



NEWS

JULY
2005

PUBLISHED BY THE BLET, A DIVISION OF THE RAIL CONFERENCE, INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS

BLET, Teamsters leave AFL-CIO

New Change to Win Coalition will devote millions of dollars to organizing

(BLET Editor's Note: Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa issued the following statement on July 25.)

Good afternoon. This is an historic day. I join my brother Andy Stern and the great SEIU in a joint announcement. I am here today to announce that the General Executive Board of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters has unanimously voted to withdraw our membership from the AFL-CIO.

This decision has been reached through a lengthy and thoughtful process. It has been a difficult decision to make and we do not take this step lightly.

The Teamsters General Executive Board is directly elected by our 1.4 million members to chart the course of our great union. And after months of discussion and deliberation, we have made our decision as a matter of principle and have decided on a new course of action.

We submitted, in good faith, proposals to dramatically change the direction of the AFL-CIO to stem the losses that we have endured over the past de-

cade. We proposed that the AFL-CIO embark on a new course of action that would not only protect our existing Teamster members and their families, but lead to thousands of new working men and women having the opportunity to organize into a strong union that would give them the chance to achieve the American dream — to own their own home, send their kids to college and plan a strong retirement.

In our view, we must have more union members in order to change the political climate that is undermining workers' rights in this country.

The AFL-CIO has chosen the opposite approach. (The July 25) decision means that we have chosen a course of growth and strength for the American Labor Movement based on organizing new members. We have partnered with seven strong and progressive unions in the Change to Win coalition to organize the unorganized and create real power for the working families of America.

Earlier (on July 25) the leadership of the Change To Win coalition met with our respective organizing directors to set in motion a process of building larger

Don Hahs statement on disaffiliation — Page 8

scale strategic organizing capacity. This is just the beginning of a new era for America's workers.

And let me be clear, the Teamsters will remain the bulwark of the labor movement. Striking workers, no matter what union they belong to, can always count on the Teamsters for support and assistance. That is our history and tradition and we will never waiver from our proud role as defenders of America's working families.

We will continue to work with our brothers and sisters in the Building Trades, in State Federations and Central Labor Councils to achieve justice for all working people. But let me be clear, our coalition will not allow corporate America to pit one union against another to the detriment of our members and their families.

We wish our brothers and sisters that remain in the AFL-CIO the best of luck in their efforts. We pledge cooperation with the AFL-CIO on all the fronts that affect working families. •

War for Amtrak funding not over

By a vote of 17-4, the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation approved S. 1516, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2005, on July 28.

The Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act is a six-year reauthorization bill (FY 2006-2011), which provides for Amtrak's capital and operating needs to maintain current operations, upgrade equipment, and return the Northeast Corridor (NEC) to a state of good repair. Over the life of the bill, Amtrak's operating subsidy is reduced by 40 percent through cost cutting, restructuring, and reform while capital funding is increased. The bill creates an intercity passenger rail capital grant program for the States.

Senator Trent Lott (R-MS), Chairman of the Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Subcommittee, sponsored the bill along with Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), Committee Chairman Ted Stevens (R-AK), Co-Chairman Daniel Inouye (D-HI), Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) and Senator John D. Rockefeller IV (D-WV).

"This is a new, innovative option for Amtrak funding," Senator Lott said.

The proposal would cut Amtrak's operating subsidies, but would increase the amount the federal government gives Amtrak to maintain its infrastructure. Other Senators said that this bill was proof that this Congress is committed to Amtrak funding.

"Every other country gives their passenger railroad subsidies," Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) said.

Senator Conrad Burns (R-MT), an Amtrak supporter, said that there had "never been a Congress that has had a commitment to the rail carrier." Senator Burns also made a commitment to the locomotive engineers on Amtrak.

"We need a commitment to the public, right down to the people who drive the trains," Senator Burns said.

"This is the first time in a long time that Congress has made a commitment to long-term funding," said BLET National President Don M. Hahs.

It would be hard for Amtrak to attract enough private financing to make up for all the subsidies, and it would be very difficult to win private investment in the company's long-distance routes.

This passenger rail reauthoriza-

tion bill centers around three themes: reform and accountability, adequate funding for intercity passenger rail, and passenger rail service improvement.

The bill would restructure Amtrak's debt, now about \$1.7 billion. It also would require the company to provide periodic performance reports on some of its long-distance lines.

While introducing an amendment to the bill, Senator Hutchison noted the need for a commitment to a national railroad system and hoped for further cooperation of the freight railroads.

Senator Inouye noted that even though Amtrak does not run in his state, he still supports funding for the carrier.

"In Hawaii, we have a narrow gauge railroad that runs for a mile and a half, and in spite of this, I continue to support Amtrak," he said.

The details of bill, consisting of over 110 pages, and including more than two dozen amendments that were introduced during mark-up, are being reviewed by the BLET's National Legislative Department. •

Members vote on Division size initiative

As part of the merger document with the Teamsters, BLET members will consider a constitutional provision this month that may impact the size of local divisions.

In question is Section 37(b) of the Brotherhood's bylaws, which calls for a membership vote on whether they want to keep divisions at their current size or merge them with other divisions if active membership in the division falls below 25.

Divisions that have less than 25 members are protected by a grandfather clause contained in Section 37(b), identified as Note 1. If members vote to remove this protection, then divisions with less than 25 members may be merged with other divisions on the same seniority district or a division under the same general committee of adjustment. Currently, there are 94 divisions that have less than 25 members.

The BLET National Division is required to put this question to a membership vote by Note 2 of Section 37(b).

Section 37(b) reads as follows:
"37 (b) If the membership of any di-

See Section 37(b), Page 8

BLET NEWS

President Hahs letter to all NS trainmen

Looking toward the future will benefit members more than dwelling on the past

(BLET Editor's Note: The following is the text of a letter sent to all Norfolk Southern conductors and trainmen by BLET National President Don M. Hahs on June 16.)

