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PIERCE ADDRESSES CONGRESS

Senate introduces two-person crew bill; BLET President Pierce condemns PSR, asks Congress to block Mexican crews from operating in U.S.

Dennis Pierce, National President of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) and President of the Teamsters Rail Conference, urged members of Congress to support a national two-person crew law and asked them to block Mexican train crews from operating in the United States during a hearing before the U.S. House of Representatives on June 20, 2019.

Testifying before the House Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials at a hearing titled "The State of the Rail Workforce," President Pierce also strongly condemned the practice of Precision Scheduled Railroading (PSR) and the negative impact it has on rail worker safety. Throughout his testimony, President Pierce was highly critical of the Federal Railroad Administration's failure to regulate railroad companies, which has led to the industry becoming less safe than it should be.

Just seven days later after President Pierce's powerful testimony was delivered, the United States Senate acted by introducing a two-person crew bill. The Senate's "Safe Freight Act," a companion bill to H.R. 1748 in the U.S. House of Representatives, would promote rail safety by mandating at least two-person crews on all freight trains in the United States. The bill was introduced



President Pierce testifies on June 20, 2019

"Even though railroad workers are more productive and efficient than ever before, an increasing number are being furloughed as the rail industry cuts to the bone and compromises safety in order to pursue increased profit margins under the moniker of Precision Scheduled Railroading (PSR)."

— DENNIS PIERCE,
IN HIS TESTIMONY TO
CONGRESS ON JUNE 20, 2019

by Senators Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.) and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.).

SENATE TWO-PERSON CREW BILL

According to a press release from Senator Markey's office: "The bill is designed to correct the Federal Railroad Administration's recent rollback of a proposed rule that would have established these necessary safety standards. The Safe Freight Act will specifically require that all freight trains have at least one certified conductor and one certified engineer on board, who can then work together to protect the safety of both the

train and people living near the tracks."

Other Senators co-sponsoring the Safe Freight Act are Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Angus King (I-Maine), Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Tina Smith (D-Minn.), Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), and Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.).

"The FRA abdicated its responsibility as our nation's rail safety agency when it withdrew the proposed two-person crew rule," Senator Markey said. "A series of tragic accidents have resulted in recent years from unattended and understaffed trains, making clear that we need enough

crew on board to protect both property and the public. I am proud to lead the introduction of the Safe Freight Act with Senator Wyden to address this critical safety concern."

Senator Markey cited the 2013 tragedy in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec where an unattended freight train carrying 72 tank cars of crude oil derailed and exploded, killing 47 people, destroying much of the town, and causing millions of dollars in environmental damage. The train had been operated by a single employee.

"The decision by the FRA to abandon

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Two-person crew bills become law in CO & NV

The BLET scored major victories for railroad worker safety as two-person crew bills were signed into law in Colorado and Nevada. Colorado Governor Jared S. Polis signed his state's two-person crew bill into law on March 21, while Nevada Governor Steve Sisolak signed a similar measure in Nevada on May 15.

Shortly after passage of the Nevada two-person crew bill, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) withdrew a 2016 Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) that would have established a minimum crew size of two members on most railroad operations. The FRA also contends that the withdrawal preempts all minimum crew size laws at the state level. In a joint statement with SMART TD on May 24, BLET National President Dennis Pierce said the FRA's actions would not go unchallenged.

"These two-person crew laws represent significant legislative victories for all railroaders, especially our hard working



The team of supporters who backed Nevada's two-person crew law.

engine and train crews," President Pierce said. "In the event of an emergency situation, a lone crew member cannot properly assess the situation, secure the train, notify all necessary emergency responders and take other steps to mitigate the emergency in a timely manner."

President Pierce thanked Colorado

State Legislative Board Chairman Paul Pearson and Nevada State Legislative Board Chairman Matt Parker for their hard work in testifying in favor of these bills and lobbying for their passage.

"Brother Pearson and Brother Parker have performed admirably in their work to secure passage of these bills, which will

make railroads safer places to work," President Pierce said. "I hope other state governments will follow their lead in adopting similar railroad safety laws."

COLORADO TWO-PERSON CREW BILL

The Colorado bill reads in part: "The general assembly hereby finds, determines, and declares that it is in the public interest to require that a common carrier engaged in the transportation of freight by railroad have multiple crew members aboard a railroad train or light engine in order to help ensure the public safety of citizens of this state and the safety of the state's waterways and natural environment."

According to Chairman Pearson, House Bill 19-1034 was introduced in the Colorado House of Representatives on January 4, 2019, shortly after the opening of the first regular session of the 72nd Colorado General Assembly. Prime sponsors of the bill were Representatives Tom

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BLET President's Message

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Pedigo Reelected

Texas SLB Chairman
gets second term **pg. 4**



Off-Duty Tragedy

BLET member killed in
Ohio car crash **pg. 8**





BLET PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY DENNIS R. PIERCE

THE STATE OF THE RAIL WORKFORCE

FRA NEEDS TO DO ITS JOB, PSR AND LONGER TRAINS A DANGER TO WORKERS, PUBLIC

BLET Editor's Note:

The following is a transcript of the oral testimony delivered by BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce before the House's Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials at a hearing titled "The State of the Rail Workforce" on June 20, 2019.

Good morning, Chairman Lipinski, Ranking Member Crawford, and Subcommittee Members. I appreciate the opportunity to appear this morning, and I thank Chairman DeFazio for inviting me to testify, and for his and Ranking Member Graves' leadership of the T&I Committee.

My name is Dennis Pierce. I am proud to be the National President of the oldest union in North America — the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen — and the President of the Teamsters Rail Conference.

What is The State of the Rail Workforce? I unfortunately must report to you that — while rail worker productivity has never been better and Class I railroads have enjoyed multi-billion-dollar profits for many years — employment levels are headed in the other direction, with hundreds — if not thousands — of furloughs.

