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# Locomotive

ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN NEWS

APRIL  
2009

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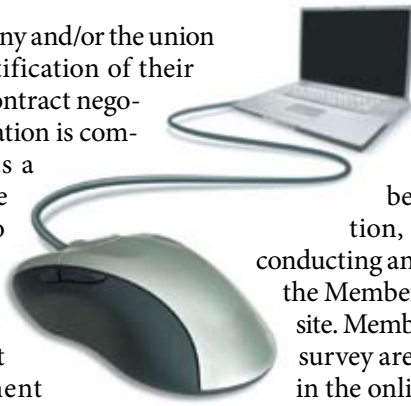
## BLET gearing up for contract negotiations

**T**he Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen is conducting a random survey of its membership in preparation for the upcoming round of national contract negotiations.

The six-page survey seeks membership input on a variety of issues and will provide the National Division with demographic information for analysis of the returns.

Section 6 of the Railway Labor Act re-

quires that the company and/or the union provide advance notification of their intent to engage in contract negotiations. This notification is commonly referred to as a Section 6 notice. The BLET is eligible to serve its Section 6 notices on the carriers regarding a new National Agreement and a new Agreement



with Amtrak beginning November 1, 2009.

The written survey was mailed to 2,000 randomly selected members on March 10. In addition, the National Division is conducting an identical online survey in the Members' Area of the BLET website. Members chosen for the random survey are not eligible to participate in the online survey.

**The survey is located on the BLET website at: <http://www.ble-t.org/survey>**

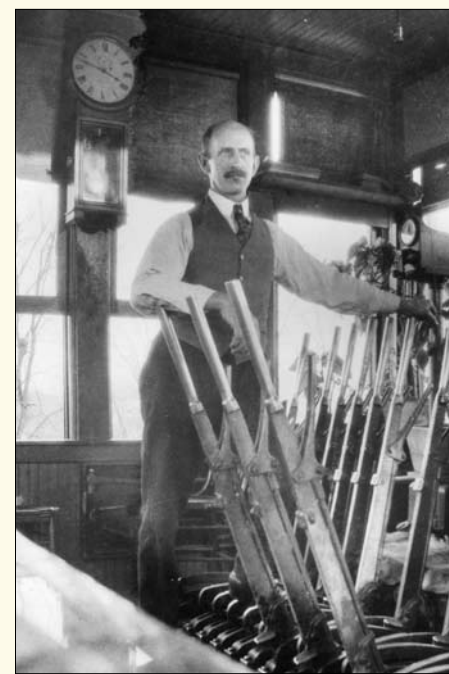
Access to the online survey is password protected. Those interested in participating can use the same password they normally use to enter the Members' Area of the BLET website. A registration area for those who do not have a password is provided at the link above. Those who don't have a password must register using their seven-digit membership identification

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**Long Island Rail Road Locomotive 99** and its crew at rest in 1896 at the Wading River station, which had opened recently.



**LIRR engineers in 2008:** Bobby Olsen, LIRR GCA S-T; Mickey Quinn, LIRR General Chairman; and Jim Brown, LIRR Vice Chairman.



**Left:** A towerman, circa 1925, uses large levers to control switches in the Patchogue yard.

**Far left:** "Dashing Dan" (1950s) and "Dashing Dottie" (1963), characters used in the LIRR's "The Route of the Dashing Commuter" customer service campaign in the 1950s-60s.

**Below:** Print showing crowds waiting to board the LIRR train to Brighton Beach at the Flatbush Avenue Station in 1890.

see page 2 for full photo credits

## Long Island milestones



LIRR celebrates 175th anniversary; Division 269 to mark 125th

**T**he Long Island Rail Road is marking its 175th anniversary this year, and is currently enjoying record-breaking ridership and on-time performance thanks to the members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

And as the railroad reaches this anniversary, the BLET is also marking a significant milestone. BLET Division 269 was chartered to represent LIRR engineers 125 years ago — December 20, 1884.

The LIRR was incorporated on April 24, 1834, and is the oldest railroad in the U.S. still operating under its original name. It has become North America's busiest commuter railroad, carrying more than 87 million riders last year.



Thanks in part to the professionalism of BLET members, more than 95 percent of LIRR commuter trains were on time in 2008. Specifically, 245,933 trains had an on-time performance of 95.14 percent.

"The 125-year history of strong Brotherhood rep-

resentation at LIRR has created a safe work environment for workers and passengers," BLET General Chairman Mickey Quinn said. "Today, BLET members have helped the railroad set an all-time record for best on-time performance. The fact that we achieved this record in the face of record highs in ridership is a testament to the hard work and dedication of BLET locomotive engineers."

In terms of active members, Division 269 is the largest Division in the BLET today.