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Over the past month or so, outlandish and outrageous statements, web-postings, DVDs and mailings from the UTU concerning the BLET's A-card campaign on the Norfolk Southern property have rained down on you. **Let's be clear, this campaign started because many of you approached the BLET and said you no longer wanted UTU representing you. You wanted what we got when we merged with the Teamsters, the largest and most powerful transportation union in the world.**

The communications you have received from UTU have largely dealt with the issues in the past. Look, we can debate and burden you with correspondence concerning the BLE's issue on the Soo Line Railroad in 1994 or the UTU's signing of the infamous Halloween Agreement of 1985, from now until doomsday.

The fact of the matter is the past is the past and there is not a tinker's damn to be done about it. **We are concerned about the future.** The BLET has a tradition of forward thinking. That tradition will continue.

You are looking for better representation by a union that will fight for a more secure future rather than one that engages in senseless debates about the past. **THE BLET TEAMSTERS IS THAT UNION.**

If you sign an A-card for representation by the BLET-Teamsters and elect the BLET-Teamsters as your representative, will it solve all your problems? The answer is: IT WILL BE A DAMN FINE START.

When the BLET begins representing you as conductors and trainmen, you will decide whether you want to

have your own general committee of adjustment and your own divisions or whether you want to be a part of the existing structure of the BLET. **That decision will be up to you.**

Regarding existing crew consist agreements; those agreements remain in full force and effect when the BLET becomes your representative. **ONLY NEGOTIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP RATIFICATION CAN CHANGE THOSE AGREEMENTS.** *Only conductors and trainmen will vote on the ratification of an agreement that affects conductors and trainmen.* Therefore, **if there is any change in crew consist agreements, only your votes on ratification will change it.**

No union, especially in the rail industry, can guarantee you everything you desire. However, **the BLET-Teamsters has already provided a new approach to bargaining with the carriers through the development of the Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition (RLBC).** The seven unions of the RLBC represent nearly 85,000 rail workers. Since the 1930s, the NCCC has assumed master contract bargaining on behalf of the majority of the carriers. **For the first time in decades, rail unions are joining in a coalition to make sure our members get a fair contract.** By presenting a unified front at the bargaining table, members of the Rail Coalition have taken an important step in combating rail management's divide and conquer bargaining strategy.

The BLET-Teamsters are using every resource of the nation's largest and most powerful transportation union in this round of bargaining. We will continue to do so in all future endeavors on behalf of our members. Everything the BLET has asked of the Teamsters, they have provided tenfold.

Now, the central question for you, as a UTU member, is: **ARE YOU STRONGER STANDING ALONE OR**

"By presenting a unified front at the bargaining table, members of the Rail Coalition have taken an important step in combating rail management's divide and conquer bargaining strategy."

— BLET National President Don M. Hahs

ARE YOU STRONGER STANDING UNITED WITH OTHER RAIL UNIONS IN THE TEAMSTERS RAIL CONFERENCE? The Teamsters have the most powerful negotiating skills and the most effective political power of any union in the country. Why not be a part of that POWER! Rail labor needs to stand together, protecting each other rather than being whipsawed by the real enemy – the Carriers – whose profits are measured in billions of dollars.

WHY THE TEAMSTERS?

Because the Teamsters' history of negotiating strong contracts is unparalleled. Teamster contracts have among the highest wages, best benefits, safest workplace and other standards.

Because, the Teamsters have power! Political Power. Negotiating Power. Financial power. Organizing power. Research Power. Member Power.

The Teamsters are America's strongest and largest transportation union. With 1.4 Million members in 500 Locals and 40 Joint Councils, the Teamsters have extraordinary financial resources — \$140 million a year at the International level and \$550 million a year at the Local union level. The Rail Conference is a key component of the Teamsters' vision of a comprehensive transportation union – rails and roads, ports and planes.

Contrary to popular belief, the Teamsters are not mostly a truckers'

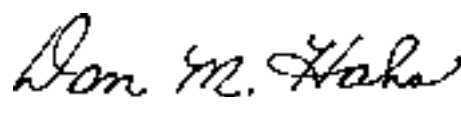
union. In fact, truck drivers represent less than 10 percent of Teamsters members. **The Teamsters represent workers from a wide cut of America's transportation workforce, including workers in rail, ports, air cargo, passenger air, trucking and package delivery.**

The Teamsters dedicates \$15 million annually to organizing and conducts more NLRB and NMB elections every year than any other union in the U.S. Over the past ten years, the Teamsters membership has remained stable, while other unions' membership has declined.

The Teamster Union is this nation's most powerful political union, bar none. Member power merged with financial power translates into political power.

The future for railroad workers now is uncertain. The BLET-Teamsters promise to use every resource available to provide you with the best representation and best collective bargaining agreements possible. We feel that this can be better accomplished using the strength of the Teamsters and the unity of the Rail labor Bargaining Coalition (RLBC). **Coming together, staying united, we are all stronger.**

In Solidarity,



National President

BLET member reminds UTU leader of reality

(BLET Editor's note: What follows are portions of a letter from retired Norfolk Southern engineer and BLET Member Chris Kopf to UTU National Legislative Director Jim Brunkenhoefer.)

Mr. James Brunkenhoefer
UTU National Legislative Director
304 Pennsylvania Ave, S.E.
Washington, DC 20003-1130

Dear Mr. Brunkenhoefer:

After reading from the United Transportation Union web site, and from a circular that they put out, I felt the need to rebut some of the things that they have said.

As you know I was a member of both the UTU and the BLE and double headed whenever I wasn't serving as

an officer of the union. My feeling was, if I wanted a voice I had better be a member. I was a UTU-E Local Chairman for a good many years on the Penn Central Railroad and on Conrail before switching to the BLE. I switched for good, after seeing first hand how craft autonomy worked within the UTU regarding engine service members.

The UTU says, "Crew-consist and remote control agreements protect UTU members from total elimination via the adverse effects of new technology." The truth is, the October 31, 1985 UTU agreement allows engineers who can't hold an engineer's position due to the adverse effects of new technology to bump onto a trainman's position. If RC operators are doing more work than the engineers they replaced, shouldn't the RC operators



make at least as much as the engineers that they replaced? The only person the UTU has ever protected was the pre-85 trainman.