Some of this may be due to a modest downturn in traffic currently, and more is undoubtedly due to deployment of certain technologies. But the most serious threat to the workforce — at least in the short term — is the industry's fascination with Precision Scheduled Railroading, or PSR. As a result of this new "asset

maximization" philosophy, a huge number of locomotives and cars have been mothballed; dozens of shops and yards have been, or are slated to be, closed; and entire operating divisions are being sold off.

This means the loss of jobs for Union-represented employees; but it also impacts the workplace of those who remain. The vast majority of freight engineers and conductors are "on call employees," who must report for work with as little as 90 minutes' notice.

Reliable train line ups that predict work start times are the optimum way for these crews to be truly rested when called for work. But PSR has eliminated many of the jobs of employees who manage and update train lineups, and balance crews with traffic flows.

And many Carriers have implemented draconian attendance policies, forcing employees to report to work even when not fully rested due to poor predictability. Forcing employees to work fatigued in order to avoid discipline endangers both the workforce and the general public.

Ironically, Congress mandated fatigue mitigation programs in 2008 — but FRA still hasn't finalized that regulation. This Committee should act to ensure that meaningful steps are taken to mitigate fatigue as Congress commanded 11 years ago.

Equally concerning is FRA's refusal to address the ever-longer trains that are a cornerstone of PSR. With the increased use of Distributed Power locomotives — extra locomotives in the middle and rear of trains, controlled via telemetry — a single engineer is responsible for con-



President Pierce during the BLET's St. Louis regional meeting, June 25, 2019.

trolling and operating trains that are several miles long.

This push for longer trains with fewer crews has reached a breaking point. The limits of telemetry that allows an engineer to control the rear of a train from the head end are being exceeded, and in-train communications losses are becoming commonplace. A blockage in a train's brake system and a communications loss can have catastrophic results ... yet FRA does nothing to address the situation.

At the forefront of the public debate today is train crew size. The industry argues that technology has made the two-person crew obsolete, and a job should be eliminated. No technology is designed to prevent all accidents, particularly low speed collisions, or most highway/rail crossing accidents. And there is no technology that can

replace the safety benefits of having two crew members on a train during operations, or in the event of a derailment, accident or breakdown.

The previous Administration initiated a rulemaking to require two crew members on certain freight trains, but the current Administration just discontinued the proceeding and is attempting to override all State crew size laws. To ensure the safety of rail workers and the general public, we urge you to pass H.R. 1748 — The Safe Freight Act of 2019 — which has been sponsored by Congressman Young and has over six dozen bipartisan cosponsors.

Finally, I want to talk about a front-burner issue involving BLET members in Laredo, Texas, that threatens to extend well beyond that area.

Beginning in 1920 American crews picked up and delivered

all international freight traffic at the U.S.-Mexico Border on the International Bridge. Last July, our crews were replaced by Mexican crews employed by a Mexican carrier in the operation between the Bridge and Laredo Yard.

This is a very complex dispute, which has been and is being contested in a number of forums. For your purposes, it is important to understand that Mexican law, preserved in NAFTA, requires that in rail operations in Mexico, all "Railway crew members must be Mexican nationals."

When our crews were replaced, we asked the White House to intercede; we've yet to receive a response. We also requested that U.S. Trade Representative Lighthizer insist on a reciprocal provision in the pending USMCA; he didn't do so.

This Congress can do what the Administration hasn't — protect the jobs and safety of American workers. We seek legislation that mirrors the protection Mexican workers enjoy in their country ... a law that says: "Trains originating in Mexico may only be operated in the United States by crews comprised entirely of citizens or nationals of the United States."

Despite the difficulties I have talked about today, America's rail workforce provides the best railroad transportation in the world. The data is in my written testimony, as are greater details of what I've highlighted this morning.

Thank you for your time and attention.

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

IT'S TIME TO FINALLY FUND INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

The Teamsters know a little something about infrastructure. Approximately 600,000 of our members drive the nation's roadways as part of their job. And we have tens of thousands of members who work on railroads and aircrafts delivering passengers and goods to their final destinations.

These same workers have witnessed firsthand the decline of the nation's transportation network. Crumbling roadways and bridges, cracked rails and overcrowded airports and public transit systems plague travelers and commuters from coast to coast, endangering the lives and livelihoods of millions of Americans. The U.S. economy suffers because of it.

For years, the Teamsters have led the charge in the call for a substantial increase in infrastructure investment. So this union was en-



couraged earlier this year when President Trump, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer announced a preliminary \$2 trillion agreement to do just that. But we also know there is still plenty of work to do to get it done.

This is a problem that can no longer be ignored. The American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) last month released its annual re-

port on the state of America's bridges, showing that slightly more than 47,000 of the nation's 616,000 spans were rated structurally deficient and are in need of urgent repairs. It also showed that the pace of repairs fell last year, resulting in only a 1-percent reduction of deficient bridges.

It's a continuation of a trend that began five years ago, when the pace of bridge improvements began to slow down. In-

credibly, at this point, it would take more than 80 years to make the significant repairs needed to these structures.

But the nation's transportation ailments go beyond bridges. The most recent American Society of Civil Engineers infrastructure report rated it a D+, with roads and public transit pulling up the rear with D and D- grades, respectively.

These are the challenges that President Trump and congressional leaders are going to have to come together to solve when they meet again in the days to come. More funds will be necessary to get it done. The importance of doing so, however, cannot be dismissed.

The gains from making such investments go beyond the better infrastructure. Rebuilding, repairing and reinvestment is also about rebuilding and repairing the trust between gov-

ernment and workers by reinvesting in the people that have and can continue to make this nation great. Better pay will lead to more spending and improve our quality of life. That way everyone wins.

