



NEWS

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Unions form historic bargaining coalition

On January 3, for the first time in two decades, seven major railroad unions have joined together in the creation of the "Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition" to coordinate upcoming contract negotiations with the rail carriers. The seven unions of the coalition represent nearly 85,000 rail workers from American railroad corporations. The Coalition will develop a coordinated contract negotiating strategy and each individual union will not sign off on any tentative agreements with the rail carriers until all the coalition members concur.

"With serving of notice to the rail carriers to commence contract negotiations, this Coalition has completed a first successful step toward developing a unified bargaining strategy," said George Francisco, coordinator of the Coalition and President of the National Conference of Firemen & Oilers (SEIU). "For the first time in decades, rail unions are joining together to make sure our members get a fair contract. This year at the negotiating table, the rail carriers will face a very different atmosphere. This year the

rail unions are united in purpose."

"This Coalition is the reason the BLE and the BMWED merged with the Teamsters under the banner of the Teamsters Rail Conference," said John Murphy, an IBT International Vice President and Special Assistant to President Hoffa for the Teamsters Rail Conference. "Even though these unions work in a variety of crafts, they are united in their demands for job security, better wages and safer working conditions."

BLET National President Don Hahs said that by presenting a unified front at the bargaining table, "members of the Rail Coalition have taken an important step in combating rail management's divide and conquer bargaining strategy."

That strategy features the coercion of individual unions into divisive contract settlements, which then are said to form a "pattern" of substandard agreements that, in turn, are forced on other organizations through over-long mediation, Emergency Board proceedings or legislation. A united union movement will restore balance to contract negotiations.

"It would be unfortunate for any rail union leader to not be a part of this coalition," said Freddie N. Simpson, President of the BMWED. "This coalition will prevent the Carriers from whipsawing unions, large and small alike, and will strengthen all of rail labor at negotiations."

The Coalition comprises the following railroad unions:

- Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division (BMWED), IBT;
- Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET), IBT;
- National Conference of Firemen and Oilers (SEIU);
- Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (BRS);
- Sheet Metal Workers International Association (SMWIA);
- International Brotherhood of Boilermakers (IBB); and
- American Train Dispatchers of America (ATDA). •

Unions tell NMB: Reject plan to silence workers

A railroad industry proposal, which enjoys the support of key Bush appointees, was condemned on January 11 by transportation labor unions who said it would suppress rail workers from speaking out on issues of working conditions, safety, and pay.

According to Edward Wytkind, president of the AFL-CIO's Transportation Trades Department (TTD), the regulatory changes would, "use a thin disguise of new 'filing fees' to stifle complaints about unsafe and unfair conduct by the railroads."

BLET National President Don Hahs and Vice-President Richard K. Radek were among the many BLET representatives at the hearing as well as the early morning rally that preceded it. Vice-President Radek testified on behalf of BLET and articulated how the proposed "filing fees" would do more to harm the current system than to help it.

The proposal seeks to impose fees on rail employees who seek arbitration services from the National Mediation Board (NMB). It is believed that imposition of these fees will discourage rail employees from filing grievances.



Bush appointees to the National Mediation Board, which oversees labor-management relations in the rail and air industries, are not only "doing the bidding of the giant railroads," Wytkind said, but would also be acting in a "dangerous and illogical" manner if they made it harder for front-line workers to speak up in a time of mounting safety and security challenges for the railroads.

Wytkind said the proposal would, "blow a hole in the col-

lective bargaining system" governed by the Railway Labor Act. For over 70 years, the federal government has mandated arbitration between labor and management over these disputes with the aim of reducing disruptions in rail service.

Outside of the National Mediation Board's hearing on the issue, 250 rail workers marched in protest of the plan. Testifying at the hearing, George Francisco, president of the National Conference of Firemen and Oilers, and chair

of the TTD's Rail Labor Division, termed the proposal a, "hostile federal tax on our members' right to speak out," which would give the railroads "an upper hand over their employees and an even greater incentive to ignore collective bargaining."

President Hahs noted that several locomotive engineers from across the United States attended the rally and thanked them for taking time from their busy schedules to participate on such short notice. •

BLET organizes NOGCR shortline

Workers at the New Orleans and Gulf Coast Railway (NOGCR) have selected the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen as their designated collective bargaining representative.

Ninety-three percent of voters selected the BLET and the National Mediation Board certified the election on December 14. It marks the BLET's 12th shortline railroad organizing victory in the past three years.

"I welcome our new Brothers and Sisters to the House of Labor," said BLET National President Don M. Hahs. "The Brotherhood will soon begin the process of negotiating an equitable contract for our new members."

The NOGCR is a 32-mile long railroad that interchanges with the UP in Westwego, N.O. The railroad serves over 20 switching and industrial customers and is the only

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BLET SCHOLARSHIP DIRECTORY

Railroad Craft Scholarship Foundation deadline is May 1

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

"To my knowledge this is the first scholarship program that covers all craft lines and is available on any railroad," said Brother John D. Mullen, a member of BLET 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 BLET members, the Railroad Craft Scholarship Foundation has awarded dozens of

scholarships over the past eight 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 re-

ceived by May 1, 2005. Applications will be reviewed and award winners determined by the Railroad Crafts Scholarship Foundation's Board of Directors at their annual meeting held in May of each year. For an application packet, please write or call:

John D. Mullen
Railroad Craft Scholarship Foundation
2609 S. Chase
Burleson, Texas 76028
 e-mail: jdmullen54@sbcglobal.net

SMA Scholarships

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

Check with your division secretary-treasurer to ensure your division participates. In general, 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 12-17, 2005.

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 based on academic achievement and financial need.

Applicants must be the child of an active, retired or deceased BLET 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.

SWCM application forms can be filled out on your computer screen with the interactive PDF form available on the BLET website. Deadline is August 1, 2005. Divisions must have paid their annual SWCM convention dues for applicants from their Division to be eligible.

Instructions:
<http://www.ble-t.org/pr/swemsch.asp>
Interactive PDF application form:
<http://www.ble-t.org/pdf/swcmap.pdf>

EUMA Scholarships

The Eastern Union Meeting Association awards one \$2,000 Robert Pentland Memorial Scholarship and several other \$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, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Washington D.C., and West Virginia.

This year's deadline is June 15. Send completed applications to:

Gary J. Brink, EUMA Sec.-Treas.
12 Kellogg Ave.
Port Jervis, NY 12771

Applications are on the BLET website at: <http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/eumasch.pdf>

Midwest Rail Craft Scholarship assisted 28 students in 2004

Thanks to the generosity and hard work of many people, including its Board of Directors, the Midwest Rail Craft Scholarship Foundation (MWRCSF) was able to help 28 children of railroaders from many crafts and union affiliations with their educational expenses during the current calendar school year.

The Foundation, founded in 2004,

is led by a diverse Board of Directors representing several different railroads and labor unions.