History is clear, the UTU has bargained away the craft and class of firemen, and bargained away the jobs of flagmen, brakemen, and engineers. They now want to roll conductors and engineers into a bastard craft that is neither conductor nor engineer. They are willing to sell engineers' and conductors' rights and seniority away in order to be the sole representative for whoever or whatever is left.

If the NS trainmen elect to be represented by the BLET, they will be able

to enjoy self determination for their own craft. They may choose to have their own general committees if they so wish. Trainmen will have their own local chairman, who will address issues that are unique to their craft. They will have the right to vote on their own contract. The door is now open for all rail labor to join together in one strong union.

Fraternally Yours,

C.F. Kopf
BLET Division 4
Toledo, Ohio •

BMWED member responds to UTU distortions

(BLET Editor's Note: The following is a copy of a letter written by a rank-and-file member of the BMWED to UTU National Legislative Director James Brunkenhoefer.)

Mr. James Brunkenhoefer
UTU National Legislative Director
304 Pennsylvania Ave, S.E.
Washington, DC 20003-1130

Dear Mr. Brunkenhoefer:

I have read your missive posted on the UTU web page titled, "Teamsters Threaten Rail Retirement, FELA." I am dismayed that you and the former carrier official acting as a "spin doctor" at UTU would so misrepresent the facts simply to take a cheap shot at other unions representing over 70,000 rail workers. Your unprovoked attack against the BMWED is little more than the desperate act of a desperate union leader who has lost his way and his focus.

First of all, to set the record straight, BMWED was not "absorbed" into the Teamsters, and neither was the BLET. BMWED members nationwide voted by an overwhelming 76% to merge with the Teamsters and join the Rail Conference. The vote of the membership of BLET was even higher, with 81% voting in favor of merging with the Teamsters. Yes, this is the same BLE membership that twice voted overwhelmingly to reject a merger with the United Transportation Union. With the

kind of anti-union propaganda coming out of your office, I can fully understand why the membership of BLE twice voted against a merger with the UTU.

You also misrepresent the BMWED position on Railroad Retirement reform. Yes, I and other members of BMWED directed our leadership to oppose the framework of Railroad Retirement reform because the membership of BMWED could not support a proposal that gave away \$450 million of *our* pension money to the railroad carriers. I believed then, and still believe, that there was a better deal to be had that could have included full retirement at age 58 or 59. My personal viewpoint remains that we could have gotten more for our \$450 million, but UTU evidently thinks differently about the value of the memberships' pension money.

Additionally, if you took the time to actually read General President James Hoffa's position on Social Security reform, it would have been clear to you, as it was to me, that the General President praised the fact that Social Security solvency is finally being debated. Mr. Hoffa said that retirement for working Americans is in jeopardy, and that the nation must preserve and strengthen Social Security and institute meaningful pension law reform to protect the retirement of millions of Ameri-

can workers. Of course, you and your handlers could not let these facts interfere with your diatribe against the Teamster's leadership and its Rail Conference affiliates, BMWED and BLET.

You Sir are out of touch with the needs of your members. UTU led the give away of over \$450 million of members' pension funds to the railroads. UTU recently offered the National Mediation Board a 50/50 split in proposed arbitration fees while the rest of

Rail Labor testified in favor of the continuation of government funded arbitration. UTU also proposed a deal with the carriers to "eliminate frivolous lawsuits" under FELA, again indicating a willingness to give away the store and undercut the rights of rail workers. And UTU's grab for remote control has led to more UTU members being put out of work as displaced Locomotive Engineers leave the locomotive cab and take over the remote control boxes on the ground. So much for the legacy of the "voice" of transportation labor.

I am a proud member of the Teamsters and a proud member of the BMWED Division. We are now part of the strongest and most politically influential transportation union in North America, the 1.4 million members strong International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Together with our merger partners, we are making Rail Labor history while UTU is slowly fading away.

Our President, and the President of BLET, sacrificed their personal positions and titles in order to strengthen their respective memberships through merger with the IBT. All the while, your Presidents were standing in some back alley extorting bags of cash from UTU-designated law firms, jeopardizing FELA for injured and deceased rail workers nationwide. Thus, while UTU's leadership remains shamed and indicted, our leadership remains strong and united.

With over 25 years remaining in my railroad career, I am disappointed that the UTU has fallen victim to the carriers' "Divide and Conquer" strategy of turning our focus away from them! Instead of concentrating on our solidarity you've chosen to waste your time and resources on the divisive issues raised in your June 5 attack on our growing partnership. As I've been in the midst of organizing a local chairmen's association in Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan for all railroad crafts I realize that your letter goes against all that I've learned about Unionism!

I am optimistic about my future and the future of my union. Given the current state of affairs, can the UTU make the same claim?

Sincerely,

Matthew A. Weaver
Proud Trackman, BMWED



BLET wins duty of fair representation lawsuit

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen has been completely vindicated in a duty of fair representation lawsuit brought against the union by a Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) engineer who was dissatisfied with the outcome of his discipline case.

According to BLET National Division Attorney Tom Brennan, the former BNSF engineer from San Bernardino, Calif., filed a lawsuit in federal district court in Los Angeles in February 2004 against BNSF and BLET. Brother Brennan reports that the former engineer was fired in March 2002 for a stop signal violation, and that his firing was upheld at arbitration before a Public Law Board (PLB), due in large part to his prior record of operating rule violations.

The former engineer claimed that BNSF discriminated against him because of his race and that BLET

violated its duty of fair representation even though he had acknowledged throughout the grievance and appeal process that he was satisfied with the representation provided by the union.

"The record in this case clearly shows that every BLET officer involved with protecting this member's rights — including the former and current local chairmen of Division 662 who handled the case on the property (Al Nerkowski and Rudy Borrego), as well as General Chairman Pat Williams, who presented the case to the PLB — did an excellent job," Brother Brennan said. "Instead of filing this ridiculous lawsuit, this member should be thanking these officers for working so hard to save his job in spite of his terrible work record."

