

THE LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEER NEWSLETTER • JANUARY 2003

BLE outraged at remote control decision

Widespread job loss, reduced safety will result, BLE says

A decision issued on January 10 by Arbitrator Gil Vernon, Chairman of Special Board of Adjustment No. 1141, opens the door to the nationwide operation of unmanned remote control trains, a controversial practice that could compromise safety and lead to widespread job losses.

BLE International President Don Hahs expressed outrage at Vernon's decision, which upholds the assignment of remote control jobs to a newly created position known as "remote control operator," instead of professional locomotive engineers. President Hahs predicted that between 4,000 and 5,000 members of the United Transportation Union could lose their jobs due to the implementation of remote control trains.

"First and foremost, the decision creates serious safety concerns for railroad employees and the general public," President Hahs said. "Trains carrying nuclear waste and other hazardous materials will now be operated — at least in terminal operations — by employees who have as little as 80 hours of training.

"Secondly, the decision violates more than 150 years of established practice, ignoring Federally certified locomotive engineers as the only craft responsible for moving and operating trains. The decision also fails to recognize current collective bargaining agreements, local and national agreements, and years of past practice."

President Hahs also expressed concern that the actions of the Federal Railroad Administration — the

nation's rail safety watchdog — contributed to the magnitude of today's decision by failing in its duty to protect public safety and the safety of railroad employees.

"In essence, the FRA circumvented its own regulations — 49 CFR Part 240 — by creating a deskilled engine craft (remote control operator)," he said.

In addition, the FRA has failed to adopt enforceable federal regulations to govern the operation of remote control trains. As of today, it has only issued recommended guidelines to cover limited operations.

The BLE President also charged that over the past three decades, the United Transportation Union and railroad management have conspired to eliminate numerous railroad positions, usually through attrition and sharing of the savings.

"Today's decision is illogical and does not conform to years of established practice," he said. "The UTU's 1985 national agreement, which provides for the forced promotion to locomotive engineer, established the precedent of engineer as the prevailing craft. Eighteen years later, the carriers and UTU have collaborated to change this scenario for self-serving reasons, thereby denying the very people they forced to take promotion access to the remote control work."

President Hahs stressed that while the loss of engineer jobs is important, the public should be gravely concerned about their safety now that lesser trained and lesser qualified operators will be running trains by questionable remote technology.

"The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers will continue to press for adequate training of remote control operators, who will now begin handling carloads of spent nuclear waste and other deadly substances. Citizens should also be concerned about the remote control technology itself because it is not totally reliable. Any piece of equipment, like the remote control devices, will malfunction at some point. No matter how reliable they are, they will fail.

"More than 30 accidents and derailments involving remote control were reported to the BLE in the past 11 months, and I believe it is not the fault of the employees. These workers have not received adequate training prior to being thrown to the wolves. This situation is a ticking time bomb.

"Since September 25, four U.S. cities — Baton Rouge, La., Shreveport, La., Detroit, Mich., and Marysville, Mich., — have cited safety concerns in the adoption of resolutions banning remote control operations and/or calling upon the Federal Railroad Administration to adopt enforceable regulations to govern the use of the technology," he said.

In addition to safety concerns, these city councils cited the threat of terrorist attacks that specifically targeted U.S. railroads as one of the reasons for banning remote control trains. The U.S. Department of Transportation issued this terrorist warn-

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BLE calls into question statements made by UTU President Byron Boyd

UTU contract gives engineer yard duties to RCOs for 46 minutes extra pay

After reviewing numerous inquiries from BLE members regarding the outcome of the January 10 arbitration ruling on remote control, BLE International President Don Hahs called into question certain statements made by UTU President Byron Boyd in a UTU press release.

The January 10 news

release expressed the UTU President's opinion of the remote control arbitration and cited several reasons why he entered into the remote control letter of intent and agreement. Boyd called the outcome of the ruling a "victory" and stated that the UTU "did not seek to negotiate on remote control separately."

Recent history indicates

that the UTU willingly signed the September 26, 2001, letter of intent with the carriers to begin remote control pilot projects, while the BLE's national convention was still in session and before election of officers was completed.

"If the UTU, as stated,

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BLE prepares membership survey in IBT merger proposal

Survey to assist committees in ongoing negotiations

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers is making final preparations to mail surveys to all of its members in the next 30 days regarding the proposed merger with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

The purpose of the survey is to assist BLE leadership in structuring the best possible merger agreement.

All BLE members will receive survey information

through the mail while approximately 1,000 will also be contacted by phone.



Negotiations regarding the merger are still not complete. Information obtained from the survey will assist BLE and Teamster leaders in the ongoing negotiations.

"Things are moving forward as expected," BLE International President Don Hahs

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BLE NEWS

BLE President, members question UTU statements

Questions

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really believed it was important to negotiate together on the issue of remote control, then it appears to BLE that they should have waited at least a few more days to give the newly elected BLE officers an opportunity to participate in remote control negotiations," President Hahs said.

"As you should remember, final resolution of the BLE vote on the UTU merger was still pending on Sept. 26, 2001. We are of the opinion that UTU's zeal to grab the letter of intent was meant to be used to put pressure on BLE membership to merge or be left out of remote control negotiations.

"We believe it was their intent to grab jobs and force the merger instead of the noble ideals presented in their January 10 news release," he said.

President Hahs also disagreed with Boyd's opinion that the January 10 ruling supported the UTU's attempt to force the single craft issue before the

National Mediation Board.

"We believe the arbitrator's ruling strengthened the BLE's position that distinct and separate operating crafts exist in the railroad industry," President Hahs said. "The arbitrator provided a clear explanation of the distinct differences separating the locomotive engineer craft and the groundman crafts. In fact, the neutral appears to describe the remote control operator, or RCO, as a new craft that is distinct and separate from the locomotive engineer craft."

President Hahs also called into question Boyd's description of the arbitration as a "victory."

"As stated in the BLE's initial press release of January 10, there are no winners on the side of labor," he concluded. "Rail operating employees are paying a high price with their jobs and only receive a small part of the savings to carriers. The UTU members who don't lose their jobs to remote control will be given massively increased workloads and responsibilities for only 46 minutes of extra pay. After a short two year or

"Rail operating employees are paying a high price with their jobs and only receive a small part of the savings... The UTU members who don't lose their jobs to remote control will be given massively increased workloads and responsibilities for only 46 minutes of extra pay."

— BLE International President Don Hahs

so pay back to purchase the remote equipment, carriers will receive nearly 90 percent of the savings as corporate profits. It makes you wonder where are the UTU representatives who negotiated crew consist productivity funds and up front payments in the last round of operating job cuts?

"The remote control ruling may go down in infamy, just like the UTU's 1985 'Halloween Agreement.' Eighteen years later, operating employees still have not recovered from the devastating effects of the UTU's Halloween Agreement. I

shudder to think how many operating jobs will be lost 18 years after Friday's remote control ruling.

"The members of both organizations are sick and tired of the UTU leadership's spin on issues they create for their self-preservation that ultimately have a negative impact on workers.

The UTU has hardworking and honorable members who we hope will see through the spin and realize they will end up being the primary casualties of the remote control agreement."

BLE, Teamsters continue talks

Teamsters

Continued from Page 1

said. "Working with the Teamsters is a rewarding experience, and the BLE has already benefitted from the use of its magnanimous resources — legal, governmental affairs, organizing, research and strategic planning."

The Finance committee as well as the Constitution & Bylaws committee have meetings scheduled for the week of January 20. The Legislative Committee met the week of January 13, "and their work is almost concluded," President Hahs said.

