

Journal

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN

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WWW.BLE-T.ORG



SPECIAL CONVENTION ISSUE

Convention Wrap-Up | Speakers | Elections | Photo Highlights & More!



BLET President's Message

BY DENNIS R. PIERCE, BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

United, Moving Forward!

Reflections on the BLET's Fourth National Convention

This edition of the *Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen Journal* provides a wrap-up of the BLET's Fourth National Convention and gives all members a glimpse of our governing body at work. While in session, the delegates from our nearly 500 Local Divisions decided what rules will govern our union and also set the course for the future of our Brotherhood and its membership. We should all be proud of how our delegates from all parts of the country performed those duties at our 2018 Convention. They were presented with a multitude of proposed changes to our Bylaws, many of which were submitted by my Office with the intention of bringing additional layers of accountability and transparency to our Union and, in the end, our delegates made our Brotherhood stronger by their collective actions.

Although our Convention was the culmination of many years of planning, it also was the beginning of many new activities, including the installation of a newly-elected Advisory Board. I look forward to administering the IBT Oath of Office to each of the new Advisory Board members on January 1, 2019, which will likely happen as this issue of the *Journal* is being printed and mailed to you.



President Pierce shares a laugh with Brother T.M. Wild, delegate representing BLET Division 62 (Houston, Texas) following the conclusion of the BLET's Fourth National Convention on October 4, 2018.

Across the board, you can rest assured that the National Division Advisory Board officers elected in 2018 will work tirelessly to protect the interests of the membership. Your team is made up of seasoned and experienced officers, and I am proud to serve with them.

One newest National Vice President is a familiar name to many of you: Mark L. Wallace, who has served as National Division Trustee from 2014-2018. Brother Wallace is the son of retired BLET General Chairman Ray Wallace and brings a lifetime of railroad and union experience to the table.

Also new to the Advisory

Board is National Vice President J. Alan Holdcraft. Brother Holdcraft did a yeoman's job as General Chairman of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (former AT&SF) General Committee of Adjustment (GCA), and I am proud to welcome him to the Advisory Board. His GCA will be in good hands under the leadership of new General Chairman M. R. (Robby) Cunningham.

Delegates elected R. E. (Dick) Crow to the office of National Division Trustee to fill the vacancy created by Brother Wallace's election as National Vice President. Brother Crow will bring a wealth of experience to the

Board gained from his many years as General Chairman of the Union Pacific-Northern Region GCA.

The Convention also provided an opportunity to two long-serving officers to bid farewell to the Brotherhood. National Vice President Gil Gore and National Vice President Cole Davis both announced their retirements, effective December 31, 2018. These are two great men who epitomize the word Brotherhood. We all owe Brother Cole and Brother Gil a debt of gratitude for their tireless service to our Brotherhood, and I wish them well as they

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

Contents »

SPECIAL CONVENTION ISSUE

Highlights from the BLET's 4th National Convention



Departments

NEWS	4
COLUMNS BY JAMES P. HOFFA AND JOHN MURPHY, IBT	4
BLET AUXILIARY	21
LEGISLATIVE UPDATE	30



8

Features

6 Convention Recap
7 Delegates Make Bylaws Changes
8 Officer Elections
13 National President's Report
14 Convention Speakers
16 Vice Presidents Gore and Davis Retire
19 Daily Recaps
23 Delegate Generosity
24 Photo Highlights



24

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Journal

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Guest Columnists

BY JAMES P. HOFFA, TEAMSTERS GENERAL PRESIDENT
& JOHN MURPHY, DIRECTOR, TEAMSTERS RAIL CONFERENCE

Big wins for Teamsters in Election Day results

From coast-to-coast, a historic number of hardworking Americans showed up and had their voices heard at the polls this November. And taken together, they made it clear that the status quo that has favored the powerful in government is no longer acceptable.

Whether it was the defeat of virulent anti-union GOP governors like Wisconsin's Scott Walker and Illinois' Bruce Rauner; the onslaught of inspiring victories by women candidates such as Gretchen Whitmer for governor of Michigan or Jacky Rosen for U.S. Senate in Nevada; or the

retaking of the House of Representatives by Democrats, Americans have sent a message that lawmakers haven't been standing up for them. That has to change.

Not only did Teamster-backed candidates prevail at the top of the ticket, but it trickled down to the state-house level as well. Democrats flipped the Colorado Senate, Maine Senate, Minnesota House, New Hampshire House, New Hampshire Senate and New York Senate on November 6 and now have full control of government in Colorado, Illinois, Maine, Nevada, New Mexico and New

York because of it.

Our own members helped lead the way, with key victories by Teamsters like retired BLET Division 391 President Jeff Kurtz in the Iowa House; Susan Martinez in the Nevada House; and David Dellosa and Steve Malagari in the Pennsylvania House, among others.

Too many elected officials have chosen to attack unions in recent years. But that's going to stop right now. Workers first proved in Missouri last August that terrible laws like so-called right-to-work can't be shoved through by elected officials against the will of the people. The vote on November

6 reinforced that position.

Hundreds of Teamsters mobilized across the country to get these new union-endorsed lawmakers elected. Now, the Teamsters stand ready to help chart a new course for this nation, one that prioritizes workers by advocating for better pay, respect on the job and a secure retirement. Let's get to work!

Fraternally,

JAMES P. HOFFA
TEAMSTERS GENERAL
PRESIDENT

Election Day victories and challenges

Now that one of the most consequential midterm elections of our lifetime is behind us, we have some things to celebrate and some significant challenges ahead.

In California, an attempt to rescind the state gasoline tax was overwhelmingly rejected by voters, thereby protecting \$54 billion in additional infrastructure investment, including the state's high-speed rail project. The HSR project already has billions of dollars invested in two dozen construction sites in the state, employing over 2,000 workers in high-wage jobs, and reduc-

ing unemployment in California's Central Valley below double digits for the first time in decades.

We'll have to see how much political muscle Governor-elect Gavin Newsom puts behind the project. Outgoing Governor Jerry Brown was a prime supporter of it. During his victory speech, Newsom "committed" to completing the first phase of the high-speed rail project from Silicon Valley to the Central Valley. And we'll have to see what measure of federal funds Nancy Pelosi, the anticipated new Speaker of the House, is able to secure for it. In the mean-

time, the project continues to move forward with existing revenue sources.

In Colorado, voters rejected two infrastructure initiatives: Propositions 109 and 110 by margins of 60 to 40 percent. The law requires Colorado's secretary of state to propose another transportation measure for voters in 2019.

In Florida, voters struck down Amendment 11, a constitutional provision requiring the state to develop high-speed rail. The so-called "requirement" to develop high-speed rail is a hold-over from a voter initiative in 2000.

In other state and local elec-

tions, transportation initiatives were voted on. The absence of leadership at the federal level has caused transportation funding issues to devolve to the states and local jurisdictions. Given that the House has changed hands, we hope the Federal government will once again assume its leadership role in funding our growing infrastructure needs.

Fraternally,

JOHN F. MURPHY
DIRECTOR, TEAMSTERS
RAIL CONFERENCE
AND INTERNATIONAL
VICE PRESIDENT

About the Authors:



James P. Hoffa grew up on picket lines and in union meetings. He is the only son of James R. Hoffa, former General President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. On his 18th birthday, Hoffa received his own union card and was sworn in by his father.

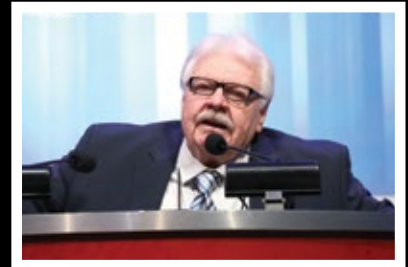


John Murphy has been an Eastern Region Vice President since 1998. He spearheaded merger negotiations with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees and now serves as Director of the Rail Conference.



More than 450 delegates from across America gathered in Las Vegas to help plot the direction of the BLET for the next four years.