In recognition of LIRR's 175th anniversary, the New York Transit Museum in Brooklyn Heights, N.Y., is hosting a new exhibit, "The Route of the Dashing Commuter: The Long Island Rail Road at 175," from April 14-September 13. @@



### BLET PAC 2009

Can you afford \$1 per month? **pg 3** BLET thanks those who gave to the BLET PAC in 2008. **pg 4** BLET PAC fund contributions **pgs 3-7**

### Sticking with the BLET

IC&E workers reaffirm BLET membership. **pg 2**

### Fatalities on the rise

FRA Chief Safety Officer Jo Strang calls for help from all railroaders **pg 7**

## Calendar & Events

### Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conferences

The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board holds free information conferences for railroaders. Conference registration begins at 8 a.m., with the programs beginning promptly at 8:30 a.m. and ending at 12:30 p.m.

**May 1, 2009**

**Ashland, Neb.**

Eugene T. Mahoney State Park,  
7840 W. Park Highway

**May 1, 2009**

**Kansas City, Mo.**

Embassy Suites Hotel,  
7840 NW Tiffany Springs Parkway

**May 8, 2009**

**Lakewood, Colo.**

Holiday Inn Lakewood,  
7390 West Hampden Ave.

**May 8, 2009**

**Independence, Ohio**

Holiday Inn Cleveland South, I-77  
and Rockside Road, 6001 Rockside Road

**May 15, 2009**

**Philadelphia, Pa.**

Sheet Metal Workers Local 19 Union Hall,  
1301 S. Columbus Blvd.

**May 15, 2009**

**Little Rock, Ark.**

Holiday Inn Airport, Kittyhawk South,  
3201 Bankhead Drive

**May 29, 2009**

**Billings, Mont.**

Wingate by Wyndham, 1801 Majestic Lane

**June 7-12, 2009**

**82nd SMA, Gatlinburg, Tenn.**

John Mason, Local Chairman of BLET Division 239 (Knoxville, Tenn.), is Chairman of the 2009 SMA in Gatlinburg, Tenn. It will be held at the Park Vista Hotel & Conference Center (705 Cherokee Orchard Road, Gatlinburg, TN 37738; Phone: (865) 436-9211). The room rate is \$103 per night. Contact Mason at: (865) 523-2684 email: scooterloco@comcast.net or LNM67@comcast.net.

**July 5-9, 2009**

**71st EUMA, Philadelphia**

Brother Sean Simon, Vice President of BLET Division 226 (Newark, N.J.), is Arrangements Chairman of the 2009 EUMA in Philadelphia, Pa. It will be held at the Hyatt Regency Philadelphia at Penn's Landing (201 S. Columbus Blvd., Philadelphia, PA 19106; Phone: (215) 928-1234. The room rate will be \$169 per night. To contact Simon, call (609) 558-6405 or email: EUMA2009@aol.com.

**July 29-August 1, 2009**

**Military Railway Service Reunion**

Organizers are planning a large reunion of MRS veterans who served during WWII and Korea, which will be held at Ft. Eustis, Va., as part of the Army's Transportation Corps week. Email Mark Metz for details: m-m-e@comcast.net.

**September 13-16, 2009**

**75th SWCM, Kansas City, Mo.**

Mike Zenner, Secretary-Treasurer of BLET Division 130 (Kansas City, Kan.), is Hosting Chairman of the 2009 SWCM in Kansas City, Mo. It will be held at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center (2345 McGee St., Kansas City, MO 64108; Phone: (816) 421-1234). The room rate will be \$139 per night. To contact Brother Zenner, call (816) 804-9107 or email: zmike5@kc.rr.com. Visit the SWCM website at: www.bletsbcm.org.

# IC&E workers maintain BLET membership

Employees of the Iowa, Chicago & Eastern Railroad (IC&E) reaffirmed their allegiance to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen today by voting overwhelmingly in favor of the BLET in a representation election.

IC&E workers originally joined the Brotherhood in December of 2002, and thanks to the BLET, they obtained their first-ever union contract in January of 2005. These dedicated members showed their appreciation to the Brotherhood by voting 164-88 to remain BLET members, clearly rejecting a takeover attempt by the United Transportation Union.

First Vice President Paul Sorrow, head of the BLET's Organizing Department and Short Line Department, gave special recognition to Vice President Mike Twombly for his hard work and dedication.

"These dedicated members showed their appreciation to the Brotherhood by voting to remain BLET members."

"This was an extremely difficult, hard fought representation election, and it is thanks in part to Brother Twombly that the BLET was successful," First Vice President Sorrow said.

He also thanked Tommy Miller, BLET Director of Organizing, for his superb effort.

"Things were looking bleak until Tommy Miller showed up on the scene," Sorrow said. "He virtually lived on the railroad throughout the entire representation election.

"But most importantly, I wish to thank our loyal and dedicated members in Kansas City, Mo., Mason City, Iowa, Savan-

nah, Ill., Quad Cities, Iowa, and all across the railroad for supporting the Brotherhood in the face of an aggressive foe."

Organizers Bob Kreuzer and Bob Ramshaw also lent assistance from the Teamsters Rail Conference.

The Iowa Chicago & Eastern Railroad began operations in 2002 with 1,400 miles of track in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri and Wisconsin. IC&E's main lines extend from Chicago to Kansas City, Mo., and from Sabula, Iowa along the Mississippi River northwesterly to Minneapolis-St. Paul using trackage rights over the Canadian Pacific from La Crescent, Minnesota, to the Twin Cities. Branch lines (known as the "Corn Lines") extend from Marquette, Iowa, west to Mason City and Sheldon, and from Austin, Minn., to Jackson and to Rosemount. ©©

### BLET CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

number (found on the mailing label of the monthly Newsletter) or their Social Security Number and their date of birth.