President Hahs said that all members of the joint IBT-BLE committees are completely dedicated to reaching an agreement that is 100 percent supported by everyone on the negotiating teams.

"The difficulty in putting together a package like this is that it takes time," President Hahs said. "Each and every individual member of the joint committees is devoted to making sure we secure the best possible deal for our members, who will have the final say on whether or not we merge with the Teamsters."

President Hahs could not speak to the specifics of the negotiations, but said the BLE is looking to obtain an agreement that protects BLE autonomy

while allowing BLE to take advantage of the Teamsters' resources.

As the meetings are still in the drafting stage, the Chairmen of the Subcommittees agreed that all content of discussion should remain confidential.

"Negotiations are not complete," President Hahs said. "It would be inappropriate and unprofessional to report details of our negotiations until completed."

Once final documents are approved in accordance with Section 1 (e) of the BLE Constitution & Bylaws, they will be distributed to BLE members for ratification.

Arbitrator gives remote control to UTU; job losses to follow

Arbitration

Continued from Page 1

ing to U.S. railroads on October 22. Several other cities are considering similar measures.

"It is my belief that in order to ensure safety, each remote control assignment should have at least one federally certified locomotive engineer as a member of the crew."

President Hahs said today's ruling marked a sad day for railroad operating employees.

"The bottom line is that the biggest losers, unfortunately, are the very members both organizations represent," he said. "The BLE and UTU will lose one job on every assignment — period — for payment

of one hour and 32 minutes. There are no winners today as far as operating crews are concerned. The winners are rail management and the manufacturers of remote control devices."

President Hahs will promptly set up urgent meetings with the FRA and the National Carriers Conference Committee to press for resolution of BLE's safety concerns and other issues regarding this matter.

A copy of the January 10 ruling is available on the BLE website at: <http://www.ble.org/pr/pdf/rco011003.pdf>

For a list of recent remote control accidents and other information, please see: <http://www.ble.org/remotecontrol>. •

BLE files dissenting opinion in remote control arbitration

On January 16, BLE President Don Hahs filed his dissent to Chairman Gil Vernon's decision in the remote control arbitration case, Special Board of Adjustment No. 1141.

Vernon was the "neutral" member of the four-member Board, which also included President Hahs, NCCC Chairman Robert Allen and UTU President Byron Boyd.

The NCCC's Allen and the UTU's Boyd voted in favor of Vernon's decision. President Hahs' dissent made the final vote 3-1.

Hahs's dissent stated that the Chairman's decision was an "aberration" that was "fundamentally flawed."

"The carriers' common agreements with BLE have always been applied to require an engineer on every locomotive that moves cars and freight and to require the carriers to assign the operation of locomotives, regardless of the means of control, to locomotive engineers," President Hahs wrote. "As far back as 1944, the carriers and BLE expressed their

understanding in the so-called 'Diesel Agreements' that a locomotive consist could be operated from one cab by one engineer with one set of controls and that the 'duties and responsibilities of engineers' regardless of the size of a consist 'will not be assigned to others.' The operation of locomotives to move cars and freight is what those 'duties and responsibilities' have always been."

President Hahs also disputed Vernon's opinion that a computer or microprocessor had replaced or eliminated the duties of the engineer.

"This is not a situation where an employee's work has been eliminated by technology," President Hahs wrote. "The Board has mistakenly compared this situation to advances in radio telemetry and data input. This is a case where the carrier, under the guise of technological advancement, has assigned the actual duties and responsibilities of one craft to another."

President Hahs also said he was "appalled" at Vernon's dismissal of the many local agreements that were presented by BLE General Committees of Ad-

justment during the November 18 and 19 hearings.

Many of these local agreements were "manning" agreements stipulating that at least one locomotive engineer must be assigned to all train movements. In BLE's opinion, these agreements proved that the assignment of remote control work to other than engineers was a violation of the Brotherhood's collective bargaining agreements.

"Both BLE and the carriers made extensive filings on these issues and representatives of the General Committees of Adjustment orally argued their respective positions before the Board," President Hahs concluded. "For the Board to dismiss them (which the Board should not have done in any event) with a checklist of reasons, not even identifying the specific basis for which any agreement provision is being rejected, is both disgraceful and a disservice to the parties."

A copy of President Hahs' dissent is on the BLE website at: <http://www.ble.org/pr/pdf/dissent.pdf>. •

Shreveport bans remote control

Becomes third major U.S. city to ban remotes; City Council cites safety concerns

The city of Shreveport, La., became the third city in the United States to adopt legislation banning the use of remote control locomotives after a resolution passed by its City Council became effective on November 26.

The Shreveport City Council's resolution is similar to remote control locomotive safety measures already adopted in Baton Rouge, La., and Detroit, Mich. Other U.S. cities — including Greenup, Ky. — are also considering similar public safety regulations.

On December 2, the city of Marysville, Mich., adopted a resolution which did not ban remote control trains, but asked the Federal Railroad Administration to adopt enforceable regulations governing their operation (see article below for more details).

The Shreveport City Council adopted a resolution on November 12 — that became effective November 26 — outlawing the operation of remote control locomotives until certain safety considerations are met.

The Shreveport City Council resolved that those safety considerations are:

- Any railroad operating a remote control locomotive must notify the Office of Mayor before implementing such operations.

- Remote control locomotives cannot be used to transport hazardous materials, switch cars containing hazardous materials, or switch other cars on or near tracks occupied by hazardous materials.

- Remote control locomo-

tives cannot be operated over a public or private highway rail crossing without a person occupying the cab of the locomotive who has the required skills to stop the locomotive and its attached equipment.

- A railroad must provide effective and reliable protection at the point of movement in any location accessible to the general public for any remote control operation.

The resolution also asks the FRA to pass comprehensive and enforceable regulations governing the operation of remote control locomotives.

Michael F. O'Brien, Chairman of the Louisiana State Legislative Board, played a major role in passage of remote control safety legislation in Baton Rouge and Shreveport. He recognized the assistance of: BLE General Chairman Sam Parker, Kansas City Southern; Tim Windsor and Rodney Stutes, members of the BLE Mobilization Team; Bob Harvey, Regulatory Research Coordinator of the BLE's Washington D.C. Headquarters; Clifton Starks, President of BLE Division 599 (Shreveport, La.); and "everyone who has taken pictures and/or supplied written documented accounts of remote control locomotive incidents on the KCS and other carrier properties."

"Without this information available for presentation, I doubt that a serious argument could have been made regarding the safety issues associated with remote controlled locomotives in either Shreveport or Baton Rouge," Brother O'Brien said. •

Resolution No. 165 of 2002,

introduced by Councilman Roy Burrell and voted Ayes-6, Nays-0, Absent-1 Adopted by City Council on November 12, 2002, Approved by Mayor on November 18, 2002 and effective on November 26, 2002 at 12:01 O'clock A.M.

A RESOLUTION PROVIDING THAT NO RAILROAD SHALL OPERATE REMOTE CONTROLLED LOCOMOTIVES WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF SHREVEPORT UNTIL CERTAIN SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS ARE MET AND TO OTHERWISE PROVIDE WITH RESPECT THERETO.

Whereas: The City of Shreveport has a duty to provide for the public safety of its Citizens; and

Whereas: Railroads operate within the geographic boundaries of Shreveport, over public and private highway rail crossings; over and around Cross Lake and other public water supplies, and on property accessible to persons of all ages and abilities; and

Whereas: Railroad equipment is known to present significant danger to persons and property from collision, derailment, and possible release of hazardous materials; and

Whereas: a significant bulk of Kansas City Southern (KCS) Railroad's cargo is petrochemical and hazardous materials traveling through and being switched in Shreveport; and

Whereas: the United States government has issued a safety alert against vandalism and terrorists threats to railroads;

NOW, THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Shreveport, that no railroad shall operate remote controlled locomotives within the boundaries of Shreveport until all of the following safety considerations are met.

