



NEWS

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Safe Rails, Secure America

BLET, Teamsters launch nationwide program to boost railroad security

The Teamsters Rail Conference has launched the Safe Rails Secure America campaign designed to obtain firsthand information about the true condition of safety and security along our nation's railroads.

The data collected will provide important information to arm the Teamsters Rail Conference and Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen in addressing dangerous practices by the carriers and in communicating our concerns to the general public and federal authorities.

Since September 11, 2001, billions of dollars have been devoted to the security of the airline industry. Unfortunately, the Bush administration has ignored FBI warnings about likely future attacks on commuter and freight rail lines and has left railroad security up to their friends in private industry.

"The security of America's railroad infrastructure — bridges, tunnels, tracks and rolling equipment — is of the utmost importance to our nation's citizens and our national economic well being," said BLET National President Don Hahs. "I ask that all BLET members use the Safe Rails Secure America forms to provide first hand information about unsecure conditions or suspicious activity on the railroad. With your help, we can make a difference."

Railroad employees now have an opportunity to share what they see and know about lapses in rail security by filling out the Safe Rails survey form at right.

If you are a BLET member, feel free to use this form and fill it out. After you fill it out, please return the form to your local chairman. •

Date _____

Location _____

Railroad _____

Department _____ Subdivision _____

Yard/Equipment

For the purposes of this survey "secure" is defined as "accessible only to authorized personnel."

- Was rail yard access secure today? Y N
- Was there a visible rail police presence in yard today? Y N
- Was equipment access secure today? Y N
- Was your train or equipment delayed or left unattended for an extended period of time prior to or during your tour of duty? Y N
- If yes, were there hazardous materials on board? Y N

- Did you notice other trains or equipment left unattended in yard, sidings, or along right-of-way? Y N

Eyes & Ears

- Did you see any trespassers in the yard today? Y N
- How many hours did you work today? (Include time on train waiting to be relieved) _____
- Was there another certified engineer available to assist or relieve you in case of emergency or hijacking? Y N
- Was today a heightened terrorist alert day? Y N Didn't Know
- If yes, were there additional security personnel on duty in the yard or on locomotive? Y N

Remote Control:

- Were remote control devices kept in secure area today? Y N
- Was the switching of rail equipment performed by remote control locomotives in the yard today? Y N
- If yes, were those cars carrying hazardous materials? Y N

General:

- Can you secure the cab against unauthorized access while occupied? Y N While unoccupied? Y N
- Is there a duress code or signal on board, other than the railroad radio, in case of terrorist emergency or hijacking? Y N
- Have you received any, or additional, training related to terrorism prevention and response in the last 12 months? Y N

- Have you received specific training related to the monitoring of nuclear waste shipments? Y N
- If yes, do you feel it was adequate? Y N
- Is rail yard in close proximity to schools, government buildings, densely populated areas or other likely terrorist targets? Y N
- Have you reported security concerns to a railroad supervisor? Y N

Feel free to add additional information related to security concerns.

Please give this form to your local chairman. Thank you!

BMW: UTU story on Railroad Retirement a 'total fabrication'

Recently, RRESQ (Railroad Employee Safety and Quality) circulated an article produced by the UTU that contained false information. Below is one unsolicited response to this article from the BMW's Director of Safety and Education Rick Inclima.

Dear Friends from RRESQ:

My name is Rick Inclima, and I am currently the Director of Safety and Education for the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees and have been a member in good standing of the BMW for over 28 years. I have been on the RRESQ mailing list for some time now and have had the opportunity to interact with RRESQ. I have also responded to safety ques-

tions/inquiries that RRESQ posed directly to me or forwarded to me from other sources, such as the AFL-CIO. I believe that RRESQ serves an important purpose as a voice for railroad safety, and I applaud your efforts in the railroad safety arena.

However, I recently received an email from RRESQ titled, "Are Teamsters Eying Rail Retirement Assets" and felt compelled to respond. As a member of the BMW, I try not to get in the middle of the ongoing fraternal fight between BLET and UTU. I suggest that RRESQ also refrain from entering the fray or being used as a pawn in that unfortunate spat.

