



NEWS

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BLET, Congress blast Bush on rail security

House Democrats say 'Voluntary standards are not enough,' Railroads held to a lower standard than ports

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) and members of the U.S. House of Representatives expressed outrage over the Department of Homeland Security's announcement on March 31 that it was issuing voluntary security guidelines — as opposed to mandatory regulations — for railroad companies that transport the most hazardous chemicals in the United States.

The BLET, as a member of the Teamsters Rail Conference, has publicly expressed concern about glaring security oversights on the nation's railroads. Those concerns were summarized in the Teamsters' report, "High Alert: Workers Warn of Security Gaps on Nation's Railroads."

On March 31, the Department of Homeland Security attempted to address some of those security concerns. However, its security plan is merely a suggestion — it is nothing more than a list of voluntary measures that railroad companies may implement if they so choose.

"The Bush administration dropped the ball on this important national security issue," BLET National President Don Hahs said. "Our members are the first line of defense when it comes to the security of

America's railroads, and the Bush administration's rail security plan issued today has let them down."

While the security guidelines issued by the Bush administration note that many hazardous materials carried by rail "have the potential of causing significant numbers of fatalities and injuries if intentionally released in an urban environment," the document also states that "All measures are voluntary."

Rep. Markey: Security not an 'April Fools' joke

Representative Edward Markey is the author of legislation that would require the Department of Homeland Security to impose additional security requirements for shipments of extremely hazardous materials, including re-routing of such shipments around areas that raise particular security concerns whenever possible. The legislation was recently adopted as an amendment to H.R. 4439, a bill to reorganize the Transportation Security Administration,



during a Homeland Security Subcommittee markup.

Rep. Markey also spoke at the Teamsters press conference when the "High Alert" study was made public.

"(The March 31) announcement is an early April Fool's joke," Rep. Markey said. "This Administration says, 'we have new security guidelines — April Fools!'"

"Unfortunately, this joke of a proposal has deadly serious consequences for the security of toxic chemicals transported across our nation's rail network. The Bush Administration motto continues to be 'In Industry We Trust,' and (the March 31) notice is the latest example of the Bush Administration letting compa-

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NMB backs BLET on election interference

Management at shortline railroad improperly influenced workers during representation election

The National Mediation Board (NMB) is conducting a second representation election at the Stillwater Central Railroad after ruling that the carrier violated the Railway Labor Act by improperly influencing workers during the original election process.

"The carrier's intent... was to influence employees and convey the idea that the union was unnecessary," the NMB determined. "The Board has found such deliberate conduct intended to influence employees in their selection of a representative to be contrary to Section 2, Ninth of the Railway Labor Act."

The NMB issued its ruling on March 15 after a protest by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, which is seeking to organize approximately 20 train and engine service employees at the Kansas-based shortline railroad.

An August 2005 representation election at Stillwater resulted in only nine of 20 workers voting in favor of BLET. However, the BLET filed charges of election interference on

August 26, 2005, after learning how the carrier had improperly influenced the vote.

"During election campaigns, a carrier must act in a manner that does not influence, interfere with, or coerce employees' selection of a collective bargaining representative," the NMB wrote in its 46-page ruling. "When considering whether employees' freedom of choice of a collective bargaining representative has been impaired, the Board examines the totality of the circumstances as established through investigation. In such an evaluation, each conclusion may not constitute interference in and of itself, but when combined with other factors, the totality evidences improper interference."

After months of investigation, the NMB agreed with BLET, ruling that conditions for a fair and unbiased election were tainted after the carrier: fired three train and engine service employees who were known union supporters; held numerous group and one-on-one meetings with workers; changed work policies for train and engine service employees; and gave workers pay increases during the election process.

"Guys literally lost their jobs helping organize the property," said BLET Organizing Director Tommy Miller. "The NMB ruling is a victory. It lets the people on the Stillwater Central know we've stuck with them. We're not going to desert them. The BLET is the type of organization that will stick with you."

If the carrier does not appeal the NMB's ruling, then the re-vote is expected to take place as this issue of the *News* goes to press.

During the election process, the carrier improperly influenced the vote by holding mandatory group meetings and informal one-on-one meetings with workers. The carrier had no history of holding such meetings prior to the BLET's presence on the property. During these meetings, the carrier implied that it was willing to address worker concerns and that union representation was not necessary. The carrier also implied that working conditions might deteriorate and that wages might decline if the union was voted in.

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Divisions must be 'square on the books' to seat delegates

With the upcoming First Quadrennial Convention of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen scheduled for June 19-22, all BLET Divisions are reminded that their secretary-treasurers must file their monthly dues reports in a timely fashion in order to seat their delegates at the convention.

Section 23, page 31, of the BLET By-laws states: "Any delegate whose division is not square on the books and any division that has not paid its pro rata assessments, as provided in these By-laws, also its indebtedness to other divisions, shall not be allowed a seat in the ND."

The convention begins June 19.

It is essential that each Division ensure that the April 2006 Dues Remittance report is filed prior to the opening of the convention.

All BLET division secretary-treasurers were formally reminded of this constitutional requirement in a letter dated March 2 from National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert.

The First Quadrennial Convention, held once every four years, will take place at Bally's in Las Vegas, Nevada, from June 19-22, 2006. •

BLET NEWS

Bush administration drops the ball

Railroad Security

Continued from Page 1

nies decide just what security precautions should be taken. This Administration is doing nothing more than asking industry to do us a favor and please protect the public — this is an abdication of its responsibility to the American people.”

The risks

Each day hundreds of thousands of shipments of extremely hazardous materials travel through densely populated areas and near critical infrastructure such as bridges and power plants. Enough chlorine to kill 100,000 people in half an hour is routinely contained in a single rail tanker car that rolls right through crowded urban centers without adequate security protection.

In 2003, an Ohio-based Al Qaeda operative was arrested for plotting to collapse a bridge in New York City or derail a train in Washington, D.C. He has since pled guilty. Last year, an accidental crash of a Norfolk Southern train containing chlorine in Grantieville, S.C., killed 9 people and caused hospitalizations and widespread evacuations.

House Democrats blast DHS
Democratic Members of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security also blasted the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for its failure to issue mandatory security standards for the nation's railroads

for the elements of the rail system used to transport TIH (Toxic-By-Inhalation materials) and other hazardous materials.”

Each day hundreds of thousands of rail shipments of extremely hazardous materials travel through densely populated areas and near critical infrastructure such as bridges and power plants. Enough chlorine to kill 100,000 people in half an hour is routinely contained in a single rail tanker car that rolls right through crowded urban centers without adequate security protection.

In the letter, dated April 3, the Committee members write: “We are extremely disappointed with your decision not to require railroads to meet certain security standards regarding the movement of toxic-by-inhalation (TIH) materials by rail. Instead, you have decided to issue recommended security actions that are purely voluntary.

“It is time for your Department to take a more active role in securing our nation's rail systems. Terrorists have already targeted rail systems in the past few years.”

The Democratic committee members also write: “Our nation depends on your Department to ensure there is some

to safeguard the transportation of toxic chemicals.

Fifteen members of the Homeland Security Committee sent a letter to DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff on April 3, demanding an explanation why his department, on March 31, issued voluntary security guidelines for railroads instead of enforceable regulations.

The Democrats also question why the railroads are not held to the same high security standards as other modes of transportation.

“The Coast Guard already mandates security standards in our nation's ports, both to protect our economic infrastructure and to protect the people living nearby,” the Committee wrote. “The Department should be doing the same thing

“It is time for your Department to take a more active role in securing our nation's rail systems.”

— House Democrats to the Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff

NMB sides with BLET in rare ‘election interference’ decision

Organizing

Continued from Page 1

Following the mandatory group meetings, the carrier issued a document titled, “SLWC Items of Adjustment for Policy.” Many of the “Items of Adjustment” went into effect immediately, addressing some of the workers' grievances expressed during the group meetings. Among the changes: the carrier began making bottled and filtered water available; job assignments were posted publicly for the first time; job assignments were rotated; and workers were guaranteed 40 hours of work per week.

In addition to the work rule improvements, which the NMB ruled were implemented to influence the vote, the carrier also gave wage increases to 11 of 20 eligible voters.

The carrier could not prove that those wage increases were mandated in advance, which implies that the carrier granted them to influence the outcome of the election.

Headquartered in Pittsburg, Kan., the Stillwater Central is a subsidiary of Watco, a transportation company that owns 16 shortline railroads operating in 15 different states.

The Stillwater Central operates over 275 miles of track in Oklahoma, primarily handling mined, mineral, and industrial products.

“The BLET is pleased that we were able to bring about positive change, even though we are not their bargaining agent yet,” Miller said. “The BLET is looking forward to the next representation election, and hopefully we can further enhance their wages, benefits and working conditions.” •

BLET applauds appointment of Jo Strang to FRA safety post

The BLET commends the Department of Transportation for its appointment of Jo Strang as Associate Administrator for Safety of the Federal Railroad Administration.

“We worked with Ms. Strang on many issues in the past at the NTSB and in her previous position at the FRA,” BLET National President Don M. Hahs said. “I believe that she is an excellent person to fill this post and I look forward to working with her.

“The safety of our nation's railroads is a paramount concern for us. I hope that Ms. Strang continues to be a proactive voice for safety in the industry.”

Ms. Strang has served as the FRA Acting Associate Administrator for Safety since October 30, 2005.

She will be primarily responsible for the FRA inspector force that identifies safety problems on the nation's railroads, enforces federal rail safety laws and regulations, and investigates train accidents. She also will play a key

role in rail safety research, the development of new regulations, and will report to FRA Administrator Joseph H. Boardman.

She previously served as FRA's Deputy Associate Administrator for Railroad Development, Acting Head of the Office of Research and Development, and Deputy Regional Administrator based in Chicago. In addition, she was an Associate Director for the National Transportation Safety Board's Office of Railroad, Pipeline, and Hazardous Materials, where she was responsible for railroad and transit accident investigations.

Ms. Strang received a Master of Science degree in economics from Marquette University and a Bachelor's Degree in economics and geology from the University of Cincinnati. She was selected for the position by the Department of Transportation's Executive Resources Review Committee. She currently resides in Washington, D.C., with her husband Shobhik Chaudhuri. •

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GIA Dialogue

Legislative issues should matter to us all

By Becky Schneider

1st Vice President & U.S. National Legislative Representative,
Grand International Auxiliary

National and state legislative developments have a profound effect on the policies and operation of every industry in today's modern world. Staying in touch with legislation that impacts the Railroad industry is one of the most important things that we can do as spouses of



railroad employees. We make a real difference.

The Legislative Department is relatively new in relation to how long the GIA has been around. It began in 1981, when Ruth Windham introduced a resolution for the position of National Legislative Representative (NLR) to be tied to the office of 2nd Vice President. She was the first member elected to the position. Since that time, the department has grown exponentially as more and

more members understand and realize the importance and impact of laws passed by Congress. Because almost all railroad activities are governed by Federal laws and regulations, the only way to truly effectuate change is at the national level.

In 1996, Mabel Grotzinger was elected 2nd Vice President and NLR. Because her home is located close to the BLET's Washington, D.C. office, and because of the working relationship already developed with key players there, she became an integral part of that department, and was unofficially appointed to monitor hearings and developments concerning Amtrak. She jump-started the process of in depth education of GIA members as to the "goings on" in Washington, and how developments there affect our spouses and families. She also began the practice of setting a GIA Legislative Agenda.

The push to reform Railroad Retirement began under her watch, until she moved up to the position of Vice President in 2001 due to a vacancy. I was appointed to assume her duties as NLR, and vowed to make sure that what she had accomplished would not be lost. With her help and mentoring, I have been able to further expand the number and variety of GIA issues.

We continue to strive to keep our members abreast of areas of concern, including issues such as: remote control, positive train control, Amtrak, rail security, rail safety (including fatigue and hours of service), cross-border operations, as well as those areas which affect our member retirees, such as medicare and Railroad Retirement. In addition, when issues arise that affect our whole country, not just our members, such as Cam-

paign Finance Reform, we do our best to keep our members aware of what is happening in the ivory towers of the beltway.

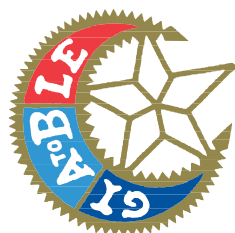
As Sereena Hogan, 3rd Vice President pointed out in her article that appeared in the February issue of this publication, our best tool when addressing issues affecting railroaders and their families is grass roots mobilization. The GIA Legislative Department depends on our members to respond to calls for action in contacting elected representatives on specific issues as they arise. We rely on a timely and serious response in order to make a difference. Of course, the more voices that join together, the more noise we can make, and the more our legislators take notice. While the call for action goes out to our members, we also

spread the word among interested BLET members, as well as retiree's organizations, and other rail labor unions. A number of issues outside of the contractual ones are dictated by legislation, so we all have a stake in what happens in Washington, whether or not we are members of the GIA or another organization. That being said I encourage BLET and GIA members to talk to your co-workers and spouses and get involved. It only takes a couple of minutes to make a call that could make a big difference in your lives.

In recent years, our Legislative Department has expanded to include GIA State Legislative Representatives. The state program is still growing as more State Representatives are appointed. We are committed to making a difference at the state level as well as the national level.

As I near the end of my term as the GIA NLR, I believe we have accomplished a great deal and indeed have made a difference. I encourage each of you to add your voice to ours. When our voices come together with a united message for a common cause, we are powerful and we are heard.

Feel free to contact me at beckygia1@earthlink.net or (915) 581-1373, or any International Officer to learn more about the GIA and how you can help to make a difference. •



Brotherhood helps members get back to work at KCS

Two locomotive engineers are on their way back to work at the Kansas City Southern thanks to the efforts of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

"The Brotherhood went to Federal court to get these brothers their jobs back," BLET National President Don Hahs said. "We did so and saw that they were reinstated with full back pay."

The BLET obtained a favorable ruling on March 14 in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of Illinois.

KCS had dismissed the engineers for alleged vandalism of company property. The BLET had previously obtained First Division Award 26088, which reversed the dismissals and directed that they be reinstated.

However, Kansas City Southern refused to comply and tried to get the Award set aside on grounds that the appeals filed on behalf of the two engineers were untimely handled on the property and

before the Board. The Board rejected both of these procedural arguments and so did the Court.

On both points, the Court held that the Board acted within its authority and did not exceed its jurisdiction when it interpreted the agreement's procedural provisions to allow the appeals.

"Right or wrong," the Court said, "(The Board's) interpretation is conclusive."



Improved monthly audit form developed for BLET Divisions, SLBs, GCAs

A new interactive spreadsheet that makes monthly auditing easier for State Legislative Boards, General Committees and Local Divisions is now available from the BLET's Education & Training Department.

The new interactive spreadsheet, available for download as a Microsoft Excel file, contains built-in formulas so that Secretary-Treasurers can simply input data and the spreadsheet will perform automatic calculations.

The monthly audits became required beginning in June of 2005 in order to comply with the Constitution of

the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

"The new interactive spreadsheet was developed to ease the workload of our Secretary-Treasurers," said BLET National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert, who also heads the Education & Training Department. "Secretary-Treasurers from General Committees, State Legislative Boards and Local Divisions had input into the creation and development of this spreadsheet."

NST Walpert cautioned that the new form is still a beta version. He encouraged Secretary-Treasurers to test

the spreadsheets prior to submitting final reports. Feedback or changes regarding the new form should be emailed to Ken Kroeger, Coordinator of the Education & Training Dept., at: Kroeger@ble-t.org.

The new reporting form, known as a "Trustees/Auditing Committee Report," can be downloaded here:

<http://www.ble-t.org/BLETAuditReport2006.xls>

BLET Bylaws provide that divisions will be audited by "trustees" of the division. The vice president, local chairman and legislative representa-

tive are designated as "trustees" by the Bylaws.

The general committees and state legislative boards should be audited monthly by their respective auditing committees. The monthly audits do not require the convening of the auditing committees. The audits can be performed by mail, if necessary.

Once the monthly audit is performed, the records should be maintained at the division, general committee or state legislative board. There is no requirement to send the audit to the National Division or the IBT. •

BLET NEWS

BLET member is BNSF's Safety Employee of the Year

Brother Duane C. Wetsch recognized by peers for good attitude, dedication to safe operations

Duane C. Wetsch, a member of BLET Division 195 in Forsyth, Mont., was recently named Safety Employee of the Year by employees in BNSF Railway's Yellowstone Safety Team.

"Duane shows up every day with a good attitude and ready to help anyone who needs it. He makes sure the job gets done, and he makes sure it's done safely," his anonymous nominator's letter said.

Brother Westch is a long-time member of the BLET, having been initiated in November 1975, and holding continuous membership since then. He has also served for more than 20 years as Secretary-Treasurer of the Montana State Legislative Board, as well as serving as Legislative Representative from his home division.

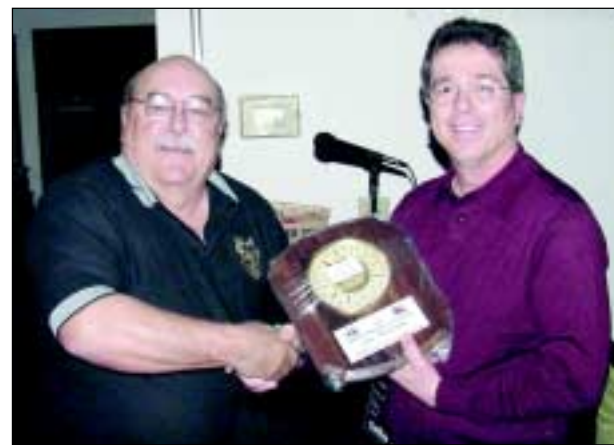
"I was pleased to learn of the award given to Brother Wetsch," said Montana State Legislative Board Chairman Craig Gilchrist. "I have known him for many years, and he approaches his work on the railroad earnestly, the same way he does his work in the union."

For the 15th year in a row, the safety team invited employees and their spouses to a recognition dinner at the Forsyth (Montana) Country Club. The event is held to show appreciation for every employee who worked through the previous year without injury, according to Howard Tait, BNSF's trainmaster in Forsyth, Mont.

While the event provides an opportunity to recognize some of the safest and best employees on the system, collectively, it also gives employees a chance to acknowledge their co-workers' outstanding leadership in safety.

This year's winners received a BNSF coat, their names on a plaque and a clock. Employees nominated co-workers with anonymous letters, describing why they should receive the award.

The team also recognized Glen Greer, conductor on local M7101, as the TY&E Employee of the Year. He was nominated for "his attitude toward new hires. He mentors them in all parts of their workday. Glen is always helping to get them up to speed." •



Congratulations to Brother Duane C. Wetsch, left, who was recently named Safety Employee of the Year by BNSF Railway's Yellowstone Safety Team in Montana. He has been a member of the Brotherhood since 1975 and has served as Secretary-Treasurer of the Montana State Legislative Board for more than 20 years. He is presented with an honorary plaque by BNSF Trainmaster Howard Tait.

DOL changes deadline for LM-30 reporting from March 31 to May 15

(The Calibre CPA Group, PLLC, issued the following bulletin to labor organizations on March 8.)

In 1963, the Department of Labor (DOL) first approved Form LM-30 "Labor Organization Officer and Employee Report" and for over 40 years the Form has remained essentially unchanged. Recently, the DOL has taken steps to revise the Form and is actively enforcing filing for union officers and employees.

The Form must be received by the DOL within 90 days after the end of the officer's or employee's fiscal year, typically December 31. Therefore, the 2005 filing must be completed on or by March 31, 2006. Although the DOL has no authority to grant extensions of the statutory filing deadlines, the Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS) recently granted a grace period so that reports filed on or before May 15, 2006 will be considered "on time." The OLMS will not take any enforcement action unless the report is received after this date. Non-filing individuals will be subject to criminal penalties for willful failure to file.

Since another filing year has ended and the Form is due, we thought this would be a good time to review the filing requirements. We will also review the reporting change that was made by the DOL in November 2005.

Who Has to File?

Other than an employee exclusively performing clerical or custodial services, Form LM-30 is required to be filed by any officer or employee of a labor organization who has reportable transactions or interests. Remember, the Form is not filed by the labor union and is not a filing of the labor union. Rather, it is an informational declaration of reportable transactions filed by an individual of the union. No filing is required if you have no reportable transactions.

Reportable transactions or interests can occur when an officer or employee or his/her spouse or minor child, either directly or indirectly, hold any legal or equitable interest or engage in any transactions (including loans) of the type described in Section 202 of the LMRDA. Section 202 of LMRDA lists six types of reportable transactions or interests involving dealings with three specific groups of employers, businesses, or individuals, as follows:

- A. Any employer whose employees your labor organization represents;
- B. Any business which deals with the business of an employer whose employees your labor organization represents or is actively seeking to represent, and any business which deals with your labor organization, or with a trust in which your labor organization is interested; or
- C. Any employer (other than an employer covered in groups A and B above) or any labor relations consultant to an employer.

Subsequently, Form LM-30 is divided into the above groups of entities. Most union officers or employees may have reportable transactions that will require filing from group B. Transactions will include meals, entertainment, and gifts from the service providers to the union and from service providers to any trust in which the union is interested.

There is a "de minimis" exemption to the reporting requirements of Form LM-30. Guidance previously issued by the OLMS described a de minimis item with a value of \$25 or less. In addition, the item given must be "under circumstances and terms unrelated to the filer's status in a labor organization" and must be "sporadic or occasional."

In November 2005, the OLMS increased the dollar amount of the de

minimis exemption to \$250. This new exemption amount applies to your 2005 LM-30 filing. However, if the aggregate value of multiple transactions from a single employer or business to a single union officer or employee exceeds \$250 in a fiscal year, the transactions will no longer be treated as de minimis and the aggregate value of the transactions must be reported in detail on the LM-30. Gifts or loans from multiple employees of one employer should be treated as originating from a single employer when calculating whether the \$250 threshold has been exceeded.

Revised Form LM-30?

On August 29, 2005, the OLMS published a proposed revised Form LM-30 and instructions, designed in a similar format to the revised Form LM-2. The comment period for the revised Form and instructions expired on October 28, 2005. The OLMS then extended the comment period for 90 days (and this extension expired on January 26, 2006). To date there has been no information from the OLMS concerning the comments received or when a revised Form will take effect. Until we hear further from the OLMS, we recommend union officers and employees use the original Form. This version of the Form shows an expiration date of November 30, 2006 on the top right-hand corner.

Form LM-10

Similar to Form LM-30 filers, employers will now have to file Form LM-10 "Employer Report" with the DOL disclosing certain specified financial dealings with a union or officer, agent, shop steward, employee or other representative of a union. The LM-10 is due within 90 days after the year end of the employer. However, the OLMS has also announced a grace period for Form LM-10 of May 15, 2006 for employers with a December 31 year end. Although the

LM-10 is not identical to the LM-30 it will report much of the same information that is required on the LM-30.

Resources and Reminders

Additional information about Form LM-30 can be found on the DOL website at www.dol.gov/esa/olms_org.htm. On the right-hand side of website is a section for "Forms Download." Under this heading, click on "All Other Forms." Scroll down the page to the Form LM-30. From here you can download a PDF or HTML version of the Form and its instructions. You can also find various articles about the Form, examples of reporting, and how to file it under the "Quick Links" section of the home page.

As a final note, remember that if you have any reportable transactions or interests the LM-30 must be received by the DOL no later than May 15, 2006 for the year ended December 31, 2005.

About Calibre CPA Group

Calibre CPA Group was founded on a commitment "to provide services of a superior calibre." Our firm is staffed with over 80 employees who provide value-added audit, accounting, tax, consulting, and technology services to the labor union community.

It's through our experience working with hundreds of labor organizations at the local, regional, and national levels, that we've developed a familiarity with best practices in internal, administrative, and accounting controls. Our specialized audit programs are focused on identifying recommendations pertaining to strengthening internal controls and enhancing administrative efficiencies.

For more information about our firm and our unique services for organized labor, please visit our website at www.calibrecpa.com or call (866) 464-2839. •

DESIGNATED LEGAL COUNSEL

Our union has designated attorneys who are qualified to serve as counsel for BLET members in accordance with the Federal Employers' Liability Act (FELA) governing workplace accidents.

In the event of an injury or death and before reaching any settlement with a railroad, members or surviving families should contact an attorney listed to get competent advice concerning their legal rights under the FELA.

In addition, if you or any members of your family have questions concerning medical malpractice, product liability or other types of injury cases, please don't hesitate to contact one of these law firms for a consultation concerning your rights and remedies.

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BLET NEWS

Credit for military service under Railroad Retirement

Many railroad employees have at some time served in the Armed Forces of the United States. Under certain conditions, their military service may be credited as rail service under the Railroad Retirement Act.

The following questions and answers provide information on how military service may be credited towards railroad retirement benefits.

1. Under what conditions can military service be credited as railroad service?

The intent behind the crediting of military service under the Railroad Retirement Act is to prevent career railroad employees from losing retirement credits while performing active duty military service during a war or national emergency period. Therefore, to be creditable as railroad service under the Railroad Retirement Act, active duty service in the U.S. Armed Forces must be preceded by railroad service in the same or preceding calendar year. With the exceptions noted later, the employee must also have entered military service when the United States was at war or in a state of national emergency or have served in the Armed Forces involuntarily. Military service is involuntary when an employee is required by law, such as Selective Service System conscription or troop call-up from a reserve unit, to leave railroad service to perform active duty military service.

Only active duty military service is creditable under the Railroad Retirement Act. A person is considered to have been on active duty while commissioned or enrolled in the active service of the Armed Forces of the United States (including the U.S. Coast Guard); or while ordered to Federal active duty from any reserve component of the uniformed Armed Forces.

2. What are some examples of creditable service performed by a member of a reserve component, such as the Army Reserve?

Any military service a reservist was required to perform as a result of a call-up to active duty, such as during the current partial mobilization, would be creditable under the Railroad Retirement Act, so long as the military ser-

vice was preceded by railroad service in the same or preceding year.

Annual training duty as a member of a reserve component of a uniformed service is also considered active duty and may be creditable, provided the employee service requirement is met. The period of active duty for training also includes authorized travel time to and from any such training duty. However, weekend alone or evening reserve duty is not creditable.

Active duty in a State National Guard or State Air National Guard unit may be creditable only while the reservist was called to Federal active duty by the Congress or President of the United States. Emergency call-up of the National Guard by a governor for riot or flood control would not be creditable.

3. What are the dates of the war or national emergency periods?

The creditable periods that affect current retirements are:

- September 8, 1939, through June 14, 1948.
- December 16, 1950, through September 14, 1978.
- August 2, 1990, to date as yet undetermined.

If military service began during a war or national emergency period, any active duty service the employee was required to continue in beyond the end of the war or national emergency is creditable, except that voluntary service extending beyond September 14, 1978, is not creditable.

Railroad workers who voluntarily served in the Armed Forces between June 15, 1948, and December 15, 1950, when there was no declared national state of emergency, can be given railroad retirement credit for their military service if they:

- performed railroad service in the year they entered or the year before they entered military service, and;
- returned to rail service in the year their military service ended or in the following year, and;
- had no intervening nonrailroad employment.

4. How can military service be used to increase benefits paid by the Railroad Retirement Board?

Railroad retirement annuities are based on length of service and earnings. If military service is creditable as railroad service, a person will receive additional compensation credits for each month of creditable military service and railroad service credit for each active military service month not already credited by actual railroad service.

Creditable military service may be used in addition to regular railroad service to meet certain service requirements, such as the basic 10-year or 5-year service requirements for a regular annuity, the 20-year requirement for an occupational disability annuity before age 60, the 25-year requirement for a supplemental annuity, or the 30-year requirement for early retirement benefits.

5. Can United States Merchant Marine service be creditable for railroad retirement purposes?

No. Service with the Merchant Marine or civilian employment with the Department of Defense is not creditable, even if performed in wartime.

6. Are railroad retirement annuities based in part on military service credits reduced if other benefits, such as military service pensions or payments from the Department of Veterans Affairs, are also payable on the basis of the same military service?

No. While railroad retirement employee annuities are subject to reductions for dual entitlement to social security benefits and, under certain conditions, Federal, State, or local government pensions, as well as certain other payments, railroad retirement employee annuities are always exempt from reduction for military service pensions or payments by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

7. Are the unemployment and sickness benefits payable by the Railroad Retirement Board affected if an employee is also receiving a military service pension?

Yes. The unemployment and sickness benefits payable by the Board are affected if a claimant is also receiving a military service pension. However,

payments made by the Department of Veterans Affairs will not affect railroad unemployment or sickness benefits.

When a claimant is receiving a military service pension or benefits under any social insurance law for days in which he or she is entitled to benefits under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act, railroad unemployment or sickness benefits are payable only to the extent to which they exceed the other payments for those days. In many cases, the amount of a military service pension precludes the payment of unemployment or sickness benefits by the Board. Examples of other such social insurance payments are civil service pensions, firefighters' and police pensions, and workers' compensation payments. Claimants should report all such payments promptly to avoid having to refund benefits later.

8. Can proof of military service be filed in advance of retirement?

Railroad employees are encouraged to file proofs of their military service well in advance of retirement. The information will be recorded and stored electronically until they actually retire. This will expedite the annuity application process and avoid any delays resulting from inadequate proofs.

If employees do not have an official record of their military service, their local Railroad Retirement Board office will explain how to get acceptable evidence. All evidence brought or mailed to a Board office will be handled carefully and returned promptly.

9. How can an employee get more information about the crediting of military service by the Railroad Retirement Board?

For more information, an employee should contact the nearest office of the Railroad Retirement Board. Most Board offices are open to the public from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on Federal holidays.

Employees can find the address and phone number of the Board office serving their area by calling the automated toll-free RRB Help Line at 1-800-808-0772. They can also get this information from the Board's Web site at www.rrb.gov. •

2006 Railroad Retirement Board informational conferences

May 5 • Little Rock, Ark.
Holiday Inn Airport
3201 Bankhead Dr.

May 5 • Kansas City, Mo.
Clarion Hotel Sports Complex
9103 East 39th St.

May 12 • Independence, Ohio
Holiday Inn, Independence
6001 Rockside Rd.
(I-77 and Rockside)

May 12 • Smyrna, Ga.
Holiday Inn Express
Vinings/Smyrna, 1200 Winchester Dr.

May 12 • Denver, Colo.
Radisson Hotel Denver Stapleton Plaza
3333 Quebec Street

May 19 • Cheektowaga, N.Y.
Holiday Inn - Buffalo Airport
4600 Genesee Street (at Holtz Drive)

May 19 • Ashland, Neb.
Eugene T. Mahoney State Park
28500 W. Park Highway

June 2 • Albuquerque, N.M.
Hawthorne Inn and Suites
Albuquerque Airport
1511 Gibson Blvd. SE

June 9 • Spokane, Wash.
Airport Ramada
8909 Airport Dr.

June 9 • Mansfield, Mass.
Holiday Inn
31 Hampshire Street

June 16 • Portland, Ore.
Hilton Gardens
12048 NE Airport Way

June 23 • Duluth, Minn.
Radisson Hotel
505 W. Superior St.

Election Supervisor's Fifth Report to BLET Members

Delegate Elections Update: — A total of 155 IBT locals, including 12 BLET General Committees of Adjustment, had contested elections by the April 30, 2006 end date for delegate elections; delegates and alternates from other General Committees, BMWED System Federations, and IBT and GCC locals were nominated without opposition. Get the list of certified delegates at www.ibtvote.org.

There are separate links to the certified delegate lists for IBT locals, GCC locals, BMWED SFs and BLET GCAs.

As delegate election results are certified, the name and GCA affiliation of each elected delegate will be posted to the list of Certified Convention delegates and alternate delegates. Each certified delegate and alternate will receive a confirming letter from the Election Supervisor.

GCA	Type	Rank	First Name	Last Name	Suffix	Date Certified
IBT	Delegate	1st	Mark B.	Henry		10 Mar 06
IBT	Alternate	1st	Tracy L.	McConnell		10 Mar 06
IBT	Alternate	2nd	John J.	Spencer		10 Mar 06

Any member may contact a delegate or alternate delegate to the IBT Convention. A member needing contact information for a delegate may ask the delegate's GCA, or may obtain that information from the Election Supervisor's office.

Delegate Convention Expenses: — Delegates attending the IBT Convention are on official union business, and each General Committee is responsible for paying the travel, lodging, lost wages and per diem expenses for its delegates (and for alternates, if the General Committee election plan provided for that). An *Advisory Regarding Payment of Expenses for Convention Delegates and Alternate Delegates* explaining this responsibility was mailed to each General Committee and to each elected delegate and alternate. You can get this Advisory at www.ibtvote.org.

Know the Procedures for Nominating IBT International Union Officers: — The Election Supervisor has issued the *Supplemental Rules* that state the schedule and procedures for nominations of candidates for IBT International Union Office at the 2006 IBT Convention, which will take place in Las Vegas, Nevada on June 26-30, 2006. Get a copy of the *Supplemental Rules* at www.ibtvote.org.

Election Protests: — IBT members, including BLET members, have filed more than 260 protests raising issues including candidate eligibility, bulletin board access, use of union resources, and fundraising.

The decisions on specific protests are examples of how the **2006 Rules** apply to the very real world of election activity. Want to know how the **2006 Rules** cover particular campaign activity? Search for protest decisions and read them at www.ibtvote.org.

Candidate Forum in August: — The *2006 Rules* require the nominated candidates for IBT General President (or, if they choose, their General Secretary Treasurer running mates) to participate in a forum where they will have an opportunity to address issues affecting the IBT and its members. The debate will be recorded and the recording will be made available for distribution to members. Check www.ibtvote.org after the Convention for details about the date, time and location of the candidate forum.

Do You Want Your Own Copy of the 2006 Rules? — Contact the Election Supervisor's Office in Washington, D.C. and request your copy of the *2006 Rules*. Rules booklets are available in English, Spanish and French. Call toll-free 888-IBT-2006 (888-429-2006) or send your request by email to ElectionSupervisor@IBTvote.org

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Passenger Rail News

Negotiations continue at SEPTA

Contract negotiations continue on SEPTA with General Chairman Richard Dixon confronting a long history of pattern bargaining with a carrier having an anti-labor culture. He likens that culture to "that of some kind of monster with SEPTA being the king of monsters."

"The Transport Workers Union, Local 234 with 5,000 members, has historically set the wage and health benefits pattern for contracts," Dixon said. "There are 15 unions representing bargaining unit employees for SEPTA's City Transit Division, Suburban Transit Division, Frontier Division and Railroad Division. Being the largest union on the property, the wage and benefit agreement reached by the TWU Local 234 establishes the pattern that is ultimately negotiated with the other unions in each round of negotiations. This has always been SEPTA's position regarding pattern bargaining."

"In November 2005, the TWU went on strike for one week before reaching a four-year deal. Now, we want the same deal and the carrier is unwilling to give it to us. The culture within SEPTA's management is hard core and dictating, in an attempt to get everything their way."

The SEPTA General Committee is also pushing for dedicated funding for mass transit throughout the state of Pennsylvania.

"Pennsylvania is one of the larger states with large mass transit systems (SEPTA in Philadelphia and Port Authority Transit in Pittsburgh) and has never had a dedicated source of funding for its transit systems," Dixon said.

Pa. Governor Edward Rendell is pushing for it also and last year diverted approximately \$214 million from state highway funding to mass transit systems in order to cover deficits.

Security is still a key issue for SEPTA employees and passengers.

"We have been working with the National Division and the BLET Pennsylvania State Legislative Board on (rail security) for several years," Dixon said. "Since 9/11 and the incidents in Madrid and London, this has become a vital issue for our members."

The age and condition of SEPTA's equipment is a concern for General Chairman Dixon.

SEPTA is in the process of acquiring 104 new railcars to replace some of its aging equipment. The carrier has approximately 305 electric multiple unit cars, dating from 1960s and 1970s, and 45 push/pull coaches hauled by eight electric locomotives, most dated 1987. SEPTA has had a steady increase in ridership over the past decade with many of the far outlying communities wanting expansion of the commuter railroad.

"With the age, condition and demand on our current fleet of equipment, the arrival of new cars was needed yesterday," Dixon said. •

BLET NEWS

A message from Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa

Rail, port security key issues for 2006

Only 5 percent of port shipments inspected



Port and Rail Security Concerns

It was astonishing to learn, as many people in the U.S. did recently, that only 5 percent of all shipments passing through our ports are inspected. Similar to the lack of security at our ports, our rails remain open to trespassers and possible terrorist activity despite the bombings in London and Madrid several years ago. Rail corporations still continue to try and further reduce the number of rail workers operating trains. However, we are aggressively fighting rail crew reduction schemes — in the legislature and at the bargaining table.

Despite the Bush administration's plan to give away the security of our ports to a firm from Dubai, we led the fight to get this plan overturned. Our nation's security should never be in the hands of any firm that isn't a truly American corporation.

Upcoming IBT Convention

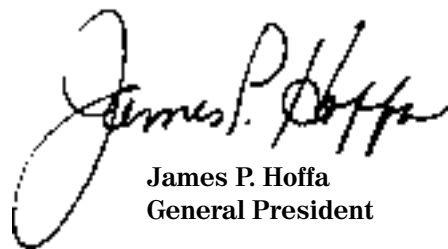
We invite you to participate in the upcoming Teamsters Convention that will be held June 26-30, 2006 in Las Vegas. This convention will immediately follow your convention and will consist of numerous items for the con-

vention delegates to discuss and debate and other business items necessary for running the union for the next five years. Each of our conventions is held at five-year intervals so this is also a time when we take stock of our past accomplishments while planning out the targets for the years ahead.

As one of the unions, which chose to merge with us since our last convention, we will especially welcome your participation. Our brothers and sisters at the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees and Graphic Communications Conference will also be joining us.

We are going to set up some aggressive organizing plans, which include a commitment to short line organizing. Bringing union benefits to the skilled, hardworking workers on short lines must be a priority.

In Solidarity



James P. Hoffa
General President

APRIL 2006 CALENDAR & EVENTS

- JUNE 4-9, 2006... 79th Annual BLET-GIA Southeastern Meeting Association (SMA)**
Hosted by SMA Chairman T.L. Reed and the members of BLET Division 198 and Division 205, the 79th annual SMA will be held at the Chattanooga Marriott at the Convention Center in Chattanooga, Tenn. See www.ble-t.org or March 2006 newsletter for registration form and other details.
- JUNE 12-16, 2006... 68th Annual BLET-GIA Eastern Union Meeting Association (EUMA)**
Hosted by EUMA Arrangements Chairman R.J. Chapter and the members of BLET Division 157, the 68th annual EUMA will be held at the Tropicana Casino & Resort on the Boardwalk in Atlantic City, N.J. See www.ble-t.org or March 2006 newsletter for registration form and other details.
- JUNE 19-22, 2006... BLET National Division Convention, Las Vegas, Nevada**
The First National Convention of the BLET National Division will be held at Bally's in Las Vegas.
- JUNE 25-29, 2006... 27th Teamsters International Convention, Las Vegas, Nevada**
The 27th International Convention of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters will be held at Bally's in Las Vegas.
- JULY 18-23, 2006... 66th Annual BLET-GIA International Western Convention (IWC)**
Hosted by S.V. Halbrook and the members of BLET Division 94, the 66th annual IWC will be held at the Holiday Inn Rapid City—Rushmore Plaza in Rapid City, S.D. See www.ble-t.org or March 2006 newsletter for registration form and other details.
- AUGUST 20-24, 2006... 71st Annual BLET-GIA Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWCM)**
Hosted by A.L. Williams and the members of BLET Divisions 182, 278, 585, 858 and GIA Auxiliary 37, the 71st annual SWCM will be held at The Peabody Little Rock in Little Rock, Ark. Make reservations by calling 1-800-Peabody or (501) 399-7000. For more details, contact Chairman A.L. Williams by e-mail at: ALWMS1@sbcglobal.net; or Vice Chairman Norman Baker at: (501) 835-0858.

Advisory Board February 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; National wage/rule negotiations (RLBC-NCCC), Washington, D.C.; Cooperating Rail Labor Organizations (CRLO) meetings, Miami; National wage/rule negotiations (RLBC-NCCC), Miami; Communications conference, Westlake, Ohio; Change To Win meetings, Oakland, Calif.
- First Vice-President & Alternate President Edward W. Rodzicz**— 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.
- 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; Secretary-Treasurer workshop, Dallas; CRLO meetings, Miami; Regional convention chairman's meeting, Miami; Advisory Board meeting, Miami; S-T Workshop for LM-2 filers, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisc.
- Vice-President Paul T. Sorrow**—CSX Western Lines GCofA mtg.; Mtgs. w/ CSX General Chairmen regarding dual track bargaining; Public Law Board 1063, NS; CSX Family Day event, Greenwood, S.C.; Mtg. w/ President Hahs; Assisted Grand Trunk Western GCA for planning session with upcoming negotiations and day-to-day issues; Assisted CSX, NS and GTW committees and performed general office duties.
- 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; Belt Rwy. of Chicago; Paducah & Louisville; Chicago Central & Pacific; Gen. Assistance, Div. 520 mtg., IHB/EJ&E, Chicago; 9-17-05 derailment documents, Metra; Arb. Dept. Gen., Cleveland; Section 3 (RLA) mtg., Miami Beach; Gen. Asst./KRM Assn. Site inspections, CN/WC, Madison; CN/IC L-M mtgs., CN/IC, Miami Beach; CN/WC negotiations, Des Plaines; Negotiations, Metra, Chicago; Div. 131 mtg., CN/IC, Hazel Crest; Local Chairman's Class, CSX-NL, Jacksonville; J. Miles Memorial/Div. 394, BRC, Beverly (Div. 394 President passed away Feb. 22, 2006), Part 240.409 dockets this month: EQAL 05-01, 03-31, 01-06, 03-47.
- Vice-President Dale McPherson** — CP Rail; Port. Term. RR; Longview Portland & Northern; Longview Switching Co.; Indiana RR; W&LE RR; Utah Railroad; UP Eastern Dist.; UP former CNW; DM&IR RR; Portland & Western RR; Great Western RR; Appalachian & Ohio RR; Public Law Boards 5604, 5681, 5721, 6040, 6281, 6449, 6558, 6589; SBA 585; UP work/rest projects; RSAC positive train control cmtc.; National wage/rules; General office duties, telephone, correspondence; National agreement negotiations, Miami; PLB 5604 hearings (UP), Miami; INRR imp. agrmt. ratification, Linton, In.; Div. 754 mtg., Terre Haute, Ind.
- Vice-President & U.S. Nat'l Legislative Representative Raymond A. Holmes** — BLET Washington D.C. office; General office duties, telephone, correspondence; BLET General Chairmen's mtg., Las Vegas; BLET Advisory Board mtg., Las Vegas.
- 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; Joint Division mtgs 599 & 621, Shreveport, La.; PLB 6884 session, Chicago; Advisory Board mtg., Miami; NARAP mtg., Washington, D.C.; Preparation for PLB 6884; Review of Awards for PLB 6907 and PLB 6884; Research, correspondence and general office duties.
- Vice-President Stephen D. Speagle**—Assigned to Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Montana Rail Link, Pacific Harbor Line, Missouri & Northern Arkansas (M&NA), National Wage/Rule Committee; National wage/rule meetings, Washington, D.C.; Wabash Hospital Association meeting; National wage/rule meetings, Miami; NMB Section 3 meeting; Advisory Board mtg.; PLB 5939; Division 155 mtg.; Mtg. w GC C.E. Davis; Section 6 meetings, MRL, Bozeman, Mont.
- 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; New Orleans Gulf Coast RR negotiations, Chicago; Crew utilization mtg., UP Southern Region GCA, Houston; Trip Rates and ID Run negotiations, UP Western Region GCofA, Portland; UP-Tacoma Belt, office duties, paper work, filing and calls.
- Vice-President Paul L. Wingo Jr.** — Assigned to NS-Southern Lines and Eastern Region GCofAs; Meridian Southern; New York Susquehanna & Western; New England Central; BLET Rail Security Officer; NTSB hearing, Birmingham; Conference call regarding contract negotiations, New England Central; Advisory Board meeting, Miami; NS Georgia Division Local Chairmen and management mtg., Macon; IBT delegate nominating meetings, Asheville, N.C., and Wheelersburg, Ohio; NYSW contract negotiations, Binghamton, N.Y.; General office duties and PLB preparation.

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Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen
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