There was a time when building roads and rails weren't just political issues — they were American values, something everyone could support. The leadership in Washington, D.C. has an opportunity to return to that era right now. It's an opportunity to break political gridlock.

Take it from the Teamsters' membership — transportation needs elected officials' immediate attention! Now it's time to finally make it happen.

Faternally,

JAMES P. HOFFA
TEAMSTERS GENERAL
PRESIDENT

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Fack reelected Oklahoma State Legislative Board Chairman

Brother D. Craig Fack, a member of BLET Division 578 (Tulsa, Okla.), was reelected Chairman of the Oklahoma State Legislative Board during its quadrennial meeting held April 25-26, 2019.

A BNSF Railway locomotive engineer, Brother Fack has held continuous membership in the BLET since 2006. He began serving the Oklahoma State Legislative Board as Secretary-Treasurer in 2009.

Brother Lonnie G. Pitner of BLET Division 523 (Chickasha, Okla.) was reelected Secretary-Treasurer, a position he has held since 2012. A Union Pacific locomotive engineer, Brother Pitner has held continuous membership in the BLET since 1996.

Elected to serve as trustees were: Chad A. Gambel, Division 604 (Madill, Okla.); B. Shane Wooten, Division 569 (Heavener, Okla.); and Ryan D. Ray, Division 141 (Oklahoma City, Okla.).



Officers, members and guests attending the Oklahoma State Legislative Board's quadrennial meeting, April 25-26, 2019.

BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative John Tolman represented the BLET National Division at the meeting. Additional BLET guests included: General Chairman Jeff Thurman, BNSF (former STL-SF) General Committee of Adjustment (GCA); General Chairman David Spradlin, Kansas

City Southern GCA; and 3rd Vice General Chairman Kyle King, BNSF (former STL-SF) GCA.

"Congratulations to Brother Fack and all officers of the Oklahoma State Legislative Board," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "I thank them for their service to our Brotherhood, and I

have every confidence they will do an excellent job representing the interests of our Brothers and Sisters in the proud state of Oklahoma."

The BLET's Oklahoma State Legislative Board represents approximately 500 active and retired members from six BLET Divisions. @@

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gin receiving the most current news from the BLET National Division.

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

Gary Pedigo re-elected Texas State Legislative Board Chairman

The BLET's Texas State Legislative Board held its 15th quadrennial meeting from April 7-11, 2019, in Austin, Texas. Brother Gary R. Pedigo, BLET Division 177 (Denison, Texas), was reelected to his second term as Chairman.

Brother Pedigo was elected Second Vice Chairman at the Texas State Legislative Board's 13th quadrennial meeting in 2011, and then Chairman at the 14th quadrennial meeting in 2015. A Union Pacific locomotive engineer, Brother Pedigo has held continuous membership in the BLET since January 1, 1979. According to the Texas SLB Bylaws, terms of office for all newly elected officers begin on June 1.

Brother Benjamin L. Wright, Division 189 (Fort Worth, Texas), was elected to his second term as 1st Vice Chairman. Brother Larry J. Williams, Division 944 (Dallas, Texas), was elected to his first term as 2nd Vice Chairman. Brother Scott J. Piekarski, Division 620 (Fort Worth, Texas), was elected to his third consecutive term as Secretary-Treasurer. Elected to serve as alternate officers were: Alternate 2nd Vice Chairman W.B. (Bryce) Dondero, Division 573 (Greenville, Texas); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer J.T. (Tye) Airhart, Division 944 (Dallas, Texas).

Elected to serve as Trustees were: Ryan F. Melconian, Division 62 (Houston, Texas); Joseph A. Walker, Division 775 (Victoria, Texas); and Guadalupe V. Rodriguez, Division 566 (Del Rio, Texas).

Representing the BLET National Division at the meeting were: National President Dennis R. Pierce; First Vice President E. Lee Pruitt; Vice President & National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman; National Vice President Michael D. Priester; National Vice President J. Alan Holdcraft; Director of Regulator Affairs Vincent G. Verna; and Director of Political and Legislative Affairs Robert F. Hagan.

"On behalf of the National Division, I congratulate Brother Pedigo and all officers of the Texas State Legislative Board," President Pierce said. "I also thank them for their service to our Brotherhood."

Guests included General Chairmen who represent Texas BLET members, includ-



Members, officers and guests attending the Texas State Legislative Board's 2019 quadrennial meeting in Austin, Texas.



Gary Pedigo, Texas State Legislative Board Chairman

Delegates prepare for the start of business.



From left: BLET Vice President Alan Holdcraft; General Chairman David Spradlin, Kansas City Southern GCA; and First Vice President E. Lee Pruitt.



From left: BLET National President Dennis Pierce and Vice President Mike Priester



From left: Vince Verna, BLET Director of Regulatory Affairs; Bob Hagan, Director of Legislative and Political Affairs; and John Tolman, Vice President and National Legislative Representative.

ing: Jeff Thurman, BNSF (former STL-SF) General Committee of Adjustment (GCA); Dana Marlow, Union Pacific-Southern Region GCA; and David Spradlin, Kansas City Southern GCA.

Chairmen of neighboring State Legislative Boards were also in attendance, including: Arlin Todd, Louisiana State Leg-

islative Board Chairman; Wayne Denson, Arkansas State Legislative Board Chairman; and Craig Fack, Oklahoma State Legislative Board Chairman.

On April 11, members of the Texas State Legislative Board lobbied on behalf of the state's two-person crew bill, H.B. 742, at the State Capitol in Austin, Texas

AFL-CIO President Rick Levy and SMART TD State Director Kamron Saunders addressed the group before the start of the lobbying effort to discuss issues affecting railroad workers.

