC Semenek, Washington, D.C.; KCS issues, assist GC Spradlin; W&LE issues, assist GC Fannon; Louisville & Indiana issues, assist GC Fannon; Huron and Eastern Division mtgs., Bay City and Detroit, Mich., assist GC Fannon; Tex Mex issues, assist GC Heise; Huron & Eastern issues, assist GC Ladrig; Ar-range PLB w/ arbitrator and CPRR, assist GC Semenek; BLET Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland; W&LE contract negotiations, assist GC Fannon, Cleveland; PLB 6884 and PLB 7084, Ft. Myers, Fla.; W&LE mediation, assist GC Fannon, Washington, D.C.; PLB 7084, assist GC Heise, Chicago; Louisville & Indiana RR contract negotiations, assist GC Fannon, Louisville, Ky.; Soo line contract issues, assist GC Semenek; D&H contract discussions, assist GC Moore; Springfield Terminal mediation, assist GC Moore.

VICE PRESIDENT R.C. (RICK) GIBBONS: Assigned to: All Norfolk Southern General Committees (Northern, Eastern and Southern Lines); Chicago, Fort Wayne & Eastern; Indiana & Ohio; RSAC/RSIA Fatigue Management Group; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications; Vice President duties; On duty at home office; PLB 7574, PLB 7238, SBA 1063, assisting GC Wallace, Dehart and Fannon, Norfolk, Va.; Holiday; BLET Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland, Ohio; NS-Southern executive mtgs., assisting GC Wallace, Asheville, N.C.; Christmas and New Years holidays.

VICE PRESIDENT JAMES P. LOUIS: Assigned Amtrak; Long Island Rail Road; New York & Atlantic; Metro-North; New Jersey Transit; PATH; SEPTA; Western New York & Pennsylvania Rwy.; National Division Department Head, Education & Training Dept.; National Division Department Head, Internal Organizing, Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; Union Track mtgs. and training; Education & Training issues; BLET Regional Meeting planning; BLET National Convention planning; SEPTA contract talks, assist GC Hill, Philadelphia; Regional mtg. hotel research; PATH contract talks, assist GC Basile; Local Chairmen training class, Cleveland, Ohio; Holiday; MBRC contract talks, assist GC Kenny; National Legislative Board mtg. and Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland, Ohio; Keolis contract talks, assist GC Kenny; Secretary-Treasurer training class, Cleveland, Ohio; SBA 940, assist GC Brown, NJ Transit; Resolution of BLET ND Convention issues, Las Vegas; Christmas and New Years holidays.

BLET members ratify 2-year pact with CN-WC

On December 28, members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) overwhelmingly ratified a new collective bargaining agreement with Canadian National's Wisconsin Central subsidiary (CN-WC). The two-year agreement governs rates of pay, benefits and work rules for over 600 members.

The agreement provides a 2.5% general wage increase effective January 1, 2018, and a 3% general wage increase effective January 1, 2019 (with full retroactivity to January 1, 2018).

The settlement is patterned after the recently ratified National Agreement settlement reached by the Coordinated Bargaining Group (including BLET). It protects all work rules and freezes monthly health care contributions at the current levels. The agreement becomes amendable again on January 1, 2020.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce thanked National Vice President Marcus J. Ruef, CN-WC General Chairman John W. Reynolds and their negotiating team for bringing the negotiations to a successful conclusion.

"Informed participation in the balloting process is a cornerstone of union democracy and I wish to thank all of our Wisconsin Central members who took the time to vote," President Pierce said.

The BLET organized the Wisconsin Central property in 1997, and the railroad was purchased by CN in 2001 for \$1.2 billion. At the time of its purchase, Wisconsin Central operated over approximately 2,850 miles of track and trackage rights in Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Michigan's Upper Peninsula and Ontario. @@