October 1-4, 2018 • Las Vegas, Nevada



4th National Convention

United, Moving Forward

President Pierce reelected by acclamation;
VPs Davis and Gore announce retirements at Fourth National Convention



Group photograph of all delegates, with members of the BLET Advisory Board standing in the front row, taken during the BLET's Fourth National Convention in Las Vegas on October 3, 2018.

The Fourth National Convention of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) convened in Las Vegas from October 1-4, 2018, with more than 400 delegates in session representing over 57,000 locomotive engineers, trainmen and non-operating craft members on national freight and passenger rail systems across the United States.

The BLET's national conventions are held quadrennially, or once every four years. The delegates completed a great deal of hard work in a short period of time, which included analyzing and voting on changes to the Brotherhood's Bylaws and the nomination of National Division officers. Several invited dignitaries addressed the delegates as part of the convention proceedings, and delegates also heard reports from various

BLET officers.

In terms of officer elections, Dennis R. Pierce was reelected by acclamation to his third full term as BLET National President on October 3, 2018. Additionally, all Advisory Board members were elected without opposition.

"I am humbled. I am honored," President Pierce said. "It's a privilege to serve you. This is a great Union, and we can do great things as long as we stick together. So thank you again."

It was also announced that National Vice President Gil Gore and National Vice President Cole Davis would be retiring. Both men made emotional farewell speeches to the delegates.

In addition to President Pierce, the following officers of the Advisory Board were elected by acclamation to four-year terms, and they will be sworn in to office on January 1, 2019:

- **E. Lee Pruitt**, First Vice President;
- **Stephen J. Bruno**, National Secretary-Treasurer;
- **John P. Tolman**, Vice President and National Legislative Representative;
- **Marcus J. Ruef**, Vice President;
- **Michael D. Twombly**, Vice President;
- **Michael D. Priester**, Vice President;
- **Rick C. Gibbons**, Vice President;
- **James P. Louis**, Vice President;
- **Mark L. Wallace**, Vice President;
- **J. Alan Holdcraft**, Vice President;
- **David P. Estes**, Trustee;
- **William P. Lyons**, Trustee; and
- **Richard E. Crow**, Trustee.

Brother Wallace was elected to the office of National Vice President from his current position as National Division Trustee. He was elected by acclamation as National Division Trustee at the BLET's Third National Convention in 2014, and he also has served as Gen-



Members of the new BLET Advisory Board who will be sworn in to office on January 1, 2019, from left: VP Mike Priester, VP Alan Holdcraft, VP Marcus Ruef, VP Jim Louis, Trustee Bill Lyons, First Vice President Lee Pruitt, VP and NLR John Tolman, National President Dennis R. Pierce, VP Mike Twombly, National Secretary-Treasurer Steve Bruno, VP Mark Wallace, VP Rick Gibbons, Trustee David Estes, and Trustee Dick Crow. Far right: Parliamentarian/BLET General Counsel Mike Wolly.

eral Chairman of the Norfolk Southern-Southern Lines General Committee of Adjustment (GCA) since 2012. Brother Wallace will fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Vice President Davis.

New to the Advisory Board is Vice President Alan Holdcraft, who currently serves as General Chairman of the BNSF (former ATSF) GCA. Brother Holdcraft will fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Vice President Gore.

Also new to the Advisory Board is Trustee Richard E. (Dick) Crow, General Chairman of the Union Pacific-Northern Region GCA. Brother Crow fills the vacancy created by Trustee Wallace's elevation to the office of National Vice President.

Twelve alternate officer positions also

were filled by acclamation. They are as follows: David P. Estes, Alternate National Secretary-Treasurer; Vincent G. Verna, 1st Alternate Vice President and National Legislative Representative; Paul S. Piekarski, 2nd Alternate Vice President and National Legislative Representative; William P. Lyons, 1st Alternate Vice President; Richard E. Crow, 2nd Alternate Vice President; L. Randy Fannon, 3rd Alternate Vice President; Peter Semenek, 4th Alternate Vice President; Patrick Driscoll, 5th Alternate Vice President; Garrison Best, 6th Alternate Vice President; Brian Carr, 7th Alternate Vice President; A. Dan Cook III, 8th Alternate Vice President; and Jeff Thurman, 9th Alternate Vice President.

Throughout the week, delegates ana-

lyzed and voted on changes to the Brotherhood's Bylaws, and heard reports from numerous guest speakers. The list of speakers (in alphabetical order) included: Railroad Retirement Board Labor Member Walt Barrows; Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown; Nevada Senator Catherine Cortez Masto; Teamsters General Secretary-Treasurer Ken Hall; BLET Auxiliary National President Sereena Hogan; Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa; National Transportation Safety Board Member Jennifer Homendy; Massachusetts Congressman Joe Kennedy, III; Teamsters International Vice President & Rail Conference Director John Murphy; Ohio Congressman Tim Ryan; and Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren. 🗳️

DELEGATES APPROVE BYLAWS CHANGES

Delegates to the BLET's Fourth National Convention spent many hours in session debating and approving changes to the BLET's Bylaws. Among the many resolutions they adopted are two important changes to the BLET Bylaws. One change would allow the National President to reconfigure the BLET Short Line Department, which will allow the BLET to further its reach in organizing. A second Bylaws change would allow the BLET to potentially grow the union by expanding its ability to represent a more diverse workforce. For example, the BLET

has declined numerous requests for organizing campaigns made by unrepresented workers of railroad companies not subject to Surface Transportation Board jurisdiction — and, hence, not subject to the Railway Labor Act — as well as unrepresented workers for so-called “light rail” or transit systems. Delegates approved a proposal that will provide the BLET with the ability to organize and represent properties outside of our current structure. These Bylaws changes will become official once it has been confirmed that they do not conflict with the IBT Bylaws.

Officer Elections

**DENNIS R. PIERCE****BLET National President**

"I am humbled. I am honored. It's a privilege to serve you. This is a great Union, and we can do great things as long as we stick together. So thank you again."

**E. LEE PRUITT****BLET First Vice President**

"I, along with President Pierce, have great hope for the future of this Organization. Thank you so very, very much for your trust in me to be able to help you and all the members in the Organization."

**STEVEN J. BRUNO****BLET National Secretary-Treasurer**

"I just want to express my gratitude to all the employees at the Brotherhood. We could not do the work that we do without them. Any of the achievements, or all the achievements, are supported by those individuals working with us."

**JOHN P. TOLMAN****National Vice President and National Legislative Representative**

"Brothers and Sisters, I am humbled once again and honored to represent you in Washington, D.C. I will continue to fight the fight to make sure our voices are heard in Washington, D.C., but I cannot do it without your help and your support."

**MARCUS J. RUEF****National Vice President**

"Everyone knows about my accomplishments, and I'm proud of them; however, I'm even prouder of someone not as well-known but who is why I am here today. And that someone is my wife, LaJuan."

**MICHAEL D. TWOMBLY****National Vice President**

"We have some opportunities with the Short Lines and the Transit Departments that have been formed to go after and do some other things and open up opportunities for our Organization. So with all that, let's get back to work."

**MICHAEL D. PRIESTER****National Vice President**

"I have said numerous times before — and I'm proud to say it again — I'm a BLETer. I am a Teamster."

**RICK C. GIBBONS****National Vice President**

"I'm very proud of this Organization, and I think it's fitting in this day and age to make unions great again. Don't give up. Don't ever give up. Do not ever give up. Keep marching forward in solidarity."



JAMES P. LOUIS
National Vice President

"Lastly, but most important, like many of you, we couldn't do what we do every day without our families. Thirty-five years ago, I convinced my wife, Janet, to go on our first date, and ever since that, she's been at my side and she has blessed me with two great boys, Shaun and Chris."



MARK L. WALLACE
National Vice President

"Let us not sit silently by as our Union is under attack but be bold in preserving this great Organization so that future generations will have their story."



J. ALAN HOLDCRAFT
National Vice President

"It's been my honor and pleasure to serve this Organization for the last 20 years plus. I want to thank my wife, Kayla, for her constant support. I look forward to new friends and new challenges."