The notion that the Teamsters are somehow going to take over Railroad Retirement is pure bunk,

and I am surprised that RRESQ would circulate such false and untrue propaganda on behalf of the UTU. In my humble opinion, this unfounded falsehood has been manufactured by the UTU, plain and simple. There is no factual basis for such an outlandish statement, and it is derived from UTU's attempt to divide rail labor for its own political purposes.

The Teamsters nor any union is going to take over the RRB or combine it with another pension plan. This is just fear-mongering from the UTU, with no basis in reality. It would take, at the very least, an act of Congress to make such a change, and none of

See BMW, Page 3

BLET NEWS

BLET sets General Chairman Workshop for November

The BLET Education & Training and Arbitration Departments are offering a General Chairman's workshop the week of November 15, 2004, to be held in the BLET Arbitration Department offices on the fifth floor of the Standard Building, Room 500, in Cleveland, Ohio.

The focus of this workshop will be on the preparation of Submissions for arbitrations conducted pursuant to Section Three of the Railway Labor Act. The three-day workshop will be held on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday (Nov. 16, 17 and 18) from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. We anticipate that most attendees will

use Monday and Friday for travel. While there is no tuition for the class, attendees are responsible for all other expenses. Attendance is limited to General Chairmen and any subordinates they designate who are engaged in arbitration work. We ask that you bring a copy of your basic Schedule Agreement for reference.

General Chairmen or Vice General Chairmen who are engaged in arbitration work and who are interested in registering for the workshop may do so online at <http://www.ble-t.org/gc>

Workshop instructors will include: BLET National Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walpert; BLET Vice-President Richard K. Radek; Assistant Director of the BLET Arbitration Department Marcus Ruef; Special Representative & Coordinator of Education and Training Ken Kroeger; and Arbitration Department Manager Greg Ross

The BLET will pay the costs of books and equipment. General Chairmen and Vice General Chairmen who attend are responsible for their transportation costs, along with the cost of

room and board. Special arrangements have been made at the Sheraton City Center in downtown Cleveland.

Registration for the General Chairman Workshop is on a first-come, first-served basis, with class size limited to the first 15 who register through the BLET website. If there is enough interest, a second workshop will be held sometime in early 2005. For more information, please contact Ken Kroeger, Coordinator of the BLET Education & Training Dept., at (216) 272-0986 or kroeger@ble-t.org.

BLET President Hahs statement on proposed BMW-IBT merger

The following is a statement by BLET National President Don Hahs regarding the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees proposed merger with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters:

I would like to congratulate the leaders of the BMW for taking the historic step of unanimously approving a merger agreement with the IBT and sending it out for ratification by its membership.

Your vote is the next step in a new era of transportation unity. The proposed merger of the BMW and the IBT will continue the work that the BLET started with its merger last year.

I urge the brothers and sisters of the BMW to vote for the merger and hope — one day soon — to welcome them into the Rail Conference with open arms.

Rail Labor needs to be united under one roof, and the entrance of the BMW into the Rail Conference would be the next step towards this goal. Labor can accomplish a lot by working together.

During the time the BLET was considering its merger with the IBT, one labor leader said that now is the time for Rail Labor to get in the parade or watch it go by. We need to use the strength that we have collectively, and we must get bigger, badder and stronger by joining together.

The integration phase of our merger has just begun, but from the outset, the benefits of this merger have been remarkable. The IBT has been magnanimous in its lending of resources and the professional team and talent that President James Hoffa has assembled is an inspiration to all.

For too long Rail Labor has been divided, each with our own agendas. Rail Labor must be able to move forward in a spirit of cooperation for the membership. With this step, we must try to finally present a united front and make real changes in the industry. Working with the different crafts must be the agenda for all rail labor leaders for the benefit of all our members.

It is my hope that the members of the BMW will vote to join their BLET Brothers and Sisters under the IBT umbrella, and that others will follow us in beginning a new era of transportation labor unity. •

N.D. State Legislative Board elects officers



North Dakota State Legislative Board officers after the conclusion of their quadrennial board meeting in Bismarck, N.D., on August 27. From left: State Legislative Board Chairman Mike Muscha of Division 671 (Enderlin, N.D.); Second Vice-Chairman R.D. Albrightson of Division 695 (Minot); Secretary-Treasurer Dean E. Altringer of Division 160 (Harvey, N.D.); First Vice-Chairman Ron K. Huff of Division 746 (Mandan, N.D.); and John W. Olson of Division 69 (Grand Forks, N.D.).

