



DAILY NEWS UPDATES  
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# Locomotive

## ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN NEWS



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### 2021 BLET Scholarship Directory

SEE PAGES 6-7 FOR LIST OF FINANCIAL AID OPPORTUNITIES

## COURT RULING FAVORS UNIONS & STATES

### REJECTS FRA'S ATTEMPT TO PREEMPT STATE TWO-PERSON CREW LAWS

**T**wo of the country's largest railroad unions achieved a favorable decision in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals on February 23 regarding an attempt by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to preempt legislation passed by a number of states that established a minimum of two-person operating crews on freight trains.

The case, brought by the states of California, Washington and Nevada and by the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers – Transportation Division (SMART-TD) and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET), challenged former FRA Administrator Ron Batory's attempt to cancel the laws of those and other states while at the same time attempting to authorize nationwide one-person crews. The unions and states argued that Batory's May 2019 order violated the comment-and-notice procedures of Administrative Procedure Act (APA) and that his agency could not implicitly preempt the state safety rules.

The Court of Appeals ruled that FRA's Order was "arbitrary and capricious,"

**NINTH CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS HOLDING ON THE FRA'S MAY 2019 PREEMPT LEGISLATION FOR A MINIMUM TWO-PERSON CREW :**

**The FRA's Order was "arbitrary and capricious," taking particular note that the assertions by FRA and the rail carriers that reducing the number of crew members in the cab to one person could improve safety "did not withstand scrutiny" and "was lacking."**

taking particular note that the assertions by FRA and the rail carriers that reducing the number of crew members in the cab to one person could improve safety "did not withstand scrutiny" and "was lacking." The Court also criticized the Order as not being a "logical outgrowth" of FRA's 2016 proposed two-person crew rule, because "[t]here was nothing in the [proposed regulation] to put a person on notice that the FRA might adopt a national one-person crew limit."

The Court chided FRA for basing its negative preemption decision on "an economic rationale" instead of what is its main obligation — safety.

The Court also found the Order's "real and intended effect is to authorize nationwide one-person train crews and to bar any contrary state regulations." In

that it utterly failed to address the safety concerns raised by nearly 1,550 commenters who support two-person crews, the Court found the Order's rationale was arbitrary and capricious, thus violating the APA.

Likewise, the Court eviscerated the lack of a sound factual basis in the Order, which merely cited a study funded by the Association of American Railroads, holding that "a single study suggesting that one-person crew operations 'appear as safe' as two-person crews seems a thin reed on which to base a national rule."

"First, we thank the more than 1,500 BLET and SMART-TD members who took the time to comment on the need for two-person crews, because you have made a difference," said BLET Presi-

dent Dennis R. Pierce and SMART-TD President Jeremy R. Ferguson. "We also congratulate the judges in this case for recognizing the former Administrator overstepped his bounds, and we look ahead to working with the FRA when crew size is again considered on a national level by the agency as a matter of public and operational safety."

"We assert, and will continue to assert, that having two sets of eyes and two people working in concert together with any improvements in technology, will be the best way to serve public safety and to continue the effective and efficient movement of our nation's railroads," the union presidents said.

The court ruling, in vacating and remanding the FRA Order, sends the matter of a potential rulemaking for freight railroad crew size back to FRA for the Agency's consideration. It also means that two-person crew legislation in the states that had been targeted by FRA's order remain in effect. ©

**A copy of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling is available here (PDF):**  
[www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/9th\\_Cir\\_Opinion.pdf](http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/9th_Cir_Opinion.pdf)

## A NEW CONTRACT AT NYS&W

**A New York, Susquehanna & Western train passes Pratt Corners near Homer, New York, on March 19, 2015. In December 2020, the BLET announced its NYS&W members had ratified a new contract.**

PLEASE SEE PAGE 8 FOR DETAILS.

**Photo:** by Brother Cory Rusch, a member of BLET Division 659 in Buffalo, N.Y. Brother Rusch is a conductor with Norfolk Southern and a regular contributor to BLET publications.



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**BLET PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY DENNIS R. PIERCE**

# HIGH-TECH DIVIDE AND CONQUER

In my last President's Message, I closed by saying the following:

"... our success in all of our goals is directly tied to our solidarity. I will say it again; we must put aside any of the issues that may have divided us in the political cycle and, instead, focus on the workplace issues that we have in common. We must not allow the Rail Carriers to divide us with their efforts to blame our Unions when they mistreat their employees. We must remember that anyone who attacks your Union is attacking you and your livelihood ..."

In the weeks that have passed since I wrote that message, it has become more evident that we must recommit ourselves to solidarity with everyone who will work with us to protect the pay, benefits and jobs of not only BLET members, but all Union rail workers. That includes working with elected and appointed government officials at both the State and Federal level who will assist us in our efforts and 2021 certainly presents us with new opportunities at all levels. It also includes supporting coalitions of Labor Unions that have all committed to a common cause. While that may seem like a simple thing, it is easier said than done.

For well over a century, Brotherhood law has cautioned our membership to beware of "insidious approaches of any and all enemies of the organization and the machinations of capital and its agents." While the wording is

from a bygone era, the warning is more important now than ever. It is obviously nothing new for rail carriers to attempt to "divide and conquer" their Union-represented employees. Over many decades, they have sown division among their individual employees, and between their employees' Labor Unions. And technology has now given them a new tool in that effort.

The term "gaslighting" is not new; by definition, it is a "form of psychological manipulation in which a person or a group covertly sows seeds of doubt in a targeted individual or group." What is more and more prevalent in our world is the use of technology to accomplish gaslighting, by "Using denial, misdirection, contradiction and misinformation, gaslighting involves attempts to destabilize the victim and delegitimize the victim's beliefs."

This may sound like complicated psychological language, but in actuality these are simple terms. Social media has become the perfect tool for rail carriers to use in an effort to mislead employees, and in doing so, drive wedges between you and your Union. It has become commonplace for railroad management to tell local representatives that the General Chairmen of their bargaining unit agreed to something when they did not. Even more often, railroad management has tried to convince its employees that one Union was intent on hurting another Union. Then those same false Carrier accusations show up



on social media, where those who read it have no readily available way of knowing what is true and what is not.

