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ILLINOIS GOVERNOR SIGNS TWO-PERSON CREW BILL

Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker signed a two-person crew bill into law on August 9, making Illinois the third state to pass such a railroad safety bill in 2019.

Senate Bill 24, or the "Two Person Freight Train Act," provides that: "no rail carrier shall operate a train or light engine used in connection with the movement of freight unless it has an operating crew consisting of at least 2 individuals. Provides that the minimum freight train crew size shall remain in effect until a federal law or rule encompassing the subject matter has been adopted."

The intent of the Bill is to protect public safety. It reads in part: "It is the public policy of the State of Illinois to enhance public safety by establishing a minimum freight train operating crew size to address the transportation of all freight, including, but not limited to, hazardous and volatile materials, on the railroads of Illinois. The transportation of this freight, coupled with substantially longer trains, creates significant health, safety, and se-

curity concerns for local communities. Adequate railroad operating personnel are critical to ensuring railroad operational safety and security and in supporting first responder activities in the event of a hazardous material incident, grade crossing incident, or mechanical failure."

The Bill passed in the Senate following its third reading on April 11, 2019, and passed in the House following its third reading on May 21. It then was referred to the Governor's office on June 19.



Piekarski

BLET Illinois State Legislative Board Chairman Paul Piekarski spent months lobbying for passage of the bill, and delivered key testimony before a major hearing of the Illinois House Transportation, Roads and Bridges Committee on May 7, 2019. Also testifying were Bob Guy and Mike Renkin of SMART TD. Several BLET members were seated in the hearing room, including:

BLET Illinois SLB 1st Vice Chris Falaney, Division 683; BLET Illinois SLB 2nd Vice Chairman Rick Leschina, Division 32; BLET Illinois SLB 3rd Vice Chairman Cory Martin, Division 135; Legislative Representative Jacob Szyzdek, Division 458; and Legislative Representative Nick Billingsley, Division 251. The bill passed out of committee by a 9-4 vote.

Brother Piekarski thanked Governor Pritzker for signing the bill. Piekarski also thanked the bill's two main sponsors: State House of Representatives Assistant Majority Leader Jay Hoffman (D-113) and State Senate Assistant Majority Leader Terry Link (D-30).

Rep. Hoffman said the bill is in response to lacking federal and state guidelines, coupled with rising concerns on the adequate number of crew members needed to operate freight trains in Illinois. "This bill is an effort to ensure that freight train engineers have the necessary support and flexibility they need to adapt in situations of mechanical breach or failure," he said. "This is a huge public safety issue."

The law becomes effective January 1, 2020.

Illinois becomes the third state in 2019 to pass a railroad safety bill mandating two crew members in the locomotive cab. Colorado Governor Jared S. Polis signed a two-person crew bill into law on March 21, and Nevada Governor Steve Sisolak signed one on May 15.

"I would like to recognize Brother Piekarski and all BLET members who worked so hard to lobby for passage of this much needed safety legislation," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "Legislation such as this proves that American citizens and their elected leaders have a great deal of concern regarding the safety of railroads that travel through our country. They understand the need to have adequately staffed trains in order to maintain the highest levels of safety." ☺☺

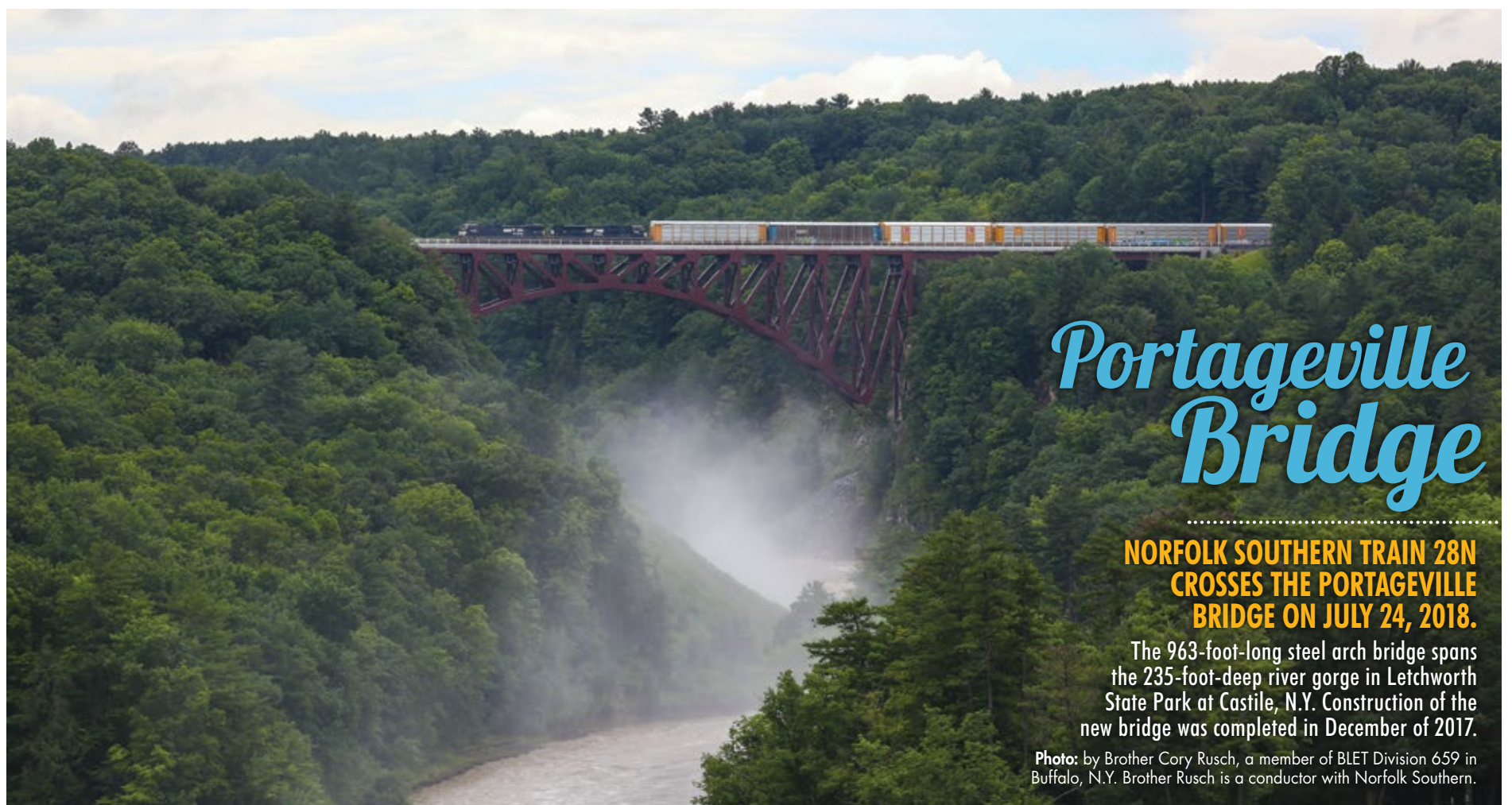
A COPY OF THE BILL

CAN BE FOUND AT:

ILGA.GOV/LEGISLATION/PUBLICACTS/FULLTEXT.ASP?NAME=101-0294

"I would like to recognize Brother Piekarski and all BLET members who worked so hard to lobby for passage of this much needed safety legislation. Legislation such as this proves that American citizens and their elected leaders have a great deal of concern regarding the safety of railroads that travel through our country."

— Dennis Pierce, BLET National President



Portageville Bridge

NORFOLK SOUTHERN TRAIN 28N CROSSES THE PORTAGEVILLE BRIDGE ON JULY 24, 2018.

The 963-foot-long steel arch bridge spans the 235-foot-deep river gorge in Letchworth State Park at Castile, N.Y. Construction of the new bridge was completed in December of 2017.

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



BLET President's Message

Our Solidarity is Crucial
to our Success **pg. 2**



Call Congress!

Make your voice heard on two-person
crews, Mexican cross border issue **pg. 3**

New deal at SEPTA

Members overwhelmingly
ratify new contract **pg. 4**





BLET PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY DENNIS R. PIERCE

OUR SOLIDARITY IS CRUCIAL TO OUR SUCCESS

In past *President's Messages*, I have written to BLET's Membership about the many issues that confront us in our effort to protect the interests of locomotive engineers and trainmen, as well as working class Americans in general. While my past *Messages* may not have presented those issues as "good news," I am still convinced that we will prevail if we remain united. Our solidarity as BLET members, and our solidarity with other Unions that share our goals, is the key to that success.

To foster that internal solidarity, I have made an increased effort to be out in the field meeting with member and officer groups in 2019. So far this year, in addition to our two Regional Meetings, I have attended over two dozen membership meetings across the country where I have explained the key issues that we are working on at the National Division. As part of those discussions, I have also solicited the input of the members in attendance on those key issues. Not only do the members who attend these meetings leave with a better understanding of what we are confronted with, my ability to do the best in my job is improved when I get direct information on our issues from the membership's perspective.

Although it is hard to rank the fights that we are waging with the Nation's Railroads, one of the most critical issues we face as this edition of the *Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen News* goes to print is our effort to maintain a minimum of two crew members on the Nation's Class I Carriers.

As I have shared at our membership meetings this year, there are three primary ways for us to preserve a minimum two-person crew and all three of these paths ultimately involve the politics of our Nation.

The first of those is Regulation. Under the leadership of President Obama, the Administrator of the FRA, Joe Szabo, initiated a rulemaking to establish a regulation on minimum crew size. As background, prior to being nominated by President Obama to serve as FRA Admin-



President Pierce addresses members and guests at the June BLET Regional Meeting in St. Louis, Missouri

istrator, Joe Szabo served as Illinois State Legislative Director for UTU. I share that for a reason. After President Trump was elected, he nominated his own FRA Administrator, a man who came from a much different background. Ron Batory, the current Trump-appointed FRA Administrator, was previously the CEO of Conrail.

This is noteworthy because Administrator Batory recently terminated the crew size regulatory process started by Administrator Szabo, obviously at the insistence of the Nation's Rail Carriers. As a result, there will be no regulatory solution protecting a minimum two-person crew so long as the current administration controls the FRA.

The second way for us to protect a minimum two person crew is through legislation. To that end, seven states have passed minimum crew size laws, all supported jointly by BLET and SMART-TD. It is worth noting that, in every case, the state crew size laws were passed by legislatures controlled by Democrats, and signed into law by Governors who were Democrats. I do not share that to incite political infighting; I share it because it is true. No matter how anyone chooses to vote, it is critical for us to measure the work of all politicians insofar as our workplace issues are concerned. Under tremendous pressure from the Nation's Rail Carriers,

the involved politicians stood up to that pressure and passed the State laws that BLET and SMART-TD supported.

But the politics don't end there. When President Trump's FRA Administrator ended the crew size regulatory process, he also invoked something called "negative preemption" against the seven State Crew Size laws. Also at the insistence of the Nation's Rail Carriers, FRA now suggests that the absence of a Federal Regulation preempts the States' Rights to enact State solutions to crew size. Our fight here is not over; BLET and SMART-TD have filed a joint petition for review of FRA's attempt to negatively preempt State crew size laws in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit; so have the states of California, Washington and Nevada.

While we will continue this fight, it is imperative for all willing to keep an open mind politically to understand that none of these attacks on our regulatory and legislative efforts are by accident. Like it or not, these attacks are the consequences of the most recent Presidential election. By nominating a former Railroad CEO to be the FRA Administrator, President Trump effectively gave the industry's safety Regulating Agency to Railroad Management and we see the impact on our key issues.

But even this has not stopped our legislative effort. While the

legal actions continue on FRA's negative preemption attempt, BLET and SMART-TD are also jointly sponsoring a national legislative effort to protect a minimum two-person crew. Senate Bill S. 1979 (sponsored by Senator Ed Markey (D-MA)), along with the House version H.R. 1748 (sponsored by Don Young (R-AK)), have been introduced to legislate a Federal law to govern minimum crew size.

As expected, the Nation's Rail Carriers have started an all-out lobbying blitz to prevent these two bills from passing. That is where our internal solidarity can make a difference. By the time this edition of the *Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen News* reaches your home, you will have been asked to participate in a Mobilization effort to contact your Congressional Representatives in support of our legislative effort. Only time will tell if we are able to achieve a legislative solution to minimum crew size, but rest assured that you can make a difference if you participate in this effort.