BLET Legislative Representatives from across the state of North Dakota elected Mike R. Muscha by acclamation to another four-year term as Chairman of the North Dakota State Legislative Board in meetings held in Bismarck, N.D., on August 27.

Also elected during the quadrennial meeting were: R.K. Huff of Division 746 (Mandan, N.D.) as First Vice Chairman; and R.D. Albrightson of Division 695 (Minot, N.D.) as Second Vice Chairman.



From left: U.S. Senator Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) attends the BLET's North Dakota State Legislative Board meeting with State Chairman Mike Muscha.

Dean E. Altringer of Division 160 (Harvey, N.D.) was elected as the Secretary-Treasurer of the Board.

"I look forward to serving the Board and the members here in the State of North Dakota," said Brother Muscha, a member of BLET Division 671 (Enderlin, N.D.). "It is a great honor that I have again been chosen to represent our members, and I pledge that I will put all my effort into the job."

Delegates met with numerous visitors during the convention, including U.S. Senator Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.), State Senator Joel Heitkamp, Minority Leader Merle Boucher, and Senators April Fairfield and Dwight Cook. North Dakota State AFL-CIO President Dave Kemnitz also attended, in addition to several representatives from the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

BLET First Vice-President E.W. Rodziewicz also attended the meeting to represent National President Don Hahs.

"The national elections this fall are a big area of focus for us right now," Brother Muscha said. "We emphasized to our delegates at the meeting the importance of getting our members out to vote in November."

Brother Muscha is also a Regional Chairman in the Legislative Department of the BLET, having won election to that position at recently concluded meetings of the National Association of State Legislative Board Chairmen in Kalispell, Mont. •

Oberstar works to protect rail workers

'Champion of working class America' backs rail security, Railroad Retirement issues

Once again, Rep. James Oberstar (D-Minn.) is proving why he is a friend to members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

On August 25, Congressman Oberstar took action on two pieces of legislation of major importance to railroad workers.

In a Dear Colleague letter, Oberstar announced he is seeking cosponsors for H.R. 4896, the PROTECTS Act (Protecting Railroad Operators, Travelers, Employees, and Communities with Transportation Security Act of 2004). The proposed legislation will authorize more than \$1 billion in federal funds to boost the security of America's railroads.

"The PROTECTS Act would ensure that the Federal government will immediately do its part to take the necessary steps to address security risks on our Nation's railroads, while protecting rail passengers, rail workers, and citizens who live or work in the communities in which railroads operate," he wrote.

A copy of his Dear Colleague letter is available on the BLET website at: <http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/OberstarDearColleague.pdf>.

"The BLET is sincerely grateful to Congressman Oberstar for his continued efforts to protect the interests of rail and transportation workers. He is a true champion of working class Americans."

— BLET National President Don M. Hahs

In a second letter, addressed to leaders of the House Appropriations Committee, Congressman Oberstar asks for full funding for the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board. In its FY2005 budget, the Bush Administration is allocating just \$102.6 million for RRB operations, even though the Board had requested \$110.66 million.

"The additional funding will allow the RRB to maintain sufficient staff to continue providing high quality service to the railroad community and to continue with some information technology improvements," Congressman Oberstar wrote. "Accordingly,

I urge you to join me in supporting the \$110.66 million that the agency has requested."

A copy of his letter to the Appropriations Committee is on the BLET website at: <http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/OberstarRRB.pdf>.

"The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen is sincerely grateful to Congressman Oberstar for his continued efforts to protect the interests of rail and transportation workers," BLET National President Don M. Hahs said. "He is a true champion of working class Americans." •

IN THE LINE OF DUTY

Glen 'Skip' York II

Glen A. "Skip" York, II, a member of Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Division 811, was killed in a remote control switching accident in the Burlington Northern Santa Fe yard in Clovis, N.M., on September 2.

Brother York, 26, joined BLET Division 811 in Clovis on April 1, 2004, following in the footsteps of his father, Glen A. York, who also belongs to Division 811.

Brother York and another BLET member were wearing Belt Packs and working as Remote Control Operators in the BNSF yard when the accident happened. Investigators from the BLET Safety Task Force, National Transportation Safety

Board, UTU, and the Federal Railroad Administration are still trying to determine what happened.

