

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN **Journal**

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PICTURED ABOVE:

One of Canadian Pacific's ex-SOO Line SD60s makes its way north past the Victoria-era passenger station in Westport, New York. The station was built in 1875-1876 for the Delaware & Hudson.

Photo: Gary Knapp





BLET President's Message

BY DENNIS R. PIERCE, BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Two Person Crews are the Safest

For well more than half a century railroads have used locomotive and train control technology to eliminate operating craft jobs. Whether it was the post-World War II shift from steam to diesel, or the introduction of technology from the 1990s to present, railroads have used technology to eliminate crew members. Time and again operating craft unions were forced to mount lengthy and expensive struggles in defense of tens of thousands of members whose livelihoods were being threatened.

It should surprise no one that the industry is now eager to use Congressionally-mandated Positive Train Control (PTC) technology—a redundant safety system first recommended by the National Transportation Safety Board over 40 years ago—as a way to reduce operating crews to a single member. On March 15th, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) formally countered the carriers' move by publishing a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to require a minimum crew size of two persons, except in extremely limited circumstances.

The industry has seized on FRA's acknowledgement that it cannot provide conclusive statistical data regarding whether one-person crews are generally safer or less safe than multiple-person crews, charg-



President Pierce addresses Secretary-Treasurers at the first training class held at the new BLET headquarters building on April 13, 2016.

ing that it cannot be proven that two-person crews are safer. But, as FRA explained, the agency cannot provide such data because it does not currently collect data related to train crew size, nor do accident reports and investigations generally address the size of a crew.

While quantitative data of a statistically significant volume may not exist, there is ample qualitative data supporting the incorporation of current industry-wide crew size practice in federal rail safety regulations. FRA's NPRM cited two prominent examples of how crew size can enhance—or diminish—safety.

In early July of 2013, the town of Lac-Mégantic in Quebec, Canada, was nearly reduced to rubble when a runaway, unattended 72-car crude oil tank train derailed and exploded, killing 47 and causing the evacuation of approximately 2,000 residents. Because the train had been brought to the vicinity of Lac-Mégantic by a single-person crew, it was necessary to secure the train on a steep grade several miles outside of town. Canada's Transportation Safety Board concluded that a minimum of 17 and possibly as many as 26 hand brakes would have been needed to secure the train because of

the grade; however, applying only nine handbrakes was sufficient to comply with the railroad's operating rules.

If that train had a two-person crew, it could have been secured much closer to the town, on flat ground. This would have required cutting the train into several sections in order to avoid blocking road crossings, but the terrain and the additional handbrakes on each cut of cars would have prevented the sequence of events that led to the runaway, or at least vastly mitigated potential damage. This option was unavailable to the one-person crew, because it would have taken at least a two-person crew to cut the crossings.

Another example cited by FRA was the December 30, 2013 collision between a crude oil train and a derailed grain train in Casselton, North Dakota. The collision led to the release of nearly a half million gallons of crude, followed by explosions and fire, causing 1,500 residents to evacuate. In FRA's own words, "the heroic actions of the grain train's [three] crewmembers potentially prevented the environmental and property damages from being much worse" by pulling a cut of 50 tank cars to safety away from the burning derailed cars. The crew later went back and removed 20 additional cars from the scene

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Aerial photograph of downtown Cleveland, Ohio, showing the Engineers Building (left) and the Standard Building (right), both former headquarters buildings of the BLET and former BLE. The Brotherhood moved into a new headquarters building in the Cleveland suburb of Independence, Ohio, in March of 2016. In this issue, we take a look at the two buildings pictured above.

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Journal

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International Brotherhood of Teamsters

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BLET Advisory Board

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Dennis R. Pierce

NATIONAL PRESIDENT

National Division

E PIERCE@BLE-T.ORG

E. Lee Pruitt

FIRST VP & ALTERNATE PRESIDENT

National Division

E PRUITT@BLE-T.ORG

Stephen J. Bruno

NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER

National Division

E BRUNO@BLE-T.ORG

VICE PRESIDENTS

John P. Tolman

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE

25 Louisiana Ave. N.W., 7th Floor

Washington, D.C. 20001

E TOLMAN@BLE-T.ORG

Marcus J. Ruef

178 Fairway Dr.

Charles Town, WV 25414-5833

E MJRUEF@BLE-T.ORG

Michael D. Twombly

70 High St., Andover, MA 01810

E TWOMBLY@BLE-T.ORG

Gil L. Gore

4016 Paige Janette Dr., Harvey, LA 70058

E GORE@BLE-T.ORG

Michael D. Priestster

247 Opera House St.,

Henderson, NV 89012

E PRIESTSTER@BLE-T.ORG

Cole W. Davis

20 Holman Rd., Moberly, MO 65270

E DAVIS@BLE-T.ORG

R.C. (Rick) Gibbons

7126 North Norton, Gladstone, MO 64119

E GIBBONS@BLE-T.ORG

James P. Louis

257 Forbes Ave., Tonawanda, NY 14150

E LOUIS@BLE-T.ORG

TRUSTEES

David P. Estes

13120 136th St.

Anderson Island, WA 98303

E ESTES.DP@GMAIL.COM

Mark L. Wallace

P.O. Box 16039, Asheville, NC 28816

E MLWBLE267@AOL.COM

Matt O. Wilson

8121 Rock Elm Rd., Fort Worth, TX 76131

E WILSON@BLE-T.ORG

John Bentley Jr.

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC RELATIONS & EDITOR

E BENTLEY@BLE-T.ORG

Bill Joyce

ART DIRECTOR & ASSOCIATE EDITOR

E JOYCE@BLE-T.ORG

National Division

7061 East Pleasant Valley Road

Independence, Ohio 44131

We've moved

The BLET has moved its National Division headquarters for just the second time in more than 100 years

A look back at our historic headquarters buildings of the past

INTRODUCTION

As this issue of the *Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal* goes to press, the BLET National Division is just settling into its new headquarters building located in the Cleveland suburb of Independence, Ohio.

Founded on May 8, 1863, the BLET is the oldest labor organization in the United States. Cleveland was selected in 1870 as the union's headquarters city due to its central location for serving U.S. and Canadian members. The Organization has moved its headquarters just twice in the past 100-plus years — into the Engineers Building in 1910 and into the Standard Building in 1989.

In conjunction with our forthcoming move, the staff of the *Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen Journal* thought it timely to take a look back at the headquarters buildings of the Brotherhood's past.

ENGINEERS BUILDING, 1910-1989

At the BLE's Eighth Biennial Convention, held in Columbus, Ohio in May of 1908, a resolution offered by the late Brother John H. Welch, Delegate from Division 207 in Atlanta, Georgia, authorized the building of a permanent



The Engineers Building, home of the Brotherhood from 1910-1989.

home for the Brotherhood. The resolution carried almost unanimously and instructed what was then known as the Grand Office (now known as National Division) to select a good location for the proposed building. Two years later, the Engineers Building was dedicated on May 14, 1910.

Dedication of the building brought to fruition one of the fondest hopes of the pioneer members of the union — a permanent home for the Brotherhood. It was a proud milestone in the history of the Organization. All of the sacrifices, failures, disappointments and grueling hardships suffered by the pioneer members in nurturing the steady growth of the Brotherhood since its

frail inception in 1863 was embodied in the great structure — a monument to their collective strength and their tenacity of purpose.

The building was dedicated during the Ninth Biennial Convention, which was held in Detroit, Michigan. Almost all delegates traveled to Cleveland for the dedication ceremony on Saturday, May 14. Some traveled by boat across Lake Erie, but most traveled there by three special trains via the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern and the Michigan Central Railroads.

Well over 5,000 BLE members and their families were in attendance to participate in the dedication events, representing every state in the union, as well as from Canada, Panama and Mexico. The governor of Ohio and the mayor of Cleveland were among the dignitaries in attendance.

The 12-story building cost well over \$1 million. The exterior was finished in white terra cotta and constructed of steel, concrete and brick (2,450 tons of steel went into its frame). Leaders of the BLE Grand Office had the foresight to include a 1,200-seat auditorium in the Engineers Building, which served to host BLE International Conventions for nearly 70 years.

When not in use for Brotherhood purposes, the auditorium was rented to local theater and acting groups. The late great comedian Bob Hope, a native Cleveland, had his first paying gig



Key Tower, the tallest building in downtown Cleveland, stands directly behind the 22-story Standard Building, a Brotherhood-owned building from 1925-2014. The Engineers Building was demolished to make room for the Marriott hotel and Key Tower complex.

during a stage performance in the auditorium of the Engineers Building.

Large murals decorated the lobby. Still owned by the Brotherhood, these very same murals are on display at the new headquarters building in Independence. Completed in 1937, the paintings depict railroad scenes and show the advance of steam locomotive power from the early little engines to the giant models of the 1930s. Other scenes show electric and diesel locomotive power.

A steam locomotive driving wheel designs throughout the building helped make it unique to the Brotherhood. The lobby's floor featured an inlaid design

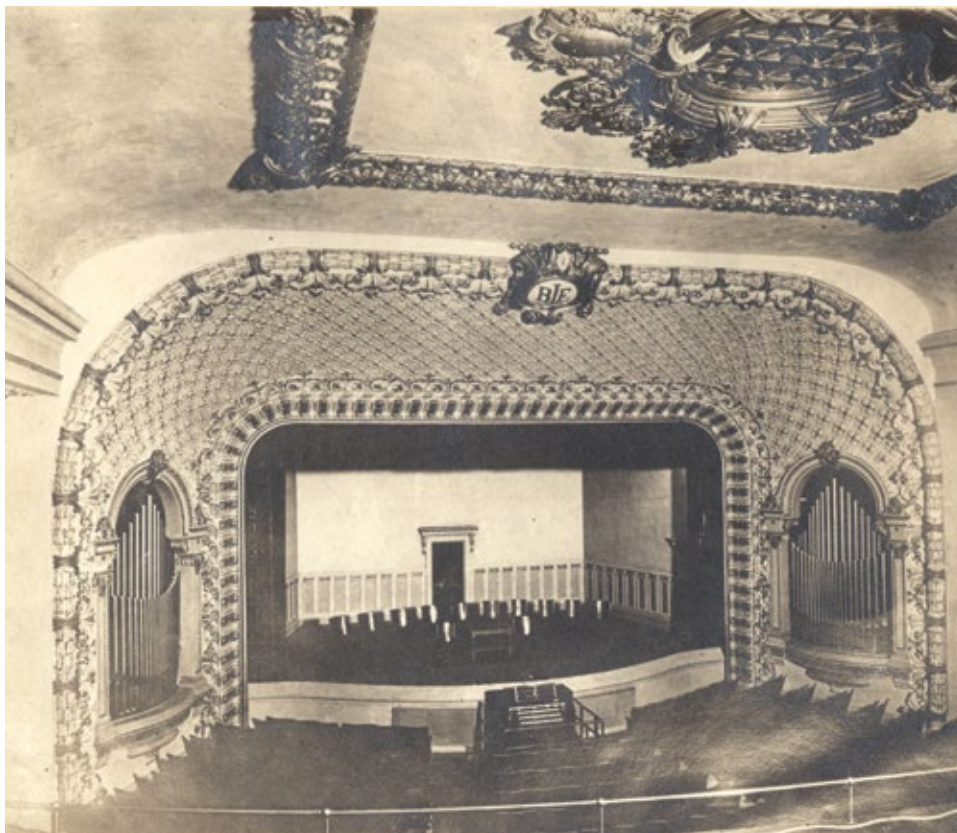
of a steam locomotive's main driving wheel. More striking, a driving wheel design was embossed on the cast bronze knob of every office door in the building, and every office door lock set was embossed with the "BLE" emblem. "It is a sight that makes the heart of any B. of L.E. man extremely proud," the *Locomotive Engineers Journal* reported in 1910. Examples of the cast bronze door knobs and locksets are also on display in the museum at the new BLET headquarters in Independence.