1. Any railroad operating a remote control locomotive must notify the Office of Mayor before implementing such operations.

2. Remote control locomotives cannot be used to transport hazardous materials, switch cars containing hazardous materials, or switch other cars on or near tracks occupied by hazardous materials.

3. Remote control locomotives cannot be operated over a public or private highway rail crossing without a person occupying the cab of the locomotive who has the required skills to stop the locomotive and its attached equipment.

4. A railroad must provide effective and reliable protection at the point of movement in any location accessible to the general public for any remote control operation.

Be It Further Resolved, That the City of Shreveport requests that in the interest of the safety of the Citizens of Shreveport that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) develop comprehensive regulations for the use of remote control locomotives.

Be It Further Resolved, that all remote control operations in Shreveport cease and desist until such time as the City of Shreveport, its agent, or assignee can study and have a plan in place for evacuation before such remote control is implemented.

Be It Further Resolved, that if any item or provision of this resolution or the application thereof is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions, items or applications of this resolution which can be given effect without the invalid provisions, item or applications and to this end the provisions of this resolution are hereby declared severable.

Be It Further Resolved, that all resolutions or parts thereof in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Marysville, Mich., passes remote control safety resolution

Fourth U.S. city asks FRA to adopt enforceable guidelines to regulate remote control trains

The City Council of Marysville, Mich., unanimously adopted a resolution calling for improved federal safety regulations to govern the operation of remote control locomotives.

The December 2 resolution asks the Federal Railroad Administration to, "conduct a comprehensive and thorough review of the safety of remote control locomotives and develop comprehensive regulations for the use of remote control locomotives..."

The City Council cited its duty to provide for the public safety of its citizens as well as a U.S. Department of Transportation warning about possible terrorist attacks on passenger and freight railroads as reasons for adopting the resolution, according to BLE

Michigan State Legislative Board Chairman Greg Powell, who worked with the Metro Detroit Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO, to have similar legislation adopted by the City Council of Detroit, Mich.

Like Marysville, city councils in Baton Rouge, La., Shreveport, La., and Detroit, Mich., have adopted similar — but more strict — resolutions, which also ask the FRA to adopt comprehensive regulations to govern the operation of remote control locomotives. The Baton Rouge, Shreveport and Detroit city councils, however, called for an outright ban of remote control trains and specifically asked railroad companies to refrain from operating remote control trains within city limits until certain

safety requirements have been met.

Several other U.S. cities are also considering similar resolutions to ban remote control locomotives.

The resolution, No. 32-02, reads as follows:

WHEREAS, the City of Marysville has a duty to provide for the public safety of its Citizens; and

WHEREAS, railroad equipment, including the use of remote control locomotives, is known to present significant danger to persons and property from collision, derailment, and possible release of hazardous materials; and

WHEREAS, the United States Government has issued a safety alert against vandalism and terroristic threats against railroads;

WHEREAS, the City desires to give additional instruction and direction to the City Manager;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Marysville requests that in the interest of the safety of the Citizens of the City of Marysville that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) conduct a comprehensive and thorough review of the safety of remote control locomotives and develop comprehensive regulations for the use of remote control locomotives to ensure the safety and well-being of the citizens of Marysville will not be jeopardized by the use of such devices. •

BLE SCHOLARSHIPS

Railroad Craft Scholarship Foundation deadline is May 1

The Railroad Craft Scholarship Foundation (formerly known as the Joint Craft Scholarship) is now available through the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers to college-bound children of all railroad operating crafts.

"To my knowledge this is the only scholarship program that covers all craft lines and is available on any railroad," said John D. Mullen, a member of BLE Division 500 (Cleburne, Texas).

The scholarships are available to children of employees working on any

railroad represented by any railroad union currently covered under the Federal Employers' Liability Act. It provides financial aid to children of active, retired, or deceased railroad employees who would be unable to attend college without financial assistance.

Established in 1995 by Brother Mullen and other dedicated BLE members, the Railroad Craft Scholarship Foundation has awarded dozens of scholarships over the past seven years.

Intended to provide financial assistance

to children who otherwise wouldn't be able to attend college, the scholarship offers several awards ranging from \$500 to \$1,000.

"There are no stipulations if you are already attending college or are just starting out," Mullen said. "The Committee focuses more on the applicant's financial need rather than his or her academic performance."

Completed applications must be received by May 1, 2003. Applications will be reviewed and award winners deter-

mined by the Railroad Craft Scholarship Foundation's Board of Directors at their annual meeting in May of each year.

For an application packet, please contact:

John D. Mullen
Railroad Craft
Scholarship Foundation
2609 S. Chase
Burleson, Texas 76028
e-mail:
j.d.mullen@worldnet.att.net

SMA Scholarships

The Southeastern Meeting Association (SMA) Scholarship Committee annually awards the Geiger-Brendle Scholarships to children of active or retired BLE members whose divisions participate in SMA.

Check with your division secretary-treasurer to ensure your division participates. The SMA includes divisions located in states east of the Mississippi River, and south of the Ohio River and the Mason-Dixon Line.

The SMA scholarship application deadline varies from year to year.

Winners are usually selected at the SMA's annual business meeting held during the convention, which will be June 15-20, 2003.

For an application, see your division officers or write:

Ronald L. Perkins
SMA Sec.-Treas.
505 Chautauqua Avenue
Portsmouth, VA 23707

SWCM Scholarships

The Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWCM) awards approximately two dozen scholarships annually, according to SWCM Scholarship Committee Sec.-Treas. Leo Srubas.

Applicants must be the child of an active, retired or deceased BLE member whose division belongs to the Southwestern Convention Meeting. Applicants must be accepted for admission to an accredited college, university or institution of higher learning. Only divisions belonging to the SWCM are eligible.

The SWCM will begin distributing and accepting scholarship applications in March. Winners are announced at the SWCM's annual convention, which will be Sept. 28-Oct. 2, 2003. For details or an application, write:

Leo Srubas
SWCM Scholarship Sec.-Treas.
5005 Georgia
Kansas City, KS 66104

EUMA Scholarships

The Eastern Union Meeting Association awards \$1,000 scholarships each year based on academic excellence and financial need.

Only children of members (living or deceased) belonging to divisions participating in the EUMA are eligible to apply. Division must be square on the books for the child to qualify.

States represented in EUMA are Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Washington D.C.

Scholarship award winners are announced during the annual EUMA convention, which will be held June 29-July 3.

Completed application should be sent to:

Gary J. Brink, EUMA Sec.-Treas.
12 Kellogg Ave.
Port Jervis, NY 12771
Application forms can be found at:
<http://www.ble.org/pr/pdf/eumasch.pdf>

Applications due April 1 for GIA, joint GIA-IWC scholarships

The Grand International Auxiliary (GIA) to the BLE offers \$1,000 scholarships annually to help the children of BLE and GIA members realize their goals in life.

There are two very strict guidelines that must be met in order to be eligible.

First, the applicant must

be a son or daughter of both a GIA and BLE member (living or deceased), with each being a member for at least two years.

Second, the applicant must be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in an accredited university, college, or school of higher learning.

The GIA also offers a joint

scholarship program for children of members participating in the International Western Convention (IWC). This covers Divisions and Auxiliaries in the following states and provinces: Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and portions of northern Ontario (such as Thunder Bay and Sioux Lookout). Applicants for the GIA-

IWC scholarship must have a parent participating in the IWC.

