



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

Regional Meeting Recaps



Photo highlights and news about the BLET's Regional Meetings in St. Louis, Clearwater. SEE PGS 4-5

Victory in New Jersey

New law prohibits NJ Transit from asserting sovereign immunity to escape rail worker lawsuit under FELA

Rail Labor scored a major victory for railroad workers in New Jersey on June 26 when Governor Phil Murphy signed the "New Jersey Transit Corporation Employee Protection Act" into law. The law prohibits NJ Transit from asserting sovereign immunity to escape rail worker lawsuits under the Federal Employers' Liability Act (FELA) and other federal rail statutes.

The new law effectively reverses the decision of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit that NJ Transit was entitled to avoid FELA lawsuits as an "arm of the state." That ruling would have halted existing

FELA suits and would have prevented all future FELA federal court claims. The new law sets things right.

Members of the New Jersey State Legislature took action to combat the wrong-headed Court decision in the form of S3164, sponsored by Senator Linda Greenstein (D-14) and Senator Patrick J. Diegnan Jr. (D-18), and A4689, sponsored by Assemblyman Daniel Benson (D-14), Yvonne Lopez (D-19) and Carol A. Murphy (D-7). Both Houses of the State Assembly unanimously ratified the final bill on June 20 by a vote of 74-0. Final language of the bill is available at: <https://legiscan.com/NJ/text/S3164/2018>

"I thank BLET General Counsel Mike Wolly for his role in drafting

the legislation and the New Jersey State Legislative Board for its efforts to lobby for passage of this much needed law," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "I also thank all BLET members in New Jersey as well as their families for contacting their members of the state legislature regarding this bill. United in solidarity, we were able to score a major victory by preserving the rights and protections that our New Jersey Transit Brothers and Sisters have enjoyed throughout their entire careers."

President Pierce also thanked members of the BLET National Mobilization Team for helping to organize membership action on this issue. @@

"United in solidarity, we were able to score a major victory by preserving the rights and protections that our New Jersey Transit Brothers and Sisters have enjoyed throughout their entire careers."

— President Dennis Pierce

TEAMSTER 2020 ELECTION SURVEY TO IDENTIFY TOP ISSUES

Working Americans face numerous challenges. Despite top line economic numbers that may look favorable, many workers' paychecks are not growing. Add to that concerns surrounding pensions and health care benefits, and uncertainty looms for the U.S. middle class.

That's why the 2020 election is so very important for the BLET and all Teamsters. The Teamsters and BLET are committed to making our presence felt and demanding that presidential candidates make commitments on issues that are important to our membership. That starts with input from BLET and Teamster members.

"The Teamsters want to hear from members about what their top issues and concerns are as the nation prepares for this pivotal election," Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa said. "This union will be putting on a full-court press to demand that any candidate for president listen to our members and address our concerns. The Teamster 2020 survey is an important step as we hear directly from our members on what issues they'll be voting on."

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce encouraged all BLET members to go to www.teamsters2020.com and fill out the survey to let union leaders know what their thoughts are going into the 2020 election.



"All BLET members are a part of this process, and we should all participate in this first step of the election process," President Pierce said. "The 2020 Presidential Election is right around the corner and it's more important than ever that we elect people who support workers and our families."

Together, Teamster Brothers and Sisters can ensure that this great union plays a critical role in electing a president that will truly stand with our members and the nation's workers. @@

URGENT: CONTACT CONGRESS ON THESE TWO ISSUES

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) is urging all members to contact their Representatives and Senators in Congress to support the union's two most pressing legislative issues: two-person train crews, and foreign crews operating trains into the United States at the southern U.S./Mexican border.

In mid-July, 15 BLET State Legislative Board Chairmen came to Washington D.C. to join BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative John Tolman, Director of Legislative and Political Affairs Bob Hagan and Director of Regulatory Affairs Vince Verna to lobby on Capitol Hill. The BLET representatives discussed these two vital issues with members of the U.S. House of Representatives and United States Senate.

TWO-PERSON CREWS

We urge you to contact your member of Congress in the U.S. House of Representatives, as well as both of your U.S. Senators, to support the Safe Freight Act H.R. 1748 in the House (introduced by Don Young, R-AK) and S. 1979 in the Senate (introduced by Ed Markey, D-MA). These bills have bipartisan support and seek to put a certified Engineer and a certified Conductor on freight trains in the US.

COPIES OF THE BILLS CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.CONGRESS.GOV: HOUSE VERSION: bit.ly/2JH7l5O & SENATE VERSION: bit.ly/2JHkpYR

To find your Member of Congress or Senators' contact information, please visit: <https://www.house.gov> or <https://www.senate.gov>

CROSS-BORDER RAIL OPERATIONS

A bill just introduced in the House of Representatives, H.R. 3896 (<https://bit.ly/2SywNNz>), would amend Title 49, United States Code, "to provide that only citizens or nationals of the United States may operate trains within the United States that originate in Mexico." Please tell your Representatives and Senators about this important issue and ask them to support our efforts by co-sponsoring H.R. 3896, which was introduced by Rep. Dan Lipinski (D-IL), Chairman of the Railroad Subcommittee and co-sponsored by Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA).

