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

"As we advised in January of 2021, the CBC and the nation’s rail carriers have been at the bargaining table since the beginning of 2020. Since January, CBC members have been asked to work as essential workers throughout the Pandemic, while being treated more like expendable workers. Our members are infuriated that they have worked through these conditions without a wage increase in over two (2) years and it is unacceptable that the Nation’s Rail Carriers continue to stonewall CBC Unions in our effort to settle our contract negotiations on a voluntary basis.

"In January, we said that ‘the Rail Carriers have not made any proposals worthy of consideration by the membership of the CBC Unions.’ No Carrier proposals have been received since our January 2021 update that would change the veracity of that statement. We will continue to negotiate in good faith, fully recognizing that it is our members who must ratify any voluntary agreement.”

SAVE THE DATE:
2022 BLET regional meetings

The BLET National Division is pleased to announce the dates and locations of its 2022 regional meetings: June 13-17 in Denver, Colorado; and August 1-5 in Baltimore, Maryland.

The Denver regional meeting will be held at the Hilton Denver City Center. Per the BLET Bylaws, regional meetings are held “for the purposes of membership, training, education and discussion of matters of importance to the membership.” Additionally, the meetings are structured to include options for fellowship with other members and their families.

More specific details will be announced at a later date. Registration information will be available online at the BLET National Division’s regional meeting website (http://bletregionals.org). All members are encouraged to attend one or both of these regional meetings in 2022.

BLET publications.

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.
O n September 22, the Coordinated Bar-
gaining Coalition (CBC) released the joint Press Release on Page 1 of this issue updating our collec-
tive memberships about the status of our national negotiations. In my comments in this edition of the Local Engineer & Fireman of Trainmen News, I would like to add to the CBC release with some additional information for BLE-T members.

Certain rail carriers – most notably Canadian National (CN) and Norfolk Southern (NS) in recent years – have traditionally bargained on property but have chosen to bargain at the national table in this round. This is a clear departure from what our members on those properties have become used to, and it is important that they know who made this decision and what to expect as a result.

As background, both the Rail Unions and the Rail Carriers served notices to start contract negotiations in December of 2019. Consistent with their authority under the BLET Bylaws, the BLET’s Section 6 Notices for all of the Class I railroads were served by the General Committees of Adjustment (GCAs) on each prop-
erty. Shortly afterwards, CN and NS both advised the BLET Gen-
eral Chairmen that they would be bargaining nationally in this round. This was not a decision made by the General Chairmen or by the BLET National Divi-
sion. While negotiations can take place on property where both par-
ties agree, absent a rare legal rul-
ing in labor’s favor, rail carriers generally had the right to go it alone.

This policy is intended to allow the National Negotiation Committee and the appropriate officer or staff for a timely response; however, an e-mail message is not con-
sidered an official communication. Moreover, anonymous e-mails and e-mails that do not provide sufficient information con-
sider 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 sug-
gestions of the membership at the same time providing a timely response to the mem-
ber’s unofficial communication, if a response is necessary, without needlessly expending limit-
ed BLET resources.

In most cases, the ND represents the membership on a given rail carrier for wages, work rules, and health and welfare benefits; in other cases, the ND only repre-
"
The fight to ensure workers’ rights is ongoing and is one in which hardworking Americans must prevail. For too long, the needs of American workers have been cast aside by elected officials. Profits pocketed by corporations and their executives in recent years have not reached the wallets of those who showed up on the job daily just trying to earn enough to support their families. Now there is an opportunity for the U.S. Senate to do something about it. The Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, approved by the House in March, would restore fairness to the economy at a time when income inequality has stifled the ability of far too many hardworking Americans to earn a decent wage that allows them to make ends meet.

The PRO Act will strengthen the 86-year-old National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) so that workers seeking to organize a union and negotiate higher wages and better benefits will be protected. Workers deserve a safe workplace, the ability to stand together and negotiate better working conditions, and the freedom to cast a vote to organize at work. The PRO Act would override such state laws that have kept the wages of working Americans down. The nation’s labor laws are inadequate to protect the rights of millions of workers. Under current law, unscrupulous employers, armed with limitless funds, routinely violate the NLRA and block workers’ ability to exercise their right to bargain. The PRO Act would level the playing field and give workers a fair shot when they join together to have a voice in the workplace.

Elected officials, now is the time to prove you are listening. Give people the power they deserve!

Fraternally,
JAMES P. HOFFA
Teamsters General President

Kerley reelected General Chairman of CSXT-Western Lines

Elected at the 2021 quadrennial meeting were: 1st Vice General Chairman David W. Engle (reelected by acclamation), Division 463 (Corbin, Ky.); 2nd Vice General Chairman A. Lee Tate, Division 129 (Nashville, Tenn.); 3rd Vice General Chairman Justin B. Dzan, Division 365 (Louisville, Ky.); 4th Vice General Chairman Steven Kiser (reelected by acclamation), Division 698 (Ashland, Ky.); 5th Vice General Chairman Roderick D. Crosby, Division 495 (Montgomery, Ala.); Secretary-Treasurer David P. Fitzgerald Jr. (reelected by acclamation), Division 781 (Erwin, Tenn.); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Kevin J. Townsend (reelected by acclamation), Division 41 (Nashville, Tenn.).

Brother Kerley has been a proud member of BLET since October of 1998. He was first elected General Chairman at the GCA’s 2017 quadrennial meeting in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. Immediately prior to his 2017 election, Brother Kerley served as Senior Vice General Chairman of the CSXT Western Lines GCA.

Also elected at the 2021 quadrennial meeting were: President J. Alan Holdcraft was also in attendance at the GCA’s 2017 quaterennial meeting on July 13-14, 2021. A CSXT locomotive engineer, Brother Kerley has been a proud member of BLET Division 782 (Etowah, Tenn.) since October 1998. He was first elected General Chairman at the GCA’s 2017 quadrennial meeting in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. Immediately prior to his 2017 election, Brother Kerley served as Senior Vice General Chairman of the CSXT Western Lines GCA.

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Teamsters General President

Parliamentarian during the meeting.

“I congratulate Brother Kerley and all officers of the CSXT Western Lines on their election,” President Pierce said. “I thank them for their dedicated service to our Brotherhood, and I know they will do an excellent job of protecting the rights of our members.”

Brother Kerley hired out on CSXT in September of 1998, and has worked his entire railroad career on the AP/KD Sub Division between Etowah, Tennessee, and Corbin, Kentucky, primarily as a locomotive engineer. He transferred into engine service in November of 1999 after working as a conductor for just over one year. Although cut back to train service after completing the Apprentice Engineer program until 2001, he has held continuous membership in BLET Division 782 since October of 1998.

Prior to his election as Local Chairman in December of 2009, Brother Kerley served Division 782 in numerous elected offices over the years, including Alternate Legislative Representative, Vice President, President and Vice Local Chairman. In 2013, he was elected as the Senior Vice General Chairman for the CSXT Western Lines GCA, a position he held until he was elevated to General Chairman. Brother Kerley and his wife Tammy have been married for more than 30 years and they have one daughter, Hannah.

The CSXT Western Lines General Committee of Adjustment represents nearly 3,300 active and retired members from 25 BLET Divisions who work for CSX, the Indiana Rail Road Company, and the Terminal Railway Alabama State Docks.

From left: Vice President Gore, General Chairman Kerley, President Pierce, and Secretary-Treasurer Fitzgerald at the BLET’s Fourth National Convention in 2018.

Delegates elected the following regional chairmen by acclamation: Eastern Regional Chairman Michael S. Edwards, Division 781 (Erwin, Tenn.); Western Regional Chairman Jason E. Lynn, Division 742 (Evansville, Ind.); South Regional Chairman W. Glen Ware, Division 332 (Montgomery, Ala.); and North Regional Chairman John V. Pedro, Division 26 (Richmond, Va.).

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce addressed the delegates on behalf of the National Division. National Vice President J. Alan Holdcraft was also in attendance. Brother Gil Gore, retired BLET National Vice President, served as
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BLET members ratify new contract with PATH

M embers of the Brotherhood of Lo comotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) have ratified a new collective bargaining agreement with the Port Authority Trans-Hudson (PATH), which governs rates of pay, work rules, and health care for over 175 members.

In a tremendous show of support for the union, nearly 94% of eligible voters cast ballots, and the new contract was ratified by over 89% of voting members. The deal was struck through October 7, 2021, and provides back pay dating to September 8, 2021. Including introductory and future pay, general wage increases total 38.17% over the life of the agreement.

The BLET also secured a daily, 10-minute bonus for engineers, an extra vacation day, and had language placed in the new agreement that strengthens the BLET’s position regarding certain work rules.

The PATH members belong to BLET Division 497. The negotiating team at the table of ratification consisted of BLET National Chairman Art Blakely, Vice Chairman Jason Englese, National Vice President Jim Louis, and IBT Director of Economics & Contracts Jim Kimball. Others who worked hard on the contract, dating to 2010, include former General Chairmen Ralph J. Nunziato, Anthony W. Basile and Nicholas J. McCarty. Brother Blakely thanked President Pierce for his support and guidance through the process. “I am pleased to offer my heartfelt congratulations to Brother Blakely and every- one on the negotiating team for their remarkable achievement,” President Pierce said.

The PATH Brothers and Sisters have long supported this agreement, and both the turnout and the margin are testament to Brother Blakely’s leadership skills and the negotiating team having a firm hold on the pulse of their membership. Brother Blakely and all our PATH Brothers and Sisters should take great pride in this accomplishment.”