In order to continue to be eligible for the GIA-IWC scholarship beyond the first quarter and/or semester, the recipient must maintain satisfactory academic status. If the applicant is a graduate student or returning to school as a sophomore, junior or senior, he or she must have a 3.0 grade point average or better to be considered. Finally, the applicant

must have been accepted to an accredited school. Deadline for the GIA as well as the GIA-IWC joint scholarships is usually April 1 of each year.

Applications are available through your local GIA auxiliary or BLE division. Members-at-large may obtain applications by contacting:

Anita J. Caruso
GIA International Sec'y.
3341 S. 112th Street
Omaha, NE 68144-4709
Phone: (402) 330-6348

BLE Divisions offer assistance

• **BLE Division 269 (Jamaica, Long Island, N.Y.)** offers two \$500 scholarships to the children of BLE members who are already enrolled in college. Participation is limited to members of Division 269 only.

Winners are picked at random in a raffle held at the division's Christmas party. For details, watch your Division 269 newsletter or contact General Chairman Bob Evers at (516) 932-7130.

• Two \$250 scholarships are available to children of BLE members in **Division 57 (Boston, Mass.)**.

The scholarships are awarded to college-bound high school seniors, and will be awarded based on their score on a labor history exam, administered by the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, said Division 57 S-T Walter H. Nutter.

By taking the exam, students also

become eligible for eight more scholarships through the Massachusetts AFL-CIO. While the Division 57 scholarship is limited to children of that division's members, the general Massachusetts AFL-CIO scholarship competition is open to children of all BLE members living in Massachusetts. The deadline for these scholarships is early January.

For further details, contact Brother Nutter at: 92 A North Main St., North Grafton, Mass. 01536, phone: (508) 259-9957, or: whnutter@yahoo.com.

Information is also available on the Division's website: <www.ble57.org>.

• **BLE Division 11 (New York, N.Y.)** awards a one-time \$500 scholarship annually to a child of any active member of Division 11 who pays local dues each month. Children who win are not eligible again. The deadline is the Division's June meeting.

For details, contact Division 11 S-T J.J. Raia, at 20 East Drive, Edison, N.J. 08820, (732) 396-9076, or e-mail: jjjob80@ix.netcom.com. •

BR&CF sets March 3 deadline Luther G. Smith scholarships

The Brotherhood's Relief and Compensation Fund (BR&CF) sponsors the Luther G. Smith Scholarship Program. Applications are available only to the children, stepchildren and adopted children, age 27 and younger, of active BR&CF members who are in "Good and Regular Standing," as defined by the BR&CF Constitution.

Financial aid is provided to winners of the Luther G. Smith Scholarships for so long as they maintain continuous post-secondary education at an academic level of not less than 3.0 (4.0 scale), or the equivalent, until they achieve the degree level sought at the time of the initial scholarship award. Aid is provided

to awardees for the period in which they would normally be expected to complete their degree, not to exceed four years.

BR&CF President R.J. Myers reports that the deadline for receipt of applications and the required documentation is March 3, 2003.

If you have any questions, please contact Nita Saultz of the BR&CF at (800) 233-7080. For more details, you can visit the BR&CF website at www.brcf.org, or write:

Brotherhood's Relief & Compensation Fund
2150 Linglestown Road
Harrisburg, PA 17110

CANADIAN SPOTLIGHT

Division 898 honors one of its own, Harry Home

(BLE Editor's Note: The following letter to the editor and photograph were received by the BLE International Division on January 9, 2003.)

Dear Editor,

I would like to take this opportunity to celebrate the career of one of Division 898's Honorary members, Harry R. J. Home.

Harry followed in his father's footsteps and hired on the Canadian National Railway in the signal department in Boston Bar, British Columbia, in 1949.

In 1953, Harry transferred to the shops department in Jasper, Alberta. It was in Jasper that Harry would eventually become a fireman, locomotive engineer, husband and father. Harry became a member of Division 898 (Lucerne) in 1962. It was soon after that when Harry began to serve the members of Division 898. He served as Local Chairman from 1975 to 1985. He finished his service to the division as Vice President in 1997. During this time

Harry also served the community of Jasper, holding various elected positions on the local School Board. He also served as a Board Member on the Alberta Resources Railway (ARR).

But what Harry may be best known for is his efforts and dedication to restore and operate the Mountain-type 4-8-2 steam locomotive, 6060. It was Harry who saved the 6060 from the scrap heap in 1960 when CNR switched over to diesels.

Harry has been frustrated (but has not given up) in his efforts to run the 6060 on regular excursions out of Jasper. He was able to bring it to Jasper for a major overhaul in 1986. He then ran it to Vancouver's Steam Expo in May 1986, pulling 10 loaded grain hoppers. He ran it back the next year in a trip which also featured the Royal Hudson double heading 14 loaded passenger coaches.

The 6060 made its latest trip to Jasper last year, where it was the main attraction in a celebration of Jasper's railway heritage put on by Parks

Canada. The 6060, owned and operated by The Rocky Mountain Rail Society, continues to run excursions out of Stettler, Alberta. During the summer months, the 6060 runs excursions with Alberta Prairie Steam Tours.

Between trips to Stettler, he can be found in Jasper fussing over the 6060 in preparation of the next run up to Big Valley. Brother Home retired from CNR in 1998 and continues to live in Jasper, with his wife Edna.

In October of 2002, Harry was honoured by being inducted into the "Heroes" category of the Canadian Railway Hall of Fame. This year he will be honoured further when CNR renames the station "Jasper West" to "Home."

The members of Division 898 wish to congratulate Harry for his achievements and all take special pride in calling out, "Clear to Home."

Fraternally,

Brian Nesbitt,
President, Division 898
Jasper, Alberta, Canada •



Brother Home and his "baby," the 6060.
Confrère Home et son "bébé", le 6060.

Division 898 honore un des siens, Harry Home

Cher Éditeur,

J'aimerais prendre l'opportunité de célébrer la carrière d'un des membres honoraires de la Division 898, Harry R. J. Home.

Harry a suivi les traces de son père et fut embauché par le Canadien National dans le Service des signaux à Boston Bar, Colombie-Britannique en 1949.

En 1953, Harry a transféré dans les ateliers à Jasper, Alberta. C'est à Jasper que Harry est devenu éventuellement un aide-mécanicien, un ingénieur de locomotives, un mari et un père.

Harry est devenu membre de la Division 898 (Lucerne) en 1962. C'est peu de temps après que Harry a commencé à servir les membres de la Division 898. Il a été Président local de 1975 à 1985. Il a terminé son service à la division comme vice-président en 1997. Durant ce temps, Harry a aussi desservi la communauté de Jasper, en détenant divers postes au Conseil scolaire local. Il a aussi été membre du Comité du « Alberta Resource Railway » (ARR).

Mais Harry a certainement été reconnu surtout par ses efforts et son grand dévouement à restaurer et manœuvrer le

train à vapeur 6060 du genre Mountain 4-8-2 pour des excursions régulières à l'extérieur de Jasper. Il a été capable de l'amener à Jasper en 1986 pour une remise en état majeure. Il l'a ensuite amené à Vancouver pour le « Steam Expo » en mai 1986, tirant 10 trémies chargées. Il l'a aussi ramené l'année suivante dans un voyage qui mettait en vedette 14 wagons à double traction Royal Hudson bondés de passagers.

Le 6060 a effectué son dernier voyage à Jasper l'an passé, où il a été l'attraction principale lors d'une célébration du Jasper's rail-

way heritage parrainé par Parcs Canada. Le 6060, propriété et opéré par The Rocky Mountain Rail Society, continue de faire des excursions hors de Stettler, Alberta. Pendant les mois d'été, le 6060 fait des excursions pour le Alberta Prairie Stream Tours.