"These are issues of the utmost importance to the BLET," National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "I urge all BLET members and their families to build on the momentum generated in the past week by taking a few minutes to call your members of Congress on these two vital issues. Please help us to protect our jobs, our craft and our future."

Stay tuned for updates on the issues as they develop in Washington D.C. @@



BLET President's Message

Help preserve what your union has accomplished **pg. 2**



Election News

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BLET PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY DENNIS R. PIERCE

JOIN THE FIGHT TO PRESERVE WHAT OUR UNION HAS ACCOMPLISHED

BLET Editor's Note: The following is a transcript of remarks delivered by BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce at the BLET's regional meeting in Clearwater, Fla., on July 23, 2019.

I want to start by thanking you all for being here. At the core of our strength and our solidarity is our fellowship. It is at meetings like this one that foster that fellowship; my hope is that we all leave here more united and determined than ever.

A lot has happened since our last BLET Regional Meeting in Washington, DC last year. Perhaps one of the most important events was when the citizens of the proud State of Missouri went to the ballot box in August of last year and overturned the State's so called Right to Work law.

My hat is off to the working men and women of Missouri, and more importantly I offer my thanks to the many Union Brothers and Sisters that got involved in the campaign to right the horrible wrong done to working class Americans in Missouri by their elected government. Let's give a round of applause for the Officers and Members of our Missouri State Legislative Board, as well as for all the hard working Teamster Brothers and Sisters who refused to sit on the sidelines and got involved in the campaign.

As was said then, don't be fooled by the slogan. Right to Work gives you no rights, except the right to work for less, have lesser health care, and a less safe work place. Strong Unions are what give working class Americans the best chance at fair wages, good health care, and a voice in workplace safety. Right to work is no more than an attempt to eradicate Unions from the American landscape.

As I shared last year, I know first-hand the difference between a Union job and non-Union job. I did not grow up in a Union household, and my first job after leaving college was in a non-Union factory in the Midwest. The boss's friends and families had the best jobs, and made the most money, I was neither of those.

That changed for me when I



President Pierce at the lectern during the St. Louis regional meeting.

hired out on the old Burlington Northern Railroad; I got a Union job. My wages doubled on day one, and for the first time, I had health insurance. As I said, I know the difference between having a Union contract and not having one. You can trust me when I say that you do not want to work in the railroad industry without a Union, and a Union contract.

But the attack on our Union movement and our Union contracts is far from over. And whether any of us wants to hear it or not, the attack is politically motivated by one party. We all have the right to cast our votes in political elections as we see fit, but I believe that we must then take an in-depth look at how our choice turned out. Elections have consequences, and in the past two years, we have seen the attack on Unions come to our door. Be it from the National Labor Relations Board, the National Mediation Board, or the Federal Railroad Administration.

We know all too well that there are very few workforces subjected to as much oversight and control by the Federal Government as those of us who toil in the nation's rail industry. Whether it be the Federal Railroad Administration's oversight of rail regulations, the Surface Transportation

Board's oversight of rail mergers, or the National Mediation Board's oversight of our grievance and contract mediation and arbitration, as well as organizing, we are continually affected by the power of the Executive Branch to appoint these government overseers.

During President Obama's administration, we had an FRA Administrator willing to pursue a regulation requiring two crew members on certain trains. In contrast, just recently President Trump's FRA Administrator withdrew the crew size rulemaking. But he took things a step further, clearly at the request of the Railroads.

As you know, six states have passed State crew size laws over the past few years. Before I go any further, these laws can also be considered the consequence of State elections. It is a matter of fact that the six state crew size laws were passed by legislatures under Democratic control, and signed into law by Governors who were also Democrats.

President Trump's hand-picked FRA Administrator, who was previously the CEO of Conrail, invoked what is called "negative preemption" when he withdrew the rulemaking. Imagine, he asserts that the lack of a federal law or regulation preempts

the States' efforts to legislate their own solutions. I will say it again, elections have consequences, and this turn of events is just that.

It's important for spouses and other family members to understand what is at risk if we are not vigilant in protecting what we have. At their 1970 Convention, UAW President Walter Reuther said, "There's a direct relationship between the ballot box and the bread box, and what the union fights for and wins at the bargaining table can be taken away in the legislative halls." Almost fifty (50) years later, these words still ring true.

We have been fortunate to work in an industry that is virtually completely organized, and for that reason, our members have benefits that come not only from collectively bargained contracts, but from also from legislation crafted and pushed by your Union, and implemented in the legislative halls over the years. Think for a minute about these combined benefits that come from over 156 years of BLET trade unionism:

- **A Railroad Retirement system** that allows you to retire with 30 years of service at age 60, and that pays retirement annuities that are about double those paid under Social Security.

- **An Occupational Disability system** for railroaders with 20 years of service that pays double the annuity paid to SSI recipients who are totally disabled.

- **A Medicare system** that provides you with Health Care in your retirement years.