Deadline to complete the random surveys is April 15, 2009. Deadline to complete the online survey is April 30, 2009.

Labor contracts or collective bargain-

ing agreements do not expire under the Railway Labor Act, but become amendable at the end of their term. The current BLET National Contract was ratified in June of 2007, and the wage increases were retroactive to July 1, 2005. Part of the 2007 National Agreement was a standard moratorium clause under which the parties agreed not to seek any changes for a defined period of time.

The National Agreement becomes amendable on January 1, 2010, and the parties agreed in 2007 that notices can be served 60 days before the Agreement becomes amendable.

"Thanks in advance for participating in this survey and helping to shape our bargaining goals for the upcoming round," BLET National President Ed Rodziewicz said. ©©

### FEDERAL EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY ACT (FELA)

## Abe Lincoln rode to the rescue of injured railroader

Abraham Lincoln's work as a lawyer for railroads is well known. But a new book on Lincoln's 25-year legal career shows that Lincoln was also one of the first attorneys in the country to champion an injured railroad employee.

Back in 1854 - when railroads were just beginning to use employees as easily disposable pieces of equipment - Lincoln sued Great Western Railroad Company for a severely injured brakeman named Jasper Harris.

According to a three-page complaint that is in Lincoln's handwriting, Harris' right leg was amputated above the knee because of an accident that was caused by the negligence of a fellow employee named George Armstrong.

Closing the complaint, Lincoln asked the court to give Harris \$10,000 in compensation. That would be nearly two million dollars today.

Although the pleading was signed on behalf of the

law firm of Lincoln & Herndon, historians have verified that the handwriting belongs to Lincoln.

This was a tough case for any lawyer, even a legendary trial and appellate advocate like Lincoln.

The first problem was that the Federal Employers' Liability Act did not exist in 1854, and Illinois had a horrible law - called "contributory negligence" - that made it extremely difficult for plaintiffs to win negligence cases.

In addition to proving that the accident that injured Harris was caused by the negligence of a Great Western employee (his co-worker Armstrong), the contributory negligence rule meant that Lincoln had to also prove there was **absolutely no carelessness** by Harris. If Harris was even **one-percent** at fault in causing the accident, the contributory-negligence rule meant he would have received **nothing**.

Making a bad situation worse, a few months after Lincoln sued Great Western



the Illinois Supreme Court adopted "the fellow-servant rule." Under the fellow-servant rule, an injured employee was absolutely prohibited from suing his employer for an accident that was caused by the negligence of a co-worker.

The fellow-servant rule would have killed Harris' lawsuit - even if it survived the defense of contributory negligence.

We are not sure exactly what happened in Harris versus Great Western. The old records say the case was dismissed - at Harris' request. And this was a few months before the Illinois Supreme Court adopted the fellow-servant rule.

Reading between the lines, Great Western probably settled the case to avoid facing the formidable Lincoln in court.

Although it looks like Jasper Harris received some

money, the lethal combination of the fellow-servant rule and the doctrine of contributory negligence continued to unfairly block other railroaders from obtaining just compensation for on-the-job injuries - until the FELA was enacted in 1908.

A tremendous victory for railroaders, the FELA abolished the detestable fellow-servant rule and the odious defense contributory negligence.

If you want a copy of the complaint Lincoln wrote for Jasper Harris, send a note to jfarina@hoeyfarina.com. I want to make this remarkable document widely available because, as Designated Legal Counsel, I am proud to follow in Abe Lincoln's footsteps as an advocate for injured railroaders.

Submitted by:



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## PRESERVING JOBS, PROTECTING LIVES

# BLET-PAC donations help protect livelihoods — and lives

### Can you afford \$1 per month?

By JOHN P. TOLMAN  
BLET VICE PRESIDENT  
AND NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE  
REPRESENTATIVE

Approximately one-third of BLET members give to the BLET-PAC. A robust PAC would consist of one half our members giving \$5 per month, or all of our members giving \$1 per month. In fact, encouraging each member to give \$1 per month is the goal of a campaign that we are instituting this summer.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those whose names are printed in this issue for contributing to the BLET-PAC. I would also like to encourage all members to give if you are not already donating, and to continue or increase your support if you are already giving. One dollar from each



John Tolman, BLET Vice President & National Legislative Representative, during a recent meeting with newly-elected President Barack Obama. Supporting the PAC helps the BLET earn face time with politicians to lobby on behalf of issues that are important to BLET members.

member every month can make a big difference.

It is vital to the political strength of the BLET to have a strong, effective political action committee. A strong BLET-PAC

gives us a powerful voice in the political process to elect politicians who will respond to our interests; influence legislation and regulations to take our concerns into account; and stop

those who try to take away our jobs, harm rail safety or infringe upon our rights as workers.