The Texas State Legislative Board represents more than 3,200 active and 1,600 retired members in 41 Divisions. ©©

TWO-PERSON CREW

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Sullivan and Daneya Esgar, both strong friends of labor and both endorsed by the BLET Colorado State Legislative Board. After second and third readings on the House floor, the bill was passed from the Colorado House to the Senate, where it was assigned by Senate President Leroy Garcia to the Transportation and Energy Committee. Senator Garcia was the sponsor of similar rail safety legislation in 2016, and he has been endorsed by the BLET Colorado SLB many times over the years. Senator Jessie Danielson was the prime sponsor of the Bill in the Senate. Brother Pearson testified in favor of the bill before both House and Senate Committee hearings, and it was approved for the Governor's signature on March 11.

NEVADA TWO-PERSON CREW BILL

Brother Parker said he worked closely with Jason Doering, his counterpart with the SMART Transportation Division, to lobby in favor of the bill.

"We let legislators know that A.B. 337



Teamsters who worked on the Nevada two-person crew bill (from left):

Fran Almaraz, a retired Teamster and full-time lobbyist for Teamsters Local 986; Assemblywoman Susie Martinez, primary sponsor and member of Teamsters Local 986; Matt Parker, BLET Nevada State Legislative Board Chairman; and Charlie Hogue, BMWED Director of Government Affairs.

should be passed so when things go wrong, two trained and experienced crew members are in the train cab to help, no matter what," Brother Parker said. "This is about the safety of the communities we travel through — not just for the train crews, but more importantly for the residents of those communities."



Supporters of Nevada's two-person crew bill with Governor Steve Sisolak during a signing ceremony on May 15, 2019.

Brother Parker thanked the bill's primary sponsors, Assemblywomen Susie Martinez and Maggie Carlton, as well as Assemblywoman Shea Backus, who is one of two co-sponsors. Brother Parker noted that Assemblywoman Martinez is a fellow Teamster and member of Local 986, while Assemblywoman Backus is a private-practice attorney with knowledge of the Railway Labor

Act. He also recognized Assemblyman Richard Carrillo for co-sponsoring the bill. Carrillo's father was a career railroader on the Santa Fe and has always been a great friend to the BLET regarding the union's issues.

"Elections have consequences, and the support we received is definitely an example of electing the right people," Brother Parker said. ©©

Dave Brown reelected Minnesota State Legislative Board Chairman

David K. Brown was reelected by acclamation to his fourth term as Chairman of the Minnesota State Legislative Board at its 28th Quadrennial Meeting in Bloomington, Minn., April 28-May 1, 2019.

Brother Brown is a member of Division 517 (St. Paul, Minn.) and has nearly 48 years of service with the BNSF Railway. He hired out with the BN on September 9, 1971, and first joined the Brotherhood on December 1, 2002. He was first elected to the office of Minnesota State Legislative Board Chairman in 2007, and was reelected by acclamation at subsequent meetings in 2011 and 2015.

Delegates also elected the following officers to four year terms: 1st Vice Chairman Joel Mueller, Division 9 (Waseca, Minn.); 2nd Vice Chairman John Toth, Division 517 (St. Paul, Minn.); Secretary-Treasurer Mark Anderson, Division 333 (St. Paul, Minn.); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Boyd Schernbeck, Division 357 (Minneapolis, Minn.).

Elected to serve as Trustees were: Tom Gasior, Division 369 (Minneapolis, Minn.); Tom Moder, Division 163 (Proctor, Minn.); and Boyd Schernbeck, Division 357 (Minneapolis, Minn.). Elected to serve as Alternate Trustees were: Jason Perkovich, Division 768 (Thief River Falls, Minn.); Chad Roehrich, Division 27 (St. Cloud, Minn.); and Dan Hauschild, Division 202 (Dilworth, Minn.).

Representing the BLET National Division at the meeting were: Dennis R. Pierce, National President; E. Lee Pruitt, First Vice President; John P. Tolman, Vice President and National Legislative Representative; Dick Crow, National Division Trustee and General Chairman, Union Pacific-Northern Region GCA; Vince Verna, Director of Regulatory Affairs; and Bob Hagan, Director of Political and Legislative Affairs.

"I am happy to congratulate Brother Dave Brown and all officers of the Minnesota State Legislative Board and thank them for their service to our great Brotherhood," President Pierce said. "Led by Brother Brown, these Brothers have done a great job of representing the interests of our membership in Minnesota, and have



Members, officers and guests in attendance during the Minnesota State Legislative Board's 28th quadrennial meeting in Bloomington, Minn.

exerted a tremendous amount of effort over the last few years to secure a minimum train crew size requirement in the state legislature. I thank them for their perseverance and dedication."

Numerous BLET State Legislative Board Chairmen were in attendance, including: B.J. Trumble, Michigan; Shane Hubbard, Indiana; Chuck Schulz, Wisconsin; Tyler Jones, Kansas; Calvin Groose, Missouri; and Pat Pfeifer, Nebraska. Also in attendance was Becky Schneider, who represented the BLET Auxiliary as National 3rd Vice President and Assistant National Legislative Representative.

Additional guests included: Paul Slatery, Political Director of Teamsters Joint Council 120; Ed Reynoso, Political Director of Teamsters Joint Council 32; Tom Dwyer, National President of the National Association of Retired & Veteran Railway Employees (NARVRE); and Gary Nelson, Area 4 Director of NARVRE.

On May 1, the Board members went to the State Capital in St. Paul, Minn., to lobby and meet with many State Senators and Representatives from both sides of the aisle regarding the Minimum Train Crew Requirement, H.F. 286 and S.F. 263.

Brother Brown recognized outgoing 1st Vice Chairman Wally Czerwinski of BLET Division 202 (Dilworth, Minn.), who did not seek reelection due to his

planned retirement. Brother Czerwinski has held continuous membership in the Brotherhood since June 1, 1987, and has served as a member of the Minnesota State Legislative Board since 1992 under former SLB Chairman J.P. Max.