The third leg in the effort to protect a minimum two-person crew is through collective bargaining. Whether it be through Crew Consist Agreements or Scope Rule Agreements, both SMART-TD and BLET have previously negotiated collective bargaining agreements, all in an effort to protect each Union's respective half of a two-person crew. For our two Unions to collectively protect the current two-person crew minimums, we must preserve these existing agreements. If either Union is defeated in the effort to protect its half of the two-person crew, the Nation's Rail Carriers will certainly pursue single-person operations nationwide.

This issue also is pulled into the political landscape of our Nation and here is why. Under the requirements of the Railway Labor Act, when Rail Unions and Rail Carriers cannot reach voluntary national contract settlements, the process ultimately reaches conclusion through the appointment of a Presidential Emergency Board to hear both sides of the disputed issues prop-

erly in play through the bargaining process. In an effort to force SMART-TD's Crew Consist Agreements into this process, the Nation's Rail Carriers recently filed a law suit against SMART-TD in an effort to force this issue onto the bargaining table.

There is no doubt that the Railroads are seizing the opportunity to push changes to crew size collective bargaining agreements because President Trump will be the person appointing the PEB to hear those disputes if a voluntary agreement is not reached.

As I have asked thousands of members over the past year: In light of the Trump Administration's actions through its FRA Administrator, are you comfortable with President Trump being the one to appoint the PEB that could hear and make recommendations on crew size nationwide? I for one am not, and I ask all members to keep an open mind politically for this very reason.

But the fight does not stop here, either. SMART-TD has responded loud and clear that it will stand united to defend its collective bargaining agreements. I have personally reached out to my counterpart, SMART-TD President Jeremy Ferguson, and committed BLET to assist in that fight. Even more important is that we stand united, in solidarity, when the next national contract negotiations begin in January of 2020.

In the last round of bargaining, BLET and SMART-TD bargained together for the first time in my 40-plus year railroad career. As a result, engineers and conductors voted on the same agreement at the same time for the first time in all of those years. I have expressed my commitment to President Ferguson that our two proud Unions should bargain together again in the upcoming round. In light of the collective actions by the Carriers and the Trump Administration noted above, it is even more critical that our two Unions, who share a common goal, show our strength through solidarity. As I have said, our solidarity is crucial to our success.

DENNIS R. PIERCE
BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

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

TRAININGS GET TEAMSTERS INVOLVED IN 2020 RACE

The Teamsters are gearing up to play a major role in the 2020 election. But to do that, the union needs members and retirees who are versed on the issues to talk to the candidates traversing the country about sticking up for working families.

That effort began in earnest in August with several trainings held in Iowa and at the Teamsters' National Black Caucus (TNBC) Conference in Louisville, Kentucky. There, activists were taught to ask Teamster-issue questions at targeted public candidate campaign events. These Teamsters are getting ready and committed to asking important questions and getting candidates on the record about pension, collective bargaining, infrastructure and more.

Those who attended these sessions first filled out the Teamsters' 2020 Survey to register their opinions on what are the top issues the union should be asking presidential contenders to address. Next, they shared with the group which issue was the most



important to them and why. And finally, they roleplayed by asking a stand-in candidate questions.

Teamsters at the trainings were told to stand in a prominent place so they

get noticed by candidates and their staffs. They were also encouraged to wear Teamster gear and hold signs.

All of this is part of the union's effort to increase visibility around the is-

ssues members are prioritizing. And it will continue throughout the 2020 election season. Why? Because candidates seeking the endorsement of the Teamsters must understand the importance unions play in the working lives of the American worker and our economy as a whole. Supporting organizing efforts and standing for fairness and respect in the workplace is essential.

Workers deserve a president who is a partner who knows that it is not just jobs, but the quality and dependability of those jobs that matters. U.S. leadership should realize that those who worked hard and played by the rules should have the ability to provide a comfortable life for their loved ones, and retire with the benefits they were promised.

That needs to be the goal of anyone seeking to be president.

Fraternally,

JAMES P. HOFFA
TEAMSTERS GENERAL PRESIDENT

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U.S. leadership should realize that those who worked hard and played by the rules should have the ability to provide a comfortable life for their loved ones, and retire with the benefits they were promised.

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Keep up the pressure!

MEMBERS SHOULD CONTINUE TO CONTACT CONGRESS ON TWO-PERSON TRAIN CREWS, MEXICAN CROSS-BORDER ISSUE

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) is urging all members to keep up the pressure in Washington D.C. by continuing 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.

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 appeal to both parties and seek to put a certified En-



gineer and a certified Conductor on freight trains in the US.

Copies of the bills can be found at www.congress.gov.

To find your Member of Congress or Senator's contact information, please visit: www.house.gov or 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).

"We have had boots on the ground in Washington D.C. during July and August, holding face-to-face meetings with members of the House and Senate regarding these issues," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "We have visited with legislators from both sides of the aisle, as these issues have appeal to Democrats and Republicans alike. I urge all BLET members and their families to take 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." @@

SIGN UP FOR BLET NEWS FLASHES!

**REGISTER AT
WWW.BLE-T.ORG TO
GET BROTHERHOOD
NEWS EMAILED TO YOU**

Stay up-to-date with the latest Brotherhood news by going to the BLET website and signing up to receive BLET News Flash alerts via email.

The News Flash alerts are news articles from the BLET National Divi-

sion website that are automatically emailed to you.

**TO REGISTER ONLINE, JUST GO TO
WWW.BLE-T.ORG/NEWSFLASH.** On this page, you will find an area to enter your email address and click *subscribe* to be-

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.

GTW General Chairman John Karakian elected by acclamation to eighth straight term

General Chairman John M. Karakian was reelected by acclamation to his eighth consecutive term of office at the BLET's CN-Grand Trunk Western (GTW) General Committee of Adjustment quadrennial meeting in Novi, Mich., on August 14, 2019.

Brother Karakian, a member of Division 122 (Port Huron, Mich.), first joined the Brotherhood on June 1, 1977. He began serving as General Chairman in 1992, when he replaced outgoing General Chairman Paul Hicks, which makes him the longest serving General Chairman in the BLET.

Also elected by acclamation were: Vice General Chairman Brian Miscikowski, Local Chairman of Division 850 (Flat Rock, Mich.); Secretary-Treasurer James La Budde, Vice Local Chairman of Division 33 (Battle Creek, Mich.); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Chris Hicks, President of Division 33 (Battle Creek, Mich.).

Representing the BLET National Division at the meeting was National Vice President Mike Twombly.