The union vigorously defended its position in court. Prior to trial, both BNSF and BLET filed motions to dismiss the case. Before the court ruled on those motions, the plaintiff agreed to settle with the com-

pany and the union, receiving only a nominal amount from BNSF and no money at all from the BLET.

"I could not in good conscience authorize payment of even a nominal amount to this plaintiff after he made unfounded attacks against the credibility and character of the union officers on BNSF and this organization," Brennan said. "If his plan was to force the union to pay him money in exchange for dropping the lawsuit and avoiding negative publicity, he was sadly mistaken. This outcome completely vindicated the representational efforts made by our dedicated officers on behalf of this member."

Brennan offered a special note of thanks to retired BLET General Counsel Harold Ross and Local Counsel Ira L. Gottlieb of Geffner & Bush in Burbank, Calif., for all of their fine work in bringing this case to a satisfactory conclusion. •

The James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund Essay Contest

James R. Hoffa became a Teamster member in 1934, served as General President for 14 years, and, in recognition of his tireless service to the Union and its members, was honored as General President Emeritus for life.

At the November 1999 General Executive Board meeting, General Secretary-Treasurer C. Thomas Keegel presented a resolution to establish a new scholarship fund in recognition of Hoffa's outstanding contributions to the Union.

The James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund Essay Contest will award scholarships annually to 50 students.

Children and grandchildren of eligible IBT, GCC, BLET and BMWED members that are enrolled full-time in an undergraduate college, university or college program, or technical or vocational program, who will be 23 years old or younger by September 30, 2005 and

have not been previous recipients of an award from the James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund are eligible to apply.

Please see the link below for a PDF of the application form which notes all of the application requirements and procedures.

The completed application and essay must be received by the Scholarship Fund office no later than September 30, 2005. We cannot allow any extensions to this deadline.

The 2005 Essay Topic: Describe a brief history of your Teamster parents' or grandparents' involvement in their Local Union. How it has affected your family and why it is important to you.

The James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund Essay Contest application form:

<http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/EssayApplication05.pdf>

SOUTHEASTERN MEETING ASSOCIATION



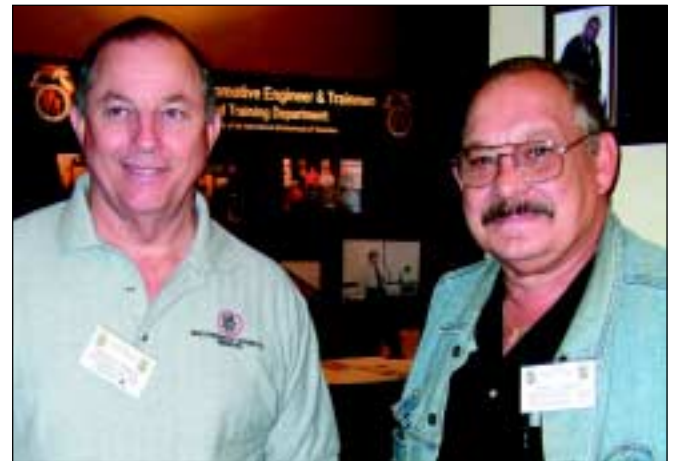
BLET National President Don M. Hahs



BLET Member Rod Sanders, right, performs at the 78th annual SMA with members of his bluegrass band, The Blue Valley Boys. Brother Sanders belongs to BLET Division 332 in Montgomery, Ala.



From left: Grand International Auxiliary (GIA) Treasurer Bettye Dollar; GIA International President Onita Wayland; and GIA Third Vice-President Sereena Hogan.



From left: Marion F. Patrick and Fred Allison of BLET Division 332 in Montgomery, Alabama.



SMA Secretary-Treasurer Ronnie Perkins.



BLET members discuss Brotherhood business in a closed session with BLET National Division officers.



Left: Brother Tommy Mayne, Chairman of the Kentucky State Legislative Board.



Right: W.M. "Gene" Myhan, Secretary-Treasurer of Division 198 (Chattanooga, Tenn.), and Jimmy Brittain, Legislative Representative of BLET Division 473 (Nashville, Tenn.).

MONTGOMERY, ALA.



Brother David Bowen, Local Chairman of BLET Division 332 (Montgomery, Ala.), served as Chairman of the 78th annual BLET/GIA Southeastern Meeting Association (SMA). Here, Brother Bowen distributes raffle prizes with the help of his right-hand man, grandson Morgan Popwell. The SMA was held at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Montgomery, Ala.



No one gets into a closed meeting during the SMA without proper identification. Here, Brother Chuck Warder, Secretary-Treasurer of BLET Division 190 (Huntington, W.Va.), verifies the identity of Brother K.L. Jackson, Local Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer of BLET Division 120 (Kansas City, Mo.).



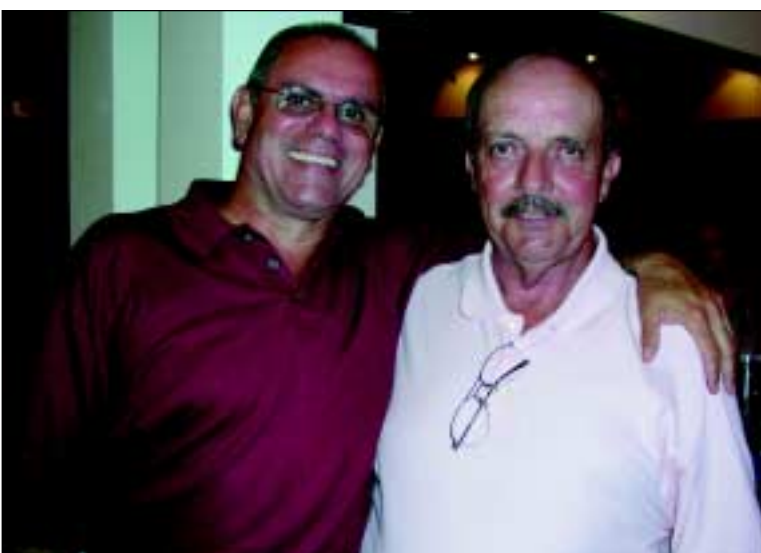
From left: Pittman Morris, BLET Division 332 (Montgomery); Cindy Peterman, Vice-President of BLET Division 332 (Montgomery); and T.E. "Ted" Hawkins, Secretary-Treasurer of BLET Division 84 (Greenville, S.C.).