On behalf of all the men and women of the BLET, National President Don Hahs gave his most sincere condolences to the York family and to the entire railroad family in the Clovis area.

"It is a tragedy that a man so young should be taken from us," President Hahs said. "I offer my heartfelt condolences to the York family."

Michael Lee, Legislative Representative of BLET Division 811, extended sympathy on behalf of all BLET members in the Clovis area. He said Brother York was a hardworking, professional railroader who will be missed by his friends and coworkers.

"All of our thoughts and prayers are with the family at this time," he said. "We're 220 members strong and Skip had a lot of friends here. It's a real sad situation."

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

"Brother York is the seventh BLET member lost in the line of duty this year," National President Hahs said. "In our prayers we still remember Mike Rogers, Jeff C. York, Anthony C. Rodella, Jeffrey S. Bohler, Dennis Vinson and Heath Pape."

UTU guilty of 'fear mongering' with latest Railroad Retirement deception

BMWE

Continued from Page 1

the rail unions would agree to share our hard earned RRB benefits that we have paid into for our entire careers. And the Railroads would certainly not agree to share the fund that they have paid into on our behalf as part of our contract settlements since day one. It's just nonsense, plain and simple.

The UTU propaganda piece states, "No other transportation union—EXCEPT the United Transportation Union—has as strong a lobbying presence in Washington, D.C. as does the Teamsters." However, as strong as the UTU proclaims to be in Washington, D.C., their own non-railroad members (e.g., 12,000 UTU bus drivers) are not covered by Railroad Retirement. Why? Because they are not employed by a Railroad employer just as truck drivers, warehouse workers, UPS employees, etc., are not employed by a Railroad employer. If you are not a railroad employee working for a railroad employer or working full time for one of the traditional railroad Brotherhoods (such as BLE, BMWE, UTU, BRS, etc., which are considered railroad employers under the RRB) you are not eligible to participate in Railroad Retirement. Don't

you think that if it could be done, the UTU would have already put their non-rail bus drivers under RRB? It hasn't been done by UTU because it couldn't be done by UTU any more than it could be done by the Teamsters or anyone else. It is total fabrication, pure and simple!

I agree with one statement in the UTU article, which said, "When railroaders are divided, they are in imminent danger of being conquered." In my humble opinion, it's time for UTU to follow its own words, rejoin the AFL-CIO (which they abandoned in order to raid the BLE), stop trying to divide the rail unions against one another, and stop the ridiculous and unfounded lies regarding the BLET/IBT and Railroad Retirement.

I have many close and dear friends in the UTU, and I will stick by those Brothers and Sisters regardless of the actions of their leaders. However, as far as the UTU-manufactured RRB lie goes, "It's never going to happen, it's never been considered, and it will never be allowed by Rail Labor, the Carriers, the Board, or the U.S. Congress," and you can quote me on that.

In the interest of fairness and balance, I respectfully request RRESQ to distribute this response to all those members of rail labor who received the UTU article. Thank you.

In Unity,

/s/

Rick Inclima, BMWE

Freddie N. Simpson elected new President of BMWE

On September 16, the BMWE held elections to fill the offices of President and Secretary-Treasurer due to the retirement of former President Mac A. Fleming following an extended medical leave.

Freddie N. Simpson was elected President and Perry K. Geller Sr. was elected Secretary-Treasurer.

Both had each been serving those offices on an interim basis.

President Simpson said, "I am gratified to be officially elected as your president and look forward to moving our organization forward together with the membership and the rest of the officers and staff."

EASTERN UNION MEETING ASSOCIATION



Janet Louis, wife of EUMA Arrangements Chairman Jim Louis, gladly greets visitors at the registration table.



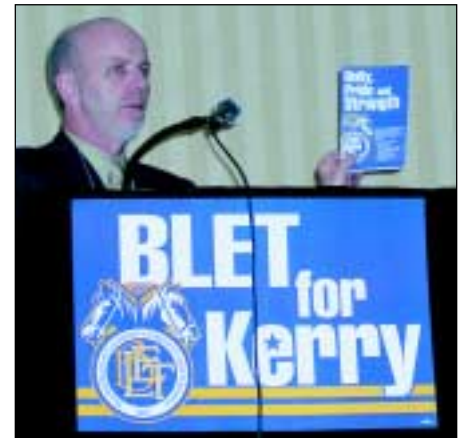
Mr. and Mrs. Gale Murphy. Brother Murphy is Local Chairman of BLET Division 255 in Steubenville, Ohio.