"For nearly 30 years now, Brother John Karakian has been one of hardest working and most dedicated General Chairmen in our great Brotherhood," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "I congratulate and thank Brother Karakian and all officers of the Grand Trunk Western for their willingness to serve the BLET membership."

Additional members in attendance were: Gerry Pesce, Local Chairman of Division 650 (Durand, Mich.); James Vandendries, Local Chairman of Division 920 (Pontiac, Mich.); Derek Burnside, Local Chairman of Division 122 (Port Huron, Mich.); and Chad Tedder, Local Chairman of Division



From left: James La Budde, Secretary-Treasurer; James Vandendries, Local Chairman, Division 920; Brian Miscikowski, Vice General Chairman and Local Chairman, Division 850; John Karakian, General Chairman; Gerry Pesce, Local Chairman, Division 650; Derek Burnside, Local Chairman, Division 122; and Chad Tedder, Local Chairman, Division 33.

33 (Battle Creek, Mich.).

Brother Karakian hired out in 1974 as a tower operator for the Penn Central (which later became Conrail) in Detroit, Mich. On March 10, 1977, he moved to the GTW where he hired out as a fireman in Pontiac, Mich. He qualified to work as a GTW yard engineer on June 30, 1978, and qualified to perform service as a GTW road engineer on February 25, 1981. Brother Karakian thanked President Pierce and the National Division for their help over the last four years, and for appointing Vice

President Twombly to assist the GCA.

The GTW GCA is proud of the significant role its forefathers played in the founding of our Brotherhood more than 150 years ago. The Grand Trunk was one of the five original railroads which sent a delegate, B. Northrup, to meet in Detroit, Mich., with 18 other delegates for four days, beginning on May 5, 1863, resulting in the formation of the original Brotherhood of the Footboard, later to become the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.



John Karakian, General Chairman and Mike Twombly, National Vice President.



Newly reelected General Chairman John Karakian

The GTW GCA is comprised of five Divisions and represents approximately 200 locomotive engineers who operate over 700 miles of track predominantly in Michigan. The GTW's main corridor is from Port Huron, Mich., to Chicago, but also has operations in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and the province of Ontario, Canada. ©©

Overwhelming majority ratifies new contract with SEPTA

By an overwhelming majority of more than 96 percent, members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) ratified a new contract with SEPTA on July 30.

The four-year contract covers approximately 200 locomotive engineers and runs through March 2, 2022. It governs rates of pay, work rules, and health care benefits. BLET members received a 2.0% general wage increase on the Sunday following ratification, with subsequent wage increases of 2.0% effective July 5, 2020, 3.0% effective July 4, 2021, and 3.5% effective July 3, 2022. It provides additional hourly compensation for operating with Positive Train Control (PTC).

The agreement provides that locomotive engineers who are victims of an assault or other criminal behavior during the performance of their assigned duties will be compensated for time spent in pursuit of criminal legal action against the perpetrator. The contract also clarifies that members who work on Christmas Day will receive compensation based

on a minimum of eight hours of pay at the rate of time and one-half. The agreement also increases the opportunity for additional paid time off with good attendance every six months.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce thanked the negotiating team of General Chairman Don Hill, First Vice Chairman Maurice Landon, Second Vice Chairman Terrence Sanchious, and Assigned National Vice President Jim Louis for bringing the negotiations to a successful conclusion. He also recognized now-retired General Chairman Rich Dixon for his assistance.

"These Brothers did an excellent job negotiating an outstanding agreement, as evidenced by the 96% ratification," President Pierce said. "Our SEPTA Brothers and Sisters are to be commended for their tremendous engagement in the ratification process."

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) is the regional public transportation system for the Philadelphia area, serving approximately 3.9 million people. ©©



Denson reelected Arkansas State Legislative Board Chairman

Brother D.W. (Wayne) Denson was reelected by acclamation to his second term as Chairman at the Arkansas State Legislative Board's triennial meeting in North Little Rock, Ark., August 13-14, 2019.

A Union Pacific locomotive engineer, Brother Denson has been a member of BLET Division 182 (North Little Rock, Ark.) since July 1, 2004. He was elected 1st Vice Chairman at the Arkansas State Legislative Board's triennial meeting in 2016, and was elevated to the office of Chairman following the retirement of Brother Terry Todd in January of 2018.

Also elected by acclamation during the meeting were: 1st Vice Chairman Jeff S. McKenzie, Division 524 (Van Buren, Ark.); 2nd Vice Chairman Norman L. Guitreau,

Division 585 (North Little Rock, Ark.); Secretary-Treasurer Earles Carpenter, Division 858 (Pine Bluff, Ark.); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Kevin R. Lunnie, Division 278 (North Little Rock, Ark.). The SLB's Trustees are: Adam Saunders, Division 278 (North Little Rock, Ark.); Kevin R. Lunnie, Division 278 (North Little Rock, Ark.); and Jeff S. McKenzie, Division 524 (Van Buren, Ark.). Brother Carpenter has served the Board as Secretary-Treasurer since 2013.

Representing the BLET National Division at the meeting were: National President Dennis R. Pierce; Vice President and National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman; Director of Regulatory Affairs Vince Verna; and Director of Political and Legislative Affairs Bob Hagan.

"I congratulate and thank Brother Den-

son and all officers of the Arkansas State Legislative Board," President Pierce said. "Brother Denson brings a high level of enthusiasm and a desire to serve the membership, which will undoubtedly benefit our Brothers and Sisters in Arkansas. Also, I would like to recognize retired Chairman Terry Todd for his years of dedicated service to our Brotherhood."

Three BLET General Chairmen were in attendance: Dana Marlow, UP-Southern Region GCA; Jeff Thurman, BNSF (former STL-SF) GCA; and Ronnie Rhodes, UP-Central Region GCA. Four BLET State Legislative Board Chairmen were in attendance: Shahrain Allen, Washington; Calvin Groose, Missouri; Nick Johnson, Arizona; and Gary Pedigo, Texas.

Additional BLET guests included Terry Todd, retired Arkansas State Legisla-

tive Board Chairman, and Robert Lyndsey, retired Local Chairman of Division 858. Allan Hughes, Regional President of the Arkansas AFL-CIO, served as a guest speaker. Those in attendance participated in a Legislative Representative training class as well as a Regulatory Affairs workshop.