Entre les voyages à Stettler, on peut le trouver à Jasper à traiter aux petits soins le 6060 en préparation au prochain voyage à Big Valley. Confrère Home a pris sa retraite du CN en 1998 et continue à vivre à Jasper avec son épouse Edna.

En Octobre 2002, Harry a

été honoré en étant intronisé au Canadian Railway Hall of Fame dans la catégorie des Héros. Cette année, il sera aussi honoré lorsque CN renommera la Gare « Jasper West » à « Home ».

Les membres de la Division 898 aimeraient féliciter Harry pour ses accomplissements et soyez tous fier d'appeler « Clear to Home ».

Fraternellement,

Brian Nesbitt
Président, Division 898
Jasper, Alberta, Canada •

NEWS BRIEFS

Paul Tellier leaves CN; Harrison new President & CEO

On December 13, Canadian National's board of directors announced the appointment of E. Hunter Harrison as CN's new president and chief executive officer, effective Jan. 1, 2003.

Harrison replaces Paul M. Tellier as CN's president and chief executive officer. Tellier

is leaving CN after 10 years to become president and chief executive officer of Bombardier Inc.

Harrison, 58, has served as CN's executive vice-president and chief operating officer since March 1998 and joined the company's board of directors on Dec. 6, 1999. Between 1993 and 1998 Harrison was president and chief executive officer of Illinois Central Corp. (IC) and the Illinois Central Railroad Co. (ICRR), and a director of both IC and ICRR. •

CN re-aligns U.S. divisions

Effective Jan. 1, Canadian National re-aligned its organizational structure. CN's Midwest Division includes the former Wisconsin Central, all CN operations in Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio, trackage in northern Minnesota, those parts of CN's Illinois operations north of Chicago, as well as most operations in Chicago itself. CN's Gulf Division in-

cludes all operations in Illinois west and south of Chicago, and all trackage and operations in Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Iowa and Nebraska. •

Norwalk virus fears stall Via Rail train

A VIA Rail passenger train en route to Toronto was stalled in Winnipeg for hours on January 7 when workers refused to board, fearing they may have

been exposed to the highly contagious Norwalk virus.

The train, carrying 143 passengers from Vancouver, made a stop in the city about 1 p.m. and two people got off complaining of symptoms.

VIA employees, represented by the CAW, refused to get back on board until the train could be tested for the virus. After officials checked the sick passengers, the train was given a clean bill of health. It pulled out of the station about 6 p.m. local time. •

RETIREMENT NEWS

Railroad Retirement annuity increases

Most railroad retirement annuities, like social security benefits, increased in January 2003 as the result of a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). However, almost all of those widow(er)s' annuities being paid under legislation enacted in December 2001 did not increase for the COLA. The following questions and answers provide information on the recent COLA and how it affected railroad retirement annuities.

1. When and how are COLAs calculated in railroad retirement and social security benefits?

COLAs are calculated in both the tier I and tier II benefits included in a railroad retirement annuity. These increases, effective December 1 and included in the January payment, are triggered under both the railroad retirement and social security programs when the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rises during the 12 months ending the previous September 30. Under certain circumstances, the increase can be based on average national wage increases rather than price increases. Generally, tier I benefits increase by the full amount of the rise in the CPI, while tier II benefits increase by 32.5% of the CPI rise. The vested dual benefit payments and supplemental annuities paid by the Railroad Retirement Board are not adjusted for the CPI rise.

2. How did the COLA payable in January 2003 affect most railroad retirement annuities?

Tier I benefits, like social security benefits, increased by 1.4 percent, which was the percentage of the CPI rise. Tier II benefits increased by 0.5 percent, which was 32.5 percent of the CPI rise.

Consequently, in January 2003, the average regular railroad retirement employee annuity increased \$17 a month to \$1,548 and the average of combined benefits for an employee and spouse increased \$23 a month to \$2,200. For aged widow(er)s whose annuities are not computed under the December 2001 legislation, the average annuity increased \$10 a month to \$820. For those beneficiaries covered by Medicare, the basic Part B premium generally deducted from monthly benefits increased from \$54 to \$58.70 in 2003.

3. Why did the railroad retirement widow(er)s' annuities that were either increased or awarded in 2002 under the recent legislation not increase for the COLA?

The Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-90), enacted on December 21, 2001, among other provisions, provided increased benefits for some widow(er)s through a new formula for computing their annuities. However, widow(er)s' annuities computed under this new formula are not increased for COLAs until the amount payable under prior law plus interim COLAs, exceeds the amount payable under the new law.

Under prior law, the widow(er)'s tier I benefit, before any reductions for early retirement or other benefits, was generally equal to the unreduced tier I benefit the deceased employee had, or would have, received; and a widow(er)'s tier II benefit was generally equal to 50 percent of the tier II benefit that was payable to the employee at the time of his or her death.

The new law established an "initial minimum amount" which yields, in effect, a widow(er)'s tier II benefit equal to the tier II benefit the employee would have received at the time of the award of the widow(er)'s annuity, minus any applicable age reduction. It does this by adding a "guaranty amount," initially set at 50 percent of the employee's tier II, to the 100 percent tier I and 50 percent tier II benefits provided under prior law.

This guaranty amount will be reduced each year by the dollar amount of the COLAs payable in both the tier I and tier II benefits provided under prior law. Consequently, until such time as the guaranty amount is reduced to zero, the amount of a widow(er)'s annuity paid under the new law will not increase for the COLA.

4. What would be a very basic example of how this formula works?

Assume that a 68 year-old widow became entitled in June 2002 to a railroad retirement widow's annuity. The widow is not entitled to any social security benefits. The employee had been receiving a railroad retirement annuity of \$2,000 a month, comprised of a tier I benefit of \$1,200 and a tier II benefit of \$800. Consequently, the widow's tier I benefit on her annuity beginning date was \$1,200. Her tier II benefit under prior law (50 percent of the employee's tier II) was \$400; and, under the new law, her "guaranty amount" was \$400. Her railroad retirement widow's annuity as of June 2002 was \$2,000.

As the COLA payable in January 2003 provided a 1.4 percent increase in tier I benefits and a 0.5 percent increase in tier II benefits, the total dollar amount increase was \$18. This amount is deducted from the \$400 guaranty amount, reducing it to \$382, so that the \$2,000 amount payable to the widow (before any deduction for the

Part B Medicare premium) does not change. The amount payable to the widow will increase only when the tier I and tier II amounts computed under prior law with subsequent COLAs exceed \$2,000. The average COLA paid over the last

10 years, including the COLA payable in January 2003, was 2.4 percent. If all future COLAs were at a steady 2.4 percent rate, this would occur with the COLA payable in January 2014.

5. What if the widow(er) is also entitled to social security benefits?

Widow(er)s' tier I benefits continue to be reduced for entitlement to social security, certain public service pensions and dual railroad retirement entitlement. However, while widow(er)s' railroad retirement annuities will be reduced by subsequent social security and applicable public service pension COLAs, the total amount of combined benefits will not decrease from the total payable before the COLA.

6. What would be a very basic example of how this would work?

Assume that a 67 year-old widow became entitled in June 2002 to a railroad retirement widow's annuity. The employee had been receiving a railroad retirement annuity of \$1,500 a month, comprised of a tier I benefit of \$900 and a tier II benefit of \$600. This widow's tier I benefit on her annuity beginning date (and before any dual benefit reduction) was \$900. Her tier II benefit under prior law (50 percent of the employee's tier II) was \$300; and, under the new law, her "guaranty amount" was \$300. Her widow's initial minimum amount on her annuity beginning date (before any reduction for dual benefits) was \$1,500. The widow is also entitled to a social security benefit, based on her own earnings, of \$1,100 a month.