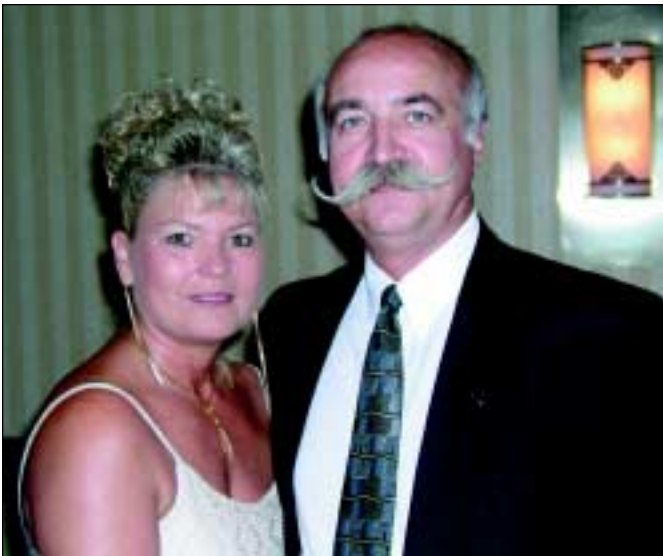
Carlos A. Lizarraga, Local Chairman of BLET Division 106 (Muncie, Ind.)



From left: Bob Chapter, Secretary-Treasurer of BLET Division 157 (Jersey City, N.J.); and Vinny Vaccarella, a trainman member of Division 157.



Teamsters International Vice-President John Murphy.



Kathy and Dino Raptis, an Amtrak engineer and a member of BLET Division 12 in Fort Wayne, Ind.



Greg Powell, Chairman of the BLET's Michigan State Legislative Board.



BLET National Vice-President Steve Speagle with his wife, Sue.



From left: Brother Ben Blissett, Division 31 (Roanoke, Va.), and Safety Task Force Primary Team Member; his wife, Dolly; and BLET National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert.



GIA President Onita Wayland and her husband, Tony.

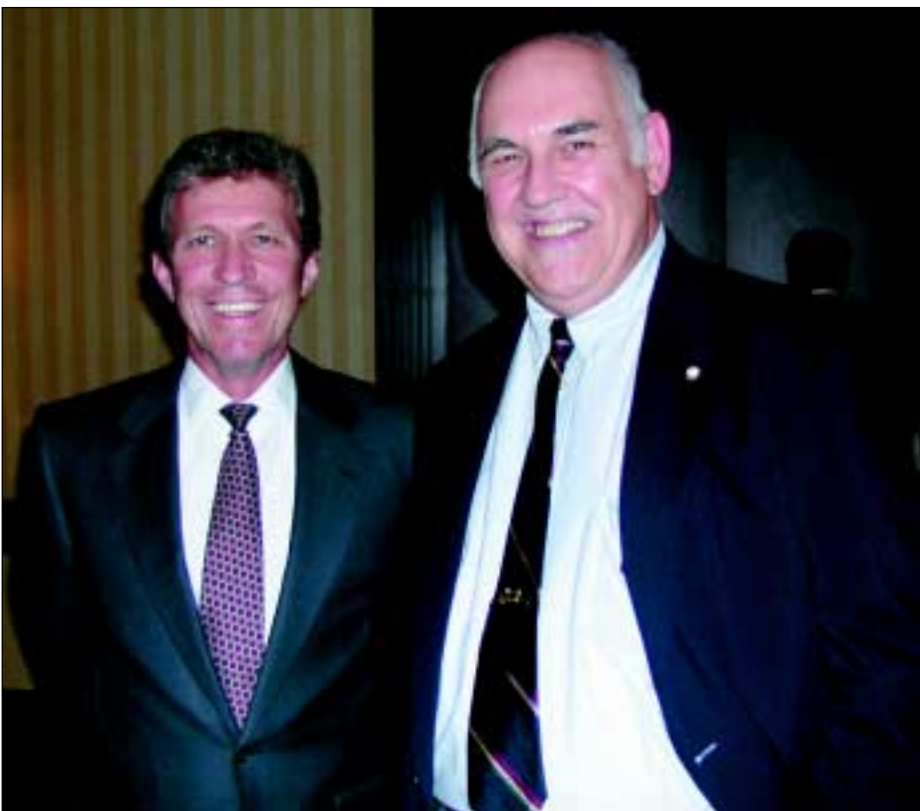
GRAND ISLAND, N.Y.