BLET National Division officers field membership questions during a closed session. Standing, from left: BLET National Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walpert; BLET Vice-President Paul T. Sorrow; and BLET Vice-President Lee Pruitt.



Left: Ladies participated in a bead workshop during this year's SMA. From left: GIA member Bobbie Clarke and GIA Guide DeLaine Morris.



Carlos A. Lizarraga, Local Chairman of BLET Division 106 (Muncie, Ind.), and retired Norfolk Southern General Chairman Larry W. Sykes.



At a tour of the Montgomery Zoo, from left: Caitlyn Popwell, Brittany Popwell, Athan Aftosmes, Morgan Popwell, Kamiel Hogan and Karlee Hawkins.

Hahs: Increase funding for rail security training

Terrorist attacks in London reveal need for improved security in the U.S.; Senate bill needs support

(BLET Editor's Note: BLET National President Don Hahs issued the following statement in the wake of the July 7 terrorist bombings in London.)

On behalf of the 55,000 men and women of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, I extend condolences to the families and victims of the tragic July 7 terrorist bombings in London.

Great Britain stood side-by-side with America after our country was attacked by cowardly terrorists on 9/11, and we are honor and duty-bound to support our British allies in the wake of 7/7.

As British Prime Minister Tony Blair said, "our determination to defend our values and our way of life is greater than (terrorists') determination to cause death and destruction to innocent people." We in the BLET embrace those remarks as they reflect the attitude and spirit of the American people in the war on terrorism.

The fact that the 7/7 bombings focused on

London's rail and mass transit system drives our determination even farther. In 2004, terrorists targeted the rail system in Madrid, killing nearly 200 innocent victims.

These terrorist attacks should serve as a warning to the railroad industry in the United States. We in the BLET are determined not to let the same thing happen here in the United States.

Let this serve as a call to rail management to work together and improve our readiness to face and fight these terrorists. The greatest weapon in this war is preparation and constant vigilance.

Let us work together for the protection of our country by increasing rail security funding and education. Let us work together to pass legislation that will provide security training to the workers on the front lines in this war — the locomotive engineers and trainmen who operate the trains crisscrossing American soil.

Currently in Congress, Senator Joseph R. Biden

Jr. (D-Del.) is sponsoring a rail security bill that would provide a \$10 million training fund for rail workers who handle hazardous materials.

The Hazardous Materials Vulnerability Reduction Act of 2005 would require the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to develop a comprehensive strategy for handling the transportation of the most dangerous chemicals by rail and would work with state and local officials to determine which areas are "high threat corridors."

The bill — while not a cure all for the security gaps in our nation's rail system — is a step in the right direction. By working together, and by boosting the training of our members on the front lines, we can beat these terrorists.

As Sir Winston Churchill said in 1941, "We shall not fail or falter; we shall not weaken or tire. Neither the sudden shock of battle nor the long-drawn trials of vigilance and exertion will wear us down. Give us the tools and we will finish the job." •

RRB submits annual financial reports to Congress

Recommends no financing changes as Railroad Retirement system thrives, remains strong

The Railroad Retirement Board is required by law to submit annual reports to Congress on the financial condition of the railroad retirement system and the railroad unemployment insurance system. These reports must also include recommendations for any financing changes which may be advisable in order to ensure the solvency of the systems. In June, the Board submitted its 2005 reports on the railroad retirement and unemployment insurance systems.

The following questions and answers summarize the findings of these reports.

1. What were the assets of the railroad retirement and railroad unemployment insurance systems last year?

As of September 30, 2004, total railroad retirement system assets, comprising assets managed by the National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust and the railroad retirement system accounts at the Treasury, equaled some \$26 billion. The Trust was established by the Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2001 to manage and invest railroad retirement assets. The cash balance of the railroad unemployment insurance system was \$90.2 million at the end of fiscal year 2004.

2. What was the overall finding of the 2005 report on the financial condition of the railroad retirement system?

The 2005 report, which addressed railroad retirement financing during the next 25 years, was generally favorable, concluding that, barring a sudden,

unanticipated, large decrease in railroad employment or substantial investment losses, the railroad retirement system will experience no cash-flow problems during the next 25 years. However, the 2005 report also indicated that the long-term stability of the system is still questionable. Under its current financing structure, actual levels of railroad employment and investment return over the coming years will largely determine whether corrective action is necessary.

3. What methods were used in forecasting the financial condition of the railroad retirement system?

The 2005 report projected the various components of income and outgo of the railroad retirement system under three employment assumptions for the 25 calendar years 2005-2029. The projections of these components were combined and the investment income calculated to produce the projected balances in the railroad retirement accounts at the end of each projection year.

Projecting income and outgo under optimistic, moderate and pessimistic employment assumptions, the 2005 report indicated no cash-flow problems occur throughout the 25-year projection period under any of these assumptions.

4. How do the results of the 2005 report compare with those of the 2004 report?

The 2005 report is an improvement over last year's report. The 2004 report indicated that no cash-flow problems occurred throughout the 25-year projection period under the optimistic and

moderate employment assumptions. They did arise, however, under the pessimistic assumption, although not until 2026.

The projected account balances are higher than in last year's report due largely to the actual investment return of approximately 11.5 percent exceeding the expected investment return of 8 percent in calendar year 2004, along with actual 2004 average employment exceeding the range projected for 2004.

5. Did the 2005 report on the railroad retirement system recommend any financing changes?

The report did not recommend any railroad retirement financing changes. The payroll tax adjustment mechanism provided by the 2001 legislation will automatically increase or decrease tax rates in response to changes in fund balance. Even under a pessimistic employment assumption, this mechanism is expected to prevent cash-flow problems for the duration of the 25-year projection period.