We need all of our members to participate in these efforts because the BLET-PAC has continued to be one of the best ways to protect our jobs and advance pro-rail labor policies. It is no secret that politicians listen more to those who are the strongest and the loudest, and if we are to continue being heard, then we must maintain and increase contributions to the PAC. If we can walk into a meeting and say that 100 percent of BLET members have united to contribute to the BLET-PAC, then politicians would understand that there are thousands of voices backing us up. We would be an even more powerful force.

Railroad lobbyists have well-funded and powerful PACs. In the 2008 election cycle, the Class I railroads donated more \$7 million dollars to candidates in or-

der to advance their agenda. We work to counter their agenda as much as we can but in order to go from defense to offense, we need the support of all of our members. We cannot simply react when important issues arise. We must get in the game early and help set the agenda.

While our contributions are small in comparison to the railroads, the BLET-PAC money collected has been used to elect worker-friendly governors and state legislators. And because 50 percent of this money goes to the National PAC, it also helped to elect Barack Obama as President, gain the Democrats a majority of seats in the U.S. House and Senate.

The money our members donate to the BLET-PAC helps us to protect the safety, livelihoods and lives of members, their families and all workers nationwide. We all need to support the PAC. Please give to the BLET-PAC. ©

Photo: International Brotherhood of Teamsters

## Your PAC contributions make a difference

By SEREENA HOGAN,  
BLET AUXILIARY VICE PRESIDENT/  
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE

There are a number of citizens across the country who believe we should not have to give money to politicians' re-election campaigns in order to have better access to them. Unfortunately, until major league reforms are put into place, that's the reality of the world we live in. When we help re-elect those who are willing to support our issues, BLET members have a much better chance of seeing the changes for the better regard-



ing workplace safety and improvement to quality of life issues. When a BLET member signs up to give contributions to the BLET PAC, it's not just the BLET members who benefit. Their spouses and families also benefit from the union's ability to see our friends hold elected office, not just at the National level, but also the State level. As Auxiliary members and spouses, perhaps we can take a moment to examine our budgets to see if there is

any wiggle room allowing a donation to the PAC. The larger the monthly donation, the better the ability our organization has to help those who can help us, but every dollar counts. Your Division Legislative Representatives should have PAC applications available, or you can contact your Division Secretary-Treasurer to sign up.

Please think about the difference we can help make and, if your family is not already contributing to the PAC fund, we encourage you to check out the advantages and the importance of doing so. ©

## Joining the BLET PAC is as easy as 1, 2, 3!

Here's how to join the BLET-PAC in three easy steps:



1. Get a PAC Authorization Check Off card from your Division's Legislative Representative or go online to [www.bletdc.org](http://www.bletdc.org), under the drop down menu "Take Action," click on BLET PAC. When prompted, fill in the username "signup" and the password "bletdc." Then print the filled out card.

2. After you fill out the form online or in this issue, give one copy to your Division Secretary-Treasurer.

3. Mail one to the BLET National Legislative Office in Washington, D.C. (25 Louisiana Ave NW, 7th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20001).

Your Division Secretary-Treasurer will then begin automatic payroll deductions and the National Legislative Office will send you confirmation of the receipt of your card and a BLET-PAC pin.

## BLET PAC FUND CONTRIBUTORS — CALENDAR YEAR 2008

### BLET EDITOR'S NOTE:

The following is a list of total calendar year contributions to the BLET PAC fund by BLET members in 2008. It is based on monthly reports filed by Division Secretary-Treasurers. There may be some discrepancies in a member's original monthly commitment and the total amount shown; for example, if you are giving at the President's Club level (\$50 per month), but began your payroll deduction after January 2008, then you will be shown at the Vice-President's Club level (\$20 per month) because your total year contributions did not reach the \$600 yearly level. Additionally, delays in filing monthly reports may account for discrepancies in this list

### President's Advisory Council \$100 per month (\$1,200 or more)

John F Collins, Div. 421  
Brian P. Gallagher, Div. 752  
Ronald K Huff, Div. 746  
Michael R. Muscha, Div. 671  
Richard A Olson, Div. 746  
John P. Tolman, Div. 57

### President's Club \$50 per month (\$600-\$1,199)

Darrell N Azarcon, Div. 692  
Steven J Benson, Div. 739  
Terry D Briggs, Div. 530  
Ben L Blissett, Div. 301  
David K Brown, Div. 517  
Theodore J Carter, Div. 158  
P C Chaput, Div. 57  
Kent N Confer, Div. 623  
Paul T Currier, Div. 28  
James A Daddino, Div. 269  
Richard J Dame, Div. 587  
Susan L Doak, Div. 623  
Don H Douglass, Div. 721  
Anthony M Dimond, Div. 176  
Michael Elliott, Div. 238  
Robert B Engelhard, Div. 75  
R H Evans Jr., Div. 57  
Steve D Facklam, Div. 130  
Doug E Finch, Div. 098  
Stephen J Frankowick, Div. 96