Thus, at the time her railroad retirement widow's annuity began, her net annuity was \$600 and her total combined social security and railroad retirement benefits were \$1,700.

After the 1.4 percent increase in tier I and social security benefits and the 0.5 percent increase in tier II benefits, the total dollar amount of this widow's tier I and tier II benefit increase would be \$13.50. This amount is subtracted from the \$300 guaranty amount, reducing it to \$286.50. In this case, tier I is not actually payable because it is reduced to zero for the social security benefit. The guaranty amount is reduced by the tier I and tier II cost of living increases, not the social security increase. Her net railroad retirement widow's annuity (before any deduction for the Part B Medicare premium) would be \$588 (her increased tier II of \$301.50 plus the reduced guaranty amount of \$286.50). However, the total amount of the combined benefits payable rose to \$1,703 because her social security benefit was increased by the 1.4 percent COLA to \$1,115.

7. When was this provision effective and to which widow(er)s did it apply?

This provision was effective February 1, 2002, and was not payable retroactively.

The provision applied to widow(er)s on the rolls before the effective date only if the annuity the widow(er) was receiving was less than she or he would have received had the new law been in effect on the date the widow(er)'s annuity began. Most of the widow(er)s' annuities being paid were already higher than the annuity that would have been payable under the new law because of previous COLAs.

8. Did the Railroad Retirement Board notify affected widow(er)s that they would not see a COLA in their January payments?

There are almost 50,000 widow(er)s on the Railroad Retirement Board's benefit rolls whose annuities were either awarded or recomputed under the new law. The Board released letters in November to these individuals advising them that their monthly payments would not change. The only change in their monthly payments would be due to changes in the amount of their Federal income tax withholding, their Part B Medicare premium, or increases in their social security benefit or public service pension.

In addition, in late December all annuitants received letters from the Board providing a breakdown of the annuity rates payable to them in January 2003. •

Early retirement plan increases lifetime maximum

The lifetime maximum benefit for each individual covered under the Railroad Employees National Early Retirement Major Medical Benefit Plan (United HealthCare's Policy GA-46000) is adjusted each year based on the medical cost component of the Consumer Price Index.

In the first year of this new provision enacted to coincide with the changes in Railroad Retirement, the lifetime maximum benefit was increased to \$79,000. As of January 1, 2003, this maximum will increase again from \$79,000 to \$84,000. The \$5,100

in additional benefits payable applies to expenses incurred on or after January 1, 2003.

An important consideration for individuals thinking about retirement is health coverage after retirement. The information below summarizes the requirements under the new legislation.

ELIGIBILITY RULES

For Age Annuitants:

- You apply for a 60/30 annuity for which you are eligible;
- On or after the date you reach age 60, or

- Anytime during the three months before your 60th birthday, provided you continue working into the month before the month in which you turn age 60.

- On the day before you apply for your annuity, you must be covered (other than under COBRA) under the Railroad Employees National Health and Welfare Plan.

For Disability Annuitants:

- You have a current connection with the railroad industry.

IBT/BLE score organizing win

Joint organizing effort leads to victory for Iowa, Chicago & Eastern employees

The joint International Brotherhood of Teamsters/Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers Rail Operating Employees' Council scored its first-ever organizing victory on the Iowa, Chicago & Eastern Railroad (IC&E).

Approximately 300 workers will now enjoy union representation as a result of the IBT/BLE organizing victory, the results of which were announced by the National Mediation Board on December 17.

"We look forward to working with management to obtain a fair and equitable agreement for the employees," BLE President Don Hahs said. "It's our goal to develop a positive relationship that will be beneficial to both our members and the company."

President Hahs thanked the International Broth-



erhood of Teamsters, IBT/BLE Organizers Tom Miller and Jim Bradford, and local Teamsters for their efforts in the successful organizing drive. Brother Miller thanked the BLE's Education & Training Department, the BLE International Division, and the IC&E employees for choosing union representation.

"This victory clearly demonstrates the strength our unions have by working together," said James P. Hoffa, Teamsters General President. "We look forward to continuing our relationship with the BLE."

President Hoffa thanked Teamster Local 41 in Kansas City, Mo., and Teamster Local 371 in Rock Island, Ill., for their efforts.

On November 18 in Davenport, Iowa, the joint IBT/IBLE Rail Operating Employees' Council held its first-ever rally. Two large Teamster trucks — one from Chicago and one from Indianapolis — served as rally headquarters for the IBT/BLE representatives. The

trucks were parked at two separate locations in the Quad Cities area and served as a rallying point for IC&E employees as they reported for work.

In July, the Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad (DM&E) purchased the I&M Rail Link (also known as IMRL) and changed its name to the Iowa, Chicago & Eastern Railroad. In doing so, the company abolished union representation.

The DM&E, which owns 1,100 miles of track, purchased the IMRL, which owned 1,400 miles of track, for a reported \$150 million. The former IMRL tracks connect the Twin Cities, Chicago and Kansas City. DM&E is in the process of upgrading its system to carry coal from Wyoming's Powder River Basin across South Dakota and southern Minnesota. •



Russian trade unionists meet with BLE

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers hosted a delegation of trade unionists from Russia on December 12.

The union members from various trades came to the United States as part of a program conducted jointly by the Solidarity Center, AFL-CIO and the U.S. State Department. Among the nine visitors was a top official of the Russian Railway Workers' Union, Sergey Linev Larinov. Brother Larinov is the Chairman of the Russian Trade Union of Railway Locomotive Brigades and was a working locomotive engineer before assuming this position.

The other eight participants include top leaders from the airlines and air transport, trucking, teachers, construction and natural gas unions.

They visited the BLE to learn about labor-management relations in the railroad industry and the role of the Federal Railroad Administration. In addition to the BLE, they also visited several other AFL-CIO affiliated unions.

Members of the delegation requested a site tour of a railroad facility while in Cleveland. Brother Larry James of BLE Division 284 arranged a visit to the CSX Collinwood Yard and diesel repair facility. He worked with Brother Mo Morrow of the BLE Executive Staff to coordinate the visit. Brother James also serves as the BLE/CSX System Labor Liason.

During their time in Cleveland, they took a tour of CSX's Collinwood rail yard and the



From left: Sergey Linev Larinov meets with BLE President Don Hahs. Brother Larinov is Chairman of the Russian Trade Union of Railway Locomotive Brigades.

Cleveland Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO.

The State Department sponsored the financial aspects of their visit and the Solidarity Center coordinated their professional studies while in the U.S. •



Members of the Russian delegation at CSX's Collinwood Yard in Cleveland. Brother Larry James (kneeling, far right) arranged the visit and worked with Brother Mo Morrow (kneeling, far left) of the BLE Executive Staff to coordinate everything. Standing, far right, is George Merkuloff, a diesel shop employee who served as the delegation's tour guide. He speaks fluent Russian.

Make your reservations early for upcoming International Western Convention!

BLE and GIA members looking to get a head start on summer plans may wish to consider making reservations now for the 63rd Annual International Western Convention in Sparks, Nevada (June 1-5, 2003).

Jeffrey Valentine is hosting "IWC, 2003 — Sparks," which will be held at John Ascuaga's Nugget Hotel & Casino in Sparks.

For reservations, call (800) 648-1177 and ask for the IWC room rate, or identify yourself as a BLE member (in Reno/Sparks, please call: 356-3300). A room rate of \$89 per night has been secured from May 30 through June 7. For more information, members may also visit the John Ascuaga's Nugget website at: <www.janugget.com>.