6. What were the findings of the 2005 report on the financial condition of the railroad unemployment insurance system?

The Board's 2005 railroad unemployment insurance financial report was also generally favorable. Even as maximum benefit rates increase 39 percent (from \$56 to \$78) from 2004 to 2015, experience-based contribution rates are expected to keep the unemployment insurance system solvent, except for small, short-term cash-flow problems in 2007 and 2008. However, projections show a quick repayment of the loans even under the most pessimistic assumption.

Unemployment levels are the single most significant factor affecting the fi-

ancial status of the railroad unemployment insurance system. However, the system's experience-rating provisions, which adjust contribution rates for changing benefit levels, and its surcharge trigger for maintaining a minimum balance help to ensure financial stability in the advent of adverse economic conditions.

Under experience-rating provisions, each employer's contribution rate is determined by the Railroad Retirement Board on the basis of benefit payments made to the railroad's employees. The report predicted that, even under the most pessimistic assumption, the average employer contribution rate remains well below the maximum throughout the projection period.

The report also predicted that the 1.5 percent surcharge in effect in calendar year 2005 will likely be followed by no surcharge for calendar year 2006 and a 1.5 percent surcharge for calendar year 2007. A 2.5 percent surcharge is expected for calendar year 2008.

7. What methods were used to evaluate the financial condition of the railroad unemployment insurance system?

The economic and employment assumptions used in the unemployment insurance report corresponded to those used in the report on the retirement system. Projections were made for various components of income and outgo under each of three employment assumptions, but for the period 2005-2015, rather than a 25-year period.

8. Did the 2005 report on the railroad unemployment insurance system recommend any financing changes to the system?

No financing changes were recommended at this time by the report. •



IN THE LINE OF DUTY**Mark W. Cain and Arthur L. "Buddy" Irby**

BLET Division 203 (Jackson, Miss.) members Mark Cain and Arthur "Buddy" Irby were killed on July 10, 2005, when their CN/IC locomotives collided head-on in Anding, Miss.

Two other crew members were also killed in the collision. Conductors Shannon Purvis, 21, of Puckett, Miss., and Samuel Jones Sr., 58, of Jackson, Miss., were both members of the United Transportation Union.

Brother Cain, 51, joined the BLE on November 1, 1986. He is survived by his wife, Genny Cain of Kosciusko, Miss.; his parents, Paul and Frankie Cain of Sallis, Miss.; a son, Brian Cain of Sallis; five step sons, Timothy Bohrer, Jordan Bohrer, Joshua Bohrer, Jonathan Bohrer, and Josiah Bohrer, all of Kosciusko; a daughter, Lisa Burr of Oxford, Miss.; two step daughters, Amanda Bohrer and Alyssa Bohrer, both of Kosciusko; two brothers, David Cain of Durant and Arthur F. Cain of Sallis; and two sisters, Paula Cain Sawyer of Fredericktown, Mo. and Glenda Dodd of Sallis.

Brother Cain and his wife Genny were married on June 4 — just five weeks before the accident.

Brother Irby, 58, joined the BLE on October 1, 1973. He is survived by his wife, Becky L. Irby of Sandhill, Miss.; his parents, Marbo and Bettie Irby of Sandhill; three daughters, Stacy Trest and her husband, Rodney of Sandhill, Susan Irby of Sandhill and Sandra Shivers and her husband, Shannon of Richland; one son, David "Bo" Irby of Ft., Hood, Texas; one sister, Margaret Watts and her husband, Jacky of Sandhill; two grandsons, Taylor Trest and Connor Shivers; and one granddaughter, Shelby Trest.

Brother Irby served over 20 years as a BLE local chairman. He was a Mason, a member of the Masonic Lodge in Pelahatchie and was a member of the Miss. National Guard for eight years.

Together, Brothers Irby (39 years) and Cain (29 years) had 68 years of total railroad service.

"All railroad workers are deeply saddened by this terrible tragedy," said BLET National President Don M. Hahs. "The lives of these two Brothers and the two other members of their crews were taken far too early. I send my deepest condolences to their families, friends and co-workers."

The accident occurred about 4:15 a.m. when a northbound train and southbound train collided on the north side of the bridge on Anding Oil City Road.

A total of 17 cars were derailed, including seven that were carrying combustible materials. Fire and heat hampered rescue and recovery efforts for nearly two days.

The northbound train from New Orleans, on its way to Iowa, had 137 cars and four locomotives and the southbound train from Champaign, Ill., to Ferguson, had 107 cars and two locomotives.

The BLET Safety Task Force is assisting the National Transportation Safety Board in its ongoing investigation to determine the cause of the accident.

The BLET flag was lowered atop the Standard Building in memory of the two Brothers.

"These brothers, their crew members and their families are in our thoughts and prayers," said President Hahs. "Railroad safety is such an important issue to our organization and this accident makes it all the more urgent."

Donations may be made in Brother Cain's name to Stump Ridge Cemetery Fund, c/o Wayne Bishop, Rt. 2, Box 72, Sallis, MS 39160.

Memorials can be made in Brother Irby's name to Leesburg Baptist Church, Building Fund, c/o Wesley Parker, 796 Hwy. 481, Morton, MS 39117. •

FRA rule calls for improved 'black box' standards

The survivability of railroad locomotive event recorders or "black boxes" will be improved to enhance the quality of post-accident investigations as a result of a final rule entered into the Federal Register on June 30.

Under the rule, developed by the Federal Railroad Administration through the Railroad Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC) process, event recorders will be hardened to prevent the loss of data from exposure to fire, impact shock, fluid immersion, and other potential damage resulting from train accidents. Older event recorders that rely on magnetic tape for data storage will be phased out over the next four years.

Currently, locomotive event recorders capture many pieces of information, including train speed, use of automatic air brakes, throttle position and cab signal indications. The new rule requires that new data required be captured by event recorders, includ-

ing horn activation, cruise control functions and train control operating directives sent to the engineer's onboard display.