"A U.S. Marine and a great friend, Wally is a dedicated and strong advocate for the safety of all rail workers," Brother Brown said. "He dedicated his entire career to our union and to the Minnesota

State Legislative Board. He is a living library of rail safety legislation and whenever his legislative knowledge was needed, he was there to help. Wally held many positions on the Board, including Vice Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer. We wish him prosperity and health in his future retirement."

The Minnesota State Legislative Board represents approximately 1,100 active and retired members in 11 Divisions. ©©



BLET State Legislative Board Chairmen and the BLET National Legislative Office at the 2019 Minnesota State Legislative Board quadrennial meeting.

SCOTT PALMER REELECTED OREGON STATE LEGISLATIVE BOARD CHAIRMAN

Scott Palmer was reelected by acclamation to his sixth term as Chairman of the Oregon State Legislative Board at its May 22 triennial meeting in Portland, Oregon.

A BNSF locomotive engineer and member of Division 842 in Klamath Falls, Oregon, Brother Palmer hired out with the Burlington Northern in Seattle in 1990. He earned promotion to locomotive engineer in 1994 and joined the Brotherhood on June 1, 1994. He has held continuous membership since that time and has served the Brotherhood in various elected offices over the years.

Also elected by acclamation were: 1st Vice Chairman Christopher L. Myron, Division 842 (Klamath Falls); Secretary-Treasurer Steve K. Baldwin, Division 362 (La Grande); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Joel Ashcroft, Division 476 (Eugene).

Brother Ashcroft was elected to serve as a Trustee. Also elected to serve as Trustees were: Matt Campbell, Division 416 (Salem) and Steven Kreines, Division 236 (Portland).

General Chairman Steve Leyshon, Union Pacific-Western Region GCA, attended the meeting and gave all members a very interesting look into Union Pacific's "Precision Scheduled Railroading" efforts.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce thanked Brother Palmer and all officers of the Oregon State Legislative Board for serving the Brotherhood.

The Oregon State Legislative Board represents about 450 members from five BLET Divisions. ©©



Scott Palmer



Members of the Minnesota State Legislative Board at the Capital in St. Paul with Rep. Rick Hansen

Driscoll reelected Conrail SSA/CSXT-ND General Chairman

Brother Patrick T. Driscoll was reelected by acclamation to his second term as General Chairman of the Conrail SSA/CSXT-Northern District General Committee of Adjustment at the GCA's quadrennial meeting in Buffalo, N.Y., May 20-21, 2019.

A member of BLET Division 382 (Buffalo, N.Y.), Brother Driscoll joined the BLET in 1994 as a Conrail locomotive engineer. Driscoll began serving as General Chairman on January 1, 2015, following the election of former General Chairman James P. Louis to the office of National Vice President. He was elected to his first full term as General Chairman at the GCA's quadrennial meeting in May of 2015. In 2018, Brother Driscoll was elected by acclamation to serve as Fifth Alternate National Vice President at the BLET's Fourth National Convention in Las Vegas.

Also elected by acclamation were: Secretary-Treasurer Christopher R. Eleczko, Division 421 (Buffalo, N.Y.); 1st Vice General Chairman Harvey N. Benn IV, Division 169 (Syracuse, N.Y.); 2nd Vice General Chairman Michael T. McCrory II, Division 382 (Buffalo, N.Y.); and 3rd Vice General Chairman Mark S. Krajewski, Division 46 (Albany, N.Y.). Elected to serve



Officers, delegates and guests attending the Conrail SAA/CSXT Northern District General Committee of Adjustment meeting in Buffalo, N.Y., May 20-21, 2019.

as alternate officers were: Alternate Vice General Chairman F. "Phil" Burgos Jr., Division 601 (Newark, N.J.); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Thomas R. Fay, Division 382 (Buffalo, N.Y.).

Appointed to serve as Trustees were: Phil Burgos, Division 601; Mike McCrory, Division 382; and Erin S. Patterson,

Division 3 (Cleveland, Ohio).

Representing the BLET National Division at the meeting were: National President Dennis R. Pierce; National Vice President Jim Louis; National Vice President Alan Holdcraft; Director of Bylaws Administration John Fink; Special Representative and Director of Mobilization-

Eastern Region Matt Kronyak; and Special Representative Rich Bartela. Brothers Fink, Kronyak and Bartela are members of BLET Divisions belonging to the Conrail SSA/CSXT-Northern District GCA.

"I am proud to congratulate Brother Driscoll and all officers of the Conrail GCA," President Pierce said. "I thank these Brothers for continuing to serve our Brotherhood and I have every confidence they will do an excellent job of protecting the rights and interests of our members."

Brother Driscoll has been an officer of Division 382 since 2000. He was elected Local Chairman in 2006, 2009 and 2012. He has served the GCA as Vice General Chairman and Alternate General Chairman. In 2014, he served the National Division as a member of the Bylaws Committee at the Third National Convention in 2014, and as a member of the Arrangements Committee at the Fourth National Convention in 2018. Brother Driscoll also serves as Secretary-Treasurer of the BLET's Eastern General Chairmen's Association.

The Conrail SSA/CSXT-Northern District GCA is comprised of 13 different BLET Local Divisions on two properties (Conrail Shared Assets and CSXT Northern District) and represents approximately 1,400 active and retired members. ©



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PRESIDENT PIERCE TESTIMONY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

its planned two-person crew rule makes no sense, especially in light of recent rail accidents,” said Senator Wyden. “This is a matter of safety and security for rail crew and the public, and experts agree. It’s now up to Congress to step in and require freight trains have the staffing required to keep folks safe.”