DAVID P. ESTES
Trustee

"It's been my honor to serve the past four years in the then-new position of National Division Trustee. The Advisory Board kindly welcomed the three of us to join in 2014."



WILLIAM P. LYONS
Trustee

"I want to thank you for everything. We're going to do what we can, save some good money for the Brotherhood, put you guys in a better position."



RICHARD E. CROW
Trustee

"I just want to thank everybody for their support, especially my Committee. I think we've probably got the greatest Committee out there."



Alternate Vice Presidents (from left): Pete Semenek, 4th Alternate; Dick Crow, 2nd Alternate; Pat Driscoll, 5th Alternate; Bill Lyons, 1st Alternate; Jeff Thurman, 9th Alternate; Vince Verna, 1st Alternate National Legislative Representative; Brian Carr, 7th Alternate; Randy Fannon, 3rd Alternate; Dave Estes, Alternate National Secretary-Treasurer; Dan Cook, 8th Alternate; and Gary Best, 6th Alternate. (Not pictured: Paul Piekarski, 2nd Alternate National Legislative Representative.)

Mark L. Wallace elected BLET National Vice President

Mark L. Wallace was elected by acclamation to serve as National Vice President of the 57,000-member Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) at the union's Fourth National Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada, on October 3, 2018.

At the time of his election, Vice President Wallace was serving as a National Division Trustee and as General Chairman of the Norfolk Southern-Southern Lines General Committee of Adjustment (GCA), which represents 43 Divisions with over 3,000 members. He was elected by acclamation to the General Chairman's position on May 8, 2012 and again in 2016. He was elected by acclamation to the office of National Division Trustee at the BLET's Third National Convention in Las Vegas on October 1, 2014.

Prior to his election to General Chairman, Brother Wallace served as the full time 2nd Vice General Chairman. He is currently an active member of BLET Division 267 (Asheville, N.C.), having joined the Brotherhood on February 1, 1997.

He began his railroad career as a carman with Norfolk Southern in 1993 transferring to the craft of conductor in 1996. In 1998, Brother Wallace successfully completed his locomotive engineer training and attained seniority as a locomotive engineer.

Brother Wallace began his service to the union immediately after joining Division 267. He served as an appointed Local Chairman to trainmen/conductors and Vice Local Chairman before becoming Local Chairman in 2000. He has served as delegate to the BLET National Conventions in 2001, 2006, 2010 and 2014 having served on the Credentials Committee in 2001. Brother Wallace was also elected as 9th Alternate Vice President at the 2001 convention and 1st Alternate Vice President in 2014. He served as the Southeast Caucus Chair-



Mark Wallace will be sworn in as National Vice President on January 1, 2019.

man in 2006 and is currently the Chairman of the Southeastern General Chairman's Association.

Prior to his railroad career, Brother Wallace attended the University of North Carolina at Asheville where he earned his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science. He follows in the footsteps of his father, Ray C. Wallace, who was a locomotive engineer, Local Chairman and General Chairman from 1986-2008. His mother Janie was very active in the Grand International Auxiliary (GIA), serving as a national officer, and also served as Executive Secretary of the NS-Southern Lines GCA for many years.

Brother Wallace has participated in every facet of membership representation at many levels, beginning at the grassroots level and working his way up through the local level to the General Committee and the National Division. He has served as Vice Local Chairman, Local Chairman, 4th Vice General Chairman, 3rd Vice General Chairman, 2nd Vice General Chairman, General Chairman, 9th Alternate Vice President, 1st Alternate Vice President and National Division Trustee.

As General Chairman, Brother Wallace has participated in many on-property negotiations with Norfolk Southern, including negotiations for the current wage package negotiated in 2015. He served on the National Wage Team in the round of bargaining that resulted in the current National Agreement. He was assigned as a member of the Rail Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC) Two Person Crew Working Group. He manages all day to day issues arising on his general committee as well as all on-property handling of time claims, discipline claims, and protective benefits. He also is the Administrator of the short term disability plan for all engineers on the Norfolk Southern property as well as serving as a fiduciary on the negotiated 401K plan.

Brother Wallace was born October 4, 1969. He and his wife, Rhonda, have a daughter, Morgan, and sons, Presley and Carson. They also have a granddaughter, Paisley. In his free time, Brother Wallace enjoys spending time with his family, camping, and watching his boys play sports. 🏈



J. Alan Holdcraft newest member of the BLET Advisory Board



Alan Holdcraft will be sworn in as National Vice President on January 1, 2019.

J Alan Holdcraft was elected by acclamation to the office of BLET National Vice President at the BLET's Fourth National Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada, on October 3, 2018. He currently serves the BLET as General Chairman of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (former AT&SF) General Committee of Adjustment (BNSF-ATSF GCA), which represents nearly 3,150 members from 35 different BLET Divisions.


Vice President Holdcraft began his railroad career on June 1, 1977, when he hired out as a trainman with the Santa Fe Railroad in Galveston, Texas. He began engineer training in November of 1977 and earned promotion to locomotive engineer on May 6, 1978. He has held continuous membership in BLET Division 776 (Galveston, Tex-

as) since initiating into the Brotherhood on February 1, 1980.

Vice President Holdcraft is a dedicated union leader who has served the Brotherhood in numerous elected offices over the years. From 2002-2008, he served as Local Chairman of Division 776. From 2008-2011, he served as Vice General Chairman of the BLET's BNSF-ATSF GCA. He was elected BNSF-ATSF General Chairman in 2012, and was reelected by acclamation in 2014 and 2018.

From 2012-2016, Brother Holdcraft served as Secretary-Treasurer of the BLET's Western General Chairman's Association, and was elected to serve as its Chairman in 2017. In 2014, Brother Holdcraft was elected 7th Alternate Vice President at the BLET's Third National Convention in Las Vegas.

Vice President Holdcraft served on the BLET's National Wage Committee during the round of contract talks that concluded in 2017, which resulted in more than 88 percent of the voting BLET members ratifying the agreement. He has also served on the Rail Safety Advisory Committee's (RSAC) Inward/Outward-Facing Recording Device Working Group.

Vice President Holdcraft and his wife Kayla were married on February 23, 1990. He has one son, James. Vice President Holdcraft's father, James Holdcraft, worked as a conductor for the Santa Fe for 38 years (1959-1997). In his time away from the railroad, Vice President Holdcraft enjoys outdoor cooking, woodworking, music, sports, and spending time with his family. 

Dick Crow elected BLET National Division Trustee



Dick Crow will be sworn in as National Division Trustee on January 1, 2019.

Richard E. “Dick” Crow was elected by acclamation to serve as a BLET National Division Trustee at the union’s Fourth National Convention in Las Vegas on October 3, 2018.

Brother Crow is a Union Pacific locomotive engineer and a member of BLET Division 404 (Chicago, Illinois). Brother Crow currently serves as General Chairman of the Union Pacific-Northern Region General Committee of Adjustment (UP-NR GCA), which represents approximately 1,200 active locomotive engineers and trainmen who work for the Union Pacific Railroad and Metra commuter lines.

Brother Crow began his railroad career in 1996 when he hired out as a trainman with the Union Pacific in Chicago, earning promotion to locomotive engineer in June of 1999. He has

held continuous membership in BLET Division 404 since June 1, 1999.


Throughout his union career, Brother Crow has been an active and involved leader. In 2003, he was elected Vice Local Chairman of Division 404, winning election to the office of Local Chairman in 2006 and again in 2009. In 2010, Brother Crow was elected 2nd Vice Chairman of the UP-NR GCA. In a show of dedication to the Brotherhood and its members, Brother Crow relocated to Clinton, Iowa, when he was elevated to the office of 1st Vice Chairman in September of 2012. He was elevated to the office of General Chairman in December of 2012 and was reelected General Chairman at the GCA’s quadrennial meetings in 2014 and 2018.

Brother Crow has served on the Ex-

ecutive Board of the BLET’s Western General Chairman’s Association (WGCA) since 2013. He was a delegate to the BLET’s Second National Convention in 2010 and a BLET delegate to the International Brotherhood of Teamsters 29th International Convention in 2016.