Brother Denson hired out in 2002 with the Union Pacific at Pine Bluff, Ark.. He joined BLET Division 182 on July 2, 2004, and earned promotion to locomotive engineer in 2005. In 2009, he was elected Vice President of Division 182, and began serving as Vice President and Legislative Representative in 2014. He was re-elected to both of those offices in 2018.

The BLET's Arkansas State Legislative Board represents nearly 900 active and retired members in six Divisions. @@



From left: Bob Hagan, BLET Director of Political and Legislative Affairs; John Tolman, BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative; Kevin Lunnie, Arkansas SLB Trustee and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer; Earles Carpenter, Arkansas SLB Secretary-Treasurer; Wayne Denson, Arkansas SLB Chairman; Dennis Pierce, BLET National President; Arkansas SLB Chairman; Norman Guitreau, Arkansas SLB 2nd Vice Chairman; Jason Roath, Legislative Representative of Division 524; and Vince Verna, BLET Director of Regulatory Affairs.



Officers, members and guests at the Arkansas State Legislative Board's triennial meeting in North Little Rock, Ark., August 13-14, 2019.

BLET TO HOST SECRETARY-TREASURER CLASS IN DECEMBER 2019

The BLET Education and Training Department will conduct a training class for Secretary-Treasurers from December 8-13, 2019, at the BLET National Division headquarters in Independence, Ohio.

Registration for the class will be filled by Division Secretary-Treasurers who sign up on a first come, first served basis. Available slots are limited, so those who are interested should register as soon as possible. You must register for this ST Class online through the BLET website at: <https://www.ble-t.org/registration>.

The session will begin with an orientation class on 4:00 p.m. Sunday afternoon, December 8, followed by full day classes from December 9-12 (Monday-Thursday). Class begins each morning at 8:30 a.m. Hotel check-out and travel day home will be December 13 (Friday). The training will take place in the Training Center at the BLET National Division headquarters (7061 East Pleasant Valley Road, Independence, Ohio 44131).

Secretary-Treasurers will receive training in a number of areas, including how to use the BLET National Division's UnionTrack reporting system for membership reporting, OLMS tax compliance tips, Division Trustee reporting, and computer skills (Word, Excel, search engines, etc.). During the four-day session, members will also learn proper record keep-



A hardworking group of ST's completed a training class held June 9-13, 2019, at BLET National Division headquarters in Independence, Ohio.



ing techniques, minute-taking, and methods for filing various Department of Labor and Railroad Retirement reports. The class will also focus on filing Internal Revenue Service Federal tax reports such as CT-1, 941, W-2, W-3, and W-4, and a focus on essential items such as 990 authorizations, bonding, check registers, banking, and other related items. A goal for our instructors is to do everything they can to make the S-T's job as easy as it can be.

Class instructors and guest speakers will include: Dennis R. Pierce, BLET National President; James P. Louis, Vice President and Department Head of Education and Training; Megan Mead, Di-

rector of the Compliance Department; Jason Wright: Special Representative and Director of the Education & Training Department; Walt Schmidt, Director of Online Services; and Matt Kronyak, Special Representative and Director of Mobilization - Eastern Region.

Upon successful completion, attendees will qualify for a \$96.00 per day stipend from the North American Railway Foundation (www.narfoundation.org). Depending on the class, the stipends will be paid directly to the Division President or the Secretary-Treasurer of the Division, General Committee of Adjustment, or State Legislative Board.

The North American Railway Foun-

dation (NARF) is a non-profit foundation formed by the Brotherhood's Relief and Compensation Fund (BR&CF) to support rail history, education, safety and technology in the United States and Canada. With initial funding and continued Board of Directors' stewardship coming from the BR&CF, NARF has supported many non-political projects throughout the United States and Canada. The primary focus of these efforts has been in support of organized rail labor — giving back to all of the men and women of the railroad community across North America.

Attendees must register for this ST Class no later than November 18, 2019,

through the BLET website. It is expected that the class will fill quickly as there is already a significant waiting list from the registration process for the previous class.

After registering online, attendees will receive an e-mail confirmation that will include hotel registration information. The BLET National Division pays the costs of books and equipment, while Secretary-Treasurers who attend are responsible for their own transportation costs as well as their room and board.

For more information, please contact Jason Wright, Special Representative and Director of the BLET Education and Training Department, at (216) 241-2630, ext. 247, or email wright@ble-t.org. @@

RRB Q&A: Unemployment and sickness benefits for railroad employees

The Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) administers the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act, which provides two kinds of benefits for qualified railroaders: unemployment benefits for those who become unemployed but are ready, willing, and able to work; and sickness benefits for those who are unable to work because of sickness or injury. Sickness benefits are also payable to female rail workers for periods of time when they are unable to work because of health conditions related to pregnancy, miscarriage, or childbirth. A new benefit year begins each July 1.

The following questions and answers describe these benefits, their eligibility requirements, and how to claim them.

1 What are the eligibility requirements for railroad unemployment and sickness benefits in July 2019?

To qualify for normal railroad unemployment or sickness benefits, an employee must have had railroad earnings of at least \$3,900 in calendar year 2018, counting no more than \$1,560 for any month. Those who were first employed in the rail industry in 2018 must also have at least five months of creditable railroad service in 2018.

Under certain conditions, employees who do not qualify on the basis of their 2018 earnings may still be able to receive benefits in the new benefit year. Employees with at least 10 years of service (120 or more months of service) who received normal benefits in the benefit year ending June 30, 2019, may be eligible for extended benefits, and employees with at least 10 years of service (120 or more months of service) might qualify for accelerated benefits if they have rail earnings of at least \$4,012.50 in 2019, not counting earnings of more than \$1,605 a month.

In order to qualify for extended unemployment benefits, a claimant must not have voluntarily quit work without good cause and not have voluntarily retired. To qualify for extended sickness benefits, a claimant must not have voluntarily retired and must be under age 65.

To be eligible for accelerated benefits, a claimant must have 14 or more consecutive days of unemployment or sickness; not have voluntarily retired or, if claiming unemployment benefits, quit work without good cause; and, when claiming sickness benefits, be under age 65.