Through the RSAC process, the BLET did a tremendous amount of work on this project to ensure that the final rule addresses many concerns locomotive engineers and trainmen have regarding new technologies in the industry.

The FRA is amending its existing regulations in four major ways:

- By requiring that a new locomotive have an event recorder with a "hardened" memory module, proven by a requirement that the memory module preserve stored data throughout a sequence of prescribed tests;
- By requiring that this event recorder on a new locomotive collect certain additional types of information;
- By improving standards for rail companies to

inspect, test and maintain all event recorders; and

- By requiring the phasing out, over a four-year period, of event recorders on existing locomotives that use magnetic tape as a data storage medium and their replacement with event recorders with a certified survivable version of its previous event recorder.

The rule requires railroads to keep data stored on event recorders involved in accidents for one year, up from the current 30-day requirement.

This regulation has been developed over the past eight years through the RSAC process and has been driven by recommendations from the NTSB.

The Final Rule effective date is October 1, 2005. The final rule is available on the FRA's web site at www.fra.dot.gov and in docket number FRA-2003-16357 at dms.dot.gov.

It is also available on the BLET website at: <http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/EventRecorderFinalRule.pdf> •

BLET seeks human factors input on Cardinal rule violations

Program seeks to eliminate root cause of incidents; Guarantees privacy of members who volunteer

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen is asking its members to participate in a voluntary program that will gather data to help eliminate the root causes of common railroad rule violations.

Members are asked to fill out a "Human Factors/Circadian Rhythms Questionnaire" if they are involved in a "Cardinal rule" violation (signals, speed, braking and track occupancy) as prescribed in 49 CFR Part 240.

All information gathered from the questionnaire will be kept confidential.

Former BLE International Vice President Bill Keppen is spearheading the program.

"This is a tool originally designed to collect human factors data when train crews are involved in accidents," Brother Keppen said. "Now it's being used to gather data on engineers involved in rule violations."

"Rule violations and train accidents are sometimes the result of human errors or performance lapses. If it is possible to identify the root causes of lapses and errors, then it may be possible to reduce rule violation and accidents."

The questionnaire is designed to collect work/sleep, human factor and demographic information. Among other information, participants are asked to

provide seven or 10 days of sleep information, if possible.

"Truthful and forthright answers to questions are essential to the success of this project," Brother Keppen said. "If our members are really concerned about safety, then they have a personal responsibility to fill out these questionnaires and respond. If we don't get the data, then we not going to fix problems like train line ups and staff shortages."

Brother Keppen also assures that participants will remain anonymous.

"This data will be kept confidential," he said. "The information will be kept by the union — the FRA and railroads will not see your individual in-

formation. But we will share group information with FRA once an appropriate level of statistical data has been collected."

Members with questions should call Brother Keppen at: (866) 573-9094.

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) regarding this program are available on the BLET website:

<http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/HUMANFACTORQandA.pdf>=

A copy of the Human Factors/Circadian Rhythms Questionnaire is available here:

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

BLET NEWS

President Hahs statement on withdrawal from AFL-CIO

Move will help labor become bigger, stronger

As President of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, the founding member of the Teamsters' Rail Conference, I respect the decision of General President Hoffa and the Teamsters General Executive Board to disaffiliate from the AFL-CIO.

It was a difficult decision and was not made lightly. Some nine months of failed negotiations between Change to Win and AFL-CIO representatives went into the decision. Change to Win believes labor must organize more members and grow the labor movement. Change to Win also requested several AFL-CIO constitutional changes. AFL-CIO was not willing to make the requested changes.

I was present at the July 20 meeting in Chicago when, subsequent to a thorough report from the IBT's Change to Win negotiators, the GEB unanimously authorized General President Hoffa to withdraw from the AFL-CIO if no agreement was reached.

The need to organize now is greater than ever before. We must regain labor's influence in Washington by increasing our membership. One of the main reasons for disaffiliation was to spend more money on organizing. In the rail industry alone, more than 40,000 unorganized workers toil in the short line industry. As evidenced by the

recent Presidential election, our best monetary efforts sometimes fall short simply because we're don't have enough labor votes. Organized labor must organize the unorganized and get bigger and stronger. Labor money without labor votes cannot change the outcome of elections.

That's part of our reason for affiliating with the Teamsters nearly two years ago. Our members voted by an overwhelming 81 percent to join the Teamsters. Our members wanted to become part of the largest and most powerful transportation union in the world. They wanted to get bigger and stronger with more political influence, and that's what we have today.

The National Division is asking its General Committees of Adjustment, State Legislative Boards and Divisions to continue their participation with State and Local AFL-CIO bodies, to the extent that the AFL-CIO will allow. The National Division intends to continue as an active member of the AFL-CIO's Transportation Trades Department, to the extent that the AFL-CIO will allow.

While this decision may be hard for many of our members to accept, hopefully the future will prove it to be beneficial to our current and future members as well as the entire labor movement. •

JULY 2005 CALENDAR & EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 16... U.S. Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conference, Fort Worth
The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board will conduct an informational conference in Fort Worth, Texas, on September 16 at the Holiday Inn South, 100 East Alta Mesa Blvd. Due to space limitations, the RRB asks that only elected BLET officers attend these conferences. Registration begins at 8 a.m. sharp. All conferences begin promptly at 8:30 a.m. at conclude at 12:30 p.m.

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

NOVEMBER 4... U.S. Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conference, Pineville, N.C.
The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board will conduct an informational conference in Pineville, N.C., on November 4 at the Holiday Inn Express, 9825 Leitner Dr. Due to space limitations, the RRB asks that only elected BLET officers attend these conferences. Registration begins at 8 a.m. sharp. All conferences begin promptly at 8:30 a.m. at conclude at 12:30 p.m.

NOVEMBER 18... U.S. Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conference, Metairie, La.
The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board will conduct an informational conference in Metairie, La., on November 18 at the Union Hall, 3513 I-10 Service Road West (corner of Severn and I-10 Service Road). Due to space limitations, the RRB asks that only elected BLET officers attend these conferences. Registration begins at 8 a.m. sharp. All conferences begin promptly at 8:30 a.m. at conclude at 12:30 p.m.