PIERCE CONDEMNS PSR

Even though railroad workers are more productive and efficient than ever before, an increasing number are being furloughed as the rail industry cuts to the bone and compromises safety in order to pursue increased profit margins under the moniker of Precision Scheduled Railroading (PSR).

“What is The State of the Rail Workforce? I unfortunately must report to you that — while rail worker productivity has never been better and Class I railroads have enjoyed multi-billion-dollar profits for many years — employment levels are headed in the other direction, with hundreds — if not thousands — of furloughs,” President Pierce said.

The PSR management style is neither precise nor scheduled, as President Pierce pointed out. It is impossible for rail workers to receive scheduled on-duty times or accurate train line-ups that predict work start times, which contributes to fatigue.

“[U]nfortunately, the quality of many Class I train lineups has become another victim of the PSR mentality,” President Pierce testified. “As a result, train crews are routinely called to go to work, unable to obtain meaningful rest, all because the employer-provided prediction for their next work shift was completely inaccurate. Put yourself in this proverbial Catch-22 — if I tell them I am too tired to work safely, I could be terminated. The days of this treatment must come to an end.”

President Pierce also condemned railroad company attendance policies, which are counterproductive to safety and do little to mitigate employee fatigue. “And many Carriers have implemented draconian attendance policies, forcing employees to report to work even when not fully rested due to poor predictability. Forcing employees to work fatigued in order to avoid discipline endangers both the workforce and the general public,” he said.

FRA WON'T REGULATE

President Pierce said that the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 mandated the FRA to implement fatigue mitigation regulations, but nothing has been done in that regard for more than a decade. Such fatigue mitigation regulations could have provided a useful tool in combating the industry’s PSR mentality, but the FRA still has not finalized a regulation on the RSIA mandate. President Pierce urged lawmakers to act instead. “Ironically, Congress mandated fatigue mitigation programs in 2008 — but FRA still hasn’t finalized that regulation. This Committee should act to ensure that meaningful steps are taken to mitigate fatigue as Congress commanded 11 years ago,” President Pierce said.

EXCESSIVE TRAIN LENGTHS CAUSED BY PSR

President Pierce also took the FRA to task for its refusal to take even the slightest interest in the longer and longer trains that have become a cornerstone of the PSR operating model. The ever-increasing use of Distributed Power (or “DP”) locomotive consists — where extra locomotives are placed in the middle and rear of trains and are controlled via telemetry from the head end — has led to longer and longer trains. In DP operations, a single locomotive engineer is charged with the responsibility of controlling and operating these longer and longer trains. Under PSR, however, train lengths have become so great that engineers are regularly losing communication with the rear of their trains, preventing them from making emergency brake applications in the event something goes wrong.



Above: View from the guest gallery during the June 20 hearing. **Below:** Witnesses seated at the table, from left: President Pierce; SMART TD President John Previsich; and Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen President Jerry C. Boles. Observers in the background include Vince Verna, John Tolman and Bob Hagan of the BLET’s National Legislative Office.



“This push for longer trains with fewer crews has reached a breaking point. The limits of telemetry that allows an engineer to control the rear of a train from the head end are being exceeded, and in-train communications losses are becoming commonplace. A blockage in a train’s brake system and a communications loss can have catastrophic results ... yet FRA does nothing to address the situation,” President Pierce said.

“In other words, PTC is not the silver bullet that some would have you believe,” Pierce testified.

TWO-PERSON TRAIN CREWS

He called out the FRA for failing to do its job and urged Congress to support a national two-person crew law.

“In spite of all of this, the industry’s safety regulator has again refused to regulate,” Pierce testified. “Although the previous Administration promulgated a rule making that would have required two crew members on many forms of freight service, the current Administration has withdrawn that rule making. In doing so, FRA has further attempted to ‘negatively preempt’ all State laws that make any effort to legislate crew size. For all of these reasons, and to ensure the safety of all rail workers, we strongly support H.R. 1748 — The Safe Freight Act of 2019 — which has been sponsored by Congressman Young and has over six dozen bipartisan cosponsors. We urge passage of

dundant, and that a job should be eliminated. However, President Pierce testified that PTC is not designed or intended to prevent all accidents, and that PTC cannot prevent low speed collisions. Nor does it reduce the potential for accidents at highway/rail crossings caused by motorists who fail to yield to the train.

“In other words, PTC is not the silver bullet that some would have you believe,” Pierce testified.

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this Bill by the House and the Senate, and that President Trump sign it into law.”

Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska) introduced H.R. 1748 on March 22, 2019. Also known as the Safe Freight Act, the House version of the bill would also require that two certified crew members operate freight trains the United States. The bill had nearly 80 co-sponsors as this publication went to press.

MEXICAN CREWS OPERATING INSIDE THE U.S.

President Pierce also touched upon the BLET’s ongoing dispute with the Kansas City Southern, which last year began using Mexican nationals to operate freight trains inside the United States for about nine miles inside along its Tex-Mex Railway subsidiary. The Mexican train crews are not held to the same engineer certification standards that U.S. train crews must maintain, which is a degradation of safety. After almost a year of inaction on the issue by the White House and the FRA, President Pierce said the BLET is seeking a law that says, “Trains originating in Mexico may only be operated in the United States by crews comprised entirely of citizens or nationals of the United States.”

IN CONCLUSION

President Pierce concluded his testimony by praising all hard working locomotive engineers and trainmen throughout the United States. “Despite the difficulties I have talked about today, America’s rail workforce provides the best railroad transportation in the world,” he said.

Peter DeFazio (D-OR) serves as Chair of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and Rep. Daniel Lipinski (D-IL) serves as Chair of the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials.