This much is true: we must not allow rail carriers to turn BLET members against one another, nor one Union against another. There is no doubt that rail carriers are abusing their employees at every turn, and then sowing seeds of blame targeting the Union for not fixing the problems fast enough. There is also no doubt that Rail Union members are angry at the fact that the Railway Labor Act requires that the vast majority of the related disputes must be arbitrated. Years of an underfunded National Mediation Board then compounds the delay in obtaining resolution, further increasing the anger on the property.

Enter the same rail carriers that created that situation, now throwing out misinformation about your Union and its efforts to stop their abuse by their plants on social media websites and pages. These seeds of misinformation, cast into the soil that the carriers have cultivated, are bound to grow if left unchecked.

And when members ask, why now? Remember that as part of its coalition of Unions in the last round of national contract negotiations, BLET bargained jointly with SMART-TD. This was the first time the operating unions bargained together nationally since 1964. We are bargaining together again in the current round, and we are working together on both the State and Federal level to pursue legislative, regulatory and legal so-

lutions to our mutual issues. You need go no further than our recent victory in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals (see Page 1 of this issue) reversing former FRA Administrator Ron Batory's effort to use negative preemption to vacate state laws requiring two persons on certain trains to see the value in our joint efforts.

BLET and SMART-TD are also negotiating in this round as part of the Coordinated Bargaining Coalition, the largest rail labor coalition assembled for national rail bargaining in recent history. Our Coalition is exactly what I described earlier, "Labor Unions that have all committed to a common cause."

These things combined are why the rail carriers will do everything in their power to try and undermine our solidarity. And this is why the cautionary language in our Union's Bylaws is more important now than ever.

Do not fall for the gaslighting. Do not assume that the anti-Union propaganda that you see on social media is true, especially when it is clearly designed to pit Union Brother against Union Brother, or one Union against another. Do your own fact checking, but most importantly, be involved in your Union. As I said in my opening quote, "anyone who attacks your Union is attacking you and your livelihood." Never forget that.

**DENNIS R. PIERCE**  
BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

66 This may sound like complicated psychological language, but in actuality these are simple terms. Social media has become the perfect tool for rail carriers to use in an effort to mislead employees, and in doing so, drive wedges between you and your Union. It has become commonplace for railroad management to tell local representatives that the General Chairmen of their bargaining unit agreed to something when they did not. 99

## COORDINATED BARGAINING COALITION UPDATE

The Rail Unions comprising the Coordinated Bargaining Coalition (CBC), negotiating together in the current round of National Negotiations, have issued the following statement:

"The CBC and the nation's Rail Carriers first met concerning the November 1, 2019 Section 6 Notices in January 2020. Although

the COVID 19 Pandemic has made meetings for groups of this size challenging, the parties continued to meet virtually to make presentations concerning their proposals throughout 2020. Additional meetings have now been scheduled for early 2021.

"While CBC and the Rail Carriers continue to share and discuss all

aspects of what would be necessary to reach a voluntary agreement, the Rail Carriers have not made any proposals worthy of consideration by the membership of the CBC Unions. The parties will continue to meet in good faith as we move into 2021, fully cognizant that it is our members who must ratify any voluntary agreement." ©©

## 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

# PUTTING WORKERS FIRST IS PARAMOUNT IN 2021

**T**he new year often brings the feeling of a clean slate, and that need to clear the decks is even more necessary in 2021 given everything Americans experienced during the previous 12 months.

Words truly fail to describe the depths to which 2020 brought us. Of course, there was (and still is) the coronavirus, as well as a bitterly divisive presidential election. Millions of hardworking Americans lost their jobs due to the pandemic, and many still haven't gotten them back.

Well, normalcy might not be here yet, but the ongoing COVID-19 vaccine distribution roll out which UPS Teamsters are participating in shows a real solution is near. Meanwhile, the



Teamsters -- with more than 1 million frontline workers -- have job openings in these essential industries. And the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris brings hope that we will soon have a federal govern-

ment that puts the people above the powerful.

Workers are ready to move beyond the empty promises of the past four years. The Teamsters have been engaged in discussions with the Biden transition team for months in an effort to communicate the union's top issues and to build common ground with the incoming administration. We are optimistic that those efforts will prove to be fruitful not only in the early days of the Biden presidency, but in the months and years to come.

There is still much more to be done. The nation's workers still need more economic relief, especially as the coronavirus continues its relentless assault on the nation's health and economy. And then there are a slew

of issues that have been Teamster priorities in recent years. The Teamsters are seeking solutions on such issues as beefed-up labor standards, transportation, automation, trade and implementation of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement.

We are hopeful about America's future in the coming year. That hope is based on science and on the experience of President-elect Biden who has shown in the past that he can get things done to help working Americans. That is how we are going to build this country back stronger.

Fraternally,

**JAMES P. HOFFA**  
TEAMSTERS GENERAL  
PRESIDENT

66 We are hopeful about America's future in the coming year. That hope is based on science and on the experience of President-elect Biden who has shown in the past that he can get things done to help working Americans. That is how we are going to build this country back stronger. 99

## Craver reelected to fourth term as Chairman of Virginia State Legislative Board

**B**rother Timothy R. Craver of BLET Division 532 (Richmond, Va.) was re-elected by acclamation to his fourth full term as Chairman of the Virginia State Legislative Board at its quadrennial meeting on October 30, 2020. A CSX locomotive engineer, Brother Craver hired out with CSX in January 1997. He earned promotion to locomotive engineer in 1997 and joined the Brotherhood effective December 1, 1998. He has served Division 532 as Legislative Representative for several terms since that time. Brother Craver was first elected Chairman of the Virginia State Legislative Board on October 21, 2008, and was subsequently reelected at quadrennial meetings in 2012, 2016 and now 2020. Also, elected during the meeting were: 1st Vice Chairman Michael Worrell, Division 301 (Roanoke, Va.); 2nd Vice Chairman Rhett Harbeson, Division 561 (Richmond, Va.); Third Vice Chairman Jim Partain, Division 456 (Norfolk, Va.); Secretary-Treasurer, Jeffrey E. Wood, Division 26 (Richmond, Va.); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Rhett Harbeson, Division 561 (Richmond, Va.). Brother Wood has served the Board as Secretary-Treasurer since 2005.

Elected to serve as Trustees were: Michael Worrell, Division 301 (Roanoke, Va.); Dan Moore, Division 26 (Richmond, Va.); and Jim Partain, Division

456 (Norfolk, Va.).