Michael Gannon, Div. 11  
Merle W Geiger Jr., Div. 758  
Craig A Gilchrist, Div. 298  
Robert F Hagan, Div. 757  
Timothy R Hanely, Div. 36  
C L Harris, Div. 28  
Thomas F Hebert Jr., Div. 312  
Orville D Hill, Div. 31  
Peter P Hinkley, Div. 144  
Ronald K Huff, Div. 746  
Garry N Johnson, Div. 28  
Terry R Jones, Div. 044  
David G Kearsing, Div. 46  
Brian P Kelley, Div. 502  
Mark B Kenny, Div. 11  
Kenneth W Kertesz, Div. 263  
John G Krueger, Div. 107  
William A Lander, Div. 28  
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Robert H Linsey, Div. 659  
James P Louis, Div. 421  
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Sean H Morgan, Div. 65  
William J Munger, Div. 439  
Jimmy A Olson, Div. 160  
C A Parrish, Div. 28  
Toni L Pepper, Div. 107  
Paul S Piekarski, Div. 683  
Dennis R Pierce, Div. 687  
Edgar L Pruitt, Div. 126  
Gregory D. Powell, Div. 920  
Richard K Radek, Div. 404  
Marcus J Radek, Div. 143  
Christopher M Riley, Div. 75  
Thomas E Roberts, Div. 601  
Edward W Rodziewicz, Div. 325  
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Steve D Speagle, Div. 155  
Robert S Svob Jr., Div. 28  
Roy C Taylor Jr., Div. 28  
Terry L Todd, Div. 585  
Michael D Twombly, Div. 191  
W E Vail, Div. 28  
F A Verna, Div. 28  
Vincent G Verna, Div. 28  
John T Voss, Div. 75  
Fred W Waldsmith, Div. 415  
William C Walpert, Div. 604  
Clarence E Way, Div. 512  
Mathew J Wiggins, Div. 28  
Steve J Young, Div. 585

### Vice-President's Club \$20 per month (\$240-\$599)

Dean E Altringer, Div. 160  
M D Anderson, Div. 333  
Paul R Ansberry, Div. 158

Photo: iStock

VICE-PRESIDENT'S CLUB CONTINUED

K S Baer, Div. 800  
 Norman J Baker, Div. 585  
 Shawn E Bartholomay, Div. 671  
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 G N Beckley, Div. 236  
 Anthony J Belscamper, Div. 602  
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 Carl W Fields, Div. 682  
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 Clovis R Ford, Div. 742  
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 Ron E Garner, Div. 75  
 Richard J Geese, Div. 602  
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 Joseph M Gioe, Div. 727  
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 Mike J Goebel, Div. 234  
 Timothy R Green, Div. 512  
 Chris C Groose, Div. 609  
 Michael D Hamilton, Div. 238  
 Herbert Harris Jr., Div. 482  
 Steven D Harrison, Div. 013  
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 Gerald D Hendrix, Div. 672  
 Philip D Henry, Div. 190  
 Kip E Hentges, Div. 298  
 David R Hilligoss, Div. 096  
 Charles E Hintz, Div. 6  
 Edward A Hitchcock, Div. 622  
 M G Holt, Div. 800  
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 David L Houser, Div. 071  
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 Bill G Hulet Jr., Div. 629  
 Jon C Hurst, Div. 28  
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 Dale A Jeremiah, Div. 518  
 Chuck R Jones, Div. 724  
 J G Joseph, Div. 28  
 David L Kastet, Div. 298  
 J J Keating, Div. 28  
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 Jeff A Lane, Div. 629  
 David S Lavery, Div. 216  
 B P Law, Div. 336  
 Anthony P Lecholat, Div. 624  
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 John T Little IV, Div. 781  
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 Richard A Lyon, Div. 130  
 R J Maloy, Div. 299  
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 Cory L Runion, Div. 115  
 Richard L Russell, Div. 676  
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 E L Schneider, Div. 192  
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 Timothy R Smith, Div. 940  
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 Ted W Stauffer, Div. 75  
 T A Street, Div. 914  
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 Rick L Thompson, Div. 695  
 E T Thomsen, Div. 183  
 Luther W Todd, Div. 299  
 James R Toomey, Div. 285  
 Dave V Torgerson, Div. 499  
 Dennis W Tucker, Div. 94  
 Shawn M Turley, Div. 647  
 Joseph A Turner, Div. 236  
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 William M Verdeyen, Div. 754  
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 Robert M Wade, Div. 42  
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 Kenny H White, Div. 622  
 David E Wilson, Div. 6  
 Leroy Winfield III, Div. 75  
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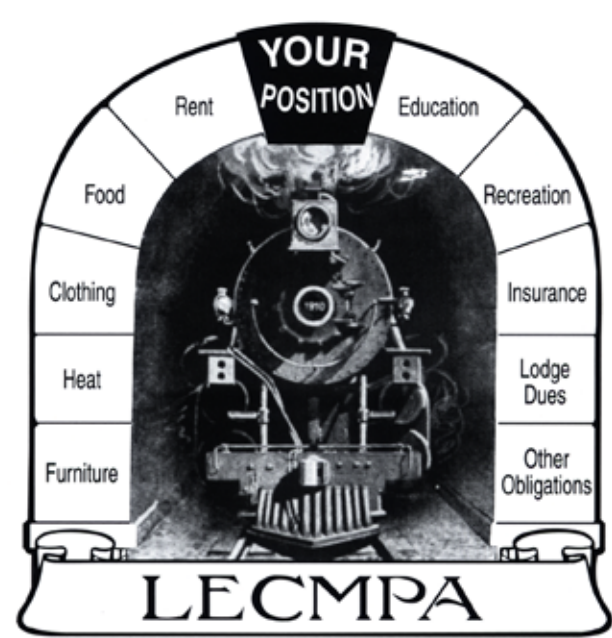
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# Rail fatalities up in 2008-2009; FRA calls for help