- **Health and welfare coverage** while working, that pays about 90% of all medical costs, and provides bridge coverage for those who take early retirement and are not old enough to qualify for Medicare.

- **The FELA System** that protects you in the event that you get injured on the job. We all know that railroading is a dangerous occupation, and the FELA is there to not only protect you if injured, but it also protects the families of railroad workers whose lives are lost on the job.

Even more important to you and your family is that if these corporate-backed politicians suc-

ceed in eliminating labor unions from the American workplace, your Union contracts go away with them. Many of our members do not realize that without a union and a union contract, there is no seniority roster or seniority district. Pay rates are decided by the boss, in many cases without regard to anything but personal favoritism and nepotism. There are no work rules that limit what you can be forced to do for a day's pay; insurance is only provided to the extent required by government, and if you complain about any of this, you are terminated without the hearing and arbitration process that your contract currently provides you. All of the items I listed are at risk if there is no Union here to protect them.

But I can't do this job alone... I need your help to spread the word, and the help of every BLET member who is willing to pitch in and do their part. To stop the anti-worker movement in the legislative halls across the country, we must seek out and elect politicians who will work for working class Americans. We must support politicians who know that a vibrant working middle class is what makes America great. In fact, the brave politicians that passed the six State Crew Size laws have earned our support.

At the Federal level, I was invited by Congress to testify on behalf of our proud Union a few weeks ago at a hearing of the House Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials. This was the second time I have testified before a Congressional Committee, and I can tell you that the tone of last week's hearing — under Democratic control — was much different than the tone of the hearing on Amtrak 188, where the Republicans were in control.

If you have not watched the way that the labor friendly Democrats on the Committee took the FRA Administrator to task, you should. It was obvious in his testimony and his defensive answers to the Committee that he has yet to separate his railroad CEO days from his current appointment as FRA Administrator.

In my testimony, I took FRA

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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

UNIONS OFFER OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNGER WORKERS

Young adults in America are not optimistic about the future, and for good reason — financially they are doing far worse than those from previous generations.

Statistics released by accounting behemoth Deloitte shows that the average net worth of those aged 18-to-25 is only \$8,000, down 34 percent since 1996. That's due in large part to sharp increases in education, housing, food, health care and transportation costs while wages have largely remained unchanged.

Those numbers followed broader global research conducted by Deloitte that stated millennials and Generation Z members are feeling unsettled about their future, especially economically. Only 26 percent expect economic conditions to improve in the coming year, down from 45 percent a year earlier. Income inequality and unemployment were listed as top concerns.

But there are things these younger generations can do to help create a more secure future — join a union! The median union worker makes \$10,000 more a year than the median non-union one. They are

also more likely to have health care and retirement benefits.

Now, to be fair, there is proof younger workers understand this. The number of millennials who were a member of a union grew by nearly 400,000 between 2016 and 2017. A Pew Report this year, meanwhile, found that 68 percent of those aged 18-to-29 support unions, the highest of any age group.

While the U.S. Supreme Court and lawmakers in some statehouses have successfully rolled back labor rights, workers do have the power to halt such actions. Last year in Missouri, for example, voters overrode an effort to put a so-called right-to-work measure on the books.

All workers can ensure a better future for themselves by organizing on the job and then supporting candidates at the ballot box that protect their rights to collectively bargain. It's never too soon to create a better tomorrow for the working class!

Fraternally,

JAMES P. HOFFA
TEAMSTERS GENERAL PRESIDENT



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Fleischmann elected New York State Legislative Board Chairman

Brother William J. Fleischmann, BLET Division 752 (Rensselaer, N.Y.), was elected by acclamation to serve as Chairman of the New York State Legislative Board at its quadrennial meeting in Lake George, N.Y., July 12-13, 2019.

An Amtrak locomotive engineer, Brother Fleischmann was elected by acclamation to serve the Board as 1st Vice Chairman at its quadrennial meeting in 2015. He has been a member of BLET Division 752 since December 1, 1998.

Also elected by acclamation were: 1st Vice Chairman Jay J. Carhart, Division 169 (Syracuse, N.Y.); 2nd Vice Chairman Brian R. Burns, Division 87 (Green Island, N.Y.); Secretary-Treasurer Rick Jordan, Division 269 (Long Island, N.Y.); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Corey W. Engel, Division 752 (Rensselaer, N.Y.).

Elected to serve on the Executive Board were: Justin M. Stutz, Division 382 (Buffalo, N.Y.); Dustin J. Deubell, 659 (Buffalo, N.Y.); Karl Bischoff, Division 269 (Long Island, N.Y.); John M. Ostrander, Division 169 (Syracuse, N.Y.); and Brian R. Burns, Division 87 (Green Island, N.Y.). Elected to the Alternate Executive Board were: 1st Alternate Josh N. LaMarti, Division 421 (Buffalo, N.Y.); 2nd Alternate David G. Kearsing, Division 46 (Albany, N.Y.); 3rd Alternate



Members, officers and guest at the New York State Legislative Board's quadrennial meeting in Lake George, N.Y., July 12-13, 2019.