"Brother Craver is a veteran BLET officer and I know he will continue to do an excellent job representing the best interests of our members in Virginia," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "I am proud to congratulate him and all the officers of the Virginia State Legislative Board, and wish to thank them for their service to our Brotherhood."

The Virginia State Legislative Board represents 12 BLET Divisions and approximately 1,200 active and retired members. ©©

## NINTH ANNUAL REPORT ON BLET EDUCATION & TRAINING FUND

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

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

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

### BLET ELECTION NEWS



**"Brother Craver is a veteran BLET officer and I know he will continue to do an excellent job representing the best interests of our members in Virginia."**  
— PRESIDENT DENNIS PIERCE

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING FUND BALANCE REPORT FOR 2019

FUND BALANCE AT JANUARY 1, 2019		\$397,918
REVENUES		
EDUCATION AND TRAINING FUND DUES	\$343,402	
REIMBURSED EXPENDITURES	\$29,623	
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>		<b>\$373,025</b>
EXPENDITURES		
WAGES, TAXES, AND BENEFITS	\$189,418	
BUSINESS TRAVEL AND EXPENSES	\$22,744	
INFORMATION SERVICES	\$16,466	
GENERAL OFFICE EXPENSES	\$12,185	
EQUIPMENT AND FURNITURE PURCHASES	\$0	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>		<b>\$240,813</b>
<b>NET REVENUES EXCEEDING EXPENDITURES</b>		<b>\$132,212</b>
<b>FUND BALANCE AT DECEMBER 31, 2019</b>		<b>\$530,130</b>



# NTSB, BLET urge action on buffer cars to protect train crews

**T**he National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) issued a Safety Recommendation Report on December 15, 2020, calling out the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) for their failure to act regarding the safe placement of buffer cars on trains carrying hazardous materials. For the past several years, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) has urged the FRA to act on the issue of additional buffer cars on unit trains to help to protect operating crews in the event of a derailment.

"This is not the first time NTSB has issued recommendations regarding the use of buffer cars to reduce the risks of hazardous materials release to train crews," said Robert Hall, NTSB Director of Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials. "We believe that it is imperative that these recommendations be implemented to prevent the potential for a catastrophic event."

The NTSB's latest recommendation would require all trains to have a minimum of five non-placarded cars between any locomotive or occupied equipment and freight cars transporting hazardous materials, regardless of train length and consist. The recommendation stems from two separate derailments of high hazard flammable trains in Draffin, Kentucky (CSX) on February 13, 2020, and in Fort Worth, Texas (Union Pacific), on April 24, 2019, both of which resulted in breached tank cars and hazardous material fires. The NTSB is investigating both derailments.

**"This is not the first time NTSB has issued recommendations regarding the use of buffer cars to reduce the risks of hazardous materials release to train crews. We believe that it is imperative that these recommendations be implemented to prevent the potential for a catastrophic event."**

**— Robert Hall, NTSB Director of Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials.**

The NTSB found that in both derailments, least-protective DOT-111 tank cars were placed in positions that increased the risk of derailment and breaching of the tank cars, resulting in release of their hazardous materials contents. Additionally, in Draffin, Kentucky, the lead locomotives were separated from the hazardous materials tank cars by only one buffer car, which shortened the distance between the breached tank cars and the crewmembers, increasing the risk of injury or death.

In the Draffin derailment, the Pike County deputy emergency management director told NTSB investigators that firefighters observed the train crew grasping to the front of the lead locomotive while a large fire burned near them. He said the cab of the locomotive was engulfed in flames that came within 10 feet of the crew. The deputy emergency management director stated, "the fire was right at them and they appeared to be panicking ... their choices were to go toward the fire or jump into the river." The train crew entered the water and ultimately was rescued by emergency responders.

The NTSB concluded that the Draffin, Kentucky, and Fort Worth, Texas, accidents could have been less severe had the DOT-111 tank cars been placed in locations within the train where they were less

likely to derail or to sustain accident damage.

In 2015, the BLET petitioned the FRA to take regulatory action to mandate an increased number of buffer cars between the lead locomotive and trailing tank cars that contain oil. Current regulations require five buffer cars on a mixed freight train if the first car contains oil, but through a loophole in the regulations, only one buffer car is required on unit oil trains that could contain over 100 oil tankers. In derailments, locomotives can be a primary ignition source for spilled oil.

"Since engine and train crews occupy the cab of that potential ignition source, there should be as much distance away from the fuel source as possible," wrote BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce in a letter to the FRA dated April 28, 2015. "Five cars may be insufficient, but one car is obviously not enough."

The FRA responded to the BLET's letter by tasking the Agency's Railroad Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC) with forming a working group to consider revisions to the hazardous materials regulations. The RSAC deadlocked on the subject, and the process eventually ground to a halt due, in part, to carrier intransigence on the buffer car issue.

The NTSB has previously recommended that the FRA develop requirements for the placement of cars carrying poison-inhalation hazard (PIH) materials to lessen their risk of derailment. As a result of the horrific derailment of a Norfolk Southern train in Graniteville, South Carolina, on January 6, 2005, the NTSB issued the following safety recommendation to the FRA: "Require railroads to implement operating measures, such as positioning tank cars toward the rear of trains and reducing speeds through populated areas, to minimize impact forces from accidents and reduce the vulnerability of tank cars transporting chlorine, anhydrous ammonia, and other liquefied gases designated as poisonous by inhalation."

The NTSB issued a similar safety recommendation to the PHMSA in 2010, after the PHMSA issued a final rule aimed at improving the safety of tank car transportation of hazardous materials which did not include operational requirements for PIH hazardous materials placement in trains. The NTSB again issued similar safety recommendations to both groups following the oil train derailment and massive fire in Casselton, North Dakota, which occurred on December 30, 2013.

President Pierce said the BLET agrees with the NTSB's latest safety recommendation. "As we have said for years, a change in the rule would require minor, easily accommodated operational changes and not the need for some expensive technology," President Pierce said. "Continuing to allow the railroads to self-regulate puts the lives of train crews at risk, and could lead to a wholly unnecessary loss of life." @@

## Dinges reelected Chairman of Maryland State Legislative Board

**B**rother David M. Dinges of BLET Division 181 (Brunswick, Md.) was reelected by acclamation to his second term as Chairman of the Maryland State Legislative Board (SLB) at the Board's quadrennial meeting on December 19, 2020.