2 What is the daily benefit rate payable in the new benefit year beginning July 1, 2019?

Almost all employees will qualify for the maximum daily benefit rate of \$78. Benefits are generally payable for the number of days of unemployment or sickness over four in 14-day claim periods, which yields \$780 for each two full weeks of unemployment or sickness. Sickness benefits payable for the first 6 months after the month the employee last worked are subject to tier I railroad retirement payroll taxes, unless benefits are being paid for an on-the-job injury. (Claimants should be aware that as a result of a sequestration order under the Budget Control Act of 2011, the RRB will reduce unemployment and sickness benefits by 6.2 percent through September 30, 2019. As a result, the total maximum amount payable in a 2-week period covering 10 days of unemployment or sickness will be \$731.64. The maximum amount payable for sickness benefits subject to tier I payroll taxes of 7.65 percent will be \$675.67 over two weeks. Future reductions, should they occur, will be calculated based on applicable law.)

3 How long are these benefits payable?

Normal unemployment or sickness benefits are each payable for up to 130 days (26 weeks) in a benefit year. The total

amount of each kind of benefit which may be paid in the new benefit year cannot exceed the employee's railroad earnings in calendar year 2018, counting earnings up to \$2,015 per month.

If normal benefits are exhausted, extended benefits are payable for up to 65 days (during 7 consecutive 14-day claim periods) to employees with at least 10 years of service (120 or more cumulative service months).

4 What is the waiting-period requirement for unemployment and sickness benefits?

Benefits are normally paid for the number of days of unemployment or sickness over four in 14-day registration periods. Initial sickness claims must also begin with four consecutive days of sickness. However, during the first 14-day claim period in a benefit year, benefits are only payable for each day of unemployment or sickness in excess of seven which, in effect, provides a one-week waiting period. (If an employee has at least five days of unemployment or five days of sickness in a 14-day period, he or she should still file for benefits.) Separate waiting periods are required for unemployment and sickness benefits. However, only one seven-day waiting



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period is generally required during any period of continuing unemployment or sickness, even if that period continues into a subsequent benefit year.

5 Are there special waiting-period requirements if unemployment is due to a strike?

If a worker is unemployed because of a strike conducted in accordance with the Railway Labor Act, benefits are not payable for days of unemployment during the first 14 days of the strike, but benefits are payable during subsequent 14-day periods.

If a strike is in violation of the Railway Labor Act, unemployment benefits are not payable to employees participating in the strike. However, employees not among those participating in such an illegal strike, but who are unemployed on account of the strike, may receive benefits after the first two weeks of the strike.

While a benefit year waiting period cannot count toward a strike waiting period, the 14-day strike waiting period may count as the benefit year waiting period if a worker subsequently becomes unemployed for reasons other than a strike later in the benefit year.

6 Can employees in train and engine service receive unemployment benefits for days when they are standing by or laying over between scheduled runs?

No, not if they are standing by or laying over between regularly assigned trips or they missed a turn in pool service.

7 Can extra-board employees receive unemployment benefits between jobs?

Yes, but only if the miles and/or hours they actually worked were less than the equivalent of normal full-time work in their class of service during the 14-day claim period. Entitlement to benefits would also depend on the employee's earnings.

8 How would an employee's earnings in a claim period affect his or her eligibility for unemployment benefits?

If a claimant's earnings for days worked, and/or days of vacation, paid leave, or other leave in a 14-day registration period are more than a certain indexed amount, no benefits are payable for any days of unemployment in that period. That registration period, however, can be used to satisfy the waiting period.

Earnings include pay from railroad and nonrailroad work, as well as part-time work and self-employment. Earnings also include pay that an employee would have earned except for failure to mark up or report for duty on time, or because he or she missed a turn in pool service or was otherwise not ready or willing to work. For the benefit year that begins July 2019, the amount is \$1,560, which corresponds to the base year monthly compensation amount used in determining eligibility for benefits in each year. Also, even if an earnings test applies on the first claim in a benefit year, this will not prevent the first claim from satisfying the waiting period in a benefit year.

On the other hand, earnings of no more than \$15 a day from work which is substantially less than full-time and not inconsistent with the holding of normal full-time employment may be considered subsidiary remuneration and may not prevent payment of any days in a claim. However, a claimant must be sure to report all full and part-time work on each claim, regardless of the amount of earnings, so the RRB can determine if the work affects benefits.

9 How does a person apply for and claim unemployment benefits?

Employees can apply for and claim unemployment benefits online or by mail.

Individuals who have established an account at RRB.gov can log in to conveniently file their applications and their bi-weekly claims online. Employees are encouraged to establish their accounts while still working to expedite the filing process for future unemployment benefits, and for access to other online services.

To apply by mail, claimants must obtain an Application for Unemployment Benefits (Form UI-1) from RRB.gov, any RRB field office, their labor organization, or employer. The completed application should be mailed to the local RRB office as soon as possible and, in any case, must be filed within 30 days from the date the claimant became unemployed or the first day for which he or she wishes to claim benefits. Benefits may be lost if the application is filed late. Claimants who know in advance that they will be filing an unemployment application or claim late should include a signed statement explaining why they are unable to meet the required time frame.

The local RRB field office reviews the completed application, whether it was submitted online or by mail, and notifies the claimant's current railroad employer, and base-year employer, if different. The employer has the right to provide information about the benefit application.

After processing the application, bi-weekly claim forms are made available on the RRB's website, and are mailed to the claimant, as long as he or she remains unemployed and eligible for benefits. Claim forms should be signed and sent on or after the last day of the claim. This can be done online or by mail. The completed claim must be received by the RRB within 15 days of the end of the claim period, or within 15 days of the date the claim form was made available online or mailed to the claimant, whichever is later. Claimants must not file both an online and a paper claim form for the same period(s). Once an individual submits a claim online, all subsequent claim forms will be made available online only, and will no longer be mailed.

Only one application needs to be filed during a benefit year, even if a claimant becomes unemployed more than once. However, a claimant must, in such a case, request a claim form from the RRB within 30 days of the first day for which he or she wants to resume claiming benefits. These claims may then be filed online or by mail.

10 How are payments made?

Railroad unemployment and sickness insurance benefits are paid by Direct Deposit. With Direct Deposit, benefit payments are made electronically to an employee's bank, savings and loan, credit union or other financial institution. New applicants for unemployment and sickness benefits will be asked to provide information needed for Direct Deposit enrollment.

11 How can claimants get more information on their railroad unemployment or sickness claims?

Claimants with online accounts at RRB.gov can view their individual railroad unemployment insurance account statement. This statement displays the type and amount of the claimant's last five benefit payments, the

claim period for which the payments were made, and the dates that the payments were approved. Individuals can also confirm the RRB's receipt of applications and claims.