Additional witnesses at the June 20 hearing included: John Previsich, President, SMART Transportation Division; Jerry C. Boles, President, Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen; Andrew W. Sandberg, Assistant to the President, Directing General Chairman, IAM District Lodge 19; William Gonzalez, President, Amtrak Police Fraternal Order of Police Labor Committee; Ronald L. Batory, Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration; and Ian Jeffries, President & CEO, Association of American Railroads. ©

A COPY OF PRESIDENT PIERCE’S WRITTEN TESTIMONY IS AVAILABLE ON THE BLET WEBSITE:
WWW.BLE-T.ORG/PR/PDF/2019-06-20_RR_SUBCMTE_BLET_PIERCE_FINAL.PDF

“This push for longer trains with fewer crews has reached a breaking point. The limits of telemetry that allows an engineer to control the rear of a train from the head end are being exceeded, and in-train communications losses are becoming commonplace. A blockage in a train’s brake system and a communications loss can have catastrophic results ... yet FRA does nothing to address the situation.”

— DENNIS PIERCE, IN HIS TESTIMONY TO CONGRESS ON JUNE 20, 2019



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6/19

Photo of the Month: June 2019

GEOMETRY TRAIN: A CSX geometry train tied up for the night in Buffalo, N.Y., on December 2, 2018. **Photo:** by Adam Vester,
a CSX locomotive engineer and member of BLET Division 382 in Buffalo, N.Y.



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 April & May 2019 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; Texas State Legislative Board mtg., Austin, Texas; BNSF-ATSF Secretary-Treasurer class, Fort Worth, Texas, and Phoenix, Ariz.; Minnesota State Legislative Board mtg., Minneapolis, Minn.; IBT General Executive Board mtg., Las Vegas; BLET Western General Chairmen's Association (WGCA) mtg., New Orleans, La.; Amtrak Local Chairmen mtg., New Orleans, La.; IBT mtg., Washington, D.C.; Conrail GCA mtg., Buffalo, N.Y.

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT E.L. (LEE) PRUITT: National Duties include but not limited to: 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.; Texas SLB mtg., Austin, Texas; Vacation; Minnesota SLB mtg., Minneapolis, Minn.; Wisconsin SLB mtg., Madison, Wisc.; WGCA annual mtg., New Orleans, La.

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; Texas SLB mtg., Austin, Texas; Minnesota SLB mtg., Minneapolis, Minn.; Vacation; WGCA annual mtg., New Orleans, La.; IBT mtgs., Washington, D.C.

VICE PRESIDENT & NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE JOHN P. TOLMAN: Assigned to BLET Washington, DC office; General office duties, telephone and correspondence communications; Mtgs. w/ NTSB Board members, Washington, D.C.; Texas SLB mtg., Austin, Texas; Oklahoma SLB mtg., Catoosa, Okla.; Mtg. w/ representatives of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO, Washington, D.C.; Minnesota SLB mtg., Minneapolis, Minn.; Series of mtgs. with various members of both the House and Senate regarding the Safe Freight Act and cross border issues, Washington, D.C.; Various receptions and office visits with members of Congress and 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) Advisory Forum-Labor Member; Department Head, BLET Arbitration Department; Assigned to CN-Wisconsin Central, CN-Illinois Central, CN-Cedar River, Belt Railway of Chicago, Gary Rwy., Illinois Rwy., Indiana Harbor Belt, Metra (Chicago), CP Rail System/US (Soo), Indiana Southern RR, Iowa, Chicago & Eastern, Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern, Union RR; Vacation; Prep for WGCA mtg.; Indexing 3rd Division awards, NRAB, Chicago; Prep and hearing, PLB 7666, CP Rail/SOO, Chicago; Metra Section 6 negotiations, Chicago; Arbitration prep w/ GC Reynolds, WC, Chicago; Referee Bass, DL 455, NRAB, Chicago; Assist Metra VGC Lough w/ claims screening and discipline submission, Chicago; Assist GC Reynolds w/ discipline appeals, WC, Chicago; PLB 7627, CP/SOO, Philadelphia; WGCA annual mtg., New Orleans; PLB 7154, IC, New Orleans; 1st Division adoption session, NRAB, Chicago; Referee Tener, DL 457, NRAB, Chicago; Referee Benn, DL 463, NRAB, Chicago; Section 6 talks, Metra, Chicago; Assist LC Rudy prep for investigation, IHB, Chicago.

VICE PRESIDENT MIKE TWOMBLY: Department Head, BLET Short Line/Organizing Department; Designated Representative of the BLET Short Line Department; Assigned to: CN-Grand Trunk Western; Springfield Terminal; Delaware & Hudson; St. Lawrence & Atlantic; New York Susquehanna & Western; Connecticut Southern (G&W); New England Central (G&W); Louisville & Indiana; Huron & Eastern; Wheeling & Lake Erie; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; On duty at home office; National Short Line Department mtg., ND headquarters, Independence, Ohio; Huron & Eastern Section 6 negotiations, Detroit, Mich.

VICE PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. PRIESTER: Assigned to all BNSF (former ATSF, former C&S, CRI&P, FWD, former STL-SF, BNSF/MRI), Panhandle Northern, Great Western Railway of Colorado; Missouri & North Arkansas, Montana Rail Link, Otter Tail; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; Mtg. w/ BNSF General Chairmen and carrier, New Orleans, La.; Texas SLB mtg., Austin, Texas; BNSF ATSF Secretary-Treasurer training, Fort Worth, Texas, and Phoenix, Ariz.; M&NA negotiations w/ GC Thurman, Springfield, Mo.; Western General Chairmen's Association annual mtg., New Orleans, La.; Mtg. w/ BNSF GC's and President Pierce, New Orleans, La.