The BLET's Maryland SLB was founded four years ago, and Brother Dinges was elected as the Board's first chairman at its inaugural meeting on June 2, 2016. Brother Dinges hired out with CSX as a brakeman/conductor in August of 1993 and earned promotion to locomotive engineer in August of 1994. He has held continuous membership in the BLET since January 1, 2008.

Also elected during the meeting were: 1st Vice Chairman Christopher T. Brown, Division 52 (Baltimore, Md.); 2nd Vice Chairman Mark A. Crouch, Division 97

**BLET ELECTION NEWS**



**"I congratulate Brother Dinges and all officers of the Maryland State Legislative Board. I thank them for their dedicated service to our Brotherhood, and I know they will continue to do an excellent job advancing the interests of our members in the proud State of Maryland."**

**— PRESIDENT DENNIS PIERCE**

(Baltimore, Md.); and Secretary-Treasurer Joel P. Myers, Division 181 (Brunswick, Md.). Elected to serve as Trustees were: Christopher T. Brown, Division 52 (Baltimore, Md.); Mark A. Crouch, Division 97 (Baltimore, Md.); and Frank L. Shillenburg, Division 934 (Cumberland, Md.).

"I congratulate Brother Dinges and all officers of the Maryland State Legislative Board," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "I thank them for their dedicated service to our Brotherhood, and I know they will continue to do an excellent job advancing the inter-

ests of our members in the proud State of Maryland."

In 2019, the members of the Maryland State Legislative Board helped lobby in support of two-person crew legislation, which passed both chambers of the Maryland General Assembly before dying on the governor's desk. Brother Dinges said the Board plans to pursue a two-person crew bill again in 2021.

Brother Dinges was elected to serve as Division 181's Secretary-Treasurer and Legislative Representative in 2015, winning reelection to both positions in 2018. He also serves Division 181 as 1st Vice Local Chairman. In 2019, he was elected Secretary-Treasurer of the BLET's National Association of State Legislative Board Chairmen (NASLBC).

The Maryland State Legislative Board represents more than 200 members from four BLET Local Divisions. @@

## BLET MEMBERS RATIFY NEW CONTRACT WITH INDIANA SOUTHERN

**M**embers of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) ratified a new collective bargaining agreement with the Indiana Southern Railroad (ISRR). Announced on November 4, 2020, the five-year agreement governs rates of pay, benefits and work rules for approximately 17 members, including the

crafts of locomotive engineer and conductor.

The BLET's ISRR membership belongs to Division 270 located in Washington, Ind., which is a part of the CP Rail-U.S. General Committee of Adjustment (GCA). The negotiating team consisted of CP Rail/Indiana Southern General Chairman Pete Semenek, Division 270 Local Chairman Terry Braun and Na-

tional Vice President Marcus Ruef. "I congratulate and thank General Chairman Semenek, Local Chairman Braun and Vice President Ruef for their hard work in bringing these negotiations to a successful conclusion," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "I also thank the Indiana Southern membership for their engagement throughout this round of

bargaining and for their participation in the balloting process."

The BLET first organized the ISRR in September of 2002. A Genesee & Wyoming property, the ISRR operates 196 miles of track between Indianapolis and Evansville, Ind. It handles primarily coal and agricultural commodities. @@



# Gabaldon reelected New Mexico SLB Chairman

Brother Eric A. Gabaldon was reelected to his second term as Chairman of the New Mexico State Legislative Board at its quadrennial meeting, which was held on October 15, 2020.

Brother Gabaldon is a Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) locomotive engineer who has held continuous membership in Division 400 (Albuquerque, N.M.) since March 1, 2006. He hired out in 1998 with the BNSF mechanical department before transferring to train/engine service. He earned promotion to locomotive engineer in 2003. Brother Gabaldon is currently in his fourth term as Local Chairman of Division 400 and also serves as its Legislative Representative.

Additional New Mexico SLB officers elected during the quadrennial meeting were: 1st Vice Chairman Clem Harris, Division 15 (Albuquerque, N.M.); 2nd Vice Chairman Gilbert Montiel, Division 446 (Belen, N.M.); Secretary-Treasurer Brian Jenne, Division 811 (Clovis, N.M.); and Alternate Secretary-

**BLET ELECTION NEWS**



**"On behalf of the BLET National Division, I congratulate Brother Gabaldon and all officers of the New Mexico SLB and thank them for their service to our Brotherhood."**  
— PRESIDENT DENNIS PIERCE

Treasurer Dwayne Tafoya, Division 791 (Belen, N.M.).

Elected to serve as Trustees were: Gilbert Tafoya, Division 791 (Belen, N.M.); Clem Harris, Division 15 (Albuquerque, N.M.); and Gilbert Montiel, Division 446 (Belen, N.M.).

Guest speakers included: BLET National President Dennis Pierce; now-retired BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative John Tolman; current Vice President and National Legislative Representative Vince Verna; BLET

Director of Political and Legislative Affairs Bob Hagan; BLET General Chairman Robby Cunningham (BNSF former AT&SF GCA); U.S. Representative Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM), who represents New Mexico's 3rd Congressional District; and U.S. Representative Xochitl Torres Small (D-NM), who represents New Mexico's 2nd Congressional District.

"On behalf of the BLET National Division, I congratulate Brother Gabaldon and all officers of the New Mexico State Legislative Board and thank them for

their service to our Brotherhood," President Pierce said.

There were several BLET State Legislative Board Chairman in attendance, including: Dave Brown (Minnesota); Paul Pearson (Colorado); Wayne Denson (Arkansas); Shahraim Allen (Washington); Shane Hubbard (Indiana); Calvin Groose (Missouri); Gary Pedigo (Texas); and Tim Craver (Virginia).

Additional BLET Division officers in attendance included: Charlie Jeffcoat, Legislative Representative of Division 811 (Clovis, N.M.), Jacob Williams, Local Chairman of Division 446 (Belen, N.M.); Greg Guerra, Legislative Representative of Division 264 (El Paso, Texas); Ozzie Murguia, President of Division 15 (Albuquerque, N.M.); Mathew Pacht, President of Division 400 (Albuquerque, N.M.); and Eddie Padilla, Secretary-Treasurer of Division 400 (Albuquerque, N.M.).