Sadly, this monument to Brotherhood members fell to the wrecking ball in 1989. Faced with an eminent domain

lawsuit from the city of Cleveland, the Brotherhood sold the building to developers in 1988 and moved its International Headquarters across the street to the Standard Building.

THE STANDARD BUILDING, 1925-2016

The second major headquarters building owned and operated by the BLET is the 22-story Standard Building. Plans for the building were approved by the Brotherhood's Advisory board in late 1923 and by August 1924, the iron and structural work was completed. Early in June 1925, the formal



Left: The auditorium of the Engineers Building, which hosted BLE international conventions for nearly 80 years, was the site of Bob Hope's first paid public performance. **Right:** Cast bronze door knob featuring the driving wheel of a steam locomotive as well as the BLE logo. Several of these original fixtures and doors were saved from the Engineers Building and used in the Standard Building. They are also being used at the BLET's new headquarters building in Independence, Ohio.

dedication and opening took place. The building was headquarters to the BLE's Cooperative National Bank of Cleveland. The building mirrored the Engineers Building in exterior appearance, as the Brotherhood hired the architectural firm of Knox & Elliot to develop both buildings. As with the Engineers Building, the Standard Building's exterior was finished with a cream colored terra cotta, which featured an elegant snowflake design.

Two records were achieved in construction of the Standard Building: not one life was lost during construction (contrary to the old skyscraper death rate of "a man to a story" at that time); and not one day was lost because of failure of materials to arrive as needed.

One of the more notable tenants who rented space in the BLE's Standard Building was famous FBI Agent Eliot Ness. From 1925 until approximately 1950, the sub-basement of the Standard Building featured a teeming Engine

Room that produced light, heat and power for both the Standard Building and the Engineers Building. Located 40 feet below street level, the former power plant had a total capacity of 3,000 kilowatts, featuring 400-horsepower union boilers that were equipped with automatic coal conveyors, stokers, superheaters, ash blowers, a 50-carload coal bin, and other pieces of power plant equipment that made for economic and efficient operation. The Brotherhood agreed to close down the power plant and purchase electricity from the City of Cleveland in order to help reduce air pollution as part of the mayor's smoke abatement program in the 1950s.

The Standard Building became home of BLE International Headquarters in 1989 following the selling of the Engineers Building. Many of the original doors, knobs and fixtures from the Engineers Building were installed in the BLE offices in the Standard Building. Those same doors and fixtures will now be in-

stalled at the new BLET National Division headquarters in Independence, Ohio. These items are now valuable antiques, but their true value lies in their important ties to the Brotherhood's history.

After approximately 90 years of operation, the Standard Building required significant investment to maintain and modernize. In early 2012, the building was put up for sale and, two years later, it was announced that the Weston Corporation would purchase the building. Unlike the Engineers Building, which was demolished, the Standard Building will remain standing but will be converted it into private residential apartments. Press reports indicate that more than \$60 million will be spent to renovate the Standard Building.

THE FUTURE

In early March of 2016, moving trucks arrived at the Standard Building to begin moving BLET headquarters into the new facility in Independence,



Top left: The Engineers Building during demolition. **Lower left:** The Engineers Building (left) and Standard Building (right). **Top right:** Terra Cotta lion's head that decorated the outside of the Engineers Building. **Middle right:** Ornamental terra cotta is removed prior to demolition of the Engineers Building. **Lower right:** Part of the BLET's historic locomotive mural painted in 1937. Originally housed in the Engineers Building and then the Standard Building, the mural will be on display at new BLET headquarters in Independence, Ohio.

Ohio. The BLET purchased the new space in Independence, a suburb of Cleveland, in March of 2015.

The new headquarters will provide ample room for National Division officers and staff in a more modern work environment. It will also feature an expanded and improved state-of-the-art Education and Training Center.

The AM Higley Co. of Cleveland is performing the construction services related to renovation of the new head-

quarters. A 100 percent union workforce is performing all renovation work on the new building. The AM Higley Co. workforce is comprised of union members belonging to Cement Finishers Local 404, Carpenters Local Union 200, and Laborers Local 310, Local 894 and Local 758. The AM Higley Co. will use subcontractors in addition to its own union workforce, and those subcontractors also will be union workers. The company has completed several high-

profile projects in the Cleveland area, including the Eaton Corporation headquarters and a new training facility for the Cleveland Cavaliers in 2007.

**THE ADDRESS OF THE NEW
BLET NATIONAL DIVISION
HEADQUARTERS IS:**

**7061 EAST PLEASANT VALLEY ROAD
INDEPENDENCE, OHIO 44131**

More details and photographs of the new building will be featured in an upcoming issue of the *Journal*. 📖

Sister Lori T. Dewey, a pioneering woman of the BLET, 1972-2016

THE NATIONAL DIVISION OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND TRAINMEN is saddened to report the passing of Sister Lori T. Dewey — a pioneering member of the founding Local Division of the BLET.

Sister Dewey was one of — if not the — first women to serve as President of a BLET Local Division. She served as President of BLET Division 1 in Detroit, Michigan, from September 2007 through December 2009. Founded in May of 1863, Division 1 is the oldest Local Division in the nearly 153-year history of the BLET.

Sister Dewey, age 43, passed away after a heroic struggle with cancer on February 17. A Norfolk Southern locomotive engineer who originally hired out on Conrail, Sister Dewey joined Division 1 of the BLET on September 1, 2001. She served her Division as President from 2007-2009, and as Secretary-Treasurer from January 2010 through September 2015. Sister Dewey also



represented BLET Division 1 as Delegate to BLET National Division Conventions in 2010 and 2014. In 2008, she was invited to and spoke at the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Women's Conference in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

Sister Dewey was an avid Detroit Lions fan. She loved trips to Las Vegas and spending time with her friends and family. She loved to spend time with her cat, Tigger, and enjoyed her job as a locomotive

engineer and her coworkers at Norfolk Southern. Sister Dewey will be deeply missed by family and friends, including many loving aunts, uncles, and cousins. She is survived by her mother, Carol Dewey, sister, Julieann (Joseph) Garlitz, nephew Johnathan Fronczak, and grandmother, Julienne Steffen. She is preceded in death by her father, Henry Dewey, and her grandparents, Richard Steffen, and Elizabeth and Elmer Dewey.

"It is a terrible tragedy that Sister Lori was taken from her family and friends at such a young age," said BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce. "She is gone too soon but her legacy will remain in the hearts of all those who had the pleasure of knowing her and working with her throughout the years. On behalf of the entire BLET, I extend deepest condolences to her family, friends, and our Brothers and Sisters of Division 1 in Detroit. Sister Dewey will be truly missed." 🕯

"It is a terrible tragedy that Sister Lori was taken from her family and friends at such a young age. She is gone too soon but her legacy will remain in the hearts of all those who had the pleasure of knowing her and working with her throughout the years."

—Dennis R. Pierce, BLET National President

BLET OBITUARIES:

THIS INFORMATION IS BASED UPON REPORTS
FILED BY THE SECRETARY-TREASURERS OF THE VARIOUS BLET DIVISIONS

AS OF NOVEMBER 30, 2015

2 — L. L. Richardson
69 — J. J. Anderson
86 — G. L. Davidson
114 — E. L. Marsh
144 — E. D. Lounsbury
275 — T. C. Maddox
325 — C. Avila
518 — C. J. Posey

AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2015

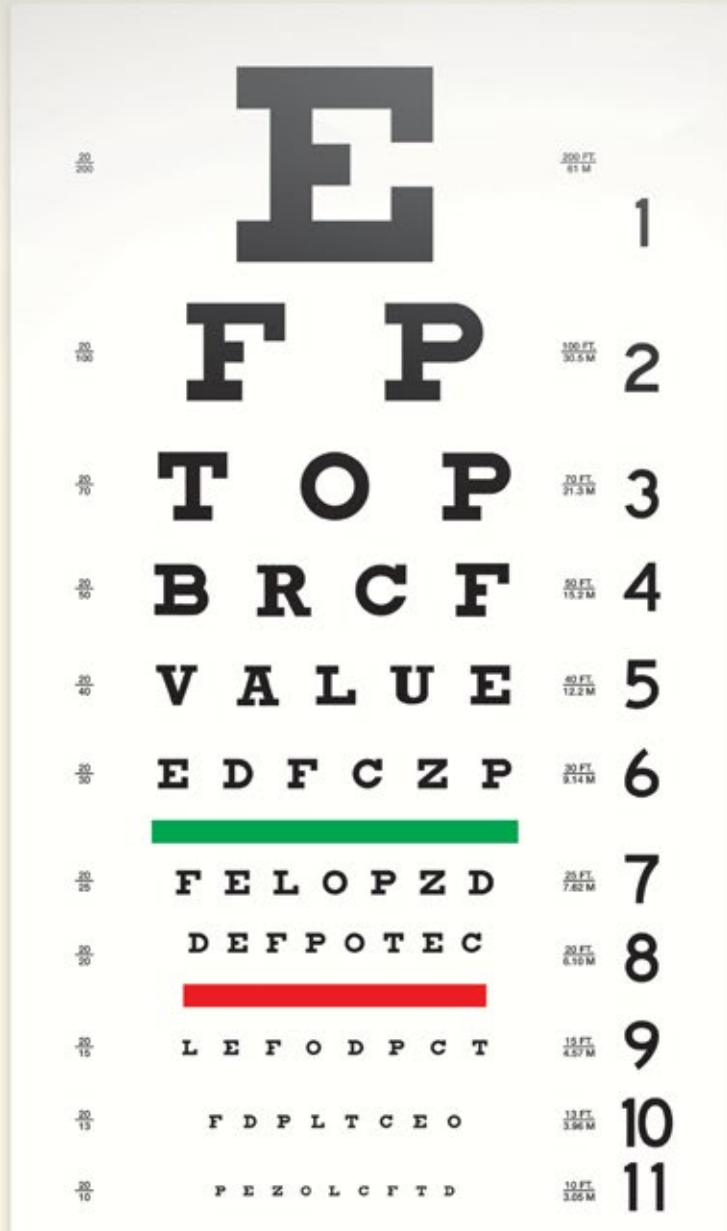
48 — E. L. Keen Jr.
143 — R. Chapa
144 — J. F. Abraham
269 — G. Azon
269 — R. R. Decker
269 — K. G. Hoffman
269 — L. Matarazzo
273 — S. B. McCollister
287 — P. J. Ross
409 — G. W. Brown

AS OF JANUARY 31, 2016

60 — M. L. Isom
74 — M. C. Flasser
153 — R. E. Miles
176 — T. D. Jacobson
197 — D. L. Wyatt
236 — J. A. Rodriguez
269 — K. F. Fohn
498 — C. W. Bond II
498 — R. A. Crawford Jr.