"We felt that the support we had seen, especially in the Midwest, prompted us to ensure that the children of all railroad crafts and backgrounds be rewarded," said Greg Shy, President of MWRCSF. "We have become incorporated in Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska,

Illinois, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas and Arkansas. Our objective is to concentrate the scholarship applicants geographically in correspondence to the enormous support we have had from railroad workers in these states.

"We also have enlisted the aid of railroad management and all labor from Midwest railroads to ensure that all crafts will be represented. This is a great opportunity for those railroad families in need of financial support for the higher education of their children."

The vast majority of the monies acquired for these scholarships comes from annual golf tournaments, contri-

butions and sponsorships. The Foundation sponsors an annual Kansas City Golf Tourney, which will be held on July 10 and 11, 2005, at the Hidden Valley Golf Course in Lawson, Mo. In addition, the second annual Lincoln, Neb., Tourney will be held in September (date to be determined).

Please use the scholarship application on the BLET website. Fill it out electronically, print it, attach the proper signatures and mail it to the enclosed address. The deadline for receiving applications is June 15, 2005.

<http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/MWRCSFApplication05.pdf> •

BLET Divisions offer assistance

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

Winners are picked at random at the division's Christmas party. For details, watch your Division 269 newsletter or contact Division President Doug Wilcox at (516) 932-7130.

• **Two \$250 scholarships are available to children of BLET 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 Walter H. Nutter of Division 57.

By taking the exam, students also become eligible for eight more scholar-

ships 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 BLET members living in Massachusetts. Deadline for these scholarships is early December.

For further details, contact Brother Nutter at: 114 Bullard Road, Oakham, Mass., 01068, phone: (508) 259-9957, or: whnutter@yahoo.com.

• **BLET 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 ST J.J. Raia, at 20 East Dr., Edison, N.J. 08820, (732) 396-9076, or email: jjraia@yahoo.com. •

BR&CF sets March 1 deadline for Luther G. Smith scholarships

The Brotherhood's Relief and Compensation Fund (BR&CF) sponsors the Luther G. Smith Scholarship Program. Applications are available 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 1, 2005.

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.bref.org, or write:

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

BLET SCHOLARSHIP DIRECTORY

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

The Grand International Auxiliary (GIA) to the BLET offers \$1,000 scholarships annually to help the children of BLET 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 BLET member (living or deceased), with each being a member for 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, Auxiliaries and Members-at-Large 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.

The GIA also administers a joint scholarship program for children of members participating in the Eastern Union Meeting Association (EUMA). This covers Divisions, Auxiliaries and Members-at-Large in the following states: Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Washington D.C., and West Virginia. Applicants for the GIA-EUMA scholarship must have a parent participating in the EUMA.

In order to continue to be eligible for the GIA-IWC-EUMA scholarship beyond the first quarter and/or semester, the recipient must maintain satisfactory academic status. If the applicant is a graduate student or return-

ing 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 IWC-EUMA joint scholarships must be submitted by April 1, 2005. Late applications will not be considered.

GIA Scholarship application forms are available on the GIA website at: <http://mywebpages.comcast.net/mmgrotzinger>.

In addition to the application form, the GIA website provides scholarship applicants with more detailed instructions on the application process. To submit an application, simply download, print and complete the forms.

Mail completed forms to:
Anita J. Caruso
International Secretary
3341 S. 112th Street
Omaha, NE 68144-4709
(402) 330-6348

Scholarships for California members available from CSLB

The BLET's California State Legislative Board offers scholarships each year to a graduating senior who will attend college, trade or vocational school in the coming year.

The applicant's parent or guardian must be a BLET member in good standing and in a Division represented by the California State Legislative Board.

Last year, the Board offered a \$1,000 scholarship.

Applications are available on the Board's website, <http://www.calslb.com>

All applications should be mailed to the home office address:

California State Legislative Board, BLET/IBT
610 Auburn Ravine Rd.
Suite C
Auburn, CA 95603

BNSF, NS, CSX offer scholarships, financial assistance

In addition to the scholarships offered by the BLET, railroads also offer college scholarships to railroad workers and their children.

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Foundation Scholarship Program will begin accepting requests for applications Jan. 1, 2005. The program will award 35 scholarships, \$2,500 each, for the 2005-2006 academic school year. The program is available to current high school seniors who are the dependent sons, daughters or stepchildren of full-time BNSF employees or retired, disabled or deceased employees of BNSF or its predecessor companies. Applicants must submit an application postmarked no later than April 1, 2005. A direct Web site link is available again this year so applicants can electronically fill out an application request. To obtain an application and descriptive brochure, please complete and return the application request form by March 1, 2005.

As in the past, you may request an application starting Jan. 1, 2005, by either mailing or faxing in the request. Now, you may also request an application or apply directly online by accessing the following website: <http://www.scholarshipadministrators.net> and follow the instructions. You will be asked to use the access code BNSF.

Or you can request information and an application by mail:

Scholarship Program Administrators
P.O. Box 23737
Nashville, Tenn., 37202-3737
Phone: (615) 320-3149 ext. 106
Fax: (615) 523-7100

The Norfolk Southern Scholarship Program gives eight four-year scholarships. National Merit Scholarship Corp. — an independent, non-profit organization — administers the

program. To compete for the scholarships, students must take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) during October of their junior year. Students should contact their principals or counselors to arrange to take the test. The deadline for completing the form is December 31.

Applications for the NS scholarships can be obtained by writing:

Norfolk Southern
Vice President Human Resources
Three Commercial Place
Norfolk, Va. 23510-2191
Applications are also available by email: lisa.leblanc@nscorp.com

The CSX Scholarship Program provides 120 scholarships of \$2,500 each to assist children of employees with undergraduate expenses at an accredited college or university. Scholarships are awarded for one year only, but recipients are encouraged to apply again for subsequent years. The deadline for applications is May 1.

To be eligible, a student must: have at least one parent who has been an employee of CSX Corporation or an affiliate for a minimum of one year. (If the parent is retired, furloughed, or deceased, he or she must have been an employee for a minimum of 10 years); be under the age of 24 and unmarried;

be attending or planning to attend an accredited college or university at the undergraduate level; and have a grade point average of 3.0 or above.

Winners will be selected on a purely mathematical basis using financial need as indicated by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Family Contribution (50%), SAT scores (25%), and grade point average (25%).

For an application form and a brochure explaining the program, contact:

CSX Corporation
Scholarship Service
P. O. Box 5151
Richmond, VA 23220-8151

Union Plus scholarships range from \$500-\$4,000

The Union Plus program awards scholarships in amounts ranging from \$500-\$4,000. This is a one-time cash award sent to individual winners for undergraduate study beginning in the fall of the same year.

The deadline for the 2005 awards is January 31, 2005. To download the Union Plus Scholarship application (PDF), go to the Union Privilege website at: <http://www.unionprivilege.org>.

Members of unions participating in any Union Plus program, their spouses and their dependent children (foster children, step children, and any other child for whom the individual member provides greater than 50% of his or her support) can apply for a Union Plus Scholarship. (Participating union members from Puerto Rico, Canada, Guam and Virgin Islands and U.S. citizens are eligible.) Members do not have to purchase any Union Plus program prod-

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uct or participate in any Union Plus programs to apply for the scholarships and scholarship are not based upon participation in a Union Plus program.

The individual must be accepted into an accredited college or university, community college or recognized technical or trade school at the time the award is issued. Graduate students are not eligible. Applicants for scholarships

are evaluated according to academic ability, social awareness, financial need and appreciation of labor.

In addition to Union Plus, various state and local AFL-CIO bodies fund scholarships for union members and their children.

For more information, go to the AFL-CIO website at: <http://www.aflcio.org>.

BLET SCHOLARSHIP DIRECTORY

James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund

Teamsters offer 31 awards that total \$10,000 and 69 \$1,000 grants to eligible students

BLET members are now eligible to participate in the James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund. The parents or grandparents of applicants must belong to the Teamsters for at least 12 months in order to be eligible for a scholarship.

James R. Hoffa became a Teamster member in 1934 and served as General President for 14 years, and, in recognition of his tireless service to the Union and its members, was honored as General President Emeritus for life. At the November 1999 General Executive Board meeting, General Secretary-Treasurer C. Thomas Keegel presented a resolution to establish the new scholarship fund.

The Teamsters website describes the James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund and outlines eligibility requirements and application procedures. This information is available at: <http://www.teamster.org>.

The deadline for applications is March 25, 2005.

One hundred scholarships will be awarded this program year. Applicants compete in one of the five geographic regions where the Teamster parent's local union is located.

Thirty-one of the awards total \$10,000 each.

These four-year scholarships are disbursed at the rate of \$2,500 per year and are renewable annually. Sixty-nine of the awards are one-time \$1,000 grants. These scholarships are disbursed to the college or university at the beginning of the recipient's freshman year.

Eligibility requirements and application procedures are the same for all awards. Recipients are selected by an impartial committee of university admissions and financial aid directors based on academic achievement, SAT/ACT scores, character, potential and financial need. We consider all applicants without regard to race, religion, gender, disability, or any other legally protected status.

Guidelines

The Scholarship Fund has established some guidelines to be used by students when deciding whether or not to apply to this program. Applicants should:

1. Rank in the top 15 percent of their high school class;
2. Have, or expect to have, excellent SAT or ACT scores; and

3. Demonstrate financial need.

Due to the highly competitive nature of the program and the large number of applicants, students should carefully consider these criteria before submitting an application.

After the BLET eligible student completes the application, it should be forwarded to: William C. Walpert, National Secretary-Treasurer, BLET, 1370 Ontario Street, Cleveland, OH 44113. The National Secretary-Treasurer's office will verify membership status and sign the application form. The completed form will then be sent directly to the James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund for processing.

Additional information and application forms are available on the Teamsters website at: www.teamster.org, or by contacting the following:

**James R. Hoffa
Memorial Scholarship Fund
25 Louisiana Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: (202) 624-8735
E-Mail: scholarship@teamster.org**

Franklin P. Greene Fund available to children of BLET members

The Franklin P. Greene Educational Loan Fund provides low-interest loans to help children of Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen members pursue their academic goals.

The Franklin P. Greene Educational Loan Fund was established in 1956. Its foundation was stipulated in the will of Brother Greene, a member

of BLET Division 266 (Gladstone, Mich.). Brother Greene left an estate in trust of the BLET with instructions that the funds be available for low-interest loans to children of U.S. locomotive engineers, living or deceased.

Brother Green was an engineer on the Soo Line from 1895 to 1940. Before his death at age 86, Brother Greene

wrote Grand Chief Engineer Guy L. Brown of his intention to establish the educational loan fund.

"Everything I have I owe to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers," he wrote. "And I want to take this means of showing my appreciation for what the organization has done for me."

Brother Greene's will stipulated

that the parent of applicants must be a BLET member in good standing or must of have been in good standing at the time of his or her death.

Qualified applicants are asked to contact Jenny Berndt in the BLET Accounting Office at: (216) 241-2630, ext. 211 or berndt@ble-t.org, to request an application. •

EDUCATION & TRAINING NEWS

Four Secretary-Treasurer Workshops announced for 2005

Training classes scheduled to assist STs with tax forms prior to IRS deadlines; Also, training for BLET Internet filing

The BLET's Education and Training Department will conduct four Secretary-Treasurer Compliance Workshops this year prior to the March 31 deadline for filing Department of Labor reports.

The workshops will take place in Kansas City, San Francisco, Denver and Chicago.

During the three-day sessions, members will learn proper record keeping techniques, computer applications, and minute-taking. They will also learn methods for filing various Department of Labor and Railroad Retirement reports, as well as Federal tax returns. A representative from the Department of Labor will be on hand to answer Secretary-Treasurer questions and have tips regarding the preparation of LM reports.

As most ST's already know, there are many changes to the filing of the reports this year, and all these changes will be gone over in class.

A major change came when the BLET National Division implemented a new Internet-based dues reporting and collection system on January 1, 2005. There will be an online demonstration

and conference call to the Cleveland office regarding this new system to help everyone in class become familiar with the new system.

Presenters will include Bill Walpert, BLET National Secretary-Treasurer; Dr. Elaine Reese, Director of Compliance; Ken Kroeger, BLET Special Rep & Coordinator of the Education & Training Department; and Bob Broka, Director of Records.

The BLET National Division pays the costs of books, equipment and tuition, while Secretary-Treasurers who attend are responsible for their transportation costs as well as their room and board.

Upon successful completion of the course, attendees will qualify for an \$86 per day stipend from the North American Railway Foundation. The stipends will be paid directly to the Secretary-Treasurer of the respective divisions.

Secretary-Treasurers will register for the 2005 workshops online through the BLE website at: <http://www.ble-t.org/st>.

The workshops will take place from February 6-9 at the Holiday Inn on the Plaza in Kansas City, Mo.; February 20-

2005 Secretary-Treasurer Workshops

February 6-9, Kansas City, Mo. — Holiday Inn on the Plaza, One East 45th Street, (816) 753-7400.

February 20-23, San Francisco, Calif. — Sheraton Gateway Hotel, San Francisco International Airport (650) 340-8500.

March 6-9, Denver, Colo. — Four Points by Sheraton Denver Cherry Creek, (303) 757-3341.

March 13-16, Chicago, Ill. — Chicago City Center Holiday Inn Hotel, (312) 787-6100.

23 at the Gateway Hotel San Francisco, Calif.; March 6-9 at the Four Points Denver Cherry Creek, Denver Colo.; and March 13-16 at the Holiday Inn City Centre in Chicago, Ill.

Members are responsible for making their reservations at the meetings in Kansas City, San Francisco, Denver and Chicago. Members must ask for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen group rate when calling in order to secure a discounted room rate. Reservations can be made by calling:

- Kansas City, Mo., Feb. 6-9 — At the Holiday Inn on the Plaza, One East 45th St., (816) 753-7400.

- San Francisco, Calif., Feb. 20-23 — At Sheraton Gateway Hotel, San Francisco International Airport (650) 340-8500.

- Denver, Colo., March 6-9 — At Four Points by Sheraton Denver Cherry Creek, (303) 757-3341.

- Chicago, Ill., March 13-16 — At Chicago City Center Holiday Inn Hotel, (312) 787-6100.

Registration for the 2005 workshops is on a first come, first served basis with class size limited to the first 25 who register through the BLET website. For more information, please contact Ken Kroeger at (216) 272-0986 or kroeger@ble-t.org. •

IN THE LINE OF DUTY

Christopher G. Seeling

Brother Christopher G. Seeling, Secretary-Treasurer of BLET Division 85 (Columbia, S.C.), was killed on January 6 when his Norfolk Southern train collided with another train that was stopped in a siding. He was one of nine people to die in the accident.

A toxic cloud of chlorine gas was released as a result of the derailment, contributing to the deaths of seven people in the nearby area and injuring about 240 others. The accident happened in Graniteville, S.C., approximately 11 miles east of Augusta, Ga.

The train's conductor, William Wright, a UTU member, was hospitalized in critical condition after the accident, but his condition has been upgraded to stable.

Brother Seeling, 28, joined the BLET on March 1, 2001. He died from injuries sustained in the crash. All of the other deaths were a result of the inhalation of toxic chlorine gas fumes. Brother Seeling was not married and had no children. He is survived by his parents, his brother and his sister.

Brian McLaughlin, Local Chairman of Division 85, was one of Seeling's friends and co-workers. He described Brother Seeling as a hard working, dedicated railroader who was focused on safety.

"He was always smiling," Brother McLaughlin said. "He was a man of faith and a hard worker who took pride in his job. Chris always talked about safety. He really cared a lot about the men he worked with. He cared about their safety and cared about making sure everyone got home safe."

After a recent derailment in the area, Brother McLaughlin said Chris urged co-workers to "mind their Ps and Qs so you could go home to your family."

He said Brother Seeling will be missed by everyone.

"I will remember him as a fun loving guy who was always cracking jokes but also a man who talked about his faith and spirituality. He was sincere in everything he did."

Brother McLaughlin, 47, has been railroading for 27 years and was a mentor to Brother Seeling.

"I taught him a lot of things about safety," he said. "I was like a big brother to him and gave him encouragement sometimes when things weren't going so well. He was very humble."

Outside of the railroad, McLaughlin said Brother Seeling was an outdoorsman who enjoyed deer hunting and duck hunting. He also enjoyed spending time with his family and attending church.

"He always talked about his family get-togethers, especially around the holidays," McLaughlin said. "He talked about his faith, which meant a lot to him. He

was a man of faith who had strong convictions."

Since the accident, Brother McLaughlin said there is a "heavy cloud" hanging over all railroaders in the area. Their thoughts and prayers have turned to the families of Brother Seeling and to William Wright, the conductor on Brother Seeling's.

"We are coping with a great loss and everyone is very upset," McLaughlin said. "The mood is somber. We're concerned about the families of Chris and William, as well as the families of the other victims. We just have to work though this and come up with a way to run a safer railroad... not just for us but for the public as well."

BLET National President Don M. Hahs ordered the flag over BLET headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio, to be flown at half-mast in honor of Brother Seeling and all other BLET members who lost their lives in the line of duty.

"On behalf of the men and women of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, I send my deepest condolences to Brother Seeling's family and friends," President Hahs said.

Brother Seeling is the first BLET member killed in the line of duty in 2005. In 2004, eight BLET members were killed in on-the-job accidents.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Betty A. Child

Honorary Member Betty Child, a loyal and long time Office Administrator of the National Legislative Office of the BLET, passed away on January 5. Sister Betty was 60 years old and leaves her husband, Girard (Jerry), daughter Barbara, and literally thousands of friends in the union movement and Washington, D.C.

Betty can always be remembered for pulling out the stops to help anyone calling the Brotherhood's Washington Office. She loved a challenge and prided herself in assisting those most in need, especially people trying to understand their medical benefits or benefits under Railroad Retirement. After success with a particularly difficult request, she could be heard to say, "there is another satisfied customer," and "we are a full service office."

Betty was remarkable at finding information in the Washington maze and knowing the legislative history of railroad labor issues. Her 34 years of ex-

perience as an assistant to Vice Presidents Ed McCulloch, Paul Kerrigan, Don Lindsey, Leroy Jones, Raymond Holmes, and as Secretary to the Rail Labor Executive's Association (RLEA) gave her contacts and skills to cut through the red tape and get results quickly.

Betty loved her work and loved the Brotherhood. Much will be said about her dedication. Few were able to witness it personally, but those who did recognized a work ethic unequalled and a professionalism driven by both competence and duty.

Betty, you may take pride in knowing that you did provide a full service office and you took good care of your customers. You will be missed by many and thought of with the greatest respect as you take your place among the many who have passed this way to eternal life.

Sister Betty was an avid reader and enjoyed boating, fishing, and doing



Sister Betty

crossword and jigsaw puzzles. Her favorite pastime was cooking.

She was a native Washingtonian and graduated from St. Patrick's Academy in 1962.

She began working for the Brotherhood in August of 1968. She served under the leadership of 10 different Presidents, beginning with then-Grand

Chief Engineer Perry S. Heath.

She especially enjoyed working for International Vice-President and National Legislative Representative Ed. McCulloch for 17 years before he retired in 1985.

Her first husband, James Andrew Burton Sr., died in 1968. Her son, James A. Burton Jr., died in an automobile accident in 1992.

She is survived by her husband of 32 years, Girard; daughter Barbara; two sisters, Henrietta Cooke and Frieda Malone; two brothers, Michael Lubetski and Raymond Lubetski; and two grandchildren.

The chapel services and inurnment for Sister Betty were held at 11 a.m. on January 22 the National Funeral Home in Fall Church, Va.

Memorials may be sent in Betty's name to:

Children's National Medical Center

**111 Michigan Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20010-2971**

or

**Friends of Homeless Animals
1548 N Gate Square, #21
Reston, VA 20190 •**

President Bush to nominate Jamison for FRA Administrator slot

President Bush is expected to nominate Robert Jamison as Federal Railroad Administrator. Jamison is now serving as the Acting FRA Administrator, replacing Betty Monro, who in December retired from the FRA's top spot. He will become the Administrator if approved by the Senate.

Prior to his appointment as Acting Administrator, Jamison served as the Deputy Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Jamison has more than 15 years experience in domestic and international corporate planning, operations, and management. He came to FTA from the American Red Cross, where he served as an operations manager from 1997 to 1999, when he became Senior Operations Officer, with responsibilities for managing a \$2.5 billion budget and a 33,000-employee nonprofit organization. His management experience also includes 13 years at United Parcel Ser-

vice, where he had many roles ranging from operations supervision, to oversight of investment in foreign operation infrastructure, to management of systems and infrastructure in the Washington metropolitan area for the \$30 billion company.

As deputy administrator, Jamison led the operations of the 170-person, 10-region field staff that administers the \$6 billion FTA programs.

Jamison is a 1987 magna cum laude

graduate of the University of Memphis.

During his time at the FTA, Jamison has dealt with the issue of transit security, among other issues. The BLET hopes that this experience will help Jamison to address the rail security issue more fully than the previous FRA administration.

"I look forward to a harmonious working relationship with Mr. Jamison," BLET National President Don Hahs said. •

BLET NEWS

GC Koonce: Clarifying UTU misinformation

(BLET General Chairman John Koonce mailed the following letter to BLET National President Don Hahs on December 13.)

Brother Hahs:

I would like to address the UTU's December 3rd website posting that was full of misinformation and is nothing more than a web of lies. I was the BLET General Chairman who negotiated the Illinois Central, MidSouth and South Rail Seniority Maintenance Fees and would like the truth of the matter to be made clear.

In the UTU's posting the unknown author states "Some years ago, the BLET imposed so-called 'seniority maintenance' fees on all Illinois Central and Kansas City Southern (including KCS subsidiary South Rail) employees holding engineer seniority dates. Unless those employees, who belonged to the UTU, paid the seniority maintenance fees to the BLET, they could not accumulate additional engineer seniority while working as engineers."

Although I negotiated the Seniority Maintenance Fee on the Illinois Central Railroad in 1997, it was never "imposed" as the UTU would like many of its members to believe. The Seniority Maintenance Fee was negotiated on the Illinois Central as a "fight fire with fire" type agreement and the UTU General Chairman chose not to

implement his Seniority Retention Fee. I would guess one of the reasons the UTU chose not to implement the fee is because there are not many trainmen on the Illinois Central that belong to the BLET and the UTU-E on the Illinois Central is also almost nonexistent.

As far as the KCS subsidiary South Rail — yes, in September 2000 I was instructed by the BLET Division (BLE at that time) to implement the seniority maintenance fee. I also implemented the same on the MidSouth Rail Corporation under the BLET's membership instructions there. It should be noted that the UTU already had seniority retention fees on both KCS properties since 1995. The BLET Local Chairmen repeatedly requested that the UTU Local Chairmen suspend their retention fees and take the freeze off our Engineer's seniority, but this went on deaf ears — that is the only reason that there was a BLET seniority maintenance fee implemented on the properties I represent.

On the South Rail, there were two UTU engineers who refused to pay the fee so I requested that the Carrier freeze their seniority as of September 2000. It should come as no surprise that the Carrier sided with the UTU (tells you something doesn't it?) and would not freeze the two engineers' seniority, so I took the Carrier to Arbitration at the NRAB First Division. As you can see by the

UTU website, I won the dispute.

What I thought was ironic about the First Division Award was that the Neutral referred to both the Carrier and the UTU's position as illogical. Actually, their position was logical — logical in the sense that both of them are in bed together and, therefore, they think the same. I guess this is where the term "Company Union" came from.

The UTU posting also states "that case arose from two South Rail engineers who refused to pay the maintenance fee to the BLET. As a result, the BLET froze their engineer seniority." This is another lie. As of the date of this letter neither engineers' seniority is frozen. The Award is effective within thirty days from November 24, 2004. Within this 30 days each of the engineers will have to make up their mind if they want to:

(1) Stay in the UTU and pay a fee (actually a double fee from September 2000 until January 1, 2005), or

(2) Join the BLET and become a member (along with the regular dues remittance pay the back fee from September 2000 until January 1, 2005), or

(3) Not pay the fee or join the BLET, which on January 1, 2005 the engineer's seniority will be frozen as of the date of September 1, 2000.

The Neutral made a very valid point in awarding back payment of the fee — why

The UTU is at it again

A recent posting on the UTU website titled, "BLET members face huge legal fees," is nothing more than an attempt by UTU leaders to divert attention from their own embarrassing predicament.

The BLET reported in December that UTU will be forced to use the dues money of its hardworking members to pay the legal fees of the largest and most powerful railroad companies in the world because of the indemnity clause in the "Letter of Intent" signed by UTU leaders.

"While UTU leaders issue idle threats about what they and their lawyers will do, the fact of the matter is that they agreed to pay for management's legal fees," BLET National President Don Hahs said. "It's right there in black and white. It is obvious they are attempting to divert attention away from their embarrassingly close relationship with man-

agement."

It is also "curious" that UTU leaders have publicly denounced "free riders" and "no-bills," when many of their own members — in the UTU-E — belong to the engineer's craft. Even though the BLET holds the contract for the engineer's craft, UTU-E members have paid dues to the UTU for years. It wasn't until the shoe was on the other foot — when trainmen began joining the BLET in droves — that these "no-bills" suddenly became problematic for the UTU leadership. It should also be noted that the UTU's own president — Paul Thompson — is one of the so-called "free riders," paying dues to the UTU while holding seniority as a locomotive engineer.

"It is a shame the UTU would insult its own UTU-E members by stopping just short of calling them free-loaders," President Hahs said. •

should both of these engineers get by with not paying the fee from September 2000 when the rest of the engineers have complied with the Rule.

Anyway, I just wanted to set the record straight and bring to light the continuing

broadcast of lies and deceit that the UTU wants its members to believe.

Fraternally yours,

John R. Koonce

General Chairman, BLET CN/IC-CCP, KCS/MRC, SR, GWRW and METRA Electric

NEWS BRIEFS

UP stuck in the mud

The Union Pacific Corp. said its capacity to move freight to and from West Coast ports will be cut by a third "for an extended period" after mudslides and flooding severed the railroad's main artery to the Midwest.

The railroad has effectively embargoed all new cargo while it deals with the track outages in the mountains east of Las Vegas, forcing shippers to seek alternative routes for everything from fresh fruit to parts for just-in-time assembly lines.

At one point, four of the railroad's five rail lines in the Los Angeles area had been severed as a result of flooding and landslides associated with the storms that have pounded Southern California.

By January 13, however, the railroad said only two lines remained shut down — the mainline to the Midwest and the coastal mainline north of Los Angeles that passes through La Conchita, where 10 people died in a mudslide.

"We are facing great challenges in the wake of this severe weather in the West," said Dick Davidson, UP's chair-

man and chief executive. Davidson said he did not know when service would be restored on the two lines.

Because Union Pacific handles roughly half the rail traffic out of California, the disruption could threaten the state's farmers, shippers in the Midwest and the Port of Long Beach, where goods imported from Asia already are stacked up on docks awaiting shipment, economists said.

Union Pacific spokesman John Bromley said the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Co., which also operates a mainline from Long Beach to the Midwest and did not suffer any track damage, is permitting the Union Pacific to operate some trains on its tracks. Other trains will be rerouted, probably through Texas.

Union Pacific has suffered the most damage because its tracks are higher in elevation than Burlington Northern's and were first to be hit by mudslides, Bromley said. The damage was made worse, he said, because "the slides have occurred in areas where we've had all the forest fires, and the ground cover was burned off."

The disruption is the latest that the Union Pacific has had to deal with in

the past decade. In the late 1990s, service virtually was shut down as a result of struggles from combining operations with the Southern Pacific Railroad after a merger. In the past few years, the railroad has faced crew shortages, as employees opted for early retirement programs.

(From the *Chicago Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times* and other news wire services.) •

NS wreck kills nine in Graniteville, S.C.

In one of the worst hazardous materials spills in 30 years, nine people were killed and more than 200 hospitalized when a Norfolk Southern derailment in Graniteville, S.C., on January 5. The town's 5,000 residents were forced to evacuate after a cloud of toxic chlorine gas was released during the accident.

The accident was thought to be the country's worst chemical train wreck since 1978, when 15 people were killed in Waverly, Tenn.

Included in the dead is BLET member Christopher Seeling, 28, Secretary-

Treasurer of BLET Division 85 in Columbia, S.C. (see obituary on page 5).

Brother Seeling's 42-car freight train, en route from Macon, Ga., to Columbia, S.C., was diverted into a siding in Graniteville where it collided with a parked train. The National Transportation Safety Board's investigation focused on the crew of the parked train and if the crew was distracted or fatigued and failed to reset the switch. Members of the BLET's Safety Task Force were on hand to assist the NTSB in its investigation.

As a result of the crash, the Federal Railroad Administration issued a new safety recommendation to railroads regarding manual switches. In it, the FRA suggests that rail companies make sure their rules require train crews who handle hand-operated switches to advise a dispatcher after they restore track switches to their normal position.

The FRA also said a train's conductor and engineer should sign a form saying they know in what position they left the switch.

(Information for this report compiled from *The State* (Columbia, S.C.), and *the Associated Press*.) •

FRA denies UP request to inspect trains in Mexico

Ruling represents major victory for Rail Labor; BLET provides evidence key to FRA decision

The Union Pacific's request to inspect safety critical equipment on its trains in Mexico was denied on December 17 by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

The Union Pacific sought a waiver that would have allowed inspection and tests of its locomotives to be performed by employees of Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana (TFM). The waiver, if granted by the FRA, would have allowed

the TFM railroad to inspect the equipment and fulfill the requirements of "Pre-Departure Inspection," "229.21 Locomotive Daily Inspection," "End-of-Train Device Testing and Inspection," and the all important, "Initial Terminal Class I Brake Test." The trains then would have been allowed to move into

the U.S. for a distance of up to 1,000 miles before receiving another inspection.

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) testified against the Union Pacific's request at an FRA public hearing in Washington, D.C., on October 1.

During the hearing, Terry Briggs, Chairman of the BLET's Texas State Legislative Board, testified that training materials provided to Mexican employees were faulty. In some cases, Briggs said, the translated material was not a direct translation of 49 CFR 232, 215, 229 and 231, portions of the Code of Federal Regulations that govern locomotive inspections. In addition, Briggs provided evidence that in some cases text was omitted or de-

leted, ranging from single words to entire sections numbering 20 or 30 pages.

The FRA cited the incorrect documents as one of the four main reasons for rejecting the Union Pacific's waiver request. Other reasons for rejecting the UP request include:

- Documentation of employee training and qualifications. The FRA said that UP and TFM failed to provide documentation that TFM personnel are trained in accordance with standards equivalent to those required by the FRA.

- Inspection findings. The FRA found that the condition of autorack unit trains as delivered by TFM to be unsatisfactory when compared with trains inspected by UP personnel, noting that "general manifest trains were notably inferior in quality."

- Management of principal/agent

relationship. In its decision, the FRA wrote that, "TFM maintains its own active transportation business and delivers trains to Texas-Mexican Railway, as well as UP. The Mexican Government does not yet enforce equivalent or compatible standards. Accordingly, UP will need to actively oversee TFM's performance of inspections for UP."

In this regard, commenters called attention to safety problems recently evidenced on UP's Southern Region, contending in effect that this calls into question UP's ability to manage this relationship."

BLET National President Don Hahs called the favorable ruling a victory for rail labor and thanked Brother Briggs and Brother Bob Harvey, the BLET's Regulatory Research Coordinator, for delivering critical testimony and evidence. •



BLET announces Long Term Disability plan for NS members

The BLET's Norfolk Southern General Committees of Adjustment are pleased to announce details of a Long Term Disability Plan for its members.

NS Vice General Chairman W.A. "Billy" Thompson is the plan's Administrator and all questions



should be directed to him.

Brother Thompson provided the following information to the National Division for distribution.

Important Information Regarding the Norfolk Southern Disability Coverage

Effective January 1, 2005, we have determined that there are 4,821 Engineers on the eligibility list qualifying for benefits from the plan predicated by the preponderance of their earnings.

Each year, a review of all engineer's earnings will be made from July 1 through June 30 to determine who is eligible. Coverage will be updated every January 1. Coverage begins January 1, 2005.

What should I do if I become disabled?

Call the plan administrator, Vice General Chairman W.A. "Billy" Thompson, at his office (724) 695-3435 or his cell (412) 848-1289 as soon as possible if you believe that you will be out of work longer than

30 days. You don't need to wait until 30 days goes by. This way the process will start sooner, getting you paid quicker.

Vice General Chairman Thompson will complete the employer section of a claim form and verify eligibility. He will mail you the claim form. Fill out the employee section and have your doctor complete the doctor section. Mail or fax the completed form and medical records to UNUMProvident at the following address. The address is also at the top of the claim form.

The Benefits Center
P.O. Box 100158
Columbia SC 29202-3158
Phone: 800-858-6843
Fax: 800-447-2498

How is my claim processed by UNUM Provident once they receive my claim form?

Your claim starts out in the Intake Department. A representative of the Intake Department will review your claim to make sure that all sections are included and that all of the required fields have been filled out. Then the Intake Specialist will route your claim to the appropriate benefit specialist, based upon your diagnosis, in one of five impairment units (cardiac, cancer, orthopedic, behavioral health or general medical) for management or payment.

Your benefits specialist will then review the claim

and may request additional medical records from your physician. Once the benefit specialist has received all of the requested information, the file will be reviewed and a decision will be determined. You must be considered medically disabled and unable to perform the material and substantial duties of your regular occupation according to your policy.

How do I check on the status of my claim once it has been received by UNUM Provident?

Call the UNUM Provident Contact Center at (800) 858-6843. The Contact Center cannot make a decision about your eligibility to collect benefits but can answer many of the questions that you might have about your claim, i.e. "What is needed to complete my claim?" Your claims specialist requested the MRI report from your Physician, once he receives that; we can make a decision on your claim.

What should I do if I have a question or concern that I feel UNUM Provident can't help me with or if I have a question regarding the plan benefits?

Call Locomotive Disability Specialists at (800) 596-6445. Regina Cione, Christy Del Pizzo or Jim DiDonato will assist you with any questions. A PDF outlining the plan is on the BLET website at: http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/NegotiatedBenefits_7_27_04.pdf. •

PASSENGER RAIL NEWS

LIRR under fire from engineers for putting safety, passenger service at risk

The Long Island Railroad (LIRR) is under fire by locomotive engineers for taking unnecessary risks with safety and jeopardizing service to tens of thousands of commuters.

The LIRR, which has engaged Canadian firm Bombardier to perform maintenance work covered by warranty on commuter trains and cars at the Arch Street Yard in Queens, plans to use non-union, unqualified and uncertified Bombardier employees to operate trains beginning January 1, 2005 — putting safety at risk and vio-

lating the railroad's contract with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET).

Robert M. Evers, General Chairman of the BLET, which represents Engineers on the LIRR, notified LIRR President James Dermody that Locomotive Engineers will walk off the job if and when a Bombardier employee operates a train or moves an M-7 car anywhere on LIRR property.

"There are no warranty issues concerning the movement of trains and engines on the LIRR," Evers said. "Why

entrust a floundering company when the railroad already employs experienced, certified engineers and trainmen?"

Bombardier, which suffered a \$141 million loss during the first nine months of 2004, witnessed the abrupt departure of CEO Paul Tellier and recently announced it was cutting 7,600 jobs in their transportation division, including 2,200 jobs in its rail division.

In light of MTA/LIRR budget difficulties resulting in substantial fare increases and future service cutbacks,

"We wonder who is responsible for spending millions of dollars of taxpayers' money to build a facility for the exclusive use of a private company," Chairman Evers said. "Perhaps an investigation by the MTA Inspector General or the appropriate State Agency is in order."

The BLET represents 55,000 professional Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen throughout the United States. It is a Division of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters' Rail Conference. •

BLET NEWS

A message from IBT General President James P. Hoffa

Coalition building

Coalition building has become a mainstay of progressive organizing in the labor movement. We are seeing the fruits of this strategy in the Teamsters Rail conference due to the recent creation of the Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition.

The rail conference, along with representatives from the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET), Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division (BMWED) and five other rail unions have joined together to bargain collectively with rail corporations. This is the first time in at least 20 years that rail labor has seen such cohesion. And, the rail corporations are taking notice. In the Teamsters Rail Conference alone we represent nearly 60,000 rail employees. This is a formidable bargaining power and we intend to use it to gain the best benefits and wages for our members.

We recently saw a victory for rail safety when the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) which is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, sided with labor and denied Union Pacific's (UP) request for a safety waiver. The UP waiver would have allowed locomotive engines to be inspected in a Mexican facility. Once through the Mexican facility, the locomotive would have been allowed to travel, unchecked, for up to 1,000 miles in the United States. We were not going to let this pass us by and we fought, along with support from Capitol Hill, to

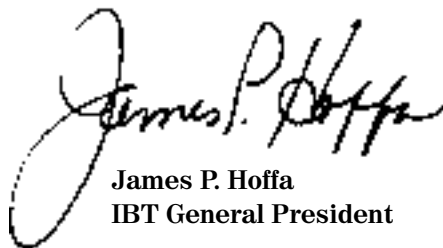
have the FRA deny this waiver. Our rail infrastructure is safer because of this action.

Rail labor solidarity

In addition to the halls of Congress, we have shown our strength on the streets. Recently Teamster staffers joined with 250 rank and file rail union members to hold a rally and demonstration in front of the National Mediation Board (NMB) hearings. The hearings were to be about fees to be imposed upon workers and unions as part of the NMB's arbitration process. We think this is an unfair set of fees that thumbs its nose at the very reason the Railway Labor Act was amended in 1907. The amendment provided for free arbitration of minor disputes in exchange for rail workers being unable to strike over the same disputes.

Shouting "NMB: Adding Insult to Injury," and "NMB: Don't Silence Workers," we made the NMB board members well aware of our opposition to these fees. Let's keep up the coalition building and solidarity in the rail conference — it's a force for change in the industry!

Stay United, Proud and Strong!



James P. Hoffa
IBT General President

BLET gets 12th shortline victory

Shortline

Continued from Page 1

railroad operating east of Avondale, La. on the Westbank.

Predominate shipments include a variety of food products, oils, grains petroleum products, chemicals and steel products. Rio Grande Pacific Corporation, a shortline and regional railroad holding company with operations in six states, maintains a 100% equity interest in this property. The NOGCR is a former Union Pacific Railroad branch

line located outside New Orleans.

The NOGCR has been placed under the jurisdiction of the BLET's Union Pacific-Southern Regional General Committee of Adjustment.

Other shortlines recently joining the Brotherhood are: the New England Central; Wheeling & Lake Erie; Louisville & Indiana Railroad; Portland & Western; New York & Atlantic; Great Western Railway of Colorado; St. Lawrence & Atlantic; Utah Railway; Iowa, Chicago & Eastern; Indiana Southern; and the Texas-Mexican Railway. •

JANUARY 2005 CALENDAR & EVENTS

FEBRUARY 20-23, 2005... Secretary-Treasurer Workshop, San Francisco, Calif.
See Page 4 for registration information

MARCH 6-9, 2005... Secretary-Treasurer Workshop, Denver, Colo.
See Page 4 for registration information

MARCH 13-16, 2005... Secretary-Treasurer Workshop, Chicago, Ill.
See Page 4 for registration information

JUNE 12-17, 2005... 78th Annual Southeastern Meeting Association, Montgomery, Ala.
Hosted by Brother David Bowen and the members of BLET Division 740, the 78th annual SMA will be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel, 300 Tallapoosa St., Montgomery, Ala. The room rate is \$114 per night and reservations can be made by calling: (334) 269-5055.

JUNE 26-30, 2005... 67th Annual Eastern Union Meeting Association, Saratoga Springs
Hosted by Arrangements Chairman Bill Kearsing and the members of Division 46, 67th annual EUMA will be held at the Prime Hotel Saratoga Springs, 534 Broadway, in Saratoga Springs. Brother Kearsing reports that the hotel is now accepting early-bird reservations by calling (518) 584-4000 or (888) 999-4711. Members should ask for the EUMA rate when making reservations, which is \$126 per night. Brother Kearsing can be contacted at (518) 869-2297 or <BKearsing@aol.com>.

JULY 3-8, 2005... 65th Annual International Western Convention, Calgary, Alberta
Hosted by Mike Linkletter and the members of BLET Division 355, the 65th annual IWC will be held at the Fairmont Palliser, 133 9th Ave. SW, in Calgary. Room rates are \$144 per night (Canadian). For details, contact Brother Linkletter at <ble355leg@yahoo.com>.

OCTOBER 2-6, 2005... 70th Annual Southwestern Convention Meeting, Oklahoma City
Hosted by John Salisbury and the members of BLET Division 141, the 70th annual SWCM will be held at the Renaissance Oklahoma City Convention Center Hotel, (405) 228-8000 or (800) 468-3571. More details to come when available.

Advisory Board November Activity

In accordance with the BLET Bylaws, summaries of BLET Advisory Board members' activities are published monthly:

National President Don M. Hahs—National Division office: General supervision of BLET activities; General office duties; CRLO conference call, Cleveland; National Legislative Meeting, Florida; General Chairmen Seminar, Cleveland; Advisory Board meeting, Cleveland; Rail Coalition meeting, Washington, D.C.; Holiday; IBT Rail Conference mtgs.

First Vice-President & Alternate President Edward W. Rodziewicz—Assisted President in general operation of National Division Office; Vice President assignments; Special Representative assignments; Organizing department; Shortline department; Passenger department; Various correspondence & phone calls; IC&E contract mtgs.; Regional NASLB meeting.; NP-NK Local Chairmen mtg.; Advisory Board mtg.; General Chairmen mtgs.; Holiday.

National Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walpert—National Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walpert-General supervision of BLET financial, record depts.; ND office; BLET Education & Training Dept.; Internal Organizing, Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; Safety Task Force; Meetings with vendors and financial institutions; Local Chairman Advanced Class, George Meany Center, Silver Spring, Md.; National Association of State Legislative Board meeting, Venice, Fla.; General Chairman's Workshop, Cleveland; GCA Secretary-Treasurer Workshop, Cleveland; Advisory Board meeting, Cleveland.

Vice-President Paul T. Sorrow—Public Law Board 6619; Advisory Board mtg.; Grand Trunk Western contract discussions; Wheeling & Lake Erie Section 6 negotiations; Worked on issues involving SBA 1063; Assisted GTW, CSX and NS Northern Lines w/ various issues.

Vice-President Richard K. Radek—ND Office; BLET 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; Advanced Local Chairman Workshop, Silver Spring, Md.; Arbitration Orientation mtgs., Chicago; NRAB Arbitration-Exec.; UP-E; CN/WC contract negotiations, general assistance, session; Green Bay, Wisc.; General Chairman's Seminar, mtgs., Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland; BRC manning provisions, dispute, Crestwood, Ill., Oakbrook, Ill.; IHB general assistance, Des Plaines, Ill., and associated points; FRA Part 240.409 dockets: EQAL 02-01, Metra.

Vice-President Dale McPherson — CP Rail; Port. Term. RR; Longview Portland & Northern; Longview Switching Co.; Indiana RR; Missouri & Northern Arkansas RR; Utah Railroad; UP Eastern Dist.; UP former CNW; BLET National Bargaining Cmte.; Public Law Boards 5604, 5681, 5721, 6040, 6281, 6589; UP work/rest projects; RSAC positive train control cmte.; General office duties, telephone, correspondence; CP Rail mediation, Washington, D.C.; ASAA mtg., Washington, D.C.; Mtgs. w/ UP Gen. Chairmen, Auto mark/demand rest, Houston; Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland; National General Chairmen's mtgs., Cleveland; CP Rail mediation agreement, St. Paul, Minn.; CP Rail mtg., re: Trackage, rights, territory, Minneapolis.

Vice-President & U.S. Nat'l Legislative Representative Raymond A. Holmes — BLET Washington D.C. office; General office duties, telephone, correspondence; National Association of State Legislative Board Chairmen; Event for Don Young (R-AK); Fundraiser for Cong. Martin Frost (D-TX).

Vice-President Merle W. Geiger Jr.—Assigned to: BLET Trainmen's Department; Kansas City Southern; Gateway Western; Midsouth Rail; Southrail; Texas-Mexican Rwy.; Springfield Terminal, Delaware & Hudson; Indiana & Ohio RR; Louisville & Indiana RR; St. Lawrence & Atlantic RR; Indiana Southern RR; Mtgs. w/ GC Koonce, GC Parker and KCS, Shreveport, La.; Mtg. w/ GC Clark and Tex Mex, Laredo, Texas; Mtg. w/ BLET Division 244, Laredo; Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland; National General Chairman's mtg., Cleveland; Special mtg. w/ GC Clark and BLET Division 244, Laredo; Holiday; Correspondence, research and general office duties.

Vice-President Stephen D. Speagle—Assigned to Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Montana Rail Link, Pacific Harbor Line; M&NA; Office work, re: BNSF Decatur; PHL mediation, St. Louis; Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland; National General Chairman's mtg., Cleveland; General office duties, correspondence, research, etc.; Claims conference w/ BNSF and BN-Northern Lines GCA, Fort Worth.

Vice-President E.L. "Lee" Pruitt — Assisted general chairmen & members of: UP-Western Lines; UP-Western Region; UP-Central Region; UP-Southern Region; UP-Tacoma Belt; General office duties, telephone paperwork; Arbitration Board 6729, 6730, 6731, 6732, Las Vegas; Assisting GC Donnigan, GCofA mtgs., West Yellowstone, UPWR GCofA; Assisting General Chairman Gore, New Orleans, UPSR GCofA; Trip Rate mtgs., Dallas/Fort Worth, UPSR GCofA.

Vice-President Paul L. Wingo Jr. — Assigned to NS-Southern Lines and Eastern Region GCofAs; Iowa, Chicago & Eastern GCofA; Meridian Southern; New York Susquehanna & Western; New England Central; BLET Rail Security Officer; NS agreement consolidation work; IC&E and DM&E special project planning; Division 85 issues; Advisory Board and National General Chairmen's mtgs., Cleveland; Security project; NYS&W contract negotiations w/ GC Martin; Public Law Board preparation; General office duties.

SAFETY TASK FORCE HOTLINE

(800) 306-5414



Report major accidents when they happen



LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND TRAINMEN NEWS
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen
A Division of the Rail Conference, International Brotherhood of Teamsters

BLET Publications Committee:
Don M. Hahs, National President
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Raymond A. Holmes, Vice-President & U.S. National Legislative Rep.
John V. Bentley Jr., Editor
www.ble-t.org • (216) 241-2630
Kathleen Policy, Associate Editor

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