Activities include a golf tournament at The Re-

sort at Squaw Creek, a Robert Trent Jones designed course in the High Sierras, a bus trip to Virginia City, America's largest historical landmark, and a dinner/dance sunset cruise aboard the MS Dixie on Lake Tahoe.

Those wishing to contact Chairman Valentine may do so by phone by calling (775) 857-2013, or by e-mail: <jval@accutek.com>. •

Lifetime Maximum

Continued from Page 6

- You have applied for a disability annuity to which you are entitled.
- You are covered under the Railroad Employees National Health and Welfare Plan (other than by COBRA) on the day before the latest of the following dates:

- The date you reach age 60
- The date you became disabled

- The date your railroad service equals 30 years

In addition to the changes in eligibility rules, the lifetime maximum under GA-46— will be adjusted each year by the medical cost component of the Consumer Price Index. The lifetime maximum for 2003 will be \$84,100.

If you retire and are eligible for GA-46000, you can also purchase supplemental coverage under GA-23111, Plan E. Generally, Plan E pays 70% of the expenses not paid under GA-46000 and

has a lifetime maximum of \$200,000.

When you retire, your railroad will not report you to United Healthcare as a retiree eligible for GA-46-000. You must enroll yourself and your family with United Healthcare. You can do this in two ways:

- You can purchase GA-23111, Plan E. Your eligibility for GA-46000 will be verified when your enrollment for that coverage is processed. ID cards for both GA-46000 and GA-23111 will be sent to you. A booklet explaining the Plan E

benefits and an Enrollment form can be obtained by calling United Healthcare.

- You can complete and return the "Retiree and Dependent Information" form found in the center of the GA-46000 employee booklet. Your eligibility will be verified and a GA-46000 ID card will be sent to you. You can obtain a GA-46000 booklet from your employer or union representative.

If you have any questions about this, call United Healthcare at (800) 842-5252. •

BLE NEWS

Update regarding \$2,000 death benefit

New contact information for families of CN/IC-CC&P employees

BLE General Chairman John Koonce provided updated information for BLE members on the CN/IC-CC&P properties regarding the \$2,000 MetLife death benefit announced in the December 2002 issue of the *Locomotive Engineer Newsletter*.

Effective June 3, 2002 all CN/IC-CC&P Engineers were covered under the new CN health and welfare plan and no longer by national handling under United HealthCare.

Employees on these properties who passed away before June 3, 2002, are covered under the MetLife plan (see below). Employees who pass away on or after June 3, 2002, will be covered under the CN/IC-CC&P plan and the \$2,000 death benefit will be paid by CN.

Those covered by the Canadian National health and welfare agreement who seek to file a claim on or after June 3, 2002, should contact:

Nancy Cline
Manager, Benefits-CN/IC
455 North Cityfront Plaza Drive,
Floor 19
Chicago, IL 60611
Phone: (312) 755-7759

In the December 2002 issue of the *Newsletter*, it was reported that MetLife Insurance Company had initiated an "outreach" program to identify surviving family members of deceased railroad employees who may be eligible for \$2,000 in unclaimed funds.

Surviving family members of retired railroad employees who died between 1964 and 2001 may be entitled to receive the \$2,000 life insurance benefit.

MetLife identified the BLE as one of 20 unions representing eligible railroad workers.

Certain retired employees of participating railroads may have been covered under group life insurance policies issued to the Health and Welfare Plan of the nation's railroads and the Railway Labor Organizations. The amount of the coverage is \$2,000.00 per

MetLife Railroad Operations Center
(800) 310-7770
P.O. Box 6122
Utica, NY 13504-6122

insured. However, the intended beneficiary may not have filed a claim for benefits, and thus, no claim would have been processed.

If you believe that you may be eligible for benefits or have information regarding individuals who may be eligible, please contact MetLife's Railroad Operations Center at (800) 310-7770. Proof of eligibility (including proof of death) will be necessary to process each claim and MetLife will make all claim determinations. MetLife representatives will answer your questions and, if appropriate, assist you in filing a claim.

Potential individual beneficiaries who contact the toll free MetLife number will be routed to a dedicated service team that will begin a process of verifying the railroad employees' eligibility and expediting the claim adjudication process. The address for submitting claims is as follows:

MetLife Railroad Operations Center
P.O. Box 6122
Utica, NY 13504-6122

MetLife's "outreach" program is the result of a federal lawsuit brought by the State of Kansas against MetLife Insurance Company, filed in February 2002. As a result of the decision rendered on or about October 9, 2002, MetLife agreed initiate an Outreach Program to handle claims for railroad retiree survivors who were unaware of a \$2,000.00 death benefit covered under the Railroad Employees National Health and Welfare Plan. •

JANUARY 2003 CALENDAR & EVENTS

JUNE 1-5, 2003... 63rd Annual International Western Convention in Sparks, Nevada
 Jeffrey Valentine welcomes BLE and GIA members to Sparks, Nevada, for the 2003 International Western Convention. The 63rd annual IWC will be held at John Ascuaga's Nugget Hotel & Casino in Sparks. For reservations, call (800) 648-1177 and ask for the IWC room rate, or identify yourself as a BLE member. A room rate of \$89 per night has been secured from May 30 through June 7. More details to come when available. Those wishing to contact Chairman Valentine may do so by phone, (775) 857-2013, or by e-mail, <jval@accutek.com>.

JUNE 15-20, 2003... 76th Annual Southeastern Meeting Association in Pigeon Forge, Tenn
 Chairman W.M. "Bill" Overton and the members of BLE Division 239 (Knoxville, Tenn.) will host the 2003 SMA at the Grand Resort Hotel & Convention Center in Pigeon Forge, Tenn. (hotel website: www.grandresorthotel.com). Members can make early-bird reservations by calling: (800) 251-9752. Room rates are \$69.77 per night (plus tax). Attractions include the Great Smokey Mountains National Park, Dollywood, and the annual golf tournament. Registration is on June 15; the banquet is on June 19. For details, contact Brother Overton at: (865) 945-5027 or by e-mail, wmo4719@hotmail.com.

JUNE 29-JULY 3, 2003... 65th Annual Eastern Union Meeting Association in Baltimore
 Arrangements Chairman Fred Cox and the members of BLE Division 52 will host the 2003 EUMA at the Baltimore Hyatt Regency in the inner harbor area of Baltimore. Early bird reservations can be made by calling (410) 528-1234. Arrangements Chairman Fred Cox reports that tentative activities include a tour of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Museum, a harbor dinner cruise, golf tournament, and a Baltimore Orioles baseball game. For more details, contact Brother Cox at (717) 244-4855 or e-mail: euma03@aol.com.

SEPTEMBER 28-OCTOBER 2, 2003... 68th Annual Southwestern Convention Meeting
 General Chairman Rick Gibbons, BNSF-SLSF & M&NA, is Chairman of the 68th annual SWCM, which will be held in Branson, Mo. Members and their families will stay at the beautiful Chateau on the Lake Resort Hotel & Convention Center. Reservations can be made at a rate of \$114 per night by calling: (888) 333-5253. A hugely popular tourist destination, Branson offers abundant and unique entertaining and dining options for the entire family. Members planning to attend the SWCM are encouraged to visit Branson's website, <www.branson.com>, to learn more about its diverse entertainment opportunities. More details and registration forms will follow.

Advisory Board December Activity

By action of the delegates at the Fifth Quinquennial Convention, summaries of BLE Advisory Board members' activities are published monthly:

International President Don M. Hahs—International Office: General supervision of BLE activities; General office duties; Special Rep. meeting; National Legislative Board mtg.; Division 197 mtg. (San Antonio); Teamsters mtgs.; TTD mtg.; Mtg. w/ David Gunn, Amtrak President; Mtg. w/ Alan Rutter, FRA Administrator; Mtg. w/ Russian delegation of trade unionists; BLE ID Christmas party; Holidays.