The BLET's New Mexico State Legislative Board represents nearly 600 active and retired members in five different BLET Divisions. @@

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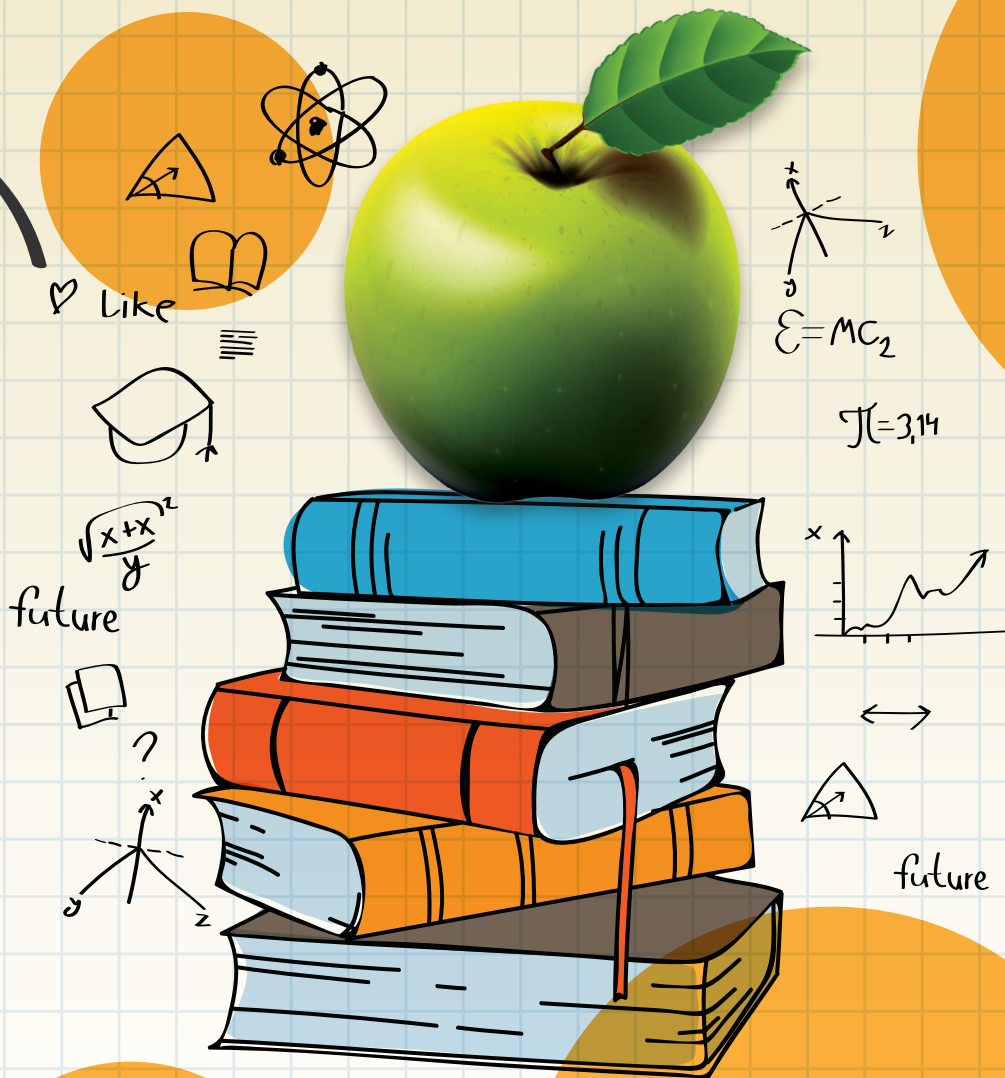


# 2021 BLET Scholarship Directory

**E**ach year, the BLET National Division compiles a list of scholarship opportunities available to the children of BLET members. Numerous financial aid opportunities are published here in the 2021 BLET Scholarship Directory.

The scholarship opportunities vary widely. The following comprehensive list provides members and their families with contact information for each scholarship program. The BLET National Division does not maintain its own scholarship program, nor does it oversee or otherwise play any role in the administration of any of the programs included in this Directory. Interested parties are advised to contact the individual scholarship providers listed below for additional information.

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



## The 2021 BLET Scholarship Directory is as follows:

### James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund

The deadline for the James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund (JRHMSF) is usually March 1 each year.

The application process is completely online. All applications must be completed through the online portal found on the Fund's website: [www.jrhmsf.org](http://www.jrhmsf.org). This JRHMSF website outlines eligibility requirements and application procedures, and applicants must complete a brief registration process in order to access the registration area.

There are two types of scholarship applications available: Academic Scholarships, which range up to \$10,000, and Training/Vocational Scholarships, which range up to \$2,000. Full details and eligibility requirements for each type of scholarship are available on the JRHMSF website at the link above. In 2020, \$1.2 million in scholarships were awarded, with 26 BLET families winning scholarships.

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

The James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund is an independent organization established and registered as a tax-exempt entity under Section

501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Fund is established solely to provide scholarships to the child or dependent of a member of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, and contributions to the Fund are deductible as charitable contributions to the extent permitted by law.

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

### BLET Auxiliary and LECMPA Scholarship Programs

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

To apply for an Auxiliary Scholarship award, the applicant must be a son, daughter, stepson, or stepdaughter of a BLET Auxiliary member and a Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineer and Trainmen member (living or deceased), with each being a member for at least one year. An exception has been made for those children of single-parent BLET members with at least one year of membership in the BLET and at least one year of membership as a BLET Auxiliary Associate Member. To qualify for the LECMPA-funded scholarships, the BLET member in the family must also be a member of LECMPA for no less than one year. Children of an unmarried BLET member who has been an Associate

Member of the BLET Auxiliary for at least one year are also eligible.

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

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

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

Completed applications must be received by BLET Auxiliary Secretary Lawana Poss, and the deadline is typically April 1 each year. Late applications will not be considered.

**FOR QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT LAWANA POSS AT [LWPOSS@GMAIL.COM](mailto:LWPOSS@GMAIL.COM). APPLICATIONS, INSTRUCTIONS FOR SCHOLARSHIPS, AND MAILING ADDRESS FOR SUBMISSION MAY BE FOUND ON THE AUXILIARY WEBSITE AT [WWW.BLETAUXILIARY.NET](http://WWW.BLETAUXILIARY.NET).**

### BLET UP-Southern Region GCA

The BLET's Union Pacific-Southern Region General Committee of Adjustment (UP-SR GCA) offers annual scholarships ranging from \$750 to \$2,000. Applicants must be the son, daughter, financial dependent or ward of a UP-SR GCA member in good standing per the BLET Bylaws starting with the 2021-2022 school year. The deadline for applications is usually March 1 each year.