498 — C. B. Johnson
498 — R. E. Warren
623 — R. D. Stensvad
665 — G. W. Grob
752 — E. A. Engelhardt
757 — C. H. Johnson
811 — T. E. Hawk
867 — R. P. McGowan

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Guest Columnists

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

Income disparity is even worse than imagined

Income inequality, thanks to the hard work of thousands of everyday Americans, has become a top issue in the nation's consciousness. But the size of that yawning gap in wealth still continues to amaze — in a very bad way.

Oxfam issued a report recently that speaks to the enormity of the matter. In short, there are 62 people on Planet Earth today whose wealth equals that of the bottom 3.5 billion people. And thanks to global tax havens, the problem is only getting worse. Five years ago, it took 388 billionaires to equal the wealth of

“It’s time for policymakers to stop turning a blind eye to the problems facing hard-working Americans.”

the bottom half of the world’s population.

The document, titled “An Economy For The 1%,” notes that the fight against poverty cannot be won until policymakers take on this income inequality crisis. Oxfam notes that some \$7.6 trillion in wealth, more than the combined domestic product of the United Kingdom and Germany, is currently held offshore. This solidifies the cur-

rent trend that makes the rich even richer and leaves workers across the world struggling.

The result is that the wealth of the richest 62 people increased by more than a half a trillion dollars during the last half decade, while the poorest 50 percent of those on the globe fell by more than \$1 trillion during the same time. The number defeats any argument that wealth trickles down!

It’s time for policymakers

to stop turning a blind eye to the problems facing hard-working Americans. The Teamsters are ready to fight in the workplace and at the ballot box to make sure workers can have a better future. But this union needs its members to weigh in and let employers and elected officials know they won’t be denied.

Fraternally,

JAMES P. HOFFA
TEAMSTERS GENERAL
PRESIDENT

Teamsters influence FAST Act to benefit passenger rail

One of the major projects undertaken by the Rail Conference last year was the reauthorization of the transportation bill. Working with other rail unions and through our membership in One Rail and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), the Rail Conference worked to influence the language of the bill. After a decade-long delay and dozens of temporary extensions, the House/Senate Conference Committee reached a deal on the long-term Highway and Surface Transportation Bill

in December 2015.

The FAST Act (Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act) bill provides \$305 billion in funding for the next five years. Approximately \$70 billion has been taken from general revenue to help fund this bill because still Congress refuses to increase the gas tax which hasn’t seen a hike since 1993 and gasoline hovers at \$2.00 a gallon. The \$70 billion can be used for various projects such as roads, public transit, and bike paths but is unavailable to fund intercity passenger or high-speed rail.

The bill authorizes \$10.4

billion for intercity passenger rail. This is the first time that a passenger rail title has been included in a comprehensive surface transportation bill — it’s a big step forward. It lays out separate authorization for the Northeast Corridor at \$2.6 billion and the National Network at \$5.5 billion.

The requirement to eliminate Amtrak’s food and beverage deficit gained a lot of attention but the language in the bill allows Amtrak to allocate a portion of their ticket towards food which will offset the cost. On another positive note it appropriates

another \$200 million for Positive Train Control implementation on commuter railways.

While we celebrate this important milestone of having a transportation bill that for the first time includes a rail title, we still have our work cut out for us to insure that Congress broadens its horizon and includes funding for high-speed rail in future bills.

Fraternally,

JOHN F. MURPHY
DIRECTOR, TEAMSTERS
RAIL CONFERENCE
AND INTERNATIONAL

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.



Hijacking high-speed rail hurts America's future



About the Author:

National radio commentator, writer, public speaker, and author of the book, *Swim Against The Current: Even A Dead Fish Can Go With The Flow*, Jim Hightower has spent four decades battling the Powers That Be on behalf of the consumers, working families, environmentalists, small businesses, and just-plain-folks.

Twice elected Texas Agriculture Commissioner, Hightower believes that the true political spectrum is not right to left but top to bottom, and he has become a leading national voice for the 80 percent of the public who no longer find themselves within shouting distance of the Washington and Wall Street powers at the top.

He broadcasts daily radio commentaries that are carried in more than 150 commercial and public stations, on the web, and on Radio for Peace International.

He is a *New York Times* best-selling author, and has written seven books. His newspaper column is distributed nationally by Creators Syndicate.

Photo: www.hightowerlowdown.com

Passenger rail travel that is fast and efficient
— let's get on board with high-speed rail

People like trains. Whether taking a long trip or making the daily commute, riding the rails, without the hassles of airports and the tensions of driving, can be the most sensible and pleasurable way to get from here to there. Americans have been doing just that for 188 of the USA's 226 years—on horse-pulled rail carriages in the 1830s; then going west on the steam-shrouded, whistling-and-screaming iron horse of the 1870s; next riding the zephyr and other sleek streamliners of the 1930s; and today, taking the electric, high-speed Acelas running on some of Amtrak's routes.

More than just another mode of transportation, these versatile, still-evolving forms of locomotion are powerful expressions of the American character — of our can-do spirit, sense of adventure, and yearning to go beyond where we are. We absorbed trains as an organic part of our culture, enriching our language, literature, and art. One place to find this special feeling for railroads is in America's songbook, which abounds with music animated by the highballing thrust and rhythm of trains, including songs like "Orange Blossom Special,"

"Wabash Cannonball," "Rock Island Line," "Fireball Mail," and "City of New Orleans."

But we aren't hearing many new upbeat tunes about traveling from city to city on today's rail passenger network. That's because our corporate and governmental masters of transportation have sidetracked what not so long ago was a world-leading, cross-country passenger train system and reduced it to an underfunded hodgepodge that is an insult to the travelling public and wholly inadequate for a nation with pretensions of greatness. Highway builders, auto lobbyists, and airline monopolists — people with concrete for brains and oil in their veins — have hijacked America's transportation policy. As a result, our mobility future has been clogged with their self-interest, blocking the efficient, reliable, enjoyable rail-travel alternative.

Waiting on a train

A verse in a Jimmie Rodgers blue-yodel from 1928 pretty well sums up where we rail travellers presently find ourselves:

*"All around the water tank,
waiting for a train.*

*A thousand miles away from
home, sleeping in the rain."*

Rodgers was singing about

the rambling, train-hopping vagabonds of his day, but it's the majority of Americans who're now waiting, stuck in traffic and yearning for a train.

Practically every wealthy nation today is making major investments in building high-speed rail networks to transport their people at speeds of 150 to 220 miles per hour — Japan, Canada, France, Russia, India, England, Morocco, Korea, Saudi Arabia, Italy, China, Mexico, Poland, Spain, Brazil, Germany, South Africa, Turkey, etc. But not us, not the wealthiest nation, one with dozens of cities dotted across a continent with millions of people needing fast, convenient rail connection. Not our country.

■ **NEVER MIND** that high-speed rail construction creates a start-up economic boom (from the manufacturing of trains and equipment, construction of everything from bridges to stations, the installation of high-tech control systems, generation of renewable energy to power the electric engines, development of new businesses to serve rail passengers, and more) *and* would be a sustained source of good, permanent jobs running and maintaining the network.

■ **NEVER MIND** that high-speed rail is a boon for passen-



gers, providing a competitive alternative to airline rip-offs and traffic congestion. Travelers get access to more cities, safer and more comfortable rides, and the ability to work or just relax “on the road.”

▪ **NEVER MIND** that high-speed trains are powered by electricity. Here’s some energy irony for you: Saudi Arabia is building its nationwide fast-train system specifically because the royal regime wants to save oil!

▪ **NEVER MIND** that high-speed rail crisscrossing America would be a monumental achievement by and for our people, on par with the 10-year moon shot effort launched by President Kennedy or the Interstate Highway system initiated by President Eisenhower. It would be a history-making project, worthy of a nation with unsurpassed wealth and underused talent. Creating such a treasure for future generations would re-engage our people’s can-do spirit, and it just might rekindle some sense of national unity.

▪ Oh, one more: **NEVER MIND** that the American people don’t merely like passenger trains, they want them. Various polls over the past 20 years show that public support for greater funding and development of a passenger rail network between our cities ranges from a low of two-thirds approval to nearly nine out of 10 of us, saying “yes” to trains. Even more telling is the fact that ridership on both long-distance and commuter trains has steadily risen as auto travel has fallen (especially among young people) and as airlines deregulated and consolidated,

permitting them to reduce service, abandon smaller cities, shrink knee room, raise prices, add fees, and generally make flying unpleasant. Not since the 1950s has rail transportation been so popular, with people now taking some 11 billion trips annually on mass transit.

Amtrak itself now has 32 million passengers a year, a 50

percent increase over 2000. That’s phenomenal, especially since this passenger rail service is not really a national system, but a herky-jerky collection of often-unconnected segments that transports customers by fits and starts. And forget high speeds. Except for some Acela trains in the Northeast that can briefly top 150 mph, the average Amtrak

train proceeds at a turtle-ish 48 mph.

What happened?

Why are we stuck in traffic on roadways and runways, left with a pokey, out-of-date rail system while nations with a small fraction of our resources — like Morocco, Poland, and Turkey — are cruising on HSR networks?