While serving as a Local Chairman, Brother Crow participated in successful negotiation of a New York Dock Implementing Agreement from 2007-2010. He also successfully completed grievance mediation training in April of 2017.

Brother Crow and his brother, Randall J. Crow, both hired out on the Union Pacific on the same day in 1996. Brother Crow has two children, Tyler and Ryan. His son Tyler hired out on the railroad in February of 2012.

His hobbies include golfing and shooting pool and darts. 



'United, Moving Forward:' President Pierce addresses delegates

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce delivered the Report of the National President at the BLET's Fourth National Convention on October 1. With the theme of "United, Moving Forward," President Pierce's report focused on two general areas: the major accomplishments of the Brotherhood over the past four years since the Third National Convention concluded in 2014; and what challenges lie ahead for the organization.

President Pierce told the delegates: "This week you are the National Division. This week you will set the course for this great Brotherhood as we enter a time that is more perilous than any of us have seen or can even imagine in our lifetimes."

During that past four years, the National Division negotiated a new national contract, which protected work rules, preserved health and welfare benefits, and provided real wage increases. The National Division also assisted its General Committees of Adjustment with more than a dozen on-property agreements that have been ratified, including: Amtrak, Norfolk Southern, CSX, Long Island Rail Road, SEPTA, New Jersey Transit, and several short line railroads.

President Pierce also touched upon the BLET's legislative agenda, describing how the union has worked to fix problems associated with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and has lobbied for a national two-person crew bill. "Our National Legislative Office continues to be the best in the business, and they do a great job given the current climate in Washington," he said.

President Pierce also discussed legislative victories on the state level, including passage of a two-person crew bill in California, a new train crew transportation safety law in Washington state, and victories in overturning harmful "right-to-work" laws in Missouri. He also acknowl-



Dennis Pierce delivers the Report of the National President on October 1, 2018. edged the chartering of the Maryland State Legislative Board.

In terms of two-person train crews, the BLET secured a major legal victory in 2015 when the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that our 2013 strike at the Wheeling & Lake Erie involved a major dispute, and then convincing the Supreme Court not to disturb that ruling. The struggle continues, however, as our W&LE Brothers and Sisters continue to oppose management on the issue of one-person train crews. President Pierce also discussed the Brotherhood's current legal battle to stop the Kansas City Southern from allowing Mexican train crews to take the jobs of American workers in Laredo, Texas.

President Pierce also emphasized the many benefits BLET members enjoy by belonging to a union. Those benefits include: strong Railroad Retirement and an occupational disability pension; health care benefits; paid time off; high wages; seniority rights; the right to representation and an appeal process when facing discipline; and a whole range of work rules to protect locomotive engineers and trainmen while on the job.

"These advantages ... are not enjoyed by the 93.5 percent of private sector workers not represented by a union," he said. "And all of these are the things Corporate America and the one percent want to take back from BLET members and all union workers, so they can stick that money in their own pockets."

Looking ahead, the BLET and all of organized labor is facing unprecedented challenges as Corporate America has chipped away at worker-friendly laws over the past 40 years, culminating in the Supreme Court's Janus decision this summer.


"The Janus ruling is intended to drive unions into bankruptcy by forcing them to expend resources on people who pay nothing for their representation," he said.

Emphasizing that "elections have consequences," President Pierce advised BLET members to vote for union-friendly candidates in the upcoming November elections.

"Mark my words — unless average Americans rise up en masse to take back their federal government this fall — in order to protect and preserve their economic security — we will face some very difficult choices in the coming years. But I do have to share that we won't be in a situation that is completely foreign to our Brotherhood," he said.

In spite of these challenges, President Pierce concluded his presentation on an optimistic note.

"This Brotherhood didn't survive for 155 years by conducting itself like a bank, or an insurance company, or any other type of service business," he said. "The BLE survived — and thrived — because of its core ethic, which dates back to 1863: each member has a personal obligation to be informed, and the responsibility to act in concert with other members. In other words, we must be united, moving forward!"

President Pierce received a standing ovation following his presentation. 

CONVENTION SPEAKERS

**REPRESENTATIVE TIM RYAN**

U.S. House of

Representatives (D-OH)

"You know, it seems like if a bank or a company or the auto industry or Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac get in a little bit of hot water, avoid the rules and get ready to go belly up, all of a sudden everyone is ready to kind of walk in and give them hundreds of billions of dollars to plug the hole. But if it's the worker, the family, the community, now all of a sudden you've got to go pull yourself up by your bootstraps.

And many times you don't even have a pair of boots. What we're talking about here today in this moment in American history is how you being a member of a union and me being a member of a legislative body and a political leader come together and unite working-class people all over the United States and reclaim the agenda in our country. That's our job."

**MATT PARKER**

National Chaplain, Division 158
(Sparks, Nevada) Nevada State
Legislative Board Chairman

"In the course of doing my work for this Brotherhood, I am often humbled.

I'm humbled when my work finds me in the presence of our National Officers and I see firsthand their dedication to working so hard in bringing about changes to make more positive the lives of the membership of this body..."

**JAMES P. HOFFA**

Teamsters General President

"We go to Capitol Hill and we say we don't have Republican issues, we don't have Democratic issues, but we have Teamster/BLET issues; and those are the issues we want to talk about. And we've got to find friends and we've got to make sure we don't back people who choke on the word 'Union.'"

**JOHN TOLMAN**

BLET Vice President
and National Legislative
Representative

"There's something wrong in America when the FRA allows another country to take our jobs south of the border with no Hours of Service, drug testing certification, or standards that U.S. crews are held to; so that a multinational KCS can make more profits while paying Mexican crews a fraction of the money U.S. crews make... Brothers and Sisters, now is the time. Now is the time to take a stand. The time is right now."

**JOHN F. MURPHY**

Teamsters International Vice President
and Rail Conference Director

"We need to continue the fight for two-person crews and to defeat the efforts of the railroads and their supporters and the FRA to promote autonomous railroad operations... We cannot allow them to eliminate Engineers and Conductors."

**SEREENA HOGAN**

BLET Auxiliary National President

"In these tumultuous times we need each other now more than ever, coming together with like minds to support an agenda that will preserve not only our union, but all unions across the nation is of the utmost importance."

**SENATOR ELIZABETH WARREN**

United States Senate (D-MA)

"Let's face it, the playing field is tilted against hard-working families, and we need to fight back against the powerful interests that keep the game rigged against our families. And that's why now more than ever the United States needs a strong labor movement."

**DENNIS R. PIERCE****BLET National President**

"So, Brothers and Sisters, what we have to do, we have to get back to our roots as a union, and as a Nation.

Getting back to our roots means working together in solidarity and in pursuit of our common goals as Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

It means each and every member doing his or her part, attending union meetings, voting in elections and contract ratifications, answering the call when the mobilization network reaches out on an important issue. In that way, we will prevail. I have hope that we will always prevail because we are united and we are moving forward."

**WALT BARROWS****Railroad Retirement Board Labor Member**

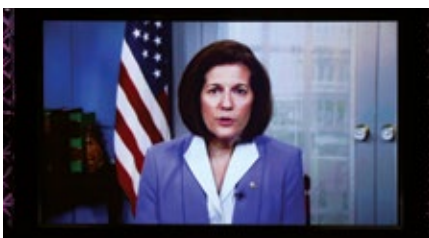
"You have earned everything you're going to get from Railroad Retirement. This is not something the railroad gave us. It's not some entitlement like some welfare program some people like to say it is. Nothing could be further from the truth. This is a benefit you've worked for, you have sacrificed for... Don't let anyone ever deny you've earned every penny of your retirement."

**KEN HALL****Teamsters General Secretary-Treasurer**

"If we get enough people elected to win back the House of Representatives, then the first thing we need to do is make sure that we look them right in the eye... [t]hey need to understand if you don't stand up for working people, we will work just as hard to get you out in the next election as we did to get you in in this election."

**SENATOR SHERROD BROWN****United States Senate (D-OH)**

"I'm fighting for legislation like the Safe Freight Act to protect workers and community safety with two-person crews on all freight trains. Obviously, we can't do it by ourselves. This has to be a movement from the ground up. That's why your work matters."

**SENATOR CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO****United States Senate (D-NV)**

"Like most of you, I grew up in a family that valued hard work and perseverance. My dad parked cars at the Dunes Hotel and Casino, and was a proud Teamster. Our local Teamsters Union fought for my family, just as unions across the country fight every day for workers to have the opportunity to build a middle class life."

**REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH KENNEDY III****U.S. House of Representatives (D-MA)**

"...[W]hether it's making sure that people stand shoulder to shoulder with working men and women to protect our pensions, to invest in our roads and bridges and infrastructure, to make sure that we rebuild this country road by road, block by block, railroad by railroad, to make sure that men and women can actually get an honest day's pay for an honest day's work, to make sure that our health care is going to be there and that their pensions are going to be there, too... [t]his is what you fight for. I'm honored to stand right by your side."

**JENNIFER HOMENDY****Member, National Transportation Safety Board**

"No one — absolutely no one — should lose their life while earning a paycheck for their family. I commit to each and every one of you that I will work tirelessly to ensure that you and your members are safe. But there's something you can do, too. You and your members are on the front lines every day when it comes to safety. Safety begins and ends with you. I need you to continue fighting every single day and night for your safety and for the safety of other train crews, for the safety of other crafts and classes on the railroad, and for the safety of passengers. I need you to help me get to zero fatalities and injuries on our nation's railroads."

Vice Presidents Gil Gore, Cole Davis deliver farewell speeches

BLET National Vice President Gil Gore and National Vice President Cole Davis delivered emotional farewell speeches during the BLET's Fourth National Convention on October 3, 2018. Both men will retire effective December 31, 2018.

Gore's railroad career began on July 26, 1973, when he hired out as a fireman on the Texas and Pacific Railroad. He earned promotion to locomotive engineer in December of 1973. Brother Gore represented the membership in all facets of union work including arbitration regarding discipline, protection, and work rules. Gore joined BLET Division 193 in Gretna, La., on February 1, 1974, and is a Union Pacific locomotive engineer. The past 44 years of his life have been devoted to serving the Brotherhood and its members.

Vice President Gore served Division 193 as Local Chairman for 20 years from 1980 to 2000. He was elected Vice General Chairman of the Union Pacific-Southern Region GCA in 1986, an office held until 1998. In 2000, he was elected to the General Chairman's position on the UP-SR GCA, which he held until his elevation to Vice President in 2009.

He was elected to the position of Fourth-Alternate Vice President at the BLET's First Quadrennial Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada, in 2006. He eventually worked his way up to the first-

alternate vice president position, and was promoted to the Advisory Board on December 17, 2009. He was elected by acclamation to serve as National Vice President at the BLET's Second National Convention in October of 2010, and was reelected by acclamation to another term of office at the BLET's Third

National Convention on October 1, 2014.

"As I sat in my room gathering my thoughts, it struck me that throughout my 38 years of union service, there has always been one common thread that connects us all," Brother Gore said. "That thread runs through me, runs through you, and all of the BLET mem-



Brother Gore hired out in 1973



Brother Davis (center) after finishing his farewell address, flanked by Parliamentarian/General Counsel Mike Wolley (left) and National President Dennis Pierce (right).

bership around this great country. That thread has the tensile strength of titanium, yet is flexible enough to stretch to connect us all irrespective of our race, religion, gender, social status, economic standing or political beliefs. And despite sometimes the Herculean effort of others, both internal and external forces, to break it, this common thread has maintained resiliency and endured. The common thread that I am talking about you cannot see because it is not visible. It cannot be touched, because it has no physical form. It cannot be heard, because it has no audible voice. Yet we find evidence of it around us every day as it manifests itself to us all in many different ways: a simple display of kindness and compassion shown to a friend; an act of charity to help a person in need; a phone call to a Brother and Sister who has been involved in a serious accident to let them know that we care; a heartfelt thank you to someone who has pro-

vided us assistance. The common unbreakable thread that I am speaking about is the spirit of brotherhood that dwells in me, in you, and in all our members across the country.

"It is the same spirit of brotherhood that possessed 12 men to gather in Detroit, Michigan, on May 8th in 1863 to band together, risking their families' futures and fortunes to found the Brotherhood of the Footboard. Over the last 155 years that same spirit of brotherhood has been stretched paper thin as a result of the mistakes of flawed human beings, only to snap back into a strong titanium cable that connects us all. I'm here to tell you now, if we continue to nurture and grow this spirit of brotherhood, it will see us through the new political and judicial challenges that we face in the near future."

Vice President Gore thanked his wife, Denise, his recognized his son Jared and daughter-in-law Liz, daughter Emily and

son-in-law Derek, and his grandchildren Eloise, Evelyn and Emmett Cade (known affectionately as "The Dude").

Vice President Davis has been a proud member of the Brotherhood for nearly 35 years, joining Division 86 on January 1, 1984. Throughout his career he has served as Vice Local Chairman, Local Chairman, Vice General Chairman, and General Chairman. Vice President Davis began his railroad career in 1968 when he hired out as summer help for the Norfolk & Western Railroad. In 1970, he hired out as a switchman for the N&W in Moberly, Mo. He transferred to road service as a brakeman two years later and then transferred to engine service in 1974.

He was elected by acclamation to his first term as National Vice President at the BLET's Second National Convention in 2010, and was reelected by acclamation to his second term at the Third National Convention in 2014. Prior to his election to the BLET Advisory Board,



Brother Davis with wife Denise



Brother Gore with wife Denise and family

Vice President Davis served as General Chairman of the Norfolk Southern (Northern Lines), Wheeling & Lake Erie and Chicago, Ft. Wayne & Eastern General Committee of Adjustment.

During his farewell address, Vice President Davis said he earned \$23 per day early in his career, but that his pay and benefits steady increased over the years thanks to the strong labor movement in the railroad industry. He also described poor cab conditions that existed when he first transferred into engine service, including high noise levels, poor braking systems, and lack of air conditioning. Those conditions improved drastically over time, thanks to the efforts of the BLET.

"In 1970, radios weren't standard equipment on the engines, and only a few of the crews had walkie-talkies, which they had to purchase themselves," he said. "All the cars had AB brakes which restricted train lengths to a mile in the summer months and no more than 60 cars in cold weather. The automatic brake on the engine was a 6BL which didn't have a maintaining feature. The modern 26-L brake became standard in the late '70s, and we wouldn't see the dynamic brake introduced until the early '80s. A lot of

the track was jointed rail, and kink-outs were common in hot weather. Likewise, pull-aparts were just as common in cold weather. Engine noise was so loud you couldn't talk with your Brakeman unless you were in idle. There were no air conditioners, and the N&W insisted on running their engines long nose ahead, so at the end of your run your face was black with the engine exhaust.

"There was a caboose on every train in the yard transfer. There's not a ride in any carnival that is any more exhilarating or scary than when you hear the train go into emergency and you're on that caboose. No one had a clue what a computer was or how it would change the industry. Clerks were our computers. Now, everybody calls that the 'good old days.'"

Vice President Davis thanked his wife, Denise, and their children Cory, Beau, Danny, Jamie, and Addie for their unwavering support over the years. The couple celebrated their 41st wedding anniversary on October 1, 2018. He also thanked members of the BLET Advisory Board and all the General Chairmen and officers he has worked with over the years.

"I couldn't walk away without ac-

knowledging the many, many people that have played such a large part in my life for the last 48 years. I owe each of them so much for their friendship and support," Vice President Davis said. "These guys, and others like them, are what make the BLET the greatest union in the world. They have welcomed me into their Committees and homes, and I've gotten to know their wives and children. I am truly blessed to be able to call them Brothers and friends. These guys are the reason it's so hard to leave. The BLET's future because of them, and the many other young and dedicated officers, is bright."

National President Dennis R. Pierce recognized both Brothers during the convention.

"I think you'll agree with me that those two men are what put the 'Brother' in Brotherhood," he said. "Brother Gil, I do want to thank you for your years of service. The things that you have taught me along the way, I will never forget. I want to wish you and Denise a happy, long and healthy retirement. Thank you, Brother Cole. Thank you for your service. And I wish you and Denise a long and enjoyable retirement beginning in January." 🎉



BLET's Fourth National Convention Daily Recaps

DAY 1

» National Division Guide **Jeff Boatman**, retired member of BLET Division 553 (Calwa City, Calif.) introduced National President Pierce.



» President **Pierce** then called the meeting to order, introducing the color guard for presentation of the flags. After the playing of the National Anthem, President Pierce then led delegates in saluting the men and women of our armed forces, recognizing those delegates and guests who have family in the military and those who are veterans. President Pierce also led the delegates in a moment of silence for those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our country, and also for the victims and families of the mass shooting in Las Vegas on October 1, 2017.

» Brother **Matt Parker**, Chairman of the Nevada State Legislative Board, served as chaplain for the National Convention and delivered the invocation each day throughout the Convention.



» Teamsters International Trustee **Kevin Moore** introduced guest speaker James P. Hoffa, General President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters

» President Pierce

introduced members of the BLET Advisory Board, then introduced guest speaker Tim Ryan (D-OH) of Ohio's 13th District.



» Brother John F. Fink,

Division 3 (Cleveland, Ohio), introduced and explained the electronic voting devices that each delegate uses in voting on recommendations and changes to the BLET's Bylaws. Brother Fink is the BLET National Division Director of Bylaws Administration and is serving as Liaison to the Bylaws Committee.



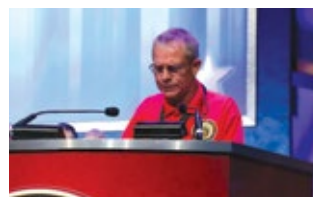
» Brother M. J. Gaab,

BLET Division 27 (St. Cloud, Minn.) and Chairman of the Credentials Committee, gave the report and recommendations of his committee. He also introduced Committee Members **C. R. Hyde**, Division 314 (Rocky Mount, N.C.), **B. H. Fransen**, Division 207 (Casper, Wyo.), **C. J. Wagner**, Division 405 (Milwaukee, Wisc.), and thanked **Louise Reich**, BLET National Division Director of the Record Department, for her hard work in serving as Liaison to the Credentials Committee. Their report was accepted without debate.

» Sereena Hogan,

National President of the BLET Auxiliary, then gave her report. The BLET Auxiliary

held its Third Quadrennial National Convention at the same time and location as the BLET's National Convention.



» Brother **R.J. Dumey**, BLET Division 595 (Chaffee, Mo.) and Chairman of the Salaries Committee, gave his committee's report and recommendations. It was accepted without debate. He also introduced Committee Members **C.R. "Rusty" Jones**, Division 239 (Knoxville, Tenn.), **S.P. Alexander**, Division 523 (Chickasha, Okla.), and **G.W. Lund**, Division 421 (Buffalo, N.Y.). Brother **R.C. Bartela, Jr.**, Division 382 (West Seneca, NY) and BLET National Division Special Representative, served as Liaison to the Salaries Committee.

» The morning session concluded with the National President's Report by **Dennis Pierce**.

» Teamsters International Vice President and Rail Conference Director **John F. Murphy** addressed delegates to kick off the afternoon session.

» BLET National Secretary-Treasurer (NST) **Stephen J. Bruno** addressed the delegates on the afternoon of Day 1. He discussed the National Division's implementation of a new membership database and modernization of its accounting software and procedures. He also spoke about BLET membership levels and finances over the past four years. NST Bruno also serves as National Chairman of the BLET Safety Task Force. He said the Safety Task Force has assisted the NTSB in 26 accident investigations since

the last BLET National Convention in 2014, and that those accidents resulted in 31 fatalities and 568 injuries — many of which could have been prevented had Positive Train Control been installed.

» Railroad Retirement Board Labor Member **Walt Barrows** addressed the delegates regarding the history of the Railroad Retirement system, which was established over the strong objections of the railroad industry. He said that while Railroad Retirement is positioned for a strong future, there are several current and future challenges that must be met in order to protect and preserve our benefits.

» Delegates also heard reports from the BLET's Work Committee and the Bylaws Committee to round out the afternoon session.



» Brother **M.B. Kenny**, BLET Division 11 (New York, N.Y.) and Chairman of the Work Committee, gave the report and recommendations of his committee. He also introduced committee members **T.L. Bryant**, Division 532 (Richmond, Va.), **D.L. Marlow**, Division 179 (Parsons, Kan.), **D.T. Hill**, Division 71 (Philadelphia, Pa.), and **J.W. Reynolds**, Division 209 (Green Bay, Wisc.). Their report was accepted without debate. Brother **M.C. Krontyak**, Division 235 (Union City, N.J.) and BLET National Division Special Representative, served as Liaison to the Work Committee.

» Brother **L.R. Fannon Jr.**, Division 37 (Norton, Va.) and Chairman of the Bylaws

Committee, began the process of giving his Committee's Report and Recommendations on changes to the BLET Bylaws. Their reporting will continue tomorrow and will take several days to complete. Brother Fannon began by introducing the members of his committee: **B.P. Carr**, Division 692 (Tracy, Calif.); **G.D. Best**, Division 498 (Abbeville, S.C.); and **K.J. Sexton**, Division 269 (Long Island, N.Y.). He also recognized Brother **John F. Fink**, the BLET National Division Director of Bylaws Administration, for serving as Liaison to the Bylaws Committee, and thanked **Denise Doody**, the BLET National Division Arbitration Department Manager, for her hard work and assistance to the Committee.

» Delegates rounded out the Day 1 afternoon session with deliberations and consideration of recommendations made by the BLET Bylaws Committee.

DAY 2



» A motivational speech from Teamsters General Secretary-Treasurer **Ken Hall** energized delegates on Day 2 of the BLET's Fourth National Convention.

» Delegates viewed two video greetings: one from U.S. Senator **Sherrod Brown** (D-OH) and one from U.S. Senator **Elizabeth Warren** (D-MA).

» Delegates were read a message of solidarity from Teamsters Canada Rail Conference (TCRC) President **Doug Finnson**.

» Delegates were read greetings from the American Train Dispatchers Association (ATDA), the National Conference of Firemen and Oilers / SEIU (NCFO), and the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART TD). The BLET, ATDA, NCFO and SMART TD are four of the six rail unions that comprised the Collective Bargaining Group (CBG), the coalition of unions that successfully bargained together during the most recent round of national contract negotiations.

» Throughout the remainder of the Day 2 session, delegates debated and considered the resolutions and recommendations of the BLET Bylaws Committee.

DAY 3

» Delegates nominated officers and alternates to the **BLET Advisory Board**, and all officers were elected by acclamation.



» Delegates enjoyed emotional retirement speeches from outgoing National Vice Presidents **Gil Gore** and **Cole Davis**.

» Delegates enjoyed an informational presentation by National Transportation Safety Board member **Jennifer Homendy**.

» The delegate group photo was taken at the conclusion of the morning session.

» Delegates viewed two video greetings: one from

Senator **Catherine Cortez Masto** (D-NV) and one from Congressman **Joe Kennedy III** (D-MA).

» Delegates were read a greeting from **Tom Perez**, Chairman of the Democratic National Committee (DNC). Perez served as the Secretary of Labor under President Obama.

» Delegates heard the report of the Legislative Committee, chaired by **D.K. Brown**, Division 517 (St. Paul, Minn.) and Chairman of the Minnesota State Legislative Board. He introduced Committee Members **M.D. Frank**, Division 899 (Birmingham, Ala.); **B.J. Farkas**, Division 121 (Indianapolis, Ind.); and **P.S. Pfeifer**, Division 388 (North Platte, Neb.). Delegates adopted their report without debate. Brother **V.G. Verna**, Division 28 (Tucson, Ariz.) and BLET Director of Regulatory Affairs, served as Liaison to the Legislative Committee.

» Throughout the remainder of the Day 3 session, delegates continued to debate the resolutions and recommendations of the BLET Bylaws Committee.

DAY 4



» Delegates adopted two resolutions during the course of business on October 4: one in support of railroad labor unity and one in support of Amtrak's long-distance trains.

» The first resolution cited the success of the Coordinated Bargaining Group (CBG) in the most

recent round of national contract negotiations, and it urges the BLET to play a leadership role in building a universal coalition of all rail labor unions that would potentially work together in the upcoming round of national bargaining.

» The second resolution emphasized the BLET's strong support of the Amtrak national passenger rail network, noting that the number of Amtrak passengers has continued to grow over the years in spite of attempts to kill the service. The resolution noted that: "the current Amtrak management is in the process of closing dozens of small-town train stations, downgrading service and amenities aboard many trains, while threatening to eliminate other trains completely." The delegates further resolved to condemn actions by Amtrak management, Congress, the President or the freight rail carriers to downgrade, erode or eliminate U.S. passenger rail train service.

» BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative **John Tolman** delivered an impassioned speech about the importance of elections and participating in the political process.

» Delegates watched a video created in 2013 to commemorate the BLET's 150th anniversary. Many of the newer delegates in the audience had never seen the video, which highlighted the union's achievements during its first 150 years of existence.

» Delegates debated and adopted the last of the recommendations of the BLET's Bylaws Committee as they wrapped up all business and formally adjourned the BLET's Fourth National Convention

» The BLET's Fifth National Convention is scheduled for 2022.



BLET Auxiliary elects new National Officers at 3rd Quadrennial Convention



Seated, from left: Jessica Cole, Auxiliary National 2nd Vice President/National Legislative Representative; Kathleen Bisbikis, Auxiliary National President; Dennis Pierce, BLET National President; Jodi Wallace, Auxiliary National 1st Vice President; and Sereena Hogan, Auxiliary National Past President.

BY KATHLEEN BISBIKIS

NATIONAL PRESIDENT
BLET AUXILIARY

It is a great honor to have been elected by the delegates at the 3rd Quadrennial Convention of the BLET Auxiliary in Las Vegas, Nevada, to serve the next four years as National President. At the convention nine Local Auxiliaries were represented by their elected delegates. Members-at-Large from the East and West regions of the country were represented by Lawana Poss and Cheri Brown. Also, nine national officers were in attendance, including National Past President Becky Schneider, who pre-

sided over the Jurisprudence & Bylaws Committee. A total of 39 resolutions were read, discussed and voted upon during the three-day session that convened on October 1 and ended on October 3, 2018.

Our new team of National Officers includes, National 1st Vice President Jodi Lynn Wallace, from LeGrande, Ore.; Jessica Cole, from Baraboo, Wisc., elected as National 2nd Vice President/National Legislative Rep.; and Becky Schneider, from El Paso, Texas, elected as National 3rd Vice President/Assistant National Legislative Rep. Terri Fleming, from El Paso, Texas, will continue in the

second half of her eight-year term as National Treasurer. Roseanna Surchik, from South Range Wisc., is our new Alternate National Secretary; and Helen Brand, from Osawatometie, Kan., is the Alternate National Treasurer.

The delegates passed a new bylaw this year changing the term of the National Secretary from eight years to four years. Lawana Poss from Suwanee, Ga., will serve as our new National Secretary. We are also pleased to have Velma Williams from Pinewood, Ark., serving as National Chaplain. Sereena Hogan assumed the title of Immediate Past National President. Congratulations to

all of our new national officers! I believe that these ladies have the skills, talent, and enthusiasm to take us to new heights in the years ahead. We will continue to grow stronger as a team as we move forward building our organization together.

Since returning home from Las Vegas, I have been very busy attending to the many new job duties and housekeeping issues that arise from the "changing of the guard," learning about my new responsibilities and getting the new officers up to speed with the duties of their new positions. I am grateful to Immediate Past National President Sereena Hogan, who has continued to be my support system and has made herself available night and

day to provide answers to the extensive list of questions I have posed to her as I adapt to this exciting new position. I am also very grateful to Past National President Becky Schneider, who has been helping with getting the Journal of Proceedings for publication and distribution to those who were in attendance at the convention. Our scribe, Jo Ann Anderson, did an excellent job of taking the minutes at the convention, and those minutes, along with the many reports and resolutions that were presented during the meeting, are all included in the Journal of Proceedings. The next job is to update the Constitution and Bylaws with the changes voted on by the delegates.

We are all grateful to the BLET Na-

tional Division for all that was provided for us at our 3rd Quadrennial Convention. We were honored to have BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce address the attendees on the last day of our convention. Our delegates were honored to have the opportunity to hear from the leader of the union that we serve and support.

For more information about the BLET Auxiliary, please visit our newly redesigned and very much "alive" website at www.bletauxiliary.net. We are excited about all the changes taking place within our organization and look forward to increasing our membership and continuing to fulfill our mission to support the interests and welfare of railroad families across the nation. 📺





2018 Convention Delegates continue legacy of generosity

Delegates attending the BLET's Fourth National Convention continued the tradition of charity and generosity established at previous Brotherhood conventions. This year, delegates donated approximately 300 boxed lunches and fresh fruit to help feed the homeless.

BLET delegates have established an impressive tradition of generosity over the past few decades. For example, delegates at the 1996 convention donated \$20,000 to striking newspaper workers in Detroit. In 2010, they established the Gary Perrien Fund to help BLET Brothers

and Sisters who suffered serious injuries that may cause financial hardship for themselves and/or their families. And in 2014, they made additional donations to the Gary Perrien Fund to help four BLET Brothers and their families in need.

BLET delegates stepped up to the plate once again in 2018. As part of the convention process, the BLET National Division provides boxed lunches to all delegates each day that the convention is in session. On the final day of the 2018 Convention, many delegates opted to donate their boxed lunches to help those in need.

The boxed lunches were donated to

the Las Vegas Rescue Mission, which is a nonprofit Christian organization that provides approximately 30,000 meals each month to those in need. The Mission receives no government support (except for a small grant specifically for food). It relies on the kindness and contributions of concerned individuals, churches, corporations, and unions like the BLET. The Mission works around the clock to help those who need help the most.

Members of the BLET's Arrangements Committee collected the donated lunches and delivered them to the Las Vegas Rescue Mission on October 4. 🙏



Members of the BLET Arrangements Committee deliver fresh fruit and approximately 300 boxed lunches to the Las Vegas Rescue Mission.

2018 Convention Photo Highlights





UP-Southern Region GCA (Dana Marlow, Chairman)



CSXT-Northern Lines GCA (Bill Lyons, Chairman)



2018 Arrangements Committee (Megan Mead, Chairman)



National Association of State Legislative Board Chairmen



BNSF/MRL GCA (E.G. LaPrath, Chairman)



BLET African-American Delegation (Herb Harris, Chairman)



BNSF (Former AT&SF) GCA (Alan Holdcraft, Chairman)



Kansas City Southern GCA (David Spradlin, Chairman)



NS-Eastern Lines/W&LE GCA (Randy Fannon, Chairman)





CSXT-Western Lines GCA (Keith Kerley, Chairman)



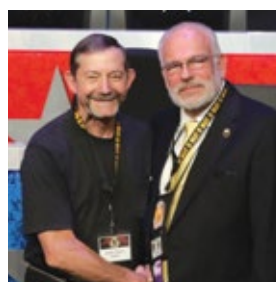
Conrail GCA (Pat Driscoll, Chairman)



UP-Western Region GCA (Steve Leyshon, Chairman)



BNSF (Former C&S/CRIP/FWD) GCA (Bobby Brown, Chairman)



NS-Southern Lines GCA (Mark Wallace, Chairman)



UP-Northern Region GCA (Dick Crow, Chairman)



Amtrak GCA (Mark Kenny, Chairman)



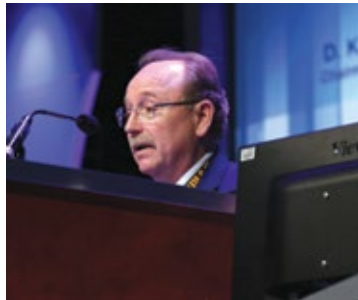
Members and delegates from the state of Colorado



BNSF (Former STL-SF) GCA (Jeff Thurman, Chairman)



BLET Advisory Board, 2014-2018







THE MORNING AFTER

2018 Midterm Election Analysis



BY JOHN P. TOLMAN
VICE PRESIDENT & U.S.
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE
REPRESENTATIVE

The Midterm elections are finally almost over. The voting is done but there are still a number of contested and/or uncalled races as this issue of the *Journal* goes to press. But what we know is the Democratic Party is now in control of one of the House of Representatives. The Republican Party is still in control of the Senate and the White House. This can and will provide for the sorely needed checks and balances for some of the crazy proposals that are brought forward and so hurtful to the Middle Class and the Labor Movement. We finally have friends in Congress who will provide a road block to stop the vicious attacks on labor that we witnessed in the past, such as attacks on Railroad Retirement, Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare, preexisting conditions, and the right for a majority of a workforce to freely choose union representation and for that union to be supported by all workers who enjoy the fruits of that representation.

With votes still being counted, an estimated 113 million Americans cast ballots in this first nationwide election of the Trump presidency, according to Associated Press data. Approximately 157.6 million people reported being registered to vote in the U.S. Voter turnout is generally around 40 percent during midterms.

- About 30 million more people participated in the 2018 midterms versus the 2014 midterms, representing the highest raw vote total for a non-presidential election in U.S. history.

- A staggering 36 million voters cast their ballots ahead of Election Day this year, setting the stage for much-higher-



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

than-usual turnout for a midterm.

- Voter participation approached presidential election-year levels in some states, including Wisconsin, Minnesota, Montana, Oregon and Colorado, where more than 60 percent of eligible voters cast ballots.

- Youth turnout, as defined by voters between 18 and 29, surged to a number not seen in a midterm election in a quarter-century. Overall, 31 percent of eligible young people cast ballots.

- Women favored the Democratic candidate in their district by 19 percentage points (59% to 40%) while men voted for the Republican 51% to 47%.

- The **most engaged voting bloc** in the months leading up to the election, comprising 56% of the mid-term electorate, was over the age of 50.

THE GOVERNORS

When it comes to Governors' races, the Democrats started with 16 seats and

are now looking, at least on Election Day, at 23 seats. Democratic strategists note that Democratic Governors now represent 52 percent of the nation's population. Republicans had to defend 26 of the 33 seats they held. The outcome of the GOP-held seat in Georgia remained uncertain at this writing.

Democratic governors were elected in Illinois, Kansas, Maine, Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico and Wisconsin. Also, Democratic governors won in every state they already held.

The seven governorships that the Democratic Party picked up include knocking off longtime anti-labor, mean spirited antagonist Scott Walker of Wisconsin. Voters also denied the Kansas Secretary of State, Kris Kobach, who was the Republican candidate for Governor in Kansas. Kobach is known as the motivating force behind dozens of proposals across the U.S. designed to suppress minority voting, immigrant



rights, and to promote white nationalist themes. And in Illinois, Bruce Rauner, who started the lawsuit that became the devastating *Janus* decision, also was ousted.

THE HOUSE

The real victory goes to the Democrats in the field who picked up 40 House seats! Currently their majority stands 241 to 194. The House of Representatives will now give Organized Labor and Middle Class families the checks and balances needed in Congress.

The most competitive races essentially broke along red and blue lines. Competitive races in purple or swing states tended to break slightly more toward Democrats than Republicans. Democrats had more of an impact in purplish states than in red states.

Democrats prevailed in other blue states held by Republicans, prevailing easily in Maine, Michigan and New Mexico, all open seats, while winning seats in the more purple states of Nevada and Wisconsin.

Democrats easily swept out most of the Republicans sitting in high-income

suburban Clinton districts: Reps. Mike Coffman (CO-06), Peter Roskam (IL-06), Kevin Yoder (KS-03), Erik Paulsen (MN-03), Leonard Lance (NJ-07), Barbara Comstock (VA-10) and Mimi Walters (CA-45), all by comfortable margins.

In these seats, political advertising declaring the incumbent voted with President Trump “95 percent of the time” proved too much to overcome. But well-funded Democrats also broke through in outer, middle-class suburbs that Trump carried by single digits. Several were in places Barack Obama had never carried. However, Democrats didn’t win a single Republican seat where Trump cracked 55 percent of the vote in 2016.

This was the first year in history Americans elected more than 100 women to the House, and it was almost entirely driven by Democrats. Of the 40 seats Democrats flipped, women were the Democratic nominees in 21 — accounting for over half of the Democrats’ margin in the House.

THE SENATE

The Senate at the present time is still controlled by the Republicans with a 53

to 47 count. The Democrats have lost Claire McCaskill from Missouri, Heidi Heitkamp from North Dakota and Joe Donnelly from Indiana, but picked up Krysten Sinema from Arizona and Jacky Rosen from Nevada.

We also know that the 2020 race for the Democratic nomination for the Presidency has started. I know from my conversations with Democratic activists that many are uninspired by the cast of potential candidates in front of them now.

Rich Trumka, President of the AFL-CIO, said, “For months, street by street and person by person, we talked about the issues that matter most and the candidates who will put working families first. We have been mobilizing on a scale that I’ve never seen in my 50 years in the labor movement.” I could say the same for our own Brotherhood. From BLET National President Dennis Pierce, to the BLET Advisory Board, to our State Legislative Board Chairman, to our General Chairman, and to our BLET Staff — we are engaged and on message. Thank you ALL BLET members for voting! 🗳️

PRESIDENT PIERCE MESSAGE

CONTINUED FROM
PAGE 2 ➡️

enjoy the fruits of their well-earned retirement.

Outside of the nomination and election of officers, the delegates also adopted several changes to the BLET Bylaws. We know the current anti-union environment that seems to prevail in Washington, D.C., and our delegates proactively took steps to help our Brotherhood grow and remain strong in the years to come. To that end, they adopted two particularly important resolutions. One allows for the creation of a Short Line Department, which will help the BLET expand its reach in organizing.

The second resolution allows the BLET to potentially grow the Organization by expanding our ability to represent a more diverse workforce by reaching out to workers of railroad companies not subject to the Railway Labor Act, such as so-called “light rail” systems. All Bylaws changes will become official once it has been confirmed that they do not conflict with the IBT Bylaws, and we expect to have approval in early 2019.

Our delegates also heard many motivational and uplifting speeches during the week. The speakers, highlighted within the pages of this *Journal*, reminded us that we are not alone in the ongoing War on Workers. Leaders

of other unions voiced their solidarity with the BLET. Delegates heard from members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. These elected officials let us know that we are not alone, and that our issues are their issues. It was truly inspiring, and I know that I left the Convention feeling energized and motivated to continue the fight for all Middle Class Americans.

In closing, organizing a convention of this magnitude took countless hours of hard work, which can be measured in months, if not years. It was my goal, and that of the BLET Advisory Board, to put on the most well-organized convention

possible, so that our delegates could conduct the important work of our Brotherhood in the most professional and efficient manner possible. Our efforts culminated in Las Vegas from October 1-4, 2018, and I want to thank all those involved for their selfless efforts in making the BLET’s Fourth National Convention a success. Now that the Convention is behind us, it’s time to roll up our sleeves and get to work. We know that we have a great deal of hard work ahead of us and I look forward to working with our new Advisory Board and putting the plan that our delegates crafted into action. Truly, we will be United, Moving Forward! 🗳️

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ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

June 24-28, 2019

Hilton St. Louis at the Ballpark



CLEARWATER BEACH, FLORIDA

July 22-26, 2019

Hilton Clearwater Beach Resort



Photos: St. Louis Convention & Visitors Commission



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Mark your calendars and plan to attend one or both of the BLET's 2019 regional meetings!

Details coming soon. For more information

regarding BLET Regional Meetings, go to: www.bletregionals.org