**COMPLETE RULES, FULL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS, AND AN APPLICATION CAN BE FOUND ON THE UP-SOUTHERN REGION GCA WEBSITE: [WWW.BLETSR.ORG](http://WWW.BLETSR.ORG).**

### California State Legislative Board

The BLET's California State Legislative Board (CSLB) will award a \$1,000 scholarship to a graduating high school senior attending a college/trade/vocational school in 2021. The applicant's parent or guardian must be a member in good standing in a BLET division chartered within the State of California.

Rules, applications, and deadline information are available on the Board's website, [www.cslb.ws/2021-scholarship/](http://www.cslb.ws/2021-scholarship/). The deadline is usually May 15 each year.

Please direct any questions to CSLB Chairman Ryan K. Snow ([rksnow1@att.net](mailto:rksnow1@att.net)).

**ALL APPLICATIONS SHOULD BE MAILED TO THE CSLB HOME OFFICE ADDRESS: BLET CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATIVE BOARD, 1207 FRONT ST., SUITE 20, SACRAMENTO, CA 95814. APPLICATIONS WITH SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION CAN ALSO BE EMAILED TO [RKSNOW1@ATT.NET](mailto:rksnow1@att.net) WITH THE SUBJECT LINE "SCHOLARSHIP." THE ELECTRONIC VERSION MUST BE CONFIRMED BY RETURN EMAIL FROM THE CHAIRMAN WITH THE NOTIFICATION ACCEPTED.**



## Illinois State Legislative Board

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

Two \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded to applicants whose parent or guardian is a BLET member in good standing with a BLET Local Division chartered within the State of Illinois. Applicants must be 26 years of age or younger.

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

In 2013, The ISLB executive board helped make Brother Little's dream a reality.

Scholarship applications and all accompanying documents must be received by May 1, 2021. Specific eligibility requirements, detailed instructions and application forms are available for download from the BLET National Division website (PDF), [www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/Illinois\\_SLB\\_Scholarship\\_2021.pdf](http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/Illinois_SLB_Scholarship_2021.pdf).

**FOR QUESTIONS OR ASSISTANCE IN COMPLETING THE APPLICATION, CONTACT JOYCE A. PIEKARSKI, SELECTION COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON AT (630) 963-6099 OR [JOYCE.PIEKARSKI@GMAIL.COM](mailto:JOYCE.PIEKARSKI@GMAIL.COM).**

## Wyoming State Legislative Board

The BLET's Wyoming State Legislative Board (WYSLB) is again offering a

scholarship program for the upcoming school year. First offered for the 2014 academic year, the scholarship deadline is typically June 1 each year.

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

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

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

**INFORMATION AND APPLICATION FORM AVAILABLE HERE (PDF), [WWW.BLE-T.ORG/PR/PDF/WYO\\_SLB\\_SCHOLARSHIP\\_APP.PDF](http://WWW.BLE-T.ORG/PR/PDF/WYO_SLB_SCHOLARSHIP_APP.PDF).**

## BLET Division 269

BLET Division 269 (Jamaica, Long Island, N.Y.) offers one \$500 scholarship to the children of BLET members who are already enrolled in college. Par-

ticipation is limited to members of Division 269 only.

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

**FOR DETAILS, WATCH YOUR DIVISION 269'S MOBILE APP OR CONTACT DIVISION VICE PRESIDENT MICHAEL GARZIANO (516) 641-4041.**

## BLET Division 622

BLET Division 622 (Alliance, Neb.) offers two \$500 scholarships to the children or dependents of Division 622 members. Scholarship winners will be chosen at random during a Division meeting in August. Applications must be received by July 31, 2021.

**FOR MORE SPECIFICS, PLEASE VISIT THE DIVISION 622 WEBSITE ([WWW.BLET622.COM](http://WWW.BLET622.COM)). YOU CAN ALSO CONTACT DIVISION SECRETARY-TREASURER NEIL BURRI AT [NBURRI@BLET622.COM](mailto:NBURRI@BLET622.COM).**

## BR&CF Scholarship Program

The Brotherhood's Relief and Compensation Fund (BR&CF) is pleased to provide opportunities for the sons and daughters of BR&CF members to participate in the Luther G. Smith Scholarship Program.

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

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

**THE 2022 BR&CF SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM IS EXPECTED TO BEGIN ON OCTOBER 1, 2021, WITH APPLICATIONS DUE ON MARCH 1, 2022. THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION IS AVAILABLE BY VISITING BR&CF'S WEBSITE AT [WWW.BRCF.ORG](http://WWW.BRCF.ORG).**

## Union Plus Scholarships

Union Plus awarded \$300,000 in scholarships to 215 union members and union family members in the 2020 Union Plus Scholarship Program. Individual awards ranged from \$750 to \$4,000. The deadline is January 31 each year.

Rising education costs are making it difficult for many union families to afford the cost of tuition. That's one reason Union Plus, which provides important consumer benefits to union members and retirees, offers a unique scholarship program. It has distributed more than \$4.8 million in scholarships to over 3,200 union members and their children since 1991. Recipients are selected based on academic ability, social awareness, financial need and appreciation of labor. A GPA of 3.0 or higher is recommended.

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

**VISIT THE UNION PLUS WEBSITE TO LEARN MORE: [@](http://WWW.UNIONPLUS.ORG/SCHOLARSHIPS)**

# Teamsters and 18 other unions endorse two for NMB

**O**N JANUARY 26, THE INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS, REPRESENTING RAIL AND AIRLINE TEAMSTERS, AND 18 OTHER UNIONS SENT A LETTER TO PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN AND DEMOCRATIC U.S. SENATE LEADERS CHUCK SCHUMER AND PATTY MURRAY REMINDING THE PRESIDENT THAT APPOINTING NEW MEMBERS TO THE NATIONAL MEDIATION BOARD (NMB) SHOULD BE PRIORITIZED. THE UNIONS ENDORSED THE APPOINTMENT OF DEIRDRE HAMILTON AND THE REAPPOINTMENT OF LINDA PUCHALA TO THE BOARD.