DECEMBER 9... U.S. Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conference, Jacksonville
The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board will conduct an informational conference in Jacksonville, Fla., on December 9 at the Holiday Inn — Baymeadows, 9150 Baymeadows Road. Due to space limitations, the RRB asks that only elected BLET officers attend these conferences. Registration begins at 8 a.m. sharp. All conferences begin promptly at 8:30 a.m. at conclude at 12:30 p.m.

Advisory Board May 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; BNSF-MNA GCoFA quadrennial mtg., Tunica, Miss.; IBT General Executive Board mtg., Las Vegas. IBT Unity Conference, Las Vegas; J.R. Hoffa Memorial Golf Tournament; National negotiations, NRLC, Washington, D.C.; NRLC mtg., Chicago.
First Vice-President & Alternate President Edward W. Rodziewicz—Assisted President in general operation of National Division Office; Vice President assignments; Special Representative assignments; Organizing department; Shortline department; Passenger department; Various correspondence & phone calls; South Buffalo RR contract negotiations; CRLO mtgs., Rail Labor Division mtg.; TTD mtg.; AFL-CIO mtgs.; Metro North mtg.; Norfolk Southern General Chairmen mtgs.; Rail Bargaining Coalition mtg.
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; BNSF (former Frisco) GCA mtg., Tunica, Miss.; National Association of State Legislative Chairmen mtg., Las Vegas; IBT Unity Conference, Las Vegas; IBT merger finance committee mtg., Washington, D.C.; Advanced Local Chairmen's Workshop, George Meany Center, Silver Spring, Md.
Vice-President Paul T. Sorrow—Performed office inventory; Reviewed cases for Public Law Boards; Attended meeting of Division 498; Assisted CSX, NS, GTW committees with the handling of various issues; Meeting with Local Chairman of Division 598; 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; Program mtg., NAA, Chicago; Division 114 mtgs., CN/IC, Waterloo, Iowa; IHB general assistance, Hammond, Ind.; Divisions 23, 99, 762 mtgs., CN/IC, Memphis, Tenn.; CN/WC general assistance, Green Bay, Wisc.; PLB 6860, BNSF, Homewood, Ill.; Interdivisional service disputes arbitration; Advanced Local Chairmen's Workshop, Silver Spring, Md.; National Academy of Arbitrators, Chicago, speaker, 2005 mtg.; FRA Part 240.409 dockets this month: EQAL 01-16, 03-47, 00-41, 02-52, 02-30, 03-35, 02-45.
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, 6558, 6589; UP work/rest projects; RSAC positive train control cmtc.; National wage/rules; INRD contract negotiations; Port. & Western contract negotiations; Utah RR contract; W&LE contract negotiations; General office duties, telephone, correspondence, vacation.
Vice-President & U.S. Nat'l Legislative Representative Raymond A. Holmes—BLET Washington D.C. office; General office duties, telephone, correspondence; Cooperating Rail Labor Organizations (CRLO) mtgs., Miami; AFL-CIO Executive Council mtgs., 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; Mtg. w/ GC Koonce and KCS, Memphis, Tenn.; IBT Unity Conference, Las Vegas; Holiday, research, correspondence, 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/rules committee; NS A-card; BNSF GCoFA mtg., Rick Gibbons committee, Tunica, Miss.; Public Law Board 6659, Washington, D.C.; Wabash Hospital mtg., Decatur; Vice presidents claim conference, Fort Worth; NS A-card mtgs., Ft. Mitchell, Ky., Decatur, Kansas City.
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; UPCR GC Rightnowar, auto-markup arbitration, Boston; PTC symposium, Washington, D.C.; UPWL and UPWR arbitration boards 180, 4450, 4451 and 4452, Detroit, Mich; Arbitration Board 6833 & 6834, assisting UPSR GC Gore, New Orleans; Trip rates, assisting UPWL GC Hannah, Colton, Calif.; Ebb & flow negotiations, assisting UPWL GC Hannah, San Antonio; Office, paper, filing, STD and calls, assisting.
Vice-President Paul L. Wingo Jr.—Assigned to NS-Southern Lines and Eastern Region GCoFAs; Iowa, Chicago & Eastern GCoFA; Meridian Southern; New York Susquehanna & Western; New England Central; BLET Rail Security Officer; Contract negotiations at NECR, St. Albans, Vt.; Contract negotiations, NYSW, Binghamton, N.Y.; NS representation town hall meetings at Cincinnati, Louisville, Kanville, Ky., Princeton, Ind. and Norton, Va.; Division 198 mtg. and special project with Division 328, Atlanta.

Members vote on change to Bylaws

Section 37(b)

Continued from Page 1

vision falls below twenty-five (25) active members, the National President shall investigate the cause; and unless the interests of the organization require the continuance of the division, he shall have the authority to order it to be merged with another division on the same seniority district or a division under the same GCA.

"NOTE 1: Divisions chartered before the effective date of these bylaws will retain the previous threshold level of twelve (12) active members.

"NOTE 2: Within two (2) years of the effective date of these bylaws, a ballot will be sent to the active membership under the Initiative process to decide whether to eliminate Note 1."

Ballots on this measure were mailed on July 22 and all votes must be in by August 26. Members may return the ballot via U.S. mail in a pre-paid envelope that will be provided; or they may also vote online via the BLET website at: <http://www.ble-t.org/vote>

Online voting requires a username and password, which is the same login information to access the members area of the BLET website. •

SAFETY TASK FORCE HOTLINE

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

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VOLUME 19 • NUMBER 7 • July 2005

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN NEWS (ISSN 0898-8625)
is published monthly by the
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen,
1370 Ontario Street, Cleveland, OH 44113-1702.
Periodicals postage paid at Cleveland, OH.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen News — BLET
Records Department, 1370 Ontario Street, Mezzanine
Cleveland, OH 44113-1702.