**BY JO STRANG**  
FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION  
ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR  
FOR RAILROAD SAFETY/  
CHIEF SAFETY OFFICER

While we have made outstanding progress together in improving the rate of safety-related accidents, injuries and fatalities over the past decade, 2008 was one of the worst years for employee on-duty fatalities (other than train accident or highway-rail grade crossing fatalities), with 19. If we do not turn back this trend, we will shatter that



record; a record that none of us will cherish. As we ask your organization to publish this letter with only 3 months behind us in 2009, the industry has already witnessed seven fatalities in both the operating and non-operating crafts. That is why we are asking all rail employees for their help in reversing this trend. As members of your union and employees of the railroads, please be on constant alert for the risk and dangers associated with your work. Compliance with

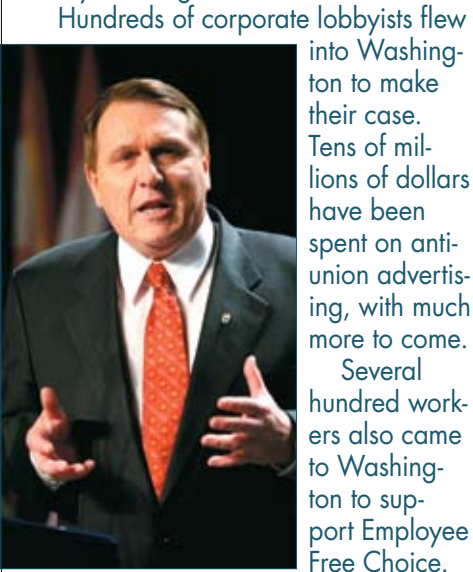
all operating rules and Federal regulations must be your first priority. Be mindful that you do not put yourselves in unsafe situations or act in an unsafe manner just to accomplish your work. If you believe that your coworkers are putting you or your team at danger, you have a right to use the railroad's empowerment policies and good faith challenges that are afforded to you by regulation. Understanding situational awareness at all times throughout your tour of duty should be a top priority. Your daily safety briefings should serve as the cornerstone for the day's work. That time should be spent making sure that everyone has a full

understanding of the task at hand, and reinforcing the dangers associated with the work and the actions that are needed to maintain a safe work environment. If a culture exists whereby workers feel they are put in situations where they are making poor decisions for fear of losing their jobs, we must work together to change this culture. The elimination of fatalities, injuries, and accidents depends upon it. As individuals, we have a responsibility to maintain a safe work environment not just for ourselves, but for all those who work with us to help maintain the safety of the Nation's railroads and the communities we serve. ©

A message from  
Teamsters General President  
James P. Hoffa

## Restoring stability to working families

**Multinational corporations** and their front groups are launching an attack on the Employee Free Choice Act, which was introduced recently in Congress.



Hundreds of corporate lobbyists flew into Washington to make their case. Tens of millions of dollars have been spent on anti-union advertising, with much more to come. Several hundred workers also came to Washington to support Employee Free Choice.

At least one worker who was fired because he wanted to join the Teamsters had never flown on an airplane before.

There's no doubt in my mind that passing the Employee Free Choice Act would bring about the most significant change for unions in the workplace since the Wagner Act took effect in 1935.

Big Corporations say Employee Free Choice would take away workers' rights to the secret ballot. They argue that the secret ballot is the linchpin of democracy, that it would be somehow un-American to take it away. They claim to care about workers who might be intimidated by a union if their secret ballot is taken away.

Of course, the secret ballot doesn't protect workers from management intimidation. How can it, when union organizers routinely get fired?

It is also untrue that Employee Free Choice takes away the secret ballot. Let me repeat: If the Employee Free Choice Act becomes law, workers could choose to cast their votes in a secret ballot.

Sen. Robert Wagner of New York sponsored the law in 1935 that bears his name. The Wagner Act recognized the right of workers to form unions. Wagner understood that the difference between despotism and democracy is not the secret ballot, but whether workers have the right to bargain collectively.

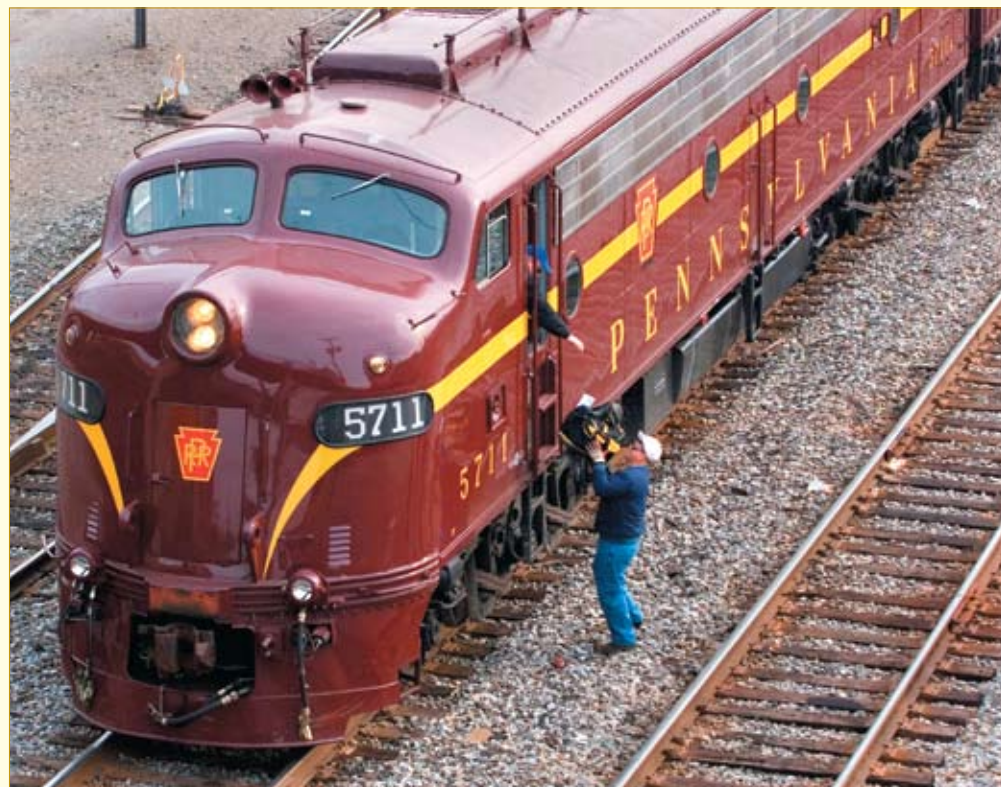
The corporate-funded front groups opposing Employee Free Choice can't pretend they support collective bargaining. So they claim that expanding unions would be bad for the economy. Just recently a spokesman for one of the front groups called Employee Free Choice "a poison pill for our ailing economy."

History shows that the economy does well when unions are strong. In these dire economic times, I can't think of a better way to restore stability to middle-class families than to strengthen unions.

Fraternally,

**James P. Hoffa**  
TEAMSTERS GENERAL PRESIDENT

## PHOTO OF THE MONTH



**Canadian Pacific and Norfolk Southern** crews make a change at Binghamton, N.Y. aboard "The Susquehanna." The vintage Pennsylvania Railroad E8s were in the lead for a special run, which departed Philadelphia on November 2, 2007, for Steamtown in Scranton, Pa., continuing on to Olean, N.Y. and finally returning to Philadelphia on November 5. Joe Geronimo, a member of BLET Division 521 (Hawthorne, N.J.) and a NYS&W engineer, snapped this image from the Chenango Street Viaduct in Binghamton, N.Y., on November 4, 2007. A freelance photographer and photojournalist, Brother Geronimo's maintains an online gallery of his images at: <http://www.jgphoto.photorelect.com>

### ARE YOU A PHOTOGRAPHER?

The National Division's Public Relations Office, which produces the Newsletter each month, has received numerous inquiries lately from BLET members volunteering to contribute their images to the "Photo of the Month" section of the Newsletter.

If you are an amateur photographer (or professional, in the case of Brother Joe Geronimo this month), we welcome your submissions. If you'd like to submit a photo for consideration, you may call Editor John Bentley at (216) 241-2630, ext. 248, or you can email images to: [Bentley@ble-t.org](mailto:Bentley@ble-t.org).

Please note only high resolution images can be used. Members are also encouraged to review their employer's policies regarding the use of cameras and other electronic devices while on duty.

## Advisory Board February Activity

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

**National President Edward W. Rodzicz** — National Division office: General supervision of BLET activities; General office duties; Various correspondence & phone calls; President, Teamsters Rail Conference; Cooperating Rail Labor Organizations (CRLO) mtgs.; Mtg. w/ 2009 BLET Regional Meeting arrangements chairman; Rail Labor Chiefs mtg.; Advisory Board mtg.

**First Vice-President and Alternate President Paul T. Sorrow** — Performed various duties in Office Administrator capacity; Various duties assigned to First Vice President; Various correspondence and telephone communications; General supervision of Special Representatives; Cooperating Rail Labor Organizations (CRLO) mtgs.; BLET Advisory Board mtg., Miami; Rail Safety Improvement Act/Hours of Service mtg., Las Vegas.

**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; Standard Building operations oversight; CRLO mtgs., Miami, Fla.; National Legislative Board mtg., Miami, Fla.; Regional meeting associations mtg., Miami; Advisory Board mtg., Miami; General Chairman, State Legislative Board Chairmen, National Division officers mtg., re: Hours of Service Act revisions, Las Vegas; Secretary-Treasurer workshop, Vancouver, Wash.

**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; Chicago Central & Pacific; Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range; Routine office duties, Chicago and Cleveland; Routine office duties, Chicago and Cleveland; Advisory Board mtg., Miami Beach, Fla.; Remote control arbitration establishment agreement, schope rule dispute, BRC, Illinois Midland, Cleveland; Part 240.409 dockets this month: 01-26 (UP), 07-11 (MBTA), 07-32 (UP), 07-44 (NS), 00-41 (NS), 02-04 (UP), 06-17 (KCS).

**Vice-President Merle W. Geiger Jr.** — Assigned to: BLET Trainmen's Department; Kansas City Southern; Texas-Mexican Rwy.; Midsouth Rail; Southrail; Gateway Western; CP Rail System/U.S.; Portland & Western RR; Great Western RR; Utah RR; Mtg. w/ GC Koonce and KCS, Chicago; Advisory Board mtg., Miami, Fla.; Audit Committee mtg., Cleveland; BLET Hours of Service mtg., Las Vegas; Implementing agreement mtgs. w/ GC Clark (Tex-Mex) and KCS, Houston; Holiday; Correspondence, research 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; General office duties; BLET Advisory Board mtg., Miami; Vacation; Mtg. on Rail Safety Improvement Act and Hours of Service, Las Vegas; Wabash Hospital Board mtg., Decatur.

**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; ID run negotiations, Las Vegas to West Colton, assisting GC Hannah, UPWL GCA; Advisory Board mtg., Miami; Audit Committee mtg., Cleveland; National general chairmen mtg., 2009 Rail Safety Act and Hours of Service, Las Vegas; General office duties, paperwork, filing, telephone calls, etc., assisting UPRR-Tacoma Belt & STD.

**Vice-President & National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman** — Assigned to BLET Washington, DC office; BLET Security Officer; General Office Duties, telephone, correspondence; Coordinate content of NLO website; Continued coordination w/ IBT Government Affairs Dept.; Coordinated PAC contributions; BLET Advisory Board mtg., Miami; National Legislative Board mtg., Miami; AAR mtgs., Washington, D.C.; TTD mtgs., Washington, D.C.; National Mediation Board mtgs., Washington, D.C.; RSAC Hours of Service working group mtgs., Washington, D.C.; RSAC internal mtg., Las Vegas; RSAC Positive Train Control mtgs., Washington, D.C.; Organized materials, presentations and events for Legislative Representative workshop; Attended various fundraisers.

**Vice-President Marcus J. Ruef** — Assigned to Amtrak; Port Authority Trans Hudson (PATH); Long Island Railroad (LIRR); Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA); New Jersey Transit (NJT); MNR; Norfolk Southern-All General Committees; Wheeling & Lake Erie; and NYAL; Prepare for SBA 1063, NS-N, and PLB 1063 session, Ft. Meyers, Fla.; Assist VGC Hill with arbitration submission; Advisory Board mtg., Miami; Claims screening w/ GC Nunziato, PATH, Newark, N.J.; Visit Division 171, NJ Transit, Hoboken, N.J.; Div. 52 mtg., Baltimore; Audit Committee mtg., Cleveland; Reinstatement conference for Div. 52 LC C. Gardner, NS-N, Newark, N.J.; Assist GC Darcy and Dixon with research and correspondence, NJT, Septa; National Hours of Service mtg., Las Vegas; Adopt awards PLB 6657, W&LE; Assist GC Quinn w/ NYAL discipline appeal; Distribute Hours of Service materials to all Passenger Rail GCofAs.

**Vice-President Dennis R. Pierce** — Assigned to all CSX General Committees — Eastern Lines, Western Lines, Northern Lines, Conrail (SAA/CSX-Northern District) — and Indiana Rail Road, Alabama State Docks; Special projects, BNSF GCofAs; General office duties; Vacation; National wage team subgroup mtg., Miami; Advisory Board mtg., Miami; General Chairmen conference calls, CSX CMC and CSX-N, CSX-W, CSX-E GCofAs; Conference call, CSX-E GCA; Tampa/Waycross interdivisional service; Rail safety/Hours of Service mtgs., BLET General Chairmen, State Legislative Board Chairmen, National Division Advisory Board, Las Vegas.

**Vice-President Mike Twombly** — Assigned to Delaware & Hudson; Springfield Terminal; St. Lawrence & Atlantic; Montreal, Maine & Atlantic; Union Railroad; Birmingham Southern; New York, Susquehanna & Western; New England Central; South Buffalo Rwy.; Iowa, Chicago & Eastern; Indiana & Ohio; Indiana Southern; Louisville & Indiana; Meridian Southern; Talleyrand Terminal Railroad; Springfield Terminal safety mtg., Andover, Mass.; Mtg. and claims conference w/ Delaware & Hudson, Binghamton, N.Y.; Division 87 mtg., Saratoga, N.Y.; Advisory Board mtg., Miami; IC&E representation election mtgs. in Bettendorf, Iowa; Savanna, Ill.; Mason City, Iowa; Moline, Ill.; Division 200 mtg., IC&E; Hours of Service mtg., Las Vegas.



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