Dear President Biden:

We, the undersigned unions representing hundreds of thousands of Americans working in the airline and rail industries, take pleasure in expressing our strong support of Deirdre Hamilton to serve as a Member on the National Mediation Board (NMB), and for sitting NMB member Linda Puchala's reappointment to the board. We also urge you to make these appointments immediately. Unlike other federal agencies, the Trump-appointed NMB will remain in control until new board members are nominated and confirmed by the Senate. With each passing day, the Trump NMB is allowed more opportunity to suppress the voices of aviation and rail workers, stifle collective bargaining rights, and undermine the Biden-Harris pro-worker agenda.

Created by Congress through the Railway Labor Act (RLA), the NMB plays an essential role in the facilitation of labor-

management relations in the aviation and rail industries. Collectively, our unions represent mechanics, pilots, flight attendants, engineers, conductors, and maintenance of way employees, among other critical roles. These workers are best served when the NMB is reliably staffed with public servants who understand the importance of collective bargaining and who, when disputes arise, will seek fair and timely resolutions. Both Ms. Hamilton and Ms. Puchala have impeccable qualifications for positions on the board, and have proven throughout their careers to be steadfast allies of workers.

With over 20 years of experience, Ms. Hamilton has represented workers before federal courts and with the NMB on a wide range of legal issues, including union elections, mediation, contract enforcement, and major and minor dispute claims, and has amassed an in-depth knowledge of the RLA and how it functions. For the past 6 years, Ms. Hamilton

has served as the Staff Attorney to the Airline Division at the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. She has held similar positions as a Senior Staff Attorney at the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, AFL-CIO, and Legal Fellow at the International Association of Machinists. With her experience and command of the RLA, Ms. Hamilton would be in an excellent position to foster strong labor-management relations, protect the right of workers to form and join unions, and ensure that the mediation and arbitration duties of the Board are deployed to serve all stakeholders.

Ms. Puchala has served as a member of the NMB since her confirmation by the U.S. Senate in 2009. Prior to her service as a Board Member, Ms. Puchala worked as a Mediator, Sr. Mediator (ADR) and the Associate Director of Alternative Dispute Resolution Services over a 10-year career at the NMB. During her tenure, Ms. Puchala has demon-

strated leadership and professionalism that has earned her the respect of both parties across the mediation table. Ms. Puchala has also pursued innovative strategies to resolve pending arbitration cases, sought to modernize the NMB's management practices and has fought for policies that will protect the rights of workers to have a union voice. Ms. Puchala also obtained important labor relations experience as a former International President of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, and a Staff Director, Michigan State Employees Association, AFSCME.

The rail and aviation industries support good middle-class jobs that are critical to the economy and are even more important as the country seeks to recover from COVID-19 in the coming months and years. NMB members have an important role to play in protecting these jobs and expanding workforce opportunities in sectors covered by the RLA.@@

## MEET THE TWO INDIVIDUALS ENDORSED AS NEW NMB MEMBERS



### DEIRDRE HAMILTON

With over 20 years of experience, Ms. Hamilton has represented workers before federal courts and with the NMB on a wide range of legal issues, including union elections, mediation, contract enforcement, and major and minor dispute claims, and has amassed an in-depth knowledge of the RLA and how it functions.



### LINDA A. PUCHALA

Prior to becoming a Member, Ms. Puchala served 10 years at the National Mediation Board as a Mediator, Sr. Mediator (ADR) and the Associate Director of Alternative Dispute Resolution Services. Ms. Puchala's prior labor relations experience includes work as International President of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, AFL-CIO and Staff Director, Michigan State Employees Association, AFSCME, AFL-CIO.





## Locomotive Engineers And Trainmen News Brotherhood Of Locomotive Engineers And Trainmen

7061 East Pleasant Valley Road  
Independence, Ohio 44131-5543

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### Photo of the Month: January/February 2021

**LET IT SNOW:** Belching a plume of black smoke, Western New York & Pennsylvania (WNYP) locomotive #431 lumbers through a wintry landscape near Lottsville, Pennsylvania, on December 2, 2020. **Photo:** by Ethan Taylor, a WNYP conductor/engineer who belongs to BLET Division 16.



**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 October/November/December 2020 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; Chairman, CRLO; New Mexico SLB mtg.; Testified at U.S. Senate Commerce Committee hearing; BLET National Association of State Legislative Board mtg.; CRLO rate renewal mtgs.; Collective bargaining mtg.; National Legislative Board mtg.; Vacation; BLET Advisory Board mtg.; IBT General Executive Board mtg.; Washington SLB meeting; BLET BNSF-ATSF S-T training.

**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; and PRAC; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; Holiday; BLET Advisory Board mtg.

**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; Mtgs. with vendors and financial institutions; Union Track issues, development, testing, status updates; Merrill Lynch, BLET finance committee; National Legislative Board mtg.; BLET Advisory Board mtg.

**VICE PRESIDENT & NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE JOHN P. TOLMAN:** Assigned to BLET Washington, DC office; General office duties, telephone and correspondence communications, Washington, D.C.; Various receptions and office visits with members of Congress and the leadership of both the GOP and Democratic parties, Washington, D.C.; BLET Advisory Board mtg.

**VICE PRESIDENT & NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE VINCENT G. VERNA:** Assigned to BLET Washington, DC office; General office duties, telephone and correspondence communications, Washington, D.C.; Various receptions and office visits with members of Congress and the leadership of both the GOP and Democratic parties, Washington, D.C.; Switching Operations Fatality (SOFA) working group mtg.; Mtg. w/ FRA Administrator; National Association of State Legislative Board mtg.; Teamsters conference call, re: COVID; Surface Transportation Board (STB) mtg.; Washington State Legislative Board mtg.; Analysis of various regulatory changes and analysis from BLET; Various communications and mtgs. regarding Georgia runoff election; BLET Advisory Board mtg.