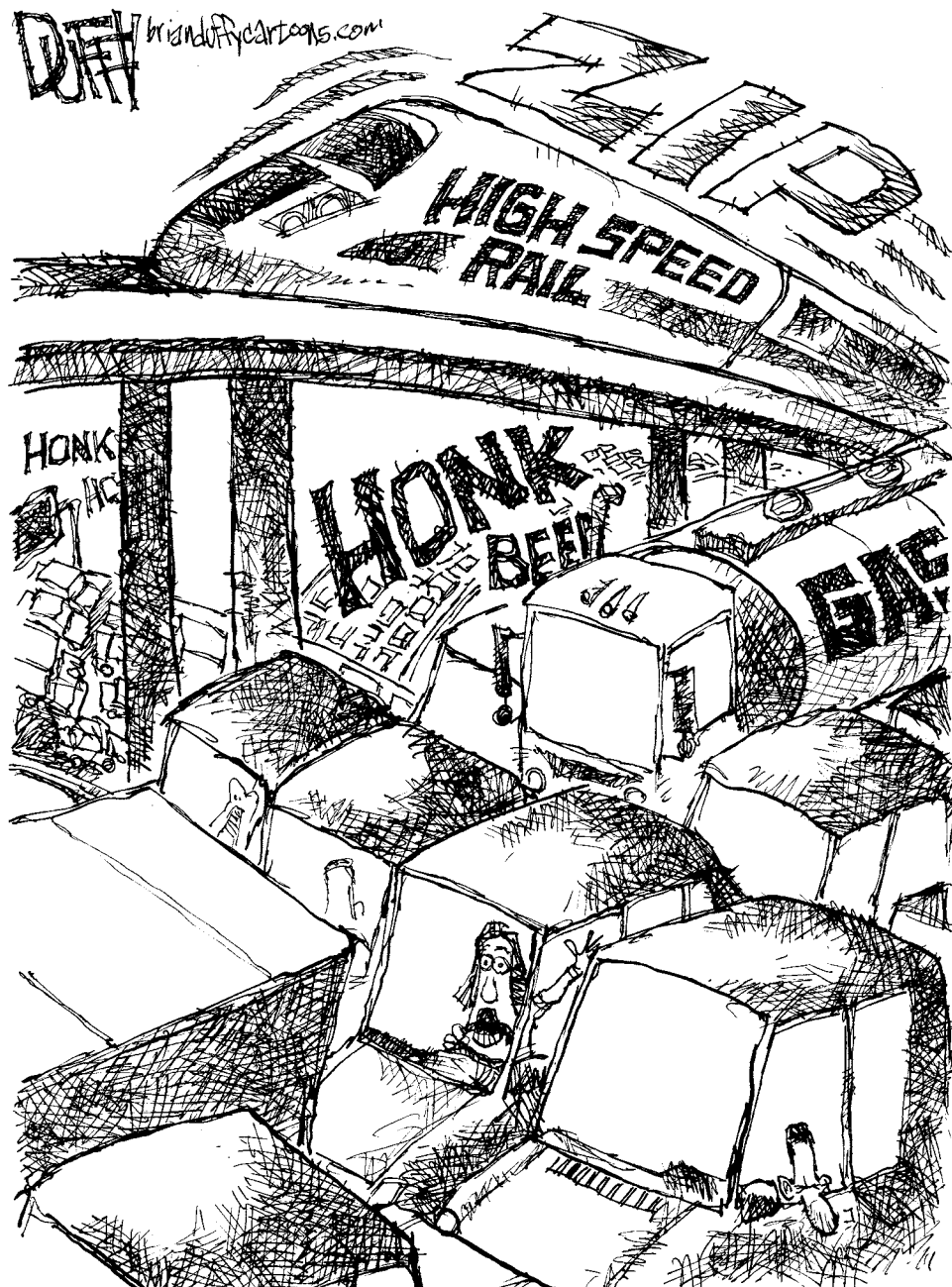


Photo: Brian Duffy



Because our leaders sold us out to corporate hucksters who fed us a diet of sugar-coated lies and ideological junk food. Their fairy tale was that mass transit is creaky, and inherently inefficient.

As early as the 1930s, giant corporate consortiums formed to buy out more than 100 of America's very effective networks of streetcars and interurban train systems. Not to run them, but to rip out the tracks and pave over the rail right of ways to make roads for cars and trucks. They even burned streetcars — as though they were witches! The biggest of these consortiums welded together the combined political and public relations power of General Motors, Standard Oil, Firestone, and Mack Trucks. Likewise, conniving corporate profiteers mounted a new offensive in the 1990s to undermine the higher-speed potential of Amtrak's Acela trains, hiring such Koch-funded front groups as Cato Institute, Heritage Foundation, and Reason Foundation to spread hokey "analyses" that brand Amtrak as a slow train to collectivist hell.

They also bought trainloads of politicians, who're still promoting the fabricated studies and talking points of the petro-cabal to wreck as much of Amtrak as they can and derail high-speed rail proposals. The executives of rail corporations, preferring the oligopolistic and very profitable freight business, play along.

U.S. passenger service hasn't dwindled naturally. It has been systematically

"As early as the 1930s, giant corporate consortiums formed to buy out more than 100 of America's very effective networks of streetcars and interurban train systems. Not to run them, but to rip out the tracks and pave over the rail right of ways to make roads for cars and trucks."

starved by a succession of no-can-do congresses and presidents who've kept cutting funding, intentionally forcing "slow downs" and reducing service. One egregious example is dubbed the "Amtrak two-step," which regular passengers know well and fume about. Why does the Capitol Limited from Chicago to D.C., for instance, arrive late on 60 percent of its runs? Incompetence? No, the passenger service is routinely shuttled onto side-tracks and forced to stop while oil, coal, and other freight haulers roll on by.

This is illegal. Federal law clearly says: "Amtrak has preference over freight transportation in using a rail line." But the freight train giants feel free to thumb their noses at Amtrak passengers, routinely putting them "in the hole," as dispatchers call it. That's because congress has provided no funding to enforce this law. Today's train robbers, you see, are no longer on horseback; they're in Congress!

Wreck of the Old 188

On Tuesday, May 12, 2015, at about 9:30 pm, Amtrak's train number 188 was making good time on its run from Washington to New York. The seven-car train was whistling along at 106 MPH as it ap-

proached the Franklin Junction rail yard in Philadelphia. But that was most unfortunate, for there's a sharp curve there with a speed limit of 50 mph. Positive Train Control, or PTC, might have prevented the crash.

While congress mandated that Amtrak implement the very expensive PTC (which it has since done along the Northeast Corridor), certain members of Congress have blocked any of the extra funding needed to finance it. When a reporter asked former House Speaker John Boehner if the failure to fund the system had anything to do with the deadly crash in Pennsylvania, he snapped: "that's a stupid question."

Astonishingly, the morning after the derailment — even as rescuers were still searching for bodies — the GOP-controlled House appropriations committee coldly cut Amtrak's already bare-bones budget by \$260 million, while in the Senate, Republican senators killed a proposal for a \$251 million increase in Amtrak funding to get PTC operational ASAP. "It's absolutely stunning to me," said an exasperated Ed Rendell, former governor of Pennsylvania. "It shows that ideology trumps reality, and it shows that cowardice reigns in Washington."

All aboard!

Rendell nailed it in that one sentence. There is no economic, technological, geographic, budgetary, or conceptual barrier to our country having the best, most effective, state-of-the-art high-speed rail service in the world. The reality is that the U.S. is in the caboose of transportation innovation only because special-interest politics continue to thwart our national will, leaving you and me with a rickety passenger rail system that is a national embarrassment. It's unforgivable that corporate and political leaders have intentionally failed to maintain, much less improve, the quality of America's passenger rail system for future generations. And the cowardice of congress critters who take special interest money to oppose the best policies for the common good is not only shamefully corrupt, but it's a firing offense.

That's where we come in. High-speed rail offers such huge benefits for us that we need to push it to the center of our policy demands, especially with a national election cycle already on us. Allies abound, and two major coalitions — the National Association of Railroad Passengers and U.S. High Speed Rail Association — are already organizing around specific proposals, wielding a wealth of detailed studies, good factual materials, and attention-grabbing graphic presentations. As the old adage puts it, "politicians only see the light when they feel the heat." 🗣️



All elections have consequences



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

Even though the 2016 presidential election is still several months away, candidates, pundits and pollsters have already used thousands of hours of television time, an ocean's worth of ink, and a trillion terabytes of data telling us what the race for the White House is all about.

Some say it's about immigration. Some say health care. Some say jobs and the economy. Some contend that terrorism and national security matter most. Some want to strengthen social safety net programs like Social Security and Medicaid, some want to tear the net apart. Some say Wall Street excess is the problem, some say greed is good — no Gordon Gecko isn't running, but the Trumpster's doing a good job of channeling him.

A lot of the rhetoric has been nasty and racist and xenophobic and homophobic and just plain un-American, unless of course — like a distressingly large number of Americans this year — you happen to think nothing's more American than ignoring the inscription on the base of the Statue of Liberty. You know the statue I'm talking about: that big green lantern-holding woman in New York harbor millions of our ancestors floated by as they entered the country from Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Russia, Poland, and a whole bunch of other European countries too numerous to mention.

Back in the day the default position was to welcome the poor, the tired, the hungry, the huddled masses and wretched refuse who were yearning to breathe free. Today, not so much, at least as some candidates and their supporters are concerned.



Dennis Pierce, BLET President; Bill John Baker, Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation; and John Tolman, VP & NLR, at the BLET's 80th annual SWCM in Tulsa, Okla.

At any rate, with the millions of words that have been flying around it's not easy to get a handle on what the 2016 presidential election is really all about. So I'm going to help you out. I'm going to define it in five words. That's right, five words that you can refer back to whenever you're having trouble focusing on what's really at stake on November 8. Here they are:

Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association.

Seriously, that's it. Five little words, which happen to be the name of a case argued before the U.S. Supreme Court in January. Five words that are more significant than anything else you'll see, hear or read between now and the day you walk into the voting booth.

Trust me, it's true because those five words and the case they encompass could well spell the end of the labor movement as we know it. I'm not kidding or exaggerating.

The case involves nine teachers in California who, egged on by a number of anti-worker extremist conservative groups, decided they shouldn't have to pay fair share or agency fees to the union that bargains their contracts and represents them in grievance and disciplinary

proceedings. They want to be "free riders" that enjoy the benefits of belonging to a union without paying a penny to support it ... I think "freeloader" is more accurate. A case decided by the Supreme Court nearly 40 years ago rejected the concept of free riders and said that non-members had to pay a fee equivalent to the cost of the services they received from the union.