In addition, claimants can call the agency toll-free at 1-877-772-5772 to access the RRB's automated HelpLine service which provides information about the status of unemployment and sickness claims or payments 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Individuals with questions about unemployment or sickness benefits, or who need information about

their specific claims and benefit payments, can also contact an RRB office by calling the toll-free number.

Persons can find the address of the RRB office serving their area by clicking on Field Office Locator, or by calling the RRB's HelpLine service and selecting the appropriate option from the automated menu. Most RRB offices are open to the public on weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., except on Wednesdays when offices are open from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. All RRB offices are closed on Federal holidays. @®

2020 FEES OBJECTOR POLICY

1. EMPLOYEES' RIGHTS

A. Any employee covered by a union or agency shop agreement in the United States has the legal right to be or remain a nonmember of the Union. Nonmembers have the legal right (1) to object to paying for Union activities not related to collective bargaining, contract administration and grievance adjustment, and to obtain a reduction in fees for such activities; (2) to be given sufficient information to intelligently decide whether to object; and (3) to be apprised of internal Union procedures for filing objections. Employees who choose to object have the right to be apprised of the percentage of the reduction, the basis for the calculation, and the right to challenge these figures. Objecting nonmembers who are public employees have the legal right not to pay any fees.

B. To the extent permitted by law, nonmembers may not participate in Union elections as a voter or as a candidate; attend Union meetings; serve as delegates to the Convention, or participate in the selection of such delegates; or participate in the process by which collective bargaining agreements are ratified.

2. PUBLICATION OF POLICY

The fees objector policy shall be published annually in the BLET's newsletter in the month preceding the objection notice period and mailed annually to each objector. It shall also be provided to each new employee when s/he first becomes subject to a union shop agreement.

3. MAKING OBJECTION KNOWN

Objecting nonmembers must provide notice of objection by notifying the National Secretary Treasurer of the objection in writing by first class mail postmarked during the month of November preceding the calendar year to which s/he objects, or within (30) days after s/he first begins paying fees and receiving notices of these procedures. The objection shall contain the objector's current home address. Each nonmember wishing to continue his/her objection from year to year must renew the objection each year as specified in this paragraph. Objections may only be made by individual employees. No petition objections will be honored.

4. MAJOR CATEGORIES OF CHARGEABLE EXPENSES

All objectors shall pay their fair share of expenses germane to collective bargaining including:

A. All expenses concerning the negotiation of agreements, practices and working conditions;

B. All expenses concerning the administration of agreements, practices and working conditions, including grievance handling, all activities related to arbitration, and discussion with employees in the craft or class (or bargaining unit) or employer representatives regarding working conditions, benefits and contract rights;

C. Convention expenses and other union internal governance and management expenses;

D. Social activities and union business meeting expenses;

E. Publication expenses to the extent coverage relates to chargeable activities;

F. Expenses of litigation related to collective bargaining, contract administration and internal governance;

G. Expenses for legislative and administrative agency activities to effectuate collective bargaining agreements;

H. All expenses for the education and training of officers and staff intended to prepare the participants to better perform chargeable activities;

I. All costs of strikes and other lawful economic actions.

5. DETERMINATION OF CHARGEABLE SHARE

The BLET shall engage an outside auditor to perform an independent audit of the records of the National Division annually. Based on this audit, the BLET shall determine the percentage of expenditures that fall within the categories specified in Section 4. The amount of expenditures that fall within Section 4 shall be the basis for calculating the reduced fees that must be paid by the objector. The auditing firm conducting the annual audit of the BLET National Division shall give an opinion concerning the adequacy of the escrow amounts maintained pursuant to Section 10, and later will verify the existence and the audits of money in any escrow account.

6. REPORT OF CHARGEABLE SHARE AND BASIS OF ITS CALCULATION

The BLET shall report the determination no later than September 30. This report shall include an analysis of the major categories of union expenses that are chargeable and nonchargeable. A copy of the report shall be sent to all nonmembers whose timely objections have not been revoked.

7. CHALLENGE PROCEDURE

Each person entitled to receive the BLET's report may challenge the validity of the calculations by filing an appeal with the National Secretary Treasurer. Such appeal must be made by sending a letter to the National Secretary Treasurer postmarked no later than October 31.

8. ARBITRATION OF CHALLENGES

A. After the close of appeals period, the National Secretary Treasurer shall provide a list of appellants to the American Arbitration Association (AAA). All appeals shall be consolidated. The AAA shall appoint an arbitrator pursuant to its Rules for Impartial Determination of Union Fees. The AAA shall inform the National Secretary Treasurer and the appellant(s) of the arbitrator selected.

B. The arbitration shall commence by December 1 or as soon thereafter as the AAA can schedule the arbitration. The arbitrator shall have control over all procedural matters affecting the arbitration in order to fulfill the need for an informed and expeditious arbitration.

C. Each party to the arbitration

shall bear its own costs. The appellants shall have the option of paying a pro rata portion of the arbitrator's fees and expenses. The balance of such fees and expenses shall be paid by the BLET.

D. A court reporter shall make a transcript of all proceedings before the arbitrator. This transcript shall be prepared within 15 days of the close of the hearing and shall be the official record of the proceedings which may be purchased by the appellants. If appellants do not purchase a copy of the transcript, a copy shall be available for inspection at the National Division during normal business hours.

E. Appellants may, at their expense, be represented by counsel or other representative of choice. Appellants need not appear at the hearing and shall be permitted to file written statements with the arbitrator at the time of the hearing instead of appearing.

F. Fourteen (14) days prior to the start of the first hearing, appellants shall be provided with a list of all exhibits intended to be introduced at the hearing and a list of all witnesses intended to be called, except for exhibits and witnesses that may be introduced for rebuttal. On written request from an appellant, copies of exhibits (or in case of voluminous exhibits, summaries thereof) shall be provided to them. Additionally, copies of exhibits shall be available for inspection and copying at the hearing.

G. The National Division shall have the burden of establishing that the reduced fees set forth in the report are lawful.

H. If the arbitrator shall determine that more than one day of hearing is necessary, hearings shall be scheduled to continue from day to day until completed. The parties to the appeal shall have the right to file a brief within fifteen (15) days after the transcript of the hearing is available, but in no case no more than thirty (30) days after the hearing closes. The arbitrator shall issue a decision within forty five (45) days after the submission of post hearing briefs or within such other reasonable period as is consistent with the rules established by the AAA.