Nate M. DeFayette, Division 641 (Hornell, N.Y.); and 4th Alternate Fred J. Eyer, Division 54 (Port Jervis, N.Y.).

Elected to serve as Trustees were: David G. Kearsing, Division 46 (Albany, N.Y.); Karl Bischoff, Division 269 (Long Island, N.Y.); and Brian R. Burns, Division 87 (Green Island, N.Y.).

Representing the BLET National Division at the meeting were: National President Dennis R. Pierce; Vice President & National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman; Director of Regulator Affairs Vince G. Verna; and Special Representative and Director of Mobilization-Eastern Region Matthew C. Kronyak.

"I wish to extend my thanks and congratulations to Brother Fleischmann and

officers for serving the New York State Legislative Board," President Pierce said. "I know they will do an excellent job of representing the best interests of our members in the Empire State."

The New York State Legislative Board represents 13 local Divisions and more than 2,500 active and retired members throughout New York, including both freight and passenger lines. ☺☺

BLET concludes St. Louis regional meeting

More than 300 members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) and their families convened in St. Louis, Missouri, on the morning of June 25 for opening ceremonies of the BLET's first regional meeting of 2019.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce called the meeting to order. After presentation of the colors by members of the First Marine Division Association (St. Louis Chapter), Brother Gary R. Pedigo, Chairman of the BLET's Texas State Legislative Board, delivered the invocation. Brother Pedigo is a member of BLET Division 177 (Denison, Texas).

President Pierce then welcomed all members, families and guests to St. Louis. He introduced members of the BLET Advisory Board who were in attendance, and thanked National Vice President Jim Louis, Special Representative Matt Kromyak and Special Representative Jason Wright for their work in managing and organizing the regional meeting. President Pierce also recognized and thanked the regional meeting arrangements committee members: Brother Mike Gurley, Local Chairman of BLET Division 42 (St. Louis, Mo.); Brother Mike McGill, Legislative Representative and Second Vice Local Chairman of Division 42 (St. Louis, Mo.); and Brother Steve Tuck, a retired member of Division 17 (Kansas



Members of Division 42 (St. Louis) lend their historic charter for display at National Division headquarters.

City, Mo.), and his wife Chris.

Guest speakers included: St. Louis Mayor Lyda Krewson; International Brotherhood of Teamsters Vice President and Rail Conference Director John Murphy; Railroad Retirement Board Labor Member John Bragg; International Brotherhood of Teamsters Trustee Jim Kabell; and BLET Auxiliary National President Kathleen Bisbikis.

A Teamster member since 1972, Brother Kabell is the Principal Officer and Secretary-Treasurer of Local 245, and is the

former President of the Missouri-Kansas-Nebraska Conference of Teamsters. With assistance from BLET Missouri State Legislative Board Chairman Calvin Goose and retired MoSLB Chairman Brian Kelly, National President Pierce presented Brother Kabell with a handsomely engraved brass bell in recognition of his distinguished career and pending retirement.

President Pierce delivered remarks regarding the state of the union and the state of the rail industry. He also discussed the upcoming national election

and the need to elect union-friendly politicians to help safeguard what the BLET has accomplished over the past 156 years.

"We know all too well that there are very few workforces subjected to as much oversight and control by the Federal Government as those of us who toil in the nation's rail industry," President Pierce said. "Whether it be the Federal Railroad Administration's oversight of rail regulations, the Surface Transportation Board's oversight of rail mergers, or the National Mediation Board's oversight of our grievance and contract mediation and arbitration, we are continually affected by the power of the Executive Branch to appoint these government overseers. I need your help to spread the word, and the help of every BLET member who is willing to pitch in and do their part. To stop the anti-worker movement in the legislative halls across the country, we must seek out and elect politicians who will work for working class Americans. We must support politicians who know that a vibrant working middle class is what makes America great."

Midway through the morning session, President Pierce led BLET members in a moment of silence for all BLET members who have been killed in the line of duty since 1989. All their names were shown in a solemn video presentation.

Also during the morning session, a delegation of members from BLET Division

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BLET concludes 2019 regional meeting schedule in Clearwater

More than 300 members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) and their families convened in Clearwater, Florida, on July 23 for opening ceremonies of the BLET's second regional meeting of 2019.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce called the meeting to order. After presentation of the colors by members of American Legion Post 273 Color Guard, Brother Chris Hyde, Vice Chairman of the BLET's CSXT Eastern Lines General Committee of Adjustment, delivered the invocation. Brother Hyde is a member of BLET Division 314 (Rocky Mount, N.C.).

President Pierce then welcomed all members, families and guests to Clearwater. He introduced members of the BLET Advisory Board who were in attendance, and thanked National Vice President Jim Louis, Special Representative Matt Krontyak and Special Representative Jason Wright for their work in managing and organizing the regional meeting. President Pierce also recognized and thanked the regional meeting arrangements committee members: Brother Dave Wyatt, Local Chairman of BLET Division 216 (Tampa, Fla.); and Brother Dave Lavery, Legislative Representative of Division 216 (Tampa) and former Chairman of the Florida State Legislative Board; and Brother Dino Rap-



Members of American Legion Post 273 served as the Color Guard during the Clearwater regional meeting.

tis, a retired member of Division 12 (Fort Wayne, Ind.), and his wife Kathy.