That's been the law since 1977. In 1991, the late Justice Antonin Scalia, no friend of labor or workers, wrote that the agency fee structure for non-members must be upheld. During oral arguments in *Friedrichs* prior to his unexpected death in mid-February, Scalia had changed his tune and was clearly hostile to the principle he once endorsed. And that spells big trouble for all of us. Not just because it could lead to a mass exodus of workers from public sector unions, but because it will encourage anti-labor groups to bring cases that will chip away at other critical protections for workers.

Which brings me to why *Friedrichs* should be the driving factor when you determine who should sit in the Oval Office beginning next January. As this *Journal* went to press, the Supreme Court



was composed of eight justices following the death of Scalia. But prior to his passing, the Supreme Court was controlled by ultra-conservative justices who seemingly enjoyed chipping away at our rights. The remaining justices are aging and approaching the end of their careers. Reagan appointee Anthony Kennedy is 79. At the same time, liberal justices Steven Breyer and Ruth Bader Ginsburg are 77 and 82, respectively. That means the next occupant of the White House may well have the opportunity to appoint as many as three or four justices — along with hundreds of other federal district and appellate judges. In essence, the next president can shape the makeup and philosophy of the third branch of government for decades to come.

And make no mistake, if the legislative and executive branches of government remain stalemated, the federal judiciary almost certainly becomes the decider of public policy. Take *Friedrichs* as an example. Despite being controlled by Republicans, the House and Senate could never have passed legislation doing away with agency fees because President Obama would have vetoed it. Yet five judges in black robes can erase them with the stroke of a pen — and deal the labor movement and working families the first of what could be many crushing blows.

We simply can't afford to place ourselves, our union, and America's working families in that type of jeopardy. We simply can't allow a person who will appoint justices and judges who oppose everything we have fought for and believe in to sit in the Oval Office.

We must spend the days between now and November thinking about these five words: *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, what they mean for our future and what we can and must do to protect ourselves, our families, our country, and our way of life.

We all need to remember what the union movement has done for the American workers;

- All breaks at work, including your lunch breaks
- Paid vacation
- Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

- Sick leave
- Social Security and Railroad Retirement
- Minimum wage
- 8-hour work day
- Overtime pay
- Child labor laws
- Occupational Safety & Health Act (OSHA)
- 40-hour work week
- Workers' compensation (workers' comp)
- Unemployment insurance
- Pensions
- Workplace safety standards and regulations
- Employer health care insurance
- Collective bargaining rights for employees
- Wrongful termination laws
- Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA)
- Employee Polygraph Protection Act (EPPA) – prohibits employers from using a lie detector test on an employee
- Veteran's Employment and Training Services (VETS)
- Compensation increases and evaluations (i.e. raises)
- Sexual harassment laws
- Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Holiday pay

- Employer dental, life, and vision insurance
- Privacy rights
- Pregnancy and parental leave
- Military leave
- The right to strike
- Public education for children
- Equal Pay Acts of 1963 & 2011 – requires employers pay men and women equally for the same amount of work
- Laws ending sweatshops in the United States

These rights shall never be forgotten, they were hard fought by our forefathers. It is our challenge to all union members to protect these rights, to vote for candidates who are committed to protecting those rights. We have friends on both sides of the aisle – both Republicans and Democrats – and our litmus test is who will fight to protect and advance the interests of working Americans and their families.

The late President John F. Kennedy had it right when he said, "Let us not seek the Republican answer or the Democratic answer, but the right answer. Let us not seek to fix the blame for the past. Let us accept our own responsibility for the future."

Let's make it better for our children and grandchildren by voting for their future in November. 🗳️

LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVES COMPLETE TRAINING CLASS

Students, instructors, officers and staff at the BLET Education and Training Department's Legislative Representative Workshop at Teamster headquarters in Washington, D.C., October 28, 2015. Additional Legislative Representative workshops will be held later this year, and those interested in attending should monitor the BLET National Division website (www.ble-t.org) for workshop announcements.





Continuing problem of fatigue

Issue front and center at Transportation
Research Board Annual Meeting



BY VINCENT G. VERNA
DIRECTOR OF
REGULATORY AFFAIRS

The New Year began with a lot of regulatory activity, but more activity from the prior year and years that is not new still needs completion.

In January, BLET was asked to speak at The Transportation Research Board's ("TRB") 95th Annual Meeting in Washington D.C. to present a status report on the issue of fatigue in the railroad industry. BLET reported on its perspective to a panel discussion on January 14, 2016.

Unfortunately, BLET's report to TRB was not filled with good tidings or positive news. In addition to providing information regarding the venues where fatigue has been an intractable problem, BLET offered some positive advice for how fatigue problems can be addressed. This is with a realization from BLET that the fatigue problem can never be one hundred percent solved.

BLET had three main points to offer. First, that any proposed solution to fatigue has to increase predictability over the current situation, where most of our members work on call and never start their on duty times at the same time twice in a row. Second,

"BLET warned the agency and the carriers that including PTC in the regulatory discussion regarding the size of train crews would be counter-productive and that turned out to be true..."

plans must include a concept that when there is a failure of predictability, the individual engineer or trainman has to have final say about their ability to perform work safely. Third there has to be a mechanism for our members to mark off for fatigue without fear of discipline.

The regulatory and collective bargaining venues have struggled to come up with ways to control fatigue with the above ideas in mind. The only bright spots so far have come in the collective bargaining arena, and BLET believes that those will be the best venues for fatigue mitigation in the future because that is where we will find the best information concerning real-world problems. Reaching a national answer for fatigue is probably too difficult to achieve via legislation or regulation because no regulation or legislation can contemplate all the varieties of

working rules, conditions and fatigue in the railroad industry. Because of this regional, local and individual solutions must be sought and the best ways to do that is through negotiating an agreement that our members understand will work for them, and that they can approve at their railroad in a given location.

The 54th Meeting of the full Rail Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC) convened in Washington D.C. on November 5, 2015. The group was addressed by newly confirmed Administrator Sarah Feinberg, and Associate Administrator for Railroad Safety / Chief Safety Officer Bob Lauby. Administrator Feinberg stated that FRA was committed to getting positive train control (PTC) installed and that the recent extension provided in S. 650 — The Railroad Safety and Positive Train Control Extension Act — should not be seen as a reason to let up on the pressure to complete implementation. BLET warned congressional leaders and staff that an extension would dissipate the momentum that had been building because of the original deadline of December 31, 2015. Unfortunately for BLET, the national election of 2014 continues to have harsh consequences on our ability to persuade Congress to support our position, because of the change in the make-up of the Senate, with many more Senators willing to side with the railroads' request for a PTC extension.



FRA also provided regulatory updates at the RSAC Meeting regarding the following rules and projected implementation timetables:

▪ **Train Crew Staffing (Two-Person Crew)** — A Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (“NPRM”) was expected in Fall of 2015, but due to review of the proposed rule at the Office of Management and Budget (“OMB”), the proposal was delayed until mid-March. All rulemakings deemed “significant” (rules determined to have \$100 million dollars or more in effect to the industry as a whole) must be approved by OMB before they can be signed by the FRA Administrator, published and become final. This adds considerable time to the process. As a reminder, this RSAC Working Group did not come to consensus as FRA and the rail carriers added Positive Train Control as a factor in determining the appropriate crew size. BLET warned the agency and the carriers that including PTC in the regulatory discussion regarding the size of train crews would be counter-productive and that turned out to be true at the conclusion of the Working Group’s meetings.

▪ **Locomotive Recording Devices (Inward Facing Cameras)**

— The RSAC Working Group that attempted to address the issue of inward- and outward-facing cameras also failed to reach consensus on a proposed regulation. Getting all stakeholders — including representatives from labor, management, federal oversight agencies and commercial interests — to agree on this issue proved to be too difficult due to concerns over the impact of constant employee surveillance on employee rights. BLET never wavered in its argument that if any safety was to be gained by cameras inside the locomotive, the data produced should be encrypted and custody only given to the National Transportation Safety Board (“NTSB”) and FRA in the event of a major accident. The use by those agencies would be limited to studying the accident, itself. We maintain that using cameras for discipline removes any credibility from camera use when the rail carriers have sole custody of the data and can use that data at their whim.

According to FRA, the pending rule will require inward- and outward-fac-

ing cameras on controlling locomotives travelling over 30 MPH. This gives short-line railroads that travel at 30 MPH or less the ability to operate without cameras. Not that BLET wants more cameras, but this exception is purely folly when one understands FRA apparently will not require that cameras be turned off when a locomotive is stopped, which is a key issue for locomotive engineers and trainmen. If FRA is willing provide relief for short-line carriers who travel at speeds under 30, why not provide relief for train crews when the locomotive is stopped? That is just one aspect of the pending rule that makes no sense to BLET. This point was made many times in the RSAC Working Group, along with many others. BLET also requested that FRA study the effects of constant surveillance on locomotive engineers and trainmen to ensure that effects of fatigue are not exacerbated on an already exhausted workforce. So far, the FRA has been unresponsive to our request.

▪ **Remote Control Locomotive Working Group**

— The second meeting of the RSAC Remote Control Locomotive Working Group convened in Washington D.C. on December 10, 2015. BLET has been stressing that the remote control practices currently used around the country need to be standardized in terms of equipment and in terms of regulations and carrier operating rules and practices. FRA states that it agrees with this, it is their opinion that standardization in equipment is taking place absent a regulation and FRA is questioning whether there is a need for regulatory action. BLET and the other labor organizations say “Yes” to this question and are pointing out equipment issues, problems with training programs and how those programs are implemented in the field, and insufficient data regarding injuries involving remote control operations. Union Pacific presented a simulator used to instruct new employees on remote control operations. Although the simulator seemed to be a good way to introduce

people to the operations in a way that keeps them out of harm's way, it was analogous to a video game and did not duplicate the kinds of real productivity and safety pressures employees face on the job. We will be keeping our members updated on future meetings, but it appears for now FRA is not indicating a departure from the agency's prior role of merely issuing a guidance document that offers suggestions, but not regulatory requirements.