I. The arbitrator shall give full consideration to the legal requirements limiting the amounts that objectors may be charged, and shall set forth in the decision the legal and arithmetic basis for such decision.

9. PAYMENT OF REDUCED FEES

Objectors shall pay reduced monthly fees based on the most recent report pending determination of the objection year's chargeable ratio.

10. ESCROW OF DISPUTED FUNDS

All monthly fees paid by objectors shall be placed in an interest bearing escrow account pending final determination of the chargeable share. Escrowed funds shall be disbursed to objectors and the Union upon issuance of the arbitrator's decision or fifteen days after the conclusion of the appeal period if there are no challenges to the determination.



Locomotive Engineers And Trainmen News Brotherhood Of Locomotive Engineers And Trainmen

7061 East Pleasant Valley Road
Independence, Ohio 44131

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10/19

Photo of the Month: August-October 2019

OH, CANADA: Canadian Pacific Railway locomotive 8883 at Port Hope, Ontario, Canada on June 23, 2012. **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; Vacation; BLET BNSF/MRL GCA meeting, Las Vegas, Nevada; BLET New York State Legislative Board mtg., Lake George, N.Y.; BLET Eastern regional mtg., Clearwater, Fla.; BLET Eastern General Chairmen's Association mtg., Clearwater, Fla.

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.; GCA mtg., Las Vegas, Nevada; BLET Eastern regional mtg., Clearwater, Fla.

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 Eastern regional mtg., Clearwater, Fla.

VICE PRESIDENT & NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE JOHN P. TOLMAN: Assigned to BLET Washington, DC office; General office duties, telephone and correspondence communications; Mtg. w/ Labor Member John Bragg and Michele Neuendorf, U.S. Railroad Retirement Board, Washington, D.C.; Work with 13 BLET State Legislative Board Chairmen to attend over 150 mtgs. in the House and Senate lobbying on H.R. 3896, H.R. 1748 and S. 1079, and other safety issues, Washington, D.C.; Attended a hearing: Next Steps for Positive Train Control Implementation, Washington, D.C.; BLET Eastern regional mtg., Clearwater, Fla.; Various receptions and office visits with members of Congress and the leadership of both the GOP and Democratic parties, Washington, D.C.

VICE PRESIDENT MARCUS J. RUEF: Vice Chairman, National Railroad Adjustment Board (NRAB); National Mediation Board (NMB) 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; Prepare for DL 464, DL 461 and DL 459, NRAP, Chicago; Assist GC Reynolds w/ discipline cases, WC, Chicago; NRAB hearing w/ Referee Benn, DL 464; Assist VGC Lough w/ discipline appeals; Assist VGC Mugavero w/ rules issue, CP/Soo, Chicago; BLET Eastern regional mtg., Clearwater, Fla.; NRAB hearing w/ Referee Benn, DL 459; NRAB hearing w/ Fereree Betts, DL 461.

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; St. Lawrence & Atlantic, mechanical, Section 6 negotiations, Auburn, Maine; BLET Eastern regional mtg., Clearwater, Fla.; Louisville & Indiana Section 6 negotiations, Jeffersonville, Idaho.

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.; BNSF/MLR GCA mtg., Las Vegas, Nevada; BLET Eastern regional mtg., Clearwater, Fla.

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; Attend Division 348 monthly mtg. w/ GC Dehart, Ind.; Assist GC Sturdivant, Independence, Ky.; BLET Eastern regional mtg., Clearwater, 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; Assist PATH GC McCarthy w/ contract issues; NMB A-13753, assist PATH GC McCarthy, Washington, D.C.; Various BLET regional mtg. issues; Assist WNYF GC Rathbun w/ contract issues; Assist NJ Transit GC Brown w/ contract issues; Assist Amtrak GC Kenny w/ VRE contract issues.

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; Mtgs. w/ VP Gibbons and GC Sturdivant, NS-Southern GCA, Independence, Ky.; BLET Eastern regional mtg., Clearwater, Fla.; PLB 7902, New Orleans, La.

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.; Vacation; Serving as Board Member on Public Law Boards 6884 and 7239, Chicago, Ill.; Assist CSXT GCs Gary Best, Pat Driscoll, Billy Lyons and Keith Kerley in negotiations w/ CSXT, Buffalo, N.Y.; BLET Eastern regional mtg., Clearwater, Fla.; Serving as Board Member of Public Law Board 7084, Chicago.

Three upcoming rail hazmat training classes available in early 2020

REGISTER FOR CLASSES AT: WWW.RAILWORKERTRAININGPROGRAM.ORG

The Rail Workers Hazardous Materials Training Program is hosting three rail worker training sessions in early 2020. The dates are as follows: January 12-17, 2020; February 2-7, 2020; and March 15-20, 2020.

These Rail Hazmat/Chemical Emergency Response training courses will run on a Sunday through Friday basis, with an orientation session at 5:30 p.m. on Sunday and departure on Friday. All training will be conducted at the Houston Fire Academy's Val Jahnke Training Facility, 8030 Braniff St., Houston, Texas, 77061.

Uncontrolled releases of chemicals can be extremely dangerous, especially in transportation. Emergency responders are particularly

at risk. Any worker who is likely to witness or discover a hazardous materials spill or release or who is likely to be involved in the clean-up or post-emergency response activities of a hazardous materials incident is considered a first responder and is required to be trained by the employer.

The Rail Workers Hazardous Materials Training Program is funded by a federal grant from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) to provide hazmat training to rail workers. These five-day hazmat training courses will provide rail workers the essential knowledge, skills, and response actions in the case of an unintentional release. These

tools will allow rail workers to protect themselves, their co-workers and their communities.

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

The funding provides the fol-

lowing student expenses: travel, lodging and meals. In addition, an incentive of \$175.00 per day is available to all training participants of these programs, except those who are able to secure regular pay through their employer, or are paid union officers.

It is recommended that rail workers complete the 40-hour chemical emergency response training courses once every three years. Please use the following website to register: <http://www.railworkertrainingprogram.org>.

For more information, please use the link above or call the Rail Workers Hazardous Materials Training Program at (202) 624-6963 (Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., EST). @