First Vice-President & Alternate President Edward W. Rodzicz— Assisted President in general operation of ID office; Various correspondence and telephone calls; VP assignments; BLE/IBT Constitution & Bylaws committee mtgs.; Division 182, Little Rock, Ark.; Kentucky State Legislative Board function, Corbin, Ky.; Holiday; Vacation day; TTD mtg., Washington, D.C.

General Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walpert—General supervision of BLE financial, record depts.; ID office; BLE Education & Training Dept.; Internal Organizing, Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; Safety Task Force; Meetings with vendors and financial institutions; Mtg. w/ Special Reps., Las Vegas; Mtg. w/ polling firm, re: Teamsters merger, Washington, D.C.; Div. 182 (N. Little Rock, Ark.) Christmas party; Christmas party, all divisions, Kansas City, Mo.; Ky. State Leg. Bd. Christmas party, Corbin, Ky.; Finance Subcommittee mtg., re: proposed Teamsters merger, Washington, D.C.

Vice-President Paul T. Sorrow—Assisted Grand Trunk Western, Norfolk Southern-Northern Lines and CSXT General Committees with various issues; Served as Employee Member of SBA 1063; Attended mtg. w/ Bylaws Committee for BLE/IBT discussions; Attended Division functions, Greenville, S.C. (Divs. 84 and 598), Savannah, Ga. (Divs. 646 & 803), Corbin, Ky. (Div. 463); General office duties.

Vice-President Richard K. Radek— ID Office; BLE Decertification Helpline services; Director of Arbitration Dept.; National Railroad Adjustment Board (NRAB); Illinois Central; Wisconsin Central; Indiana Harbor Belt; METRA; Bell Rwy. of Chicago; Paducah & Louisville; Chicago Central & Pacific; Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Rwy.; Commuter Rail Labor Assn. mtgs., Metra, Chicago; Labor/management quarterly mtg., Metra, Chicago; Div. 520 mtg., E&E, Calumet City, Ill.; NRAB arbitration, Chicago; Agreement Extension mtg., Metra; CN-IC Labor/management conferences, Chicago; IHB general assistance, Chicago; FRA Part 240.409 dockets this month: EQAL 2001-06 (CSX), 01-91 (UP), 01-82 (UP), 01-23 (UP), 01-69 (UP), 01-36 (UP), 02-10 (UP).

Vice-President Dale McPherson— CP Rail; I&M Rail Link; Port. Term. RR; Lanview Portland & Northern; Longview Switching; Indiana RR; M&NA; Utah RR; UP (Eastern District); UP (former CNW); BLE national bargaining cmt.; Constitution & Bylaws committee, BLE/IBT; UP work-rest projects; Public Law Boards 5604, 5681, 5721, 6040, 6281, 6589; General office duties; Claim/discipline conference, I&MRL; Mtgs. w/ UP GC MacArthur/LC's Comm. Serv.; BNSF (former SLSF) open house; Membership/organizing mtgs., Salt Lake City; Mtgs. w/ CP Rail GC Priestler; Mtgs. w/ CP Rail & GC Priestler, re: contract neg.; Conference call-GCs, Advisory Board.

Vice-President & U.S. Nat'l Legislative Representative Raymond A. Holmes— Washington D.C. office; General office duties; National Legislative Board mtgs., San Antonio; DOT holiday reception, Washington, D.C.; TTD retirement dinner for Dave Lucci, RRB and Joe Stringer, IBB&B; TTD/Rail Division mtg.; Receptions for Cong. Pomeroy (D-ND), Hoyer (D-MD), Cong.-elect Bell (D-TX); National Democratic Club Christmas Party; Sheet Metal Workers holiday party; Christmas party for BLE Divs. 61, 81, 147, 336, 491, 708, 393, 120, 107, 502, 930, 75, Kansas City.

Vice-President Merle W. Geiger Jr.— Assigned to: KCS; Midsouth; South Rail; Gateway Western; Springfield Terminal/Delaware & Hudson; Tex Mex RR; New York, Susquehanna & Western; Meridian Southern Rwy.; Prepare cases for PLB 6465; PLB 6465 session, KCS; Div. 270 (Indiana Southern) mtg. and officer elections, Washington, Ind.; Contract mtgs. w/ Indiana & Ohio RR, Cincinnati, Ohio; BNSF GCofAs Christmas party; BNSF (former BN GCofA) holiday open house; General office duties, research, paperwork.

Vice-President Stephen D. Speagle—General office duties; ID mtg. w/ GCs Williams & Morrison, Fort Worth; Safety summit mtg., Tucson, gave presentation; Mtg. w/ MRL & non-op unions on bridge insurance; Mtgs. w/ GCs Williams & Gibbons on traffic & ID agreement, Decatur; Mtgs. on Canadian fatigue law, Seattle; Executive session for arbitration award, Kansas City Seniority, BNSF/MRL.

Vice-President E.L. "Lee" Pruitt— Assisted general chairmen & members of the following properties: UP-Western Lines; UP-Western Region; UP-Central Region; UP-Southern Region; UP-Tacoma Belt; General office duties, telephone paperwork, filing; Prepare for arbitration, UPWL, assisting GC Hannah; PLD arbitration, UPWL, assisting GC Hannah; UPSRGA remote demonstration, San Antonio, assisting GC Gore and members; Assisting UPRR & Tacoma Belt general chairmen & members.

Vice-President Paul L. Wingo Jr.— NS Southern Lines & NS Eastern Region GCofAs; BLE Security Officer; Mtgs. of Finance Subcommittee on proposed IBT merger, Washington, D.C.; PLB in Norfolk, Va., w/ GC Knight; Assisted Div. 271 officers at Greenup, Ky., commission mtg. re: remote control resolution; General office duties.

Vice-President & Canadian Director Gilles Hallé—Ottawa Office; Canadian Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) hearings, re: Via Rail (three weeks), Toronto; Arbitration, Montreal; Mtgs. w/ CN Rail and Via Rail, Quebec; R. Dixon retirement reception, Montreal; Mtgs. w/ Don Hahs, Cleveland; Mtgs. w/ ONR, North Bay.

Vice-President & National Legislative Representative-Canada T. George Hucker—Ottawa Office; National Legislative Board-Canada; CNR Senior H&S policy cmt. mtg., Reception w/ Minister of Labour, Montreal, CCROU work/rest mtg., Railway Assoc. of Canada reception, Ottawa; CNR fatigue management plan mtg., Montreal; Mtg. w/ Minister of Labour, Claudette Bradshaw, Montreal; Mtg. w/ Caley and Wray, Essex Terminal Railway pension, Toronto; HRDC telephone survey; CCROU caucus; CPR fatigue management, Calgary; CCROU/CPR national negotiations/BLE safety management system mtgs., Calgary; BNF fatigue management plan mtg., Seattle; CCROU/CPR national negotiations; CPR Pensioners Assoc. mtg., Thunder Bay; CPR belt pack mtgs., Thunder Bay.

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THE LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEER NEWSLETTER
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 VOLUME 17 • NUMBER 1 • JANUARY 2003

THE LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEER NEWSLETTER (ISSN 0898-8625)
 is published monthly by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers,
 1370 Ontario Street, Cleveland, OH 44113-1702.
 Periodicals postage paid at Cleveland, OH.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
 LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEER NEWSLETTER — BLE
 Records Department, 1370 Ontario Street, Mezzanine
 Cleveland, OH 44113-1702.

PERIODICALS
POSTAGE
 PAID AT
CLEVELAND, OH