Guest speakers included: Ken Hall, General Secretary-Treasurer of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters; John Bragg, Labor Member of the Railroad Retirement Board; Representative Charlie Crist, U.S. House of Representatives (D-FL); BLET Auxiliary National President Kathleen Bisbikis; and Brother Lavery, former Chairman of the Florida State Legislative Board.

The chief financial officer of the IBT, Brother Ken Hall discussed the strong

financial state of the Teamsters. A second-generation Teamster, Brother Hall has been a member since 1976 when he began his Teamster career working in the oilfields for the Pennzoil Company. After serving as a Pennzoil job steward and negotiating committee member for 11 years, Hall was appointed as Local 175 business agent in 1987. He was appointed Teamster International Vice President, Eastern Region, in 2003 and elected GST in 2011. Hall spoke about the need for unity within the IBT and with all of labor.

"I'm a Teamster. You're a Teamster. We're all Teamsters. We just do different jobs," Brother Hall said. "When one of us has a fight, we all have a fight. Your fight to protect two-person train crews is the fight of all Teamsters. We have to have each other's backs."

A native of Hinton, West Virginia, Bragg began his railroad career 18 years ago with CSX Transportation as a freight conductor at Pinoka Yard in Charlotte, N.C. 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, he was appointed as a BRS Grand Lodge Representative, holding several key positions, including Director of Research — a position that works jointly with the Federal Railroad Administration to craft railroad safety regulations. In 2011, he was elected as a BRS Vice President, and was reelected by acclamation in 2014 and 2018. On February 5, 2019, he was sworn in as Labor Member of the Railroad Retirement Board, with the support of the 13 national rail unions. He urged members to remain active in order to protect their retirement benefits.

"Rest assured, when you go to retire, the Railroad Retirement system will be there for you," Bragg said. "But we have to remain vigilant. Any changes to Social Se-

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Psota elected BNSF/MRL General Chairman

Kent J. Psota was elected to the office of General Chairman at the Burlington Northern Santa Fe/Montana Rail Link (BNSF/MRL) General Committee of Adjustment's 15th triennial meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada, July 8-11, 2019.

A member of BLET Division 623 (McCook, Neb.), Brother Psota served for several years as Vice Local Chairman and then Local Chairman of Division 623. He was elected 1st Alternate Chairman at the GCA's 2007 meeting and was elevated to a full time VGC in Fort Worth, Texas, in 2008. He was reelected by acclamation to VGC spots in 2010, 2013, and 2016, prior to his election as General Chairman in 2019.

Also elected were: 1st Vice Chairman Matt Brandt, Division 727 (Sterling, Colo.); 2nd Vice Chairman Jess Nelson, Division 842 (Klamath Falls, Ore.); 3rd Vice Chairman Vern Gordon, Division 98 (Lincoln, Neb.); 4th Vice Chairman Brian Fransen, Division 207 (Casper, Wyo.); and Secretary-Treasurer Luke Myers, Division 727 (Sterling, Colo.).

Elected to serve as alternate officers were: 1st Alternate Vice Chairman, Jason Scanlan, Division 107 (St. Joseph Mo.); 2nd Alternate Vice Chairman Rick Lear, Division 290 (Superior, Wisc.); 3rd Alternate Vice Chairman Neal Schipper, Division 940 (Denver, Colo.); 4th Alter-



Members, officers and guests at the Burlington Northern Santa Fe/Montana Rail Link (BNSF/MRL) General Committee of Adjustment's 15th triennial meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada, July 8-11, 2019.

nate Vice Chairman Jeff Grimes, Division 402 (Pasco, Wash.); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Cordell Booke, Division 746 (Mandan, N.D.).

Elected to serve as Trustees were: Brandon Folsom, Division 665 (Centralia, Ill.); Lance Thomas, Division 622 (Alliance, Neb.); and Tyler Simard, Division 195 (Forsyth, Mont.).

Representing the National Division at the meeting were: National President Dennis R. Pierce and National Vice President Michael D. Priester.

"I would like to congratulate Brother

Kent and all officers of the BNSF/MRL General Committee of Adjustment," President Pierce said. "I am proud to thank these Brothers for their hard work in serving our great Brotherhood."

President Pierce served as General Chairman of the BNSF/MRL GCA from 2001-2008. He recognized outgoing General Chairman E. G. "Jerry" LaPrath and GCA Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Foley, who did not seek reelection due to their upcoming retirements. "I wish both Brothers a happy and healthy retirement," President Pierce said.

In addition to the election of officers, the delegates in attendance heard reports from their cab committee as well as their safety coordinators. The delegates also addressed Bylaws issues, including the decision to hold future meetings on a quadrennial basis (once every four years) instead of triennially.