BLET members during the opening ceremony.



From left: BLET National President Don Hahs; Vice-President Merle Geiger Jr.; and Carl W. Fields, Legislative Representative of BLET Division 682 in Hammond, Ind., and Safety Task Force Primary Team Member.



From left: BLET National Division Staff Attorney Tom Brennan and retired General Chairman Charlie Klimek.



Clockwise, from bottom left: John Bove, Secretary-Treasurer of Division 269; Robert Willis, Committeeman, LIRR General Committee of Adjustment, Division 269; Gary Lockel, 1st Vice Chairman, GCA, Div 269; James Brown, Committeeman, GCA, Div 269; Scott Decker, Vice President, Div 269; Robert Evers, General Chairman, GCA, Div 269; Douglas Willox, President, Div 269; Michael Quinn, 2nd Vice Chairman, GCA, Div 269.



As part of the entertainment package, EUMA attendees enjoyed a tour of Niagara Falls on board the Maid of the Mist.



From left: John C. Rupp, Local Chairman of BLET Division 74 (Harrisburg-Enola, Pa.); and Bill Thompson, Second Vice-General Chairman, Norfolk Southern-Southern Lines.

From left: Among the BLET and GIA officers in attendance at the EUMA were GIA Guide DeLaine Morris; GIA 3rd Vice-President Sereena Hogan; GIA Treasurer Bettye Dollar; Vice-President Mabel Grotzinger; GIA President Onita Wayland; BLET President Don Hahs; National-Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert; Vice-President Merle Geiger; Vice-President Steve Speagle; and Vice-President Paul Wingo.



BLET NEWS

Maintaining a 'current connection' with Railroad Retirement

Under the Railroad Retirement Act, a "current connection with the railroad industry" is one of the eligibility requirements for occupational disability annuities and supplemental annuities, and is one of the criteria for determining whether the Railroad Retirement Board or the Social Security Administration has jurisdiction over the payment of monthly benefits to survivors of a railroad employee.

The following questions and answers describe the current connection requirement and the ways the requirement can be met.

1. How is a current connection determined under the Railroad Retirement Act?

To meet the current connection requirement, an employee must generally have been credited with railroad service in at least 12 months of the 30 months immediately preceding the month his or her railroad retirement annuity begins. If the employee died before retirement, railroad service in at least 12 months in the 30 months before death will meet the current connection requirement for the purpose of paying survivor benefits.

However, if an employee does not qualify on this basis, but has 12 months' service in an earlier 30-month period, he or she may still meet the current connection requirement. This alternative generally applies if the employee did not have any regular employment outside the railroad industry in the period between the end of the last 30-month period including 12 months of railroad service and the month the annuity begins, or the month of death if earlier.

A current connection established at the time the railroad retirement annuity begins is permanent. The employee never loses it no matter what kind of work is performed thereafter.

2. Can nonrailroad work before retirement break a former railroad employee's current connection?

Full or part-time work for a nonrailroad employer in an interim between the end of the last 30-month period including 12 months of railroad service and the beginning date of an employee's annuity, or the date of death if earlier, can break a current connection.

Self-employment in an unincorporated business will not break a current connection. However, if the business is incorporated, compensated service will break a current connection.

Federal employment with the Department of Transportation, the National Transportation Safety Board, the National Mediation Board, the Surface Transportation Board or the Railroad Retirement Board will not break a current connection. Also, neither State employment with the Alaska Railroad, so long as that railroad remains an entity of the State of Alaska, nor non-creditable Canadian railroad service will break a current connection.

3. Are there any exceptions to these normal procedures for determining a current connection?

A current connection can be maintained for purposes of supplemental and survivor annuities if the employee completed 25 years of railroad service, was involuntarily terminated without fault from the railroad industry, and did not thereafter decline an offer to return to work in the same class or craft as his or her most recent railroad service, regardless of the location of the work offered.