• **Railroad System Safety/Risk Reduction** — In Spring of 2016, FRA is projecting to offer the final rule on Railroad System Safety. Railroad System Safety is a more general name for risk reduction programs as they apply to passenger railroads. The Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008's risk reduction requirements for freight and passenger railroads were separated because of the different nature of their operations. However, since both passenger railroads and freight railroads have the requirement to use "good faith" and "best efforts in order to reach agreement with," employees and employees represented by labor organizations, the requirements of Railroad System Safety and Risk Reduction programs regarding good faith and best efforts have to be spelled out by FRA, and must be uniform. FRA stated at the full RSAC meeting that since the System Safety rule will probably receive OMB approval and a final rule issued in the spring, the final rule on Risk Reduction might be fast tracked for approval because of its similar nature to Railroad System Safety. As stated in the Fall 2015 issue of *Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal*, a hearing was held to express our concerns with the Risk Reduction NPRM on August 27, 2015, regarding selection of a law firm routinely retained by the railroad industry to address the "public interest" question regarding discovery limitations placed on plaintiffs in railroad injury cases.

Labor organizations and legal associations vehemently objected to the selection of the firm, who determined that allowing a shield for discovery in court proceedings for rail carriers was not in the public interest, and that only the self-interest of rail carriers should guide discovery and disclosure requirements. Other issues that remain to be resolved and forthcoming in the risk reduction rule are what FRA will say regarding technology implementation plans and fatigue. Technology implementation plans were briefly discussed in the Dark Territory Working Group and then

not discussed further in RSAC, and the Fatigue Working Group failed to reach consensus due to disagreement over the unpredictable nature of calls to report for duty.

Other upcoming regulatory actions involving passenger train exterior side door safety for passenger cars, safety glazing requirements, and certification and qualification requirements of locomotive engineers are pending. The certification regulation is meant to add or revise current 49 C.F.R. Part 240 language to conform to the Part 242 regulations governing certification of conductors where appropriate. ☐

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE BLET PAC!

The BLET Political Action Committee (BLET PAC) allows us to pool our political resources, giving BLET members a stronger voice in local, state and federal affairs. On January 5, 2016, BLET Division 106 (Muncie, Indiana) Legislative Representative Cody L. Campbell, right, presented a BLET watch to Division 106 member Luke A. Seelen in recognition of his \$50 per month contributions to the BLET PAC fund. Brother Seelen has generously given to the BLET PAC at \$50 per month for more than two years now. Brother Campbell is also a Vice Local Chairman of Division 106. Thank you Brother Seelen!



12 retirees honored at 48th annual Division 269/LIRR Dinner-Dance



Retirees of the Long Island Rail Road share a toast at the 48th annual Dinner-Dance on November 7, 2015.

BLET Division 269 and the Long Island Railroad General Committee of Adjustment honored a dozen retirees at the annual Dinner-Dance retirement party on November 7, 2015.


Retirees from the Long Island Rail Road are the guests of honor each year at the Dinner-Dance, which is a tradition that dates to the late 1960s. The

2015 event was 48th annual.

Recognized at the 2015 Dinner-Dance were the following retirees: Antin J. Bendersky; Gregory Clark; Roger Edington; Paul Meilick; Ronald Moore; James Nugent; Robert Olsen; Grace Rooney; James Sinclair; Sam Vangeli; Eric Weekes; and Dorothy Ziermann.

Also recognized at the Dinner-Dance was Brother Christopher E. Shine, who

was presented with the Division's Engineer of the Year award. Brother Shine has held continuous membership in Division 269 since September 1, 1988.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce, along with Division 269 President John A. Kavanaugh Jr. and LIRR General Chairman Kevin J. Sexton, presented commemorative plaques to each retiree. 





J.H. Johnson, Division 386, retires

Brother J.H. Johnson, BLET Division 386 (Birmingham, Ala.), safely completed his last run for the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (former Santa Fe) and retired effective Au-

gust 1, 2007. Brother Johnson hired out on the Frisco in July of 1970 and he joined the BLET on April 1, 1993. During his tenure with the BLET, Brother Johnson served his Division as Chaplain. His Last

Run came on an ID run between Birmingham and Memphis, Tenn. Brother Johnson and his wife Debra have been doing a lot of travel and work for their church now that he is retired. ☪

Division 125's David Leftridge retires after 43 years

Brother David M. Leftridge of BLET Division 125 (Clinton, Iowa) safely completed his Last Run for the Union Pacific (UP) on May 27, 2015, culminating a railroad career that began 43 years ago.

In 1973, Brother Leftridge hired out as a brakemen for the Chicago & North Western (C&NW) in Chicago. He went firing in February of 1974 and earned promotion to locomotive engineer in February of 1975. He first joined the Brotherhood on December 1, 1974.

Brother Leftridge has worked in numerous locations throughout his career. From 1976-1980, he worked as a C&NW engineer on the Iowa Division out of Kansas City, Mo. From 1980-2001, he worked for the C&NW (and then Union Pacific) out of Des Moines, Iowa. From 2001-2015, he worked UP's long pool out of Clinton, Iowa.

Over the years, Brother Leftridge was elected to serve the membership in various capacities. From 1989-1996, he served as Local Chairman of Division 778 (Des Moines, Iowa). He was also elected to represent Division 778 as its



Brother Leftridge

Delegate to BLE International Conventions in 1991 and 1996.

His Last Run was on May 27, 2015, operating an intermodal train between Clinton, Iowa, and Missouri Valley, Iowa. His retirement became effective May 31, 2015. He is the owner of a 25-year BLET membership pin, and also received a 40-year service pin from the Union Pacific.

Brother Leftridge and his wife Deb-

ra have five children (Dianna, Anthony, David, Brenda-Gail, and Nicole) and five grandchildren (Jada, Anthony, Jr., DaShawn, Joshua, and Elijah).

His personal interests include: playing poker, Bible study, and helping his elderly neighbors. During retirement, he plans to relax, travel, and spend more time with his grandchildren.

"Union proud, union strong," Brother Leftridge said. ☐

Carkeek retires with 40-plus years of accident free, injury free service

Brother Terry L. Carkeek of BLET Division 120 (Kansas City, Mo.) retired in 2013 after working for more than 40 years without any accidents or injuries.

In 1971, Brother Carkeek hired out as a laborer for the Norfolk & Western railroad in North Kansas City, Mo. He went firing of August of 1974 and earned promotion to the right hand side of the cab in January of 1976. Brother Carkeek joined BLET Division 86 on October 1, 1991, transferring to Division 120 in 1993.

His last run came on January 4,

2013, as locomotive engineer of train D-70 in yard service for the Norfolk Southern. Upon retirement, he received a plaque from Norfolk Southern recognizing his 40 years of accident free, injury free service to the railroad.

He and his wife Teresa have three children (Lance Carkeek, Tamara Walker and Tracy Reynolds) and three grandchildren. During retirement, he plans to travel and camp with family in his RV, go trout and fly fishing, and spend more time with his grandchildren. Brother Carkeek is a member of his church's Disaster Relief, or "DIRT"

Team, which offers on-site relief assistance in the aftermath of tornadoes, floods, downed trees, and other natural disasters. He also enjoys spending time in his wood working shop.

While he enjoyed working for the railroad for so many years, he says he is disappointed to have witnessed the size of operating crews shrink over the years. The five-person crews that were employed when he first hired out are no longer around, and some yard service jobs have dwindled in size to single-person remote control operations. ☐

An ordained minister, Brother Jimmy Gabel served as Division chaplain



Brother Gabel, seated, surrounded by co-workers at the retirement party held in his honor at Bell Yard in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

Brother James E. (Jimmy) Gabel of BLET Division 827 (Laurel, Mississippi) safely completed his Last Run for the Canadian National-Illinois Central Railway on November 28, 2015, ending a career that lasted 53 years.

In 1962 — the same year he graduated from high school — Brother Gabel hired out as a fireman hostler on the former Gulf, Mobile and Ohio Railroad (GM&O) in Mobile, Alabama. He went firing in June of 1962 and earned promotion to locomotive engineer on June 13, 1971, joining the Brotherhood shortly thereafter. He now has nearly 45 years of continuous membership, having joined BLET Division 827 on September 1, 1971.

Brother Gabel spent over 48 years on a switch engine in Mobile, Alabama, having never worked out of his terminal until a few years ago when the carrier totally eliminated his job. At the time of his Last Run on November 28, 2015, Brother Gabel worked a road switcher out of Hattiesburg, Mississippi.



Brother Gabel holds his retirement cake at a party thrown by members of Division 827.

Brother Gabel followed in the footsteps of his father, who had 56 years of employment with the Mobile & Ohio Railroad and the GM&O, including many as a locomotive engineer. Early in his career, Brother Gabel fired for his father prior to his retirement. According to local legend, Brother

Gabel's father had the distinction of operating the first diesel locomotive that came into Mobile.

During his time away from the railroad, Brother Gabel serves as an ordained minister. He has performed marriage services for many local BLET members throughout his career and has served as chaplain of Division 827 for 35 years (1980-2015).

"This man has withstood the test of time and deserves to be recognized," said K.W. Nelson, Local Chairman of BLET Division 827. "Brother Jim has been a dedicated union brother who has served the members of this Division for many years. He has always been there for anyone who needed his assistance."

During his retirement, Brother Gabel will become more active in his ministry and will spend more time working with the local police force. He and his wife Debbie were married on April 19, 1980. "It has been a great ride," Brother Gabel said. "I have enjoyed my career with the railroad." 🕒

Division 183's Sam Caruso was Delegate to 2006, 2010 and 2014 national conventions

Brother Sam J. Caruso of BLET Division 183 (Omaha, Nebraska) safely completed his Last Run for the Union Pacific (UP) Railroad on November 9, 2014.

Brother Caruso hired out as a switchman on the former Missouri Pacific Railroad (MoPac) in Kansas City, Missouri, in February of 1979. He went firing in May of 1979 and earned promotion to locomotive engineer for MoPac in October of 1980. Brother Caruso has held continuous membership in the Brotherhood since July 1, 1979, when he initiated into Division 336 (Osawatomie, Kansas).

After roughly eight years in the Kansas City area, Brother Caruso transferred to Council Bluffs, Iowa. He also transferred his BLET membership to Division 183 in Omaha, Nebraska, on March 1, 1988. He has held continuous membership in that Division ever since.

A dedicated union member, Brother Caruso has served the Brotherhood in numerous capacities over his 36 years of membership. From 1981-1984, he served as Vice President of Division 336. From 1992-1998, he served as Local Chairman of Division 183. From 1992-1997, he served as Alternate Vice General Chairman of the Union Pacific-Eastern District General Committee of Adjustment. From 1998-2000, he served as Vice President of Division 183. From 2007-2013, he served as Legislative Representative of Division 183. Brother Caruso represented Division 183 as Delegate to BLET National Conventions in 2006, 2010 and 2014. He served as a member of the Work/Ritual Committee at the BLET's Third National Convention in 2014. In May of 2013, Brother Caruso participated in the BLET's 150th anniversary celebration in Detroit.