The BNSF/MRL GCA is the largest GCA in the BLET in terms of the number of members represented and the number of Divisions. The GCA represents nearly 6,800 active and retired members from 44 different Divisions. @@



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ST. LOUIS REGIONAL MEETING

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42 (St. Louis, Mo.), led by Local Chairman Mike Gurley and Secretary-Treasurer Mike McGill, presented their Division's original charter to President Pierce on loan to display at National Division headquarters. The charter is dated January 1, 1865, and represents an important piece of the Brotherhood's rich history. Members of the Division recently spent a considerable sum of money to restore and preserve the historic charter, but they do not have a permanent meeting location to display it. Division 42's members maintain ownership of the charter, and it will be displayed at the BLET National Division's history museum.

The June 25 afternoon session included a closed meeting for BLET members and an open meeting hosted by the BLET



Auxiliary. During the closed meeting, BLET members heard reports from various National Division officers. Also, members heard from an expert in the field of workplace distraction during the closed meeting. Randy Jamieson, a managing principal of Atticus Consulting Group, spoke to BLET members about the science



of human attention and how to identify underlying causes on internal cognitive distractions as well as external workplace distractions. He has 35 years of experience in safety and operating practices, and recently led a team of experts in conducting comprehensive assessments of workplace distractions in locomotive cabs in the



Northeast Corridor as well as Amtrak's Chicago and St. Louis operations.

Members took advantage of educational opportunities throughout the remainder of the week. Workshops featured specialized training for BLET Legislative Representatives, Secretary-Treasurers and Local Chairmen. ©©

CLEARWATER REGIONAL MEETING

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curity or Medicare will impact your Railroad Retirement benefits. It's up to us to make sure that the Railroad Retirement system is there for future generations."

President Pierce delivered remarks regarding the state of the union and the state of the rail industry. He also discussed the upcoming national election and the need to elect union-friendly politicians to help safeguard what the BLET has accomplished since its founding in 1863.

"It's important for spouses and other family members to understand what is at risk if we are not vigilant in protecting what we have," President Pierce said. "We have been fortunate to work in an industry that is virtually completely organized, and for that reason, our members have benefits that come not only from collectively bargained contracts, but from also from legislation crafted and pushed by your Union, and implemented in the legislative halls over the years... To stop the anti-worker movement in the legislative halls across the country, we must seek out and elect politicians who will work for working class Americans. We must support politicians who know that a vibrant working middle class is what makes America great. In fact, the brave politicians that passed the six State Crew Size laws have earned our support."



Midway through the morning session, President Pierce led BLET members in a moment of silence for all BLET members who have been killed in the line of duty since 1989. All their names were shown in a solemn video presentation.

Rep. Charlie Crist spoke after the morning break. He served in the Florida Senate from 1993 to 1999, and then as Florida Education Commissioner from 2001 to 2003. In 2003, he became Florida's Attorney General, serving from 2003 until his inauguration as the Sunshine State's 44th Governor on January 2, 2007. In 2016, he was elected to represent Florida's 13th Congressional District. He pledged his support to the BLET's Safe Freight Act (H.R. 1748), which would protect two-person train crews.

The daughter of a career railroader and the wife of a BLET member, Kat Bisbikis serves as National President of the BLET Auxiliary. In 2014, she was elected as the Auxiliary's National Second Vice



President and Legislative Representative, and in October 2018, she was elected to serve as National President. He is the founding member of the Nor Cal 39 Auxiliary in Stockton, Calif. Sister Bisbikis reported that the state of the national Auxiliary is good, having recently organized three new local Auxiliaries. Additionally, the Auxiliary recently awarded 10 \$1,000 scholarships to the children of BLET Auxiliary members.

The final speaker of the day was Dave Lavery, former Chairman of the Florida State Legislative Board. He comes from a deep-rooted Union family. His grandfather was a Local President in the United Mine Workers, and his father was Local President with the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks. Brother Lavery hired out in 1977 in the Maintenance of Way Department, and from there went into train service as a brakeman and a conductor. He later became a fireman and, finally, was promoted to loco-



tive engineer. He joined the BLE on October 1, 1985. In 1996 he was one of the leaders who re-formed the Florida State Legislative Board.

He spoke about A. Philip Randolph, founder of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, who fought against racism and for equal treatment of all workers. Brother Lavery encouraged BLET members to become involved and engaged in order to make their voices heard.

"Never allow your voice to be diminished in state, local or national politics," he said. "The railroads don't want to see you involved."

Members took advantage of educational opportunities throughout the remainder of the week. Workshops will feature specialized training for BLET Legislative Representatives, Secretary-Treasurers and Local Chairmen. The 2019 Clearwater regional meeting concluded with a dinner/dance on the evening of July 25. ©©

BLET MEMBERS RATIFY NEW CONTRACT WITH M&NA SHORT LINE

On June 20, members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) ratified a new collective bargaining agreement with the Missouri & Northern Arkansas Railroad. The agreement runs through 2023 and provides for improved wages and benefits for approximately 70 operating employees. Members will receive a signing bonus as well as a significant wage increase upfront and through the life of the contract. Most significantly, the agreement contains no harmful work rule changes to either the engineer or trainman crafts.