VICE PRESIDENT R.C. (RICK) GIBBONS: Assigned to: All Norfolk Southern General Committees (Northern, Eastern and Southern Lines); Chicago, Ft. Wayne & Eastern; Indiana & Ohio (G&W); General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications; Vice President duties; On duty at home office; Norfolk Southern negotiations, assisting GCs Dehart, Fannon and Sturdivant, Norfolk, Va.; Assist GC Fannon w/ Town Hall mtg., Bluefield, Va.; WGCA annual mtg., New Orleans, La.; PLB 7574, assist GC Sturdivant, Estero, Fla.; PLB 7553, assist GC Sturdivant, Norfolk, Va.; SBA 1063, assist GC Dehart, Estero, Fla.

VICE PRESIDENT JAMES P. LOUIS: National Division Department Head, BLET Education & Training Dept.; Department Head of the BLET Internal Organizing, Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; Department Head, BLET Passenger Dept.; Assigned Amtrak; Keolis Commuter Services; Keolis Rail Services of Virginia, LLC; TransitAmerica Services, Inc.; Long Island Rail Road; New York & Atlantic; Metro-North; New Jersey Transit; PATH; SEPTA; Western New York & Pennsylvania Rwy.; South Buffalo Rwy.; Union Track mtgs. and training; Education & Training issues; BLET Regional Meeting and Convention planning; Local Chairman training class, Independence, Ohio; NMB A13753, PATH, GC McCarthy, Newark/Jersey City, N.J.; PATH contract talks, GC McCarthy; GCA issues, WNYP assist GC Rathbun; GCA issues, SEPTA assist GC Hill; NMB A13867, assist SEPTA GC Hill, Washington, D.C.; General Chairman training class, Independence, Ohio; WGCA annual mtg., New Orleans; Amtrak District mtg., assist GC Kenny, New Orleans; Assist GC Hill w/ contract issues, SEPTA; Assist GC McCarthy w/ contract issues, PATH; Conrail GCA mtg., assist GC Driscoll, Buffalo, N.Y.; PLB 5210, assist GC McCarthy, PATH.

VICE PRESIDENT MARK L. WALLACE: Assigned to all Union Pacific GCAs (Eastern District, Northern Region (former C&NW), Western Lines (Pacific Harbor Lines), Western Region (Portland & Western RR, Portland Terminal), Central Region, and Southern Region); Tacoma Belt Railroad; Utah RR; Longview Portland & Northern and Longview Switching; General office duties, telephone, emails, correspondence, communications, etc.; On duty at home office; PLB 7228, UP-Western Region GCA, Chicago; PLB 7332, UP-Southern Region GCA, Chicago; Vacation; WGCA annual mtg., New Orleans, La.; Assist GC Marlow, UP-SR GCA, Omaha, Neb.; Assist GC Crow, claims conference, Omaha, Neb.; Assist GCs Carr, Geisler, Crow and Leyshon, mtg. w/ Union Pacific, Omaha, Neb.

VICE PRESIDENT J. ALAN HOLDCRAFT: Assigned to all CSX Transportation GCAs (Eastern Lines, Western Lines, Northern Lines (Bombardier Transportation Services), Conrail Shared Assets/CSX Northern District); KCS-Kansas City Southern/Louisiana & Ark. RR.; KCS-Texas Mexican Railway; KCS-Mid South Rail, South Rail, Gateway Western RR, Illinois Midland (G&W); General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; Conference call KCS GC Billy Evans; Illinois & Midland negotiations; KCSR Midsouth/Southeast negotiations; Conference call w/ GC Keith Kerley, Arbitrator David Vaughn, CSXT Manager Jones, re: Pending arbitration; Texas SLB mtg., Austin, Texas; Assisted KCS GC Billy Evans in negotiations w/ Illinois & Midland RR, Columbus, Ohio; PLB 7384, CSXT GC Gary Best, Chicago; PLB 7084, KCS GC Michael Ball, and PLB 6884, KCS GC David Spradlin, Fort Myers, Fla.; Division 599 mtg. w/ KCS GC Spradlin, Shreveport, La.; WGCA annual mtg., New Orleans, La.; Conrail GCA quadrennial mtg., GC Driscoll, Buffalo, N.Y.; Assist GC Michael Ball at claims conference w/ KCS, re: International Bridge at Laredo, The Woodlands, Texas.

BLET member killed in off-duty car collision

BLET Member David V. Sayson of Division 565 (Youngstown, Ohio) was killed in a off-duty automobile collision in Springfield Township, Ohio, on May 30, 2019. He was 48 years old.

According to police reports, a 20-year-old driver fell asleep at the wheel and traveled left of center, colliding head-on with Brother Sayson's vehicle. The 20-year-old survived, but Brother Sayson was rushed to the hospital and pronounced dead a short time later.

Brother Sayson hired out with Conrail in 1994, then moved on to Norfolk Southern where he earned promotion to locomotive engineer. He held continuous membership in



Sayson

the Brotherhood since January 1, 2011.

According to Timothy M. Laveing, BLET's Pennsylvania State Legislative Board Chairman, Brother Sayson worked out of Conway, Pa., for many years before recently moving over to Youngstown, Ohio.

"Brother Sayson leaves behind a lot of good friends in Youngstown and at my terminal in Conway," Brother Laveing said. "He loved his job and was qualified in so many areas. He developed many loving and supportive friends with his railroad family over

his 25 years of loyal service."

Brother Sayson is survived by his wife, Jody, and three children: sons Dominic and Dante, and daughter Olivia. He is also survived by his parents, Vincent and Shelda Sayson, one brother and one sister, and numerous inlaws, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and cousins.

A funeral will be held at the same location on June 7.

"This is a heartbreaking tragedy and a terrible loss to all who knew and loved Brother Sayson," BLET National President Dennis Pierce said. "On behalf of the BLET National Division, I extend our most heartfelt condolences to Brother Sayson's family and friends." @