**VICE PRESIDENT MARCUS J. RUEF:** 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, Indiana Harbor Belt, Metra (Chicago), CP Rail System/US (Soo); Arb. website development, ND; Assist GC Evans w/ discipline appeal, IC; Revise NRAB instruction sheet for COVID protocol; Assist GC Semenek w/ discipline appeal, CP; Prep for DL 484; Mtgs. regarding NRAB/PLB case coding; Referee Benn, DL 484 hearing; Assist GC Balonek w/ discipline appeal, Metra; Prep for DL 485; Referee Clauss, DL 485; Prep for DL 492; Prep for PLB 7154; Referee Darby, PLB 7154, IC; IC grievance mediation; Referee Simon, DL 497; DL 496; Vacation; Holiday; Referee Phillips, DL 496; Assist GC Hau w/ ADA issue, WC; Discuss remedy in Award 30328; Prepare Circular 1-92; Annotate recent Third Division awards; Assist GC Burns w/ discipline submissions, IHB; Upload circular 1-92; Prep for DL 498; Referee Benn, DL 498.

**VICE PRESIDENT MIKE TWOMBLY:** Department Head and designated representative of the BLET National Short Line Division (NSLD) and Organizing Department with responsibility for hearings, conferences, appeals, First Division Appeals and all other daily business involving the NSLD assigned railroads in conjunction with Carrier Officers and advancement of BLET organizing strategies and opportunities; NVP assigned to: CN—Grand Trunk Western; Springfield Terminal; Delaware & Hudson; St. Lawrence & Atlantic; New York Susquehanna & Western; Connecticut Southern; New England Central; Louisville & Indiana; Huron & Eastern; Wheeling & Lake Erie; Tacoma Municipal Belt Line Railroad; National Short Line Division (Local Division 16) railroads: Union Railroad, Belt Railway of Chicago, South Buffalo Railway, West-

ern New York & Pennsylvania and Gary Railway; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; On duty at home office, NVB and NSLB Department Head combined daily responsibilities; Local Division 16 monthly mtgs. (Oct., Nov. & Dec.); BLET Advisory Board mtg.; WNY&P discipline investigation.

**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.; Conference call with all BNSF GCs; Multiple BNSF operations update conference calls w/ BLET GCs; BLET Advisory Board mtg.; Prep for PLB 7493 w/ GC Psota and VGCs; PLB 7493 hearing w/ Arbitrator Benn, w/ GC Psota and VGCs; BLET Advisory Board mtg.; Prep for PLB 7940 w/ GC Cunningham; PLB 7940 hearing w/ Arbitrator Phillips, w/ GC Cunningham; MRL/BLET Executive Session, PLB 7493 with Neutral Benn; Great Western Rwy. contract dispute, assisting GC Cunningham; Conference call w/ GC Psota and Local Chairmen.

**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; IORY negotiations, assist GC Cole; PLB 7159, assist GC Sturdivant; IBT COVID training session; Holiday; BLET Advisory Board mtg.; NS GCs mtg., assist GCs Dehart, Fannon and Sturdivant w/ various issues, Florence, Ky.

**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; National Division technology group mtgs.; E&T issues; Regional meeting and convention hotel planning and related issues; BLET Advisory Board mtg.; ND technology mtgs.; ND mobilization mtgs.; Amtrak CEO mtg. w/ GC Kenny; SBA 940, assist NJT GC Brown; PLB 5210, assist PATH GC Blakey; GCA issues, assist PATH GC Blakey; Holidays; GCA issues, assist LIRR GC Sexton; E&T issues; ND convention issues; GCA issues, assist SEPTA GC Hill; GCA issues, assist Amtrak GC Kenny; ND Convention Planning Group; Webinar training, ND; NY&A contract issues, assist GC Sexton; NJ Transit contract talks, assist GC Brown; Contract issues, assist GC Blakey; BNSF S-T training class.

**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), Central Region, and Southern Region); Utah RR; Longview Portland & Northern and Longview Switching, and Portland Terminal; General office duties, telephone, emails, correspondence, communications, etc.; On duty at home office; Assist UP GC's with various on-property issues; Finalize PLB 7228 w/ GC Leyshon; UP-ED GCA mtg.; BLET Advisory Board mtg.; National Negotiations mtg. w/ UP General Chairmen; Mtg. w/ GC Leyshon and PNWR; IBT COVID training; Finalize PLB 7173; Mtg/ w/ UP GCs and Director of Regulatory Affairs Verna; Vacation; Assist GC Lambert with prep for PLB 7173; PLB 7173 hearing; Mtgs. w/ Coordinated Bargaining Group and NCCC; Mtg. w/ UP General Chairmen; Weekly COVID calls w/ UP; Assist GC Carr w/ PLB 7332, prep and hearing.

**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.; BLET Advisory Board mtg.; CBC and NCCC bargaining session; IBT COVID training; PLB 6884, assisting GC Spradlin; Multiple Illinois & Midland bargaining sessions, assisting GC Evans; Mtg. w/ CSX GCs regarding ongoing grievances and disputes; KCS MidSouth/ Southrail bargaining session, assist GC Evans; Conference w/ GC Semenek and claimants to prep for PLB 7666; PLB 7666 hearing; PLB 7084 hearing.

## BLET members ratify new contract with NYS&W

Members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) have ratified a new collective bargaining agreement with the New York, Susquehanna & Western Railway (NYS&W).

Announced on December 2, 2020, the five-year agreement governs rates of pay, benefits and work rules for approximately 45 members. The agreement includes retroactive pay and general wage increases each year through January 1, 2024. It also provides increased certification pay for locomotive engineers. In terms of benefits, the

agreement provides additional paid time off (PTO) for all members, and members employed for 25 years or more will receive a sixth week of vacation.

The NYS&W members belong to BLET 521 (Hawthorne, N.J.) and are represented by the CP Rail-D&H/PanAm (ST)/SL&A General Committee of Adjustment. The negotiating team consisted of NYS&W General Chairman Kevin Moore, Vice General Chairman Ben Martin, and National Vice President Mike Twombly.

"I thank General Chairman Moore, Vice General Chairman Martin, and Vice Presi-

dent Twombly for their leadership in bringing this year-long round of negotiations to a ratified agreement," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "I also thank the NYS&W membership for doing their part in the balloting process."

The NYS&W operates over 400 miles of track in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. It connects with CSX at North Bergen, N.J., Syracuse, N.Y., and Utica, N.Y., and with Norfolk Southern at Binghamton, N.Y., Passaic Junction, N.J., and Marion Interchange, N.J. The railroad is headquartered in Cooperstown, N.Y. ☺☺