The M&NA is a short line property represented by the BLET's Burlington Northern Santa Fe (former STL-SF)/MNA General Committee of Adjustment. BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said the negotiating process lasted three years, and he thanked the membership for their patience and resilience during such a

long round of negotiations.

President Pierce also thanked the negotiating team for bringing the negotiations to a successful conclusion, recognizing: National Vice President Mike Priest; General Chairman Jeff Thurman, BNSF (former STL-SF)/MNA; former Division 178 Local Chairman Gary Ebert and Mike Marlier; current Division 178 Local Chairman Matt Miller; former Division 116 Local Chairman and current President Court Middleton; and current Division 116 Local Chairman Ronnie Kent.

The BLET originally organized the M&NA operating employees in 1999 and their first BLET-negotiated agreement went into effect in April of 2000. The M&NA is a Genesee & Wyoming subsidiary headquartered in Carthage, Mo., and it operates over approximately 490 miles of line in Arkansas and Missouri. It interchanges with Class I carriers Union Pacific, BNSF Railway, and Kansas City Southern. ©©

JOIN THE FIGHT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

to task for not regulating fatigue in our industry, a task that Congress mandated they do in 2008. I took FRA to task for not regulating train lengths, even as operating crews have perished when unable to activate rear end two-way telemetry due to excessive train lengths. I took FRA to task for refusing to do its job when it comes to foreign nationals operating our trains inside the borders of our great nation. I also took FRA to task for refusing to consider the data that is out there showing that two persons on a train are safer than one. And as an update, BLET and SMART TD filed a joint petition for review of FRA's attempt to negatively preempt State crew size laws in the US Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit just last week.

As I told the Committee, we have reached the point where,

if FRA will not regulate, Congress must legislate. In the coming months, expect a full court press on our two-person crew bill, the Safe Freight Act. To that end, 15 BLET State Legislative Board Chairmen went to Congress last week to lobby on our two-person crew bill, as well as our cross border dispute with KCS RR. Those Chairman made over 150 visits to Congressional offices, taking the memberships' issues directly to the Representatives that can legislate solutions to our issues.

But we will need more than that, we will need your help if we are to be successful. Be on the look out for a National Membership Mobilization effort on these issues in the coming days, Congress needs to hear from each and every one of you on these two critical issues.

And equally important, next year's Congressional and Presidential elections give us an op-

portunity to elect more politicians willing to take on the Nation's railroads on the issues that are important to you. The term getting "railroaded" did not come about by accident; we need and deserve a Government that will work for our safety and our jobs.

Join me when the call comes to participate in our fight to preserve what our great Union has accomplished over the last 156 years, be active and engaged in your Union whenever you can be. Do not give up hope... our Union was formed at a time when Locomotive Engineers willingly joined; they did not need to be compelled to pay dues as they knew what is at stake. We must return to that ideology if our way of life is to be protected. Thank you again for being here.

DENNIS R. PIERCE
BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT



Locomotive Engineers And Trainmen News Brotherhood Of Locomotive Engineers And Trainmen

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7/19

Photo of the Month: July 2019

UNION PACIFIC'S BIG BOY: In May, the Union Pacific Railroad sent its freshly restored "Big Boy" locomotive, No. 4014, to Utah for a special ceremony to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad. The world's largest operating steam locomotive (4-8-8-4) the Big Boy is seen here hauling a special UP business train (PCYRW1-04) along with Living Legend steam locomotive 844 into Rawlins, Wyoming, to tie up for the night on May 4, 2019. **Photo:** by Brother Cory Rusch, a member of BLET Division 659 in Buffalo, N.Y. Brother Rusch is a conductor with Norfolk Southern.



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 June 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; BLET Legislative Representative class, Washington, D.C.; CP Rail/Soo Line GCA quadrennial mtg., Las Vegas, Nevada; Testified at House hearing titled The State of Rail Workforce before the House Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials, Washington, D.C.; BLET Western Regional mtg., St. Louis, Mo. BLET Advisory Board mtg., St. Louis, Mo.

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.; CP Rail/Soo Line GCA quadrennial mtg., Las Vegas, Nevada; BLET Western Regional mtg., St. Louis, Mo. BLET Advisory Board mtg., St. Louis, Mo.

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; BLET Western Regional mtg., St. Louis, Mo. BLET Advisory Board mtg., St. Louis, Mo.

VICE PRESIDENT & NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE JOHN P. TOLMAN: Assigned to BLET Washington, DC office; General office duties, telephone and correspondence communications; BLET Legislative Representative class, Washington, D.C.; Over 150 mtgs. w/ members of Congress with many State Legislative Board Chairmen and BLET members who attended LR Class, Washington, D.C.; AFL-CIO TTD mtg., w/ guest speaker Dan Lipinski (D-IL), Washington, D.C.; Hearing of the House T&I Railroad Subcommittee titled The State of the Rail Workforce, where President Pierce testified, Washington, D.C.; BLET Western Regional mtg., St. Louis, Mo. BLET Advisory Board mtg., St. Louis, Mo.; 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; CP Rail/Soo Line GCA quadrennial mtg., Las Vegas, Nevada; Assist VGC Lough w/ rules submission, Metra; Study dockets for DL 462 Van Dagens 7/12; Assist GC Balonek w/ rules submission, Metra; First Division adoption session, NRAB, Chicago; Various C3RS matters, BRC, Chicago; Assist Metra GCA w/ Section 6 discussions; Assist GC Reynolds w/ discipline appeals, WC, Chicago; BLET Western Regional mtg., St. Louis, Mo. BLET Advisory Board mtg., St. Louis, Mo.