If all of these requirements are met, an employee's current connection may not be broken, even if the employee works in regular nonrailroad employment after the 30-month period and before retirement or death. This exception to the normal current connection requirement became effective October 1, 1981, but only for employees still living on that date who left the rail industry on or after October 1, 1975, or who were on leave of absence, on furlough, or absent due to injury on October 1, 1975.

4. Would the acceptance of a buy-out have any effect on determining whether an employee could maintain a current connection under this exception provision?

In cases where an employee has no option to remain in the service of his or her employer, the termination of the employment is considered involuntary, regardless of whether the employee does or does not receive a buy-out.

However, an employee who chooses a buy-out instead of keeping his or her seniority rights to railroad employment in his or her last class or craft would, for railroad retirement purposes, generally be considered to have voluntarily terminated railroad service, and consequently would not maintain a current connection under the exception provision.

5. An employee with 25 years of service is offered a buy-out with the option of either taking payment in a single lump sum or of receiving monthly payments until retirement age. Could the method of payment affect the employee's current con-

nection under the exception provision?

If the employee had the choice to remain in employer service and voluntarily relinquished job rights to accept the payments, his or her current connection would not be maintained under the exception provision, regardless of which payment option is chosen. Therefore, nonrailroad work after the 30-month period and before retirement or death could break the employee's current connection. Such an employee could only meet the current connection requirement under the normal procedures.

An employee considering accepting a buy-out should also be aware that if he or she relinquishes job rights to accept the buy-out, the compensation cannot be used to credit additional service months beyond the month in which the employee severed his or her employment relation, regardless of whether payment is made in a lump sum or on a periodic basis.

6. What if the buy-out agreement allows the employee to retain job rights and receive monthly payments until retirement age?

The Board considers the buy-out a dismissal allowance if the employee retains job rights and receives monthly payments credited to the months for which they are allocated under the dismissal allowance agreement. This is true even if the employee later relinquishes job rights after the end of the period for which a monthly dismissal allowance was paid.

If the payments continued until retirement age, this could extend the employee's rail service until that time and thereby also maintain his or her current connection, regardless of years of service.

7. Could the exception provision apply in cases where an employee has 25 years of railroad retirement coverage and a company reorganization results in the employee's job being placed under social security coverage?

The exception provision has been considered applicable by the Board in cases where a 25-year employee's job changed from railroad retirement coverage to social security coverage and the employee had, in effect, no choice available to remain in railroad retirement covered service. Such 25-year employees have been deemed to have a current connection for purposes of supplemental and survivor annuities.

8. Where can a person get more specific information on the current connection requirement?

Railroaders and former employees can contact the nearest field office of the Railroad Retirement Board for information on how their eligibility for benefits is affected by this requirement.

Persons can find the address and phone number of the Board office serving their area by calling the automated toll-free RRB Help Line at (800) 808-0772 or by checking the Board's Web site at www.rrb.gov. •



NEWS BRIEFS

DOT repeats 15-seat van rollover warning

On June 1, the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) re-issued a warning to users of 15-passenger vans because of an increased rollover risk under certain conditions. Similar warnings were issued in 2001 and 2002.

The safety agency also unveiled an updated consumer hangtag for users of 15-passenger vans and released three related research reports. One of the reports is a detailed analysis of 15-passenger van crashes between 1990 and 2002.

The newly released NHTSA research reinforces the fact that 15-passenger vans have a rollover risk that increases dramatically as the number of occupants increases to full capacity. In fact, the likelihood of a rollover when a van is fully loaded is about five times greater than when the vehicle contains only

a driver. While an increased likelihood of rollover is present for other types of fully loaded passenger vehicles, it is most pronounced in 15-passenger vans.

The new NHTSA analysis also showed that the risk of rollover increased significantly at speeds over 50 miles per hour and on curved roads.

(DOT news release.) •

Security directive issued for mass transit

The Department of Homeland Security issued its first anti-terror directive for the nation's commuter rail and subway systems on May 20, calling for wide-ranging precautions dealing with checks of unattended bags, bombproof trash receptacles and the use of explosive-sