Disaster Relief

Teamsters offer assistance in five states

The International Brotherhood of Teamsters is offering assistance as many BLET members rebuild their homes and lives after devastating storms destroyed homes and property in the southeastern United States in April.

The Teamsters Disaster Relief Fund is currently accepting applications for financial assistance from members in specific storm-ravaged counties in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Missouri and Tennessee. See below for specific list of counties.

“The Teamsters are all about people helping people,” BLET National President Dennis Pierce said. “Members who suffered property loss or damage as a result of these storms can seek help from the Teamsters. It’s just one of many services offered by the BLET and IBT.”

In early May, Teamster “Disaster Alert Notices” and “Request for Help” forms for each state were circulated to the BLET membership via www.ble-t.org.

If you have experienced a loss due to extreme weather, please download and fill out the appropriate forms, or call the Teamsters Disaster Relief Fund office in Washington at (202) 624-8971.

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PATH OF DESTRUCTION:

FEMA photos show devastation caused by storms that rocked several states in the south. The Teamsters are offering Disaster Relief assistance to help members rebuild their lives.

Long Island to host BLET for annual EUMA

Arrangements Chairman Jim Brown and the members of BLET Division 269 are inviting all BLET members to Long Island, N.Y., for the Eastern Union Meeting Association’s 73rd annual convention, August 2-7, 2011.

“There is so much to do on Long Island that we couldn’t get it all in during your stay this year,” Brother Brown said. “From Montauk at the very east end of Long Island to New York City, you will not have enough time in the five days while attending EUMA to see it all.”

BLET members and guests will stay at the Hyatt Regency Long Island, and hotel reservations should be made online through the EUMA’s website, www.euma2011.org.

The members of Division 269 have organized many educational opportunities for attendees, including: Passenger Hours of Service workshop with the Federal Railroad Administration; Hazardous materials handling workshop; Local Chairman/mock arbitration workshop; Secretary-Treasurer workshop; and Mobilization workshop.

Entertainment options are plentiful. The EUMA kicks off with a traditional Long Island clambake and welcome reception on August 2. The annual golf outing is on August 4. A trip to the Tanger Outlet Center, aquarium, or Splash Splash Waterpark are options for non-golfers.

On August 5, EUMA attendees will enjoy the scholarship awards banquet.

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Register for News Flash email alerts at: www.ble-t.org
Since becoming President of the Teamsters Rail Conference last summer, I have studied, discussed and considered various ways that the efforts of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes Division can be coordinated under the Rail Conference umbrella to provide our members with more effective and more efficient representation.

Our great Brotherhoods already collaborate on numerous significant efforts, from collective bargaining as part of the Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition, to legislative efforts in partnership with the Teamsters Government Affairs Department, to development and enforcement of rail safety regulations along with the rest of Rail Labor. The past year has seen coordination of our work in support of high-speed passenger rail transportation through the Conference’s Passenger Rail Advisory Committee, as well as the exploration of possible joint training efforts.

My goal as Rail Conference President is to unleash the focused power of the Conference — and with it the IBT as a whole — to make a difference for the men and women who belong to the BLET and the BMWED. I am fortunate to have BMWED President Freddie Simpson as a partner in these efforts, and to be supported by a Policy Committee comprised of some of the smartest, most dedicated and hardest working officers in all of Rail Labor.

This year — above and beyond the fights that consume our day-to-day work lives — we are facing a challenge to our very existence that hasn’t confronted us in generations.

Ronald Reagan’s 1981 firing of nearly 12,000 members of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization was a defining moment for anyone who is in a union leadership position. Labor’s failure to mount an effective response opened the door to a relentless attack on workers and the organizations that represent them that has lasted more than a generation.

The percentage of the workforce represented by a union has plummeted from 23% to less than 12% since PATCO. This period also has seen the largest upward transfer of wealth in American history. Over the 22-year period from 1989 through the end of last year, worker compensation grew less than 20% — less than one percent per year — while worker productivity increased by more than 60%. At the same time, the ratio of average CEO compensation to average worker pay skyrocketed from 42:1 in 1980 to 263:1 in 2009, and corporate tax revenues as a percentage of gross domestic product fell from almost 2% in 1981 to below 1% in 2009.

As a result, the wealthiest 5% of Americans today control 72% of America’s financial wealth, while the poorest 80% — including you and me — control only 7%. The richest 400 Americans have more combined wealth than the poorer half of all Americans; these 400 have more wealth than over 150 million Americans combined.

Since last November’s elections, the war on workers has been elevated to a level not seen in nearly a century, and is being fought on many fronts. This is truly a class war being waged by the union of capital — corporate America — and their political henchmen against workers and the labor unions that represent them. The battle getting the most attention from the media these days is the attack on public workers, especially at the state government level, where there is a propaganda war that tries to pit taxpayer against police officer, firefighter and teachers. The members of the Teamsters Rail Conference are not immune from this onslaught.

In addition to the carriers trying to gut our health care coverage, overturn key portions of the Railroad Retirement Act of 2008, and intensify FRA safety regulations, they have unleashed their legislative arm in an effort to deny our very right to organize and operate.

Earlier this year the House of Representatives passed a transportation authorization bill that included a provision to deny railroad and airline workers the right to choose their representatives by majority vote; instead all non-votes would be counted as “no” votes as a matter of law. An effort by Representative Steve LaTourette, who bucked Republican leadership by proposing an amendment to strip this portion of the bill, failed on an almost straight party-line vote. Then, Republican Senator Jim DeMint introduced S. 504, which would strip from the Railway Labor Act the legal right to enter into union shop agreements and dues deduction agreements.

Between now and Election Day 2012 the Rail Conference will carry out a plan to preserve the rights won by our forefathers at the point of a bayonet, and we will implement a plan to drive from office those agents of the union of capital who would turn the clock on our wages, benefits, working conditions and human rights back to where it was when our Brotherhoods were infants. As part of the Teamsters Rail Conference each BLET member will have an important role to fulfill if our plans are to be realized, and I hope each and every one of you answers the call when it comes.

Fraternally,

DENNIS R. PIERCE
BLET National President

BLET National Division Electronic Communications Policy

Official communications between BLET and the National Division require a hard copy of the correspondence, bearing a signature, be received by the National President to be considered an official communication. This is to provide that the actual question(s) are addressed, and ensures that when official interpretations are made they have reference to a specific request and can be used in future correspondence.

The volume of e-mails received makes it impossible for the National President to answer all unofficial communications. Therefore, it is the policy of the BLET that e-mails addressed to the National President will be reviewed and forwarded to the appropriate officer or staff for a timely response; however, an e-mail message is not considered an official communication.

Moreover, anonymous e-mails and e-mails that do not provide sufficient information concerning the sender to enable National Division staff to confirm the sender’s membership status will not receive any reply or acknowledgement. This policy is intended to allow the National President to be aware of the opinions and suggestions of the membership while at the same time providing a timely response to the members of official communications if a response is necessary, without needlessly expending limited BLET resources.

Adopted at Cleveland, Ohio on July 22, 2010. S8
Congress will soon be voting on whether to send good American jobs with good American benefits to countries with cheap labor and no benefits.

These so-called “free-trade agreements” with South Korea, Panama and Colombia will be sent to Capitol Hill for approval. What politicians are calling “free trade” is actually freedom for CEOs to trade our jobs for more big salaries and bonuses.

You’d think politicians would learn something from our experience with job-killing trade deals. We’ve seen with our own eyes the disappearance of auto plants that used to have 6,000 workers running three shifts and manufacturing companies that employed thousands more. We’ve struggled with the devastation of our cities and the communities left without hope for their kids.

I’m concerned about the trade deal with South Korea because it’s likely to have an impact very similar to NAFTA. According to a recent study by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), the two industries hurt most by NAFTA are computers and electronic parts and motor vehicles and automotive parts. Those are the same two industries that are being harmed already by South Korea. A trade deal would worsen our growing trade deficit with that country and cost 159,000 U.S. jobs in seven years, according to EPI.

Many of our cities were built by businesses that hired American workers and needed a well-trained American workforce. And we were built by the hard work of our parents and grandparents, and the strength in numbers that came from unions that represented them.

Let’s send a message to Capitol Hill — show us you stand with American workers and vote against these job-killing trade deals. We need to keep and grow jobs here in America!

Fraternally,

James P. Hoffa
Teamsters General President

What politicians are calling “free trade” is actually freedom for CEOs to trade our jobs for big salaries and bonuses.
Wisconsin State Legislative Board Chairman Tony Dimond of BLET Division 176 (Adams, Wis.) was reelected to his second full term at the Board’s quadrennial meeting in Madison, Wis., from April 5-6, 2011.

Also re-elected at the meeting were First Vice Chairman Paul Aird of BLET Division 173 (Fond Du Lac, Wis.); Secretary-Treasurer Paul Dinauer of BLET Division 882 (Milwaukee); Chaplain Mike Corrigan of BLET Division 174 (Stevens Point); and Audit Committee members Richard Hemmingson of BLET Division 241 (Altoona, Wis.) and Mike Oster-tag of BLET Division 209 (Green Bay). Newly elected were Second Vice Chairman Adam Makurat of BLET Division 405 (Milwaukee) and Audit Committee member Justin John - slaw of BLET Division 253 (Portage).

“I am very proud to have been re-elected to serve the Brotherhood and the members in Wisconsin,” Chairman Dimond said. “I have been a member for over 20 years with many great individuals and I look forward to serving with this board and any others who wish to put forth the time to serve their fellow members.”

Bruno tells House “Hands off safety regulations”

In closing, Bruno urged the Subcom- mittee to consider taking up the BLET’s technical corrections to the hours of service provision of the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008. BLET National President Dennis Pence thanked Vice President Bruno for representing the Brotherhood at the hearing. "More now than ever before, it is critical that rail labor’s voice is heard in the nation’s Capitol. BLET will continue to be there at every opportu- nity to insure that our memberships’ concerns and issues are properly repre- sented before Congress and any other involved regulatory body.”
The Texas State Legislative Board held its 13th quadrennial convention from April 5-6 in Austin, Texas. Texas State Legislative Board Chairman Terry Briggs of BLET Division 530 (Commerce, Texas) was reelected to his third full term, after being elevated to the position in 2001.

Also reelected at the meeting was Catarino Garcia of Division 566 (Del Rio, Texas) as First Vice Chairman; Jerome Jones (Division 591, Del Rio) as Alternate Second Vice Chairman; Scott Piekarski (Division 187, Fort Worth) as Secretary-Treasurer; Ben Wright (Division 189, Fort Worth) as Alternate Second Vice Chairman; and Juan Garza (Division 244, Laredo) to the Audit Committee.

"In the next four years, I will work hard to inspire our younger members to take on ever more active role in preparation for the day that they will become the leaders of our great Brotherhood," Chairman Briggs said. "I would also like to thank James Ussery and Tom Keith for their long service to the board, and hope that the newly elected members can serve the board as admirably as they did."

National President Dennis Pierce attended the meeting, along with First Vice President E. Lee Pruitt, National Secretary-Treasurer William Walpert, and Vice President & National Legislative Representative John Tolman. President Pierce and the other National Division officers spoke to the group about developments at the National Division and the continuing war on the middle class in this country.

"I would like to congratulate Terry on his re-election," President Pierce said. "He and the rest of the members of the board serve the state of Texas admirably, and I look forward to continuing to work with all of them into the future."

Also attending the meeting were Terry Todd, Arkansas State Legislative Board Chairman; Arlin Todd, Louisiana State Legislative Board Chairman; Warren Dent, General Chairman UP Southern Region; Bill Hannah, General Chairman UP Western Lines; Jim Bradford, BLET Special Representative; Ken Kroeger, BLET Coordinator of Education & Training; Serena Hogan, BLET Auxiliary Vice President & National Legislative Representative; and Mark Robb, Brotherhoods Relief and Compensation Fund.

As part of the Board’s meeting, the 36 delegates, their family members and several guests attended a rally at the Texas State Capitol in Austin to support public employee and a balanced approach to solving the budget shortfall in that state. The rally drew an estimated 6,000 people from across the state.

The Texas State Legislative Board represents 3,077 total active and 1,230 retired members in 42 Divisions.

The Conrail SAA/CSXT Northern District General Committee of Adjustment reelected Jim P. Louis by acclamation to his first full term as General Chairman at quadrennial meetings in Buffalo, N.Y., on May 18.

Brother Louis is a member of BLET Division 421 (Buffalo, N.Y.), and he joined the BLET in 1987. He began serving as General Chairman following the retirement of former GC Tom Roberts on February 28, 2009.

Matt Kronyak, Division 235 (Union City, N.J.), was elected to serve as Alternate General Chairman.

Elected by acclamation to fill out the GCA were: Vice General Chairman Pat Driscoll (Division 382, Buffalo, N.Y.); Alternate Vice General Chairman Brian Baginski (Division 601, Newark, N.J.); Secretary-Treasurer Greg Lund (Local Division 421, Buffalo, N.Y.); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Bill Nasica (Division 421, Buffalo, N.Y.).

In attendance from the National Division was: National President Dennis Pierce; First Vice President Lee Pruitt; National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert; Vice President & National Legislative Representative John Tolman; and Vice President Gil Gore.

Delegates handled a variety of issues during the long, two-day work sessions.

In addition to their regular duties, the delegates attended a hands-on Arbitration Workshop sponsored by the BLET Education & Training Department. NST Walpert, Director of the Education and Training Department, led the workshop, along with Ken Kroeger, Coordinator of the Education & Training Department, and Doug Davidson, Assistant Director of Arbitration.

Other BLET guests in attendance included: General Chairman Bob Linsey (Norfolk Southern-Northern Lines); State Legislative Board Chairman Ken Kertesz (Pennsylvania); State Legislative Board Chairman Tim Hanley (Ohio); and State Legislative Board Chairman Dave Kearsing (New York).

President Pierce addressed the delegates regarding the progress of national negotiations, Positive Train Control, on-duty cell phone usage, cab security, and a number of other issues.

"Congratulations to General Chairman Louis and all General Committee officers elected during this session," President Pierce said. "The Conrail GCA delegates should be commended for electing a hard working and dedicated team of leaders. I have every confidence that Brother Louis and his team will continue to do an excellent job of representing their membership."

Also elected to serve were: Secretary-Treasurer Dave Kearsing (New York), Pennsylvania, Ohio, and New Jersey; and State Legislative Board Chairman Dave Kearsing (New York).

The General Committee is comprised of 15 different BLET Local Districts on two properties (Conrail Shared Assets and CSXT Northern District) and represents approximately 700 members in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Massachusetts and New Jersey.

The Conrail SAA/CSXT Northern District General Committee of Adjustment quadrennial meeting in Buffalo, N.Y., on May 17.

Delegates, officers and guests at the Conrail SAA/CSXT Northern District General Committee of Adjustment quadrennial meeting in Buffalo, N.Y., on May 17.

Delegates from the Texas State Legislative Board meeting at a "War on Workers" rally in Austin.
LONG ISLAND TO HOST EUMA
Continued from page 1

On August 6, EUMA will conclude with a luxurious Manhattan dinner cruise.

A convention agenda, as well as registration forms for the convention and golf outing, are available on the BLET website, www.ble-t.org/info/meetings/euma.

For more specific convention details, including hotel registration information, members should visit the EUMA 2011 website, www.euma2011.org.

For more information, please email Arrangements Chairman Jim Brown at loco542@optonline.net, or call (631) 905-9802; or

For information about the golf tournament, please email Co-Chairman Scott Decker at sddecker44@optonline.net, or call (631) 786-8085; or

For information about the work shops, please email Co-Chairman John Bove, jbove@optonline.net, or call (631) 532-5321.

Beautiful beaches and lighthouses

Continued from page 1

In the Line of Duty

TOM ANDERSON

BROTHER TOM ANDERSON, PRESIDENT OF BLET DIVISION 642, was one of two rail workers killed in the line of duty on April 17 in a rear-end collision involving two BNSF Railway freight trains in McPherson, Iowa.

According to preliminary reports from the NTSB, a BNSF freight train collided with a BNSF maintenance train. Two locomotives and multiple cars derailed as a result of the accident.

Brother Anderson, 48, joined the BLET on January 1, 2000. Also killed in the accident was UTU conductor Patricia Hyatt.

On behalf of the BLET National Division I extend my deepest sympathies to the families of all those involved in this tragedy...

CHRISTOPHER L. CARTER

A VETERAN BLET MEMBER DROWNED on his way to work on May 1 when his car was swept away by swiftly rising floodwaters in Mayflower, Ark.

Brother Christopher L. Carter, 57, was a member of BLET Division 858 in Pine Bluff, Ark. A Union Pacific engineer, Brother Carter had been a BLET member for more than 36 years, first joining the Brotherhood on February 1, 1975.

According to Division 858 Local Chairman Jay Callaway, Brother Carter was on his way to work for the Union Pacific Railroad when the accident happened.

It was reported that Brother Carter had contacted his wife, who is a Conway Police Department Officer, after landing in the ditch at approximately 1:22 a.m. and that he had requested assistance. Investigators suspect that Brother Carter’s vehicle may have hydroplaned and left the roadway before coming to rest in the ditch between the roadway and the railroad tracks.

Due to the torrential rains that came through Faulkner County and the Mayflower area, water levels rose so quickly that when first responders arrived, Carter’s Ford Explorer was completely submerged. According to statements by the first responders, investigators believe the water was between five and six feet above the roadway when they were searching for Carter.

When the water receded, the vehicle was located and Brother Carter was found in the back seat area. He was pronounced dead at the scene at 5:59 a.m.

The Coroner has ruled the death accident from drowning as a result of area flooding.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce extended heartfelt sympathies to Brother Carter’s family and friends. He said it shows that locomotive engineers not only face danger daily in the performance of their duties, but on the way to and from work as well.

“Brother Carter was a professional locomotive engineer who was answering the call of duty when tragedy struck,” President Pierce said. “This terrible accident shows the dangers that locomotive engineers face in reporting to work at any given time and in any given weather conditions.

On behalf of the BLET National Division and all men and women of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, I extend our most heartfelt condolences to the Carter family.”

Survivors include his wife, Sharen Rene Burgess Carter, who he married April 21, 1989 in Texarkana, Texas; sons, Christopher Chase Carter and Cody Wayne Hensley; brother, Ardell Carter and wife, Lynn.; sisters, Phyllis Carter, Sharron Rice and husband, Phillip, and Renee Rowe and husband, James; grandsons, Christopher Aiden Carter; and many nieces and nephews.

Memorials are requested to the American Red Cross of Faulkner County, 1301 Museum Road, Conway, Ark. 72032.

Tanger Outlet Mall, August 4

Aquarium trip, August 4

Golf outing, August 4

Beautiful beaches and lighthouses

Splish splash water park, August 4

Hyatt Regency Long Island, site of the 2011 EUMA
WGCA elects officers

The annual meeting of the BLET Western General Chairmen’s Association (WGCA) concluded in Las Vegas on April 20 with the election of officers.

Elected to one-year terms at the three-day meeting were: Chairman Pat Williams (General Chairman, BNSF-former STL-SF); Vice-Chairman Mike Young (General Chairman, Union Pacific-Eastern District); and Secretary-Treasurer Rick Gibbons (General Chairman, BNSF-former STL-SF).

Also elected as members of the Executive Committee were Matt Wilson (General Chairman, BNSF-MRL) and John Reynolds (General Chairman, CN-Wisconsin Central). Warren Dent (General Chairman, Union Pacific-Southern Region) was elected as the Alternate Secretary-Treasurer.

“We had a very successful meeting, and I can tell you that the presentations and discussions we had were beneficial to our attendees and in the end will help them better serve their respective memberships on the various properties,” Chairman Williams said.

The Association’s membership includes the General Chairmen from the Western portion of the United States and meets for the purpose of discussing a wide-range of issues. They heard informational presentations from the Railroad Retirement Board, the Federal Railroad Administration, and BLET Designated Counsel.

BLE National President Dennis Pierce, First Vice President Lee Pruitt, National Secretary Treasurer Bill Walpert, and Vice President & National Legislative Representative John Tolman all appeared before the group and made detailed reports.

President Pierce congratulated all officers on their election and thanked them for the opportunity to address the body. **

WGCA Chairman Pat Williams (seated) and First Vice President Lee Pruitt

From left: VP Marcus Ruef, President Dennis Pierce and VP Gil Gore

President Pierce addresses the assembled General Chairmen

GC Matt Wilson and 1st VGC Steve Bratka (BNSF/MRL GCA), and 1st VGC Mark Chenchar and and GC Mike Young (UP-Eastern District GCA)

GC Bruce MacArthur and 1st VGC Mike Elsberry (UP-Northern Region GCA)

Transportation Workers protecting each other since 1910

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4000 Town Center, Suite 1250, Southfield, MI 48075-1407
phone: 800.516.0010 | fax: 877.635.1910
email: lecmpa1910@lecmpa.org | web: www.lecmpa.org
Confer appointed BLET Special Rep, Director of Organizing

K

ent N. Confer, a member of BLET Division 623 (McCook, Neb.), has been appointed as a Spe-

cial Representative and Director of Organizing by BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce. He

will continue to serve as the BLET’s National Mobiliza-

tion Coordinator for the Western United States.

Brother Confer hired out on the Burlington Northern in 1973 and earned promotions to locomotive engineer in 1979. He has held continuous membership in Di-

vision 623 since joining the Brotherhood on May 1, 1979.

“Kent has our full support at the National Divi-
sion and I am sure he will be an asset to the Organiza-
tion in his new position just as he has been in the past,” President Pierce said.

In his new position, Brother Confer will be responsible for coordinating all efforts for the BLET Na-

tional Division. He will also coordinate all BLET mobiliza-

tion efforts west of the Mississippi River and will handle other duties as assigned by the National President.

Brother Confer was elected Secretary-Treasurer of his Division in 1980, later winning decisions to serve as Di-

vision President and Local Chairman. He has also re-

presented Division 623 as Delegate to six BLET nation-

al conventions and served as 1st Alternate General Vice Chairman on the BNSF/MRL General Committee of Adjustment.

Known across the BNSF system for his dedication to safety, Brother Confer has served on the BNSF System Cap-

Committee since 1995, and has held the position of Labor Co-Chairman since 2007. He was also appointed BLET Safety Coordinator in 2002, a position he held until April 1, 2011.

He has been a member of the BLET’s National Mo-

bilization Team since 1997, and has served as BNSF/MRL CCA Coordinator and BNSF System Coordinator.

Brother Confer and his wife Anne have been mar-

ried for 38 years. The couple has three adult children and two grand children (with two more grandkids on the way). #BLET