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

na & 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; Delaware & Hudson mediation case A-13917 at National Mediation Board, Washington, D.C.; CN-GTW Public Law Board 7562, Rosemont, Ill.; BLET Western Regional mtg., St. Louis, Mo. BLET Advisory Board mtg., St. Louis, Mo.

VICE PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. PRIESTER: Assigned to all BNSF (former ATSF, former C&S, CRI&P, FWD, former STL-SF, BNSF/MRL), Panhandle Northern, Great Western Railway of Colorado; Missouri & North Arkansas, Montana Rail Link, Otter Tail; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; CP Rail/Soo Line GCA quadrennial mtg., Las Vegas, Nevada; BLET Western Regional mtg., St. Louis, Mo. BLET Advisory Board mtg., St. Louis, Mo.

VICE PRESIDENT R.C. (RICK) GIBBONS: Assigned to: All Norfolk Southern General Committees (Northern, Eastern and Southern Lines); Chicagiana, Ft. Wayne & Eastern; Indiana & Ohio (G&W); General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications; Vice President duties; On duty at home office; BLET Western Regional mtg., St. Louis, Mo. BLET Advisory Board mtg., St. Louis, Mo.

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; SBA 940, assist GC Brown, NJ Transit, Newark, N.J.; BLET Legislative Representative training class, Washington, D.C.; Assist PATH GC McCarthy w/ contract issues; Secretary-Treasurer class, Independence, Ohio; NMB A13867, assist SEPTA GC Hill, Washington, D.C.; Regional meeting issues; Assist WNYC GC Rathbun w/ contract issues; Assist NJ Transit GC Brown w/ contract issues; BLET Western Regional mtg., St. Louis, Mo. BLET Advisory Board mtg., St. Louis, Mo.

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; Portland & Western mediation, Dallas, Texas; BLET Western Regional mtg., St. Louis, Mo. BLET Advisory Board mtg., St. Louis, Mo.

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.; Assist CSXT GCs Gary Best, Billy Lyons, Keith Kerley and Pat Driscoll in negotiations with CSXT management, Nashville, Tenn.; SBA 1183, assisting GC Kerley, Carrollton, Texas; Attend Division 569 mtg. w/ GC David Spradlin, Heavener, Okla.; BLET Western Regional mtg., St. Louis, Mo. BLET Advisory Board mtg., St. Louis, Mo.

Semenek reelected to third full term as CP Rail General Chairman

General Chairman Peter M. Semenek was reelected by acclamation at the CP Rail-U.S./Metra Northern District/Indiana Southern/Dakota Minnesota & Eastern General Committee of Adjustment's quadrennial meeting in Las Vegas, June 10-11, 2019.

Brother Semenek is a member of BLET Division 790 (Chicago) and he joined the Brotherhood on March 10, 1995. This is his third full term of office, having won election at the GCA's quadrennial meetings in 2011 and 2015. He began serving as General Chairman on January 1, 2011, following the election of former General Chairman Michael D. Priester to the BLET Advisory Board. Brother Semenek was elected to serve the National Division as Alternate National Vice

President No. 4 at the BLET's Fourth National Convention in 2018.

Also elected during the meeting were: 1st Vice Chairman Nick T. Mugavero, Division 790 (Chicago); 2nd Vice Chairman Joe Rainwater, Division 117 (Mason City, Iowa); 3rd Vice Chairman Kyle E. Donze, Division 294 (Bensenville, Ill.); Secretary-Treasurer Paul M. Dinauer, Division 882 (Milwaukee, Wisc.); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Josh McCleary, Division 575 (Chicago).

Delegates also elected the following Brothers to serve as Trustees: Jeremy C. Thorson, Division 160 (Harvey, N.D.); Paul P. Ripplinger, Division 671 (Enderlin, N.D.); and Gordon L. Kepka, Division 357 (Minneapolis, Minn.).

Representing the National Division at the meeting were: Dennis R. Pierce, National Pres-

ident; E. Lee Pruitt, First Vice President; Marcus J. Ruef, National Vice President; and Michael D. Priester, National Vice President.

"I am proud to congratulate Brother Semenek and all officers of the General Committee, and I thank them for their service to our great Brotherhood," President Pierce said. "I have every confidence they will continue doing an excellent job protecting the rights of our Brothers and Sisters."

The GCA has more than 1,300 active and retired members and represents locomotive engineers on the Canadian Pacific-U.S. (former Soo Line) and Metra; locomotive engineers, conductors and trainees on the Indiana Southern Railroad; and locomotive engineers and train service employees on the former Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad. @®