His Last Run came on November 9,



Brother Caruso

2014, working as a locomotive engineer of a UP unit coal train between North Platte and Omaha, Nebraska. His retirement became effective November 13, 2014.

Brother Caruso is the proud owner of a BLET 30-year membership pin. At the request of the Union Pacific, he appeared in the CNBC program "Rise of the Machines," which aired on national television in September of 2013.

He and his wife Anita J. Caruso were married on September 18, 1976. The couple has two adult children (Paula J. Caruso Baggiani and Samuel L. Caruso) and three grandsons (Dominic, Sam and Luca). Their daughter was a Human Resources Manager for the UP from 2004-2008. Their son Samuel hired out with the UP as a crew dispatcher in 2004 and is now a manager at Union Pacific Distribution Services (UPDS). Wife Anita is a long-time member of the BLET Auxiliary and served as its National President from 2010-2014.

Brother Caruso enjoys target shooting and said traveling is his favorite

activity. During retirement, he enjoys attending all of his grandsons' school and sports activities while serving as a Board Member of his Home Owner's Association. Brother Caruso belongs to St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic Church and is a member of the Knights of Columbus.

"From the time I was a little boy, I was always fascinated with trains and hoped one day to become a locomotive engineer," Brother Caruso said. "I was truly blessed to do what I enjoyed and got paid to do it. It was a great honor to serve the Brotherhood through my nearly 36 year career. Some of the most rewarding times were the terms I served as Local Chairman of Division 183 in Omaha and the three National Conventions I represented and served Division 183 as Delegate. Most special, though, was being appointed by BLET National President Dennis Pierce to serve on the Work Committee at the BLET Third National Convention in 2014. It was a wonderful experience I will never forget!" 🍷

Larry James was dedicated to rail safety throughout 41-year career



Brother Larry James, Division 284 (Grafton, West Virginia), said the goal of his work was to benefit locomotive engineers by fighting for better and safer working conditions.

Brother Larry James retired from CSX Transportation (CSXT) effective January 1, 2016, ending a 41-plus year railroad career.

Following military service in the U.S. Air Force, Brother James hired out on the former Baltimore & Ohio Railroad at Parkersburg, West Virginia, on May 29, 1974. He earned promotion to locomotive engineer on May 30, 1975.

Brother James joined the Brotherhood in 1977 and from that time to present was involved in numerous positions, activities and projects for the BLE/BLET. Brother James was Local Chairman of Division 284 (Grafton, W.Va.) and at the same time Secretary-Treasurer of the West Virginia State Legislative Board. He also was elected to serve as the Eastern Region Vice General Chairman of

the CSX Northern Lines General Committee of Adjustment.

In 1995, Brother James was appointed to the position of Coordinator of the BLE Education and Training Department, working in the Cleveland office. During this time, his work with Brother Bill Walpert was instrumental in creating many of the BLET's initial Education and Training programs. Additionally, he was involved in much of the early mobilization planning and actions.

Following a tragic head-on collision and fatality involving a dear friend and Brother in West Virginia, Brother James committed his focus to safety and always kept in mind that the goal of his work was to benefit locomotive engineers through better and safer working conditions. He said one

of his most rewarding undertakings was the Operation Thanos March in Washington D.C., ending at the nation's capitol on April 28, 1997.

One of the most successful projects Brother James was involved in was the initial concept and development of the BLET Safety SENSE Program, initiated and agreed to by CSXT in 1998, which has led the industry in major safety measurements the past three years. In 2000, he left the Cleveland Office to become the BLET's System SENSE Safety Liaison to CSXT. He held this position until retirement.

During his time as CSXT Liaison, he participated in many activities including RSAC, SAC-P, and was a charter member of the CSXT-FRA CCB Waiver Committee until completion. He was also labor co-chair of the



Brother James with Teamsters
General President Jim Hoffa

BLET-CSXT System Locomotive Cab Committee, which was recognized by the AAR in 2013 for its widespread success in the industry.

In 2011, he was nominated for the Harold Hammond Award for contributions to safety and was presented with a commemorative plaque in Washington, D.C. He previously served on the Work Ritual Committee at the BLET's First and Second National Conventions (2006 and 2010) and also worked on the history display at the BLET 150th Anniversary Celebration in Detroit (2013).

"I want to give special thanks to my Brothers and friends Justin Wilcox, Robert Denlinger, David Rose and Harvey Benn and the CSXT General Chairmen for their unwavering support of the System Locomotive Cab Committee and the BLET SENSE Program," he said. "I also want to thank all of the BLET-CSXT Division Safety Coordinators for their hard work and support of both me and the program. I have been blessed with a very rewarding career, which I have enjoyed to the fullest. I have met so many great members, families, friends and others whom I would have never had the opportunity without being involved in our organization."

Larry and his wife Ava have been married for 26 years. He wants to give special thanks to his wife for being so supportive during the long hours and days away for home while working for the Brotherhood. "It's been a great run," he said. 🍷

Dan Myers, Division 98: "41 and done!"



Friends hosted a retirement party for Brother Myers at the Izaak Walton Gun Club in Bennet, Nebraska. The cake reads: "41 and done."

Brother Dan G. Myers of BLET Division 98 (Lincoln, Nebraska) retired effective January 2, 2016, after a 41-year railroad career.

He vividly remembers hiring out with the Burlington Northern on the steel gang at Inland, Nebraska, in May of 1974.

"My friends and I drove up to the dining car and asked for a job," Brother Myers explained. "We were given a piece of paper to sign, a hard hat, and directed to 'go over there.' That was the entire hiring process."

The pay was \$4.56 per hour. It might not seem like much now, but considering 1974 was a recession year and that minimum wage at the time was \$1.80 per hour, Myers said he and his friends thought they "were rich."

The work was grueling, however. After a few months of laboring out of doors in temperatures over 100 degrees,

Myers joined the U.S. Marine Corps.

"After two years of running, marching, mopping floors and being yelled at for 16 hours a day, I decided the railroad didn't look so bad," he said. "I heard the railroad needed engineers. Seemed like an easy job. I didn't sleep for the next 37 years."

Brother Myers earned promotion to locomotive engineer in March of 1979 and joined the Brotherhood effective March 1, 1980. He received a 30-year membership pin in 2011.

His Last Run for the BNSF was on assignment Lneb 8411, BNSF 6170 BNSF 9174, from Lincoln, Nebraska to the ADM plant in Columbus, Nebraska.

"I don't have a family any more," he said. "I put my house up sale. The game plan is to load up my gear and head East. I'll figure out the rest as I go. The best in life is yet to come! See ya at the next Old Timers." 🍷

Texas politics exhilarating and exasperating, says retired Legislative Board Chairman Terry Briggs

Brother Terry D. Briggs, who served the BLET as Chairman of the Texas State Legislative Board for nearly 15 years, retired effective June 2, 2015. His railroad career spanned 44 years.

Brother Briggs hired out on the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad (Rock Island) as a fireman on April 11, 1971, earning promotion to locomotive engineer on November 30, 1972. He worked for the St. Louis Southwestern Railroad (Cotton Belt) as an engineer from July 11, 1979, to September 11, 1996. He became a Union Pacific engineer on September 11, 1996, when the UP formally acquired the Cotton Belt along with the Southern Pacific.

Brother Briggs belongs to Division 530 (Commerce, Texas) and has been a BLET member for over 44 years. He first joined the Brotherhood as a member of Division 609 on March 1, 1973, transferring to Division 530 on September 1, 1979.

A dedicated union officer, Brother Briggs has held many elected offices over the years. From 1985-2001, he served as Legislative Representative of Division 530. From 1998-2001, he served as Secretary-Treasurer of Division 530. He also served Division 530 as Delegate to BLE International Conventions in 1996 and 2001, and to BLET National Conventions in 2006, 2010 and 2014.

His involvement with the Texas State Legislative Board dates to 1989, when he was elected Alternate 2nd Vice Chairman. Brother Briggs served as 2nd Vice Chairman from 1991-1992 and as 1st Vice Chairman from 1992-2001. He was elevated to the office of



Brother Briggs addresses delegates in his role as Chairman of the Legislative Committee during the BLET's Third National Convention in 2014.

Chairman of the Texas State Legislative Board in 2001, following the election of former Chairman Raymond Holmes to the office of BLE Vice President & U.S. National Legislative Representative. Brother Briggs was reelected to the Texas State Legislative Board Chairman's office in 2003, 2007 and 2011. He was also active with the BLET's National Association of State Legislative Board Chairmen (NASLBC) for many years.

At the BLET's Second National Convention in 2010, Brother Briggs was elected Alternate Vice President and National Legislative Representative, a position he held until 2014. He was a member of the Legislative Committee at the 2006 and 2010 BLET National Conventions, and served as Chairman

of the Legislative Committee at the BLET's Third National Convention in 2014.

"Being able to work in what some describe as the best job in the BLET, Texas State Legislative Chairman, was not only a rare privilege, but it was also exhilarating, challenging and, when dealing with Texas politics, usually exasperating," he said. "One thing is for sure; I made a lot of good friends along the way and now have enough good memories to fill a lifetime. For that I am eternally grateful."

Brother Briggs was part of the BLET team assigned to the Railroad Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC) Risk Reduction Working Group as well as the Fatigue Management Plan Working Group. He was also a member of

the BLET Safety Task Force Go Team in 1994.

Following in the footsteps of his grandfather and father, Brother Briggs has deep railroad and union roots. His grandfather, Dan Briggs, was a shop worker for the Rock Island around 1920. "Family historians say he lost his job to replacement workers brought in by the National Guard during a strike, likely the Railway Shopmen's Strike of 1922. He never returned to railroad service. My father Carl Briggs, President of the Bricklayers local, had me, at the tender age of 14, handing out fliers, door to door, opposing right to work legislation in Oklahoma. That



early exposure to union work and politics naturally led me in that direction later in life," Brother Briggs said.

His parents Carl and Edna Briggs

are still active today and are 92 and 87 years old, respectively. Brother Briggs and his wife Pamela were married on February 6, 1971. The couple has three children (Tony Briggs, Sarah Raines and Philip Briggs) and seven grandchildren. He enjoys fishing, camping, and spending time with his large family. On rare occasions, he will play a round of golf.

"One thing I want is to shoot my age in golf, although that may not happen until I reach the age of 110," he said. "Pam and I want to see all the National Parks at least once. I will continue to spoil my grandkids and then send them home." 📍

The BLET publishes Last Runs for members who have retired, and recognizes members with 40 years or more of membership in Honor Roll articles. If you are planning to retire soon, please let us know! For details, contact: John Bentley, Editor, Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal, Email: Bentley@ble-t.org, 7061 East Pleasant Valley Road, Independence, Ohio 44131

PRESIDENT PIERCE MESSAGE

CONTINUED FROM
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of the fire. That wouldn't have happened if there were only one-person crews.

Safety studies show that locomotive engineers and conductors function as an integrated team, monitoring the operating environment outside the locomotive, while also collaborating in planning activities, problem solving, and identifying and mitigating potential risk. While the locomotive engineer is guiding the train over the road, and separate and apart from team functions, the conductor: manages train consist and makeup; checks speed, signal indications, and engineer alertness; interacts with non-crewmembers such as dispatchers and roadway workers; diagnoses and responds to train problems; and manages the crew's paperwork.

Moreover, conductors are the source of supply for future

"Safety studies show that locomotive engineers and conductors function as an integrated team, monitoring the operating environment outside the locomotive, while also collaborating in planning activities, problem solving, and identifying and mitigating potential risk."

locomotive engineers on virtually every freight railroad. As engineer training and promotion approach, the conductor also must focus on gaining knowledge of the territory, including maintaining awareness of surroundings. He or she also must develop the ability to project the effect of consist on train dynamics, which includes the ability to plan ahead, and to multitask; all in preparation for one day becoming a locomotive engineer in many cases.

The importance of a second crewmember will be heightened—not lessened—when PTC is deployed. PTC can provide warnings of upcoming signals, work zones and speed restrictions,

and can bring the train to a stop in an emergency situation. However—and as FRA notes—PTC cannot account for all the physical and cognitive functions that a conductor currently provides. PTC cannot monitor events outside the cab window for potential obstacles and hazards undetected by automated systems, nor does it prevent collisions or derailments when operating at restricted speed. This will be more important than ever, because PTC will much more frequently require an engineer to divert his attention from outside the cab to the displays in front of him or her.

PTC cannot go back and inspect a train that has expe-

rienced an undesired emergency brake application, and it cannot change the broken air hose and restore the train's braking system. PTC also is not required to and cannot prevent low-speed rear-end collisions. When a train is being held out of the yard, PTC can't cut a crossing to provide access to first responders who have to cross the railroad to attend to a community emergency. And it is of no help when you need to move volatile cargo away from the scene of a fire.

The industry's generations old "swap technologies for jobs" model must be retired, for the sake of railroad worker and public safety. To that end, BLET will be working with SMART-TD to file joint comments on FRA's proposed crew size regulation. Our common goal of improving railroad safety compels us to work together on this important issue, and that will be our approach in responding to the FRA's proposal. 📍



Promoting solidarity among BLET families



BY SUSIE BURROLA

BLET AUXILIARY
NATIONAL 1ST VICE
PRESIDENT

Solidarity — a word that is frequently used by union Brothers and Sisters — means nothing to some, yet is heartfelt to many in the labor movement. The word solidarity is defined as “unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest; or mutual support within a group.”

Since 1887, when the BLET Auxiliary was first organized as the Grand International Auxiliary to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, the members of the BLET Auxiliary have understood the meaning and the importance of solidarity and camaraderie. The majority of our Auxiliary members are from a generation that understands

the need for strong unions. We understand that it is our job to ensure that our children and the younger members of both the BLET and the Auxiliary understand that need as well.

We’ve come along way baby! Over the years, we have continually implemented changes within our Auxiliary in order to keep up with the times. We realize that we must embrace change as it is inevitable, whether we favor it or not. We are continually adapting to the changes that occur in the railroad industry, the BLET, and in cultural norms. We strive to implement changes that are in the best interest of our organization and its members.

The growth we have experienced in the last year has been an amazing testament to the relevance of the BLET Auxiliary. The encouragement and inspiration we have received from the local BLET Division officers, all the

way up to the National Division officers, has been heartwarming to say the least. We are especially encouraged by the calls we have received from BLET members, local Division officers, and their spouses, reaching out to us to help them organize a local Auxiliary in their area. Many State Legislative Board Chairmen and Division Legislative Representatives have realized the power that the voices of the spouses and family members have when lobbying in state houses and the halls of Congress.

The Auxiliary has much to offer to its members and to the BLET. We support the members of one of the greatest labor organizations in this country, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen. As history tells us, “Few can realize the aid given to our institutions through the influence of the Ladies Auxiliaries to the B. of L.E., its workings many times silent and unseen,



Indianapolis Auxiliary No. 121,
Indianapolis, Indiana



The Red Willow Rails Auxiliary
No. 623, McCook, Nebraska



The Other Women Auxiliary No. 348, Elkhart, Indiana


has done much to elevate the laborer at the throttle and to eliminate evils that have many times rendered manual labor a burden." This statement was taken from a book titled *A History of Boston Division Number Sixty-One, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers*. The book was published in 1906. Nearly 110 years later, today's Auxiliary includes both men and women and all are welcome. We have numerous BLET members and others who have joined us as associate members.

We are educating our members about the health and safety issues that railroaders face every day, and about the legislative issues that affect the industry. We teach them that our voices

can and do make a difference. With the "War on Workers" and the many political attacks on unions in recent years, it is encouraging to see the spouses and family members of our engineers and trainmen become more involved and proactive on issues that affect all of our livelihoods. Now, more than ever, we need the support and involvement of union family members.

We remind the younger generations to be grateful for what their union forefathers have provided for them. They need to support the union that they belong to and stand proud as union members and families. We are now seeing many of the younger BLET members becoming more active at local Division

meetings because their spouses are involved in the Auxiliary, and the local Auxiliaries have become an extension of their nuclear families. It is very gratifying to see the children in these union families show their pride to be a part of the BLET and the Auxiliary.

We are the strongest assets that our spouses have. As we all know, railroad engineers and trainmen spend more than half their lives on duty or at their away-from-home terminals. What better way do we have to share and support each other than being a part of the Auxiliary? For more information about how you or your family members can become involved, please see our website at www.bletauxiliary.net. 



Mile High Auxiliary No. 5280,
Denver, Colorado



Southern Comfort Auxiliary No. 30,
Atlanta, Georgia



Auxiliary members are also active participants in numerous pro-labor rallies throughout the United States.

ABOUT THE AUXILIARY:

The BLET Auxiliary exists to support the interest and welfare of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) Auxiliary and railroad families, especially the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, and the organizations of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Rail Conference, our members and their families throughout the United States. Learn more about joining the Auxiliary at: www.bletauxiliary.net

PURPOSE:

The overall purpose of the Auxiliary shall be to provide support and promote issues that effect the health, safety, welfare and quality of life of railroaders and their families, to promote higher education with the families of its full members, to give assistance to widows, widowers, sisters and brothers, when needed, especially during times of duress, and to render assistance whenever and wherever needed to further our mission.

GET YOUR UNION-MADE GEAR FROM THE BLET WEB STORE!

Stretch Fit Ball Cap — BLT-0216

Classic stretch fit ballcap in sleek black fabric. A fully embroidered BLET logo is on the front with a complimentary blue sandwich visor to finish off the look.

One size fits most. \$18.95

USA Eagle T-Shirt — BLT-0215

You will be proud to wear our newest T-shirt design. Bold and bright, this shirt shouts a USA themed design. It features a full back screen-printed



design with a complimentary BLET front left chest logo.

Available in sizes: medium thru 4X
Med- XL, \$15.00, 2X \$16.50, 3X \$18.00, 4X \$19.50

Full Zip Sweatshirt — BLT-0108

Super comfortable full zip hoodie makes the perfect new addition to your BLET wardrobe. Black hoodie



with a classic embroidered BLET logo on the left chest.

Available in sizes: medium to 3X
Med-XL \$35.00, 2X \$37.00, 3X \$38.00

Crest Polo Shirt — BLT-0202

Sharp and classic moisture wicking polo with waffle pattern. A complimentary silver/gray BLET logo is



embroidered on the left chest giving this polo a professional look.

Available in sizes: medium thru 4X
Med-XX \$35.00, 2X \$37.00, 3X \$39.00, 4X \$41.00

Portfolio — BLT-0213

Full size portfolio in black pearl fabric. Inside features slash pocket,



card pocket and is fully lined. A legal tablet is also included. Decorated with a gold hot stamp of our BLET logo. **\$15.00**

Decals — BLT-0210

What a great way to show pride and solidarity! This 2 1/2 X 3 1/2 decal is perfect for any application. Conve-



niently packaged in lots of 25, making this a perfect purchase for any size division.

Bundle of 25, \$7.00

Bumper Sticker — BLT-0211

Classic full-color bumper sticker proudly shows the BLET logo. A great organizing tool or recognition at your



next meeting. Size is 3 X 11 1/2 and can be purchased individually or in lots of 12.

Single for \$1.00, 12 for \$10.00

Ashton Polo — BLT-0209

Moisture wicking fabric makes this polo super comfortable and cool to wear. Navy blue color with a coordinating fully embroidered BLET



logo on the left chest finishes off this classic shirt.

Available in sizes: medium thru 4X
M-XL \$35.00, 2X \$37.00, 3X \$39.00, 4X \$41.00

Fired Up Long Sleeve T-Shirt — BLT-0150

Shout your pride with this long sleeve 100% cotton dark ash T-shirt.



Decorated with a full color back logo, a decorated sleeve logo and a front left chest BLET logo.

Available in sizes: large thru 3X
L-XL \$19.95, 2X \$21.95, 3X \$22.95

Black Dial Gold watch — BLT-0123M

What a stylish way to show pride as a BLET member. The logo stands out as it displays sharply against a black



background with gold-plated case and band. This watch will truly be a keepsake for years to come. Engraving is available up to four lines of text on the back of your watch.

Watch \$86.95, Custom Engraving \$10.00 extra
(Women's watch available for same price: Product number BLT-0123L)

YOU CAN ALSO SHOP FOR BLET ITEMS ONLINE: Go to www.bletmerchandise.com

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2016 BLET REGIONAL MEETINGS

Join us in Chicago!

JULY 11-14, 2016

Registration for the BLET's 2016 Regional Meetings will be available soon!

Please watch the BLET National Division website and Facebook page for the latest information. The Chicago Regional Meeting will be held July 11-14, 2016, at the Drake Hotel. The Long Beach Regional Meeting will be held August 22-25, 2016, at the Hyatt Regency. The Drake in Chicago is a beautifully restored grand hotel, and the Hyatt Regency in Long Beach is in the heart of the Long Beach Harbor entertainment area.

www.bletregionals.org



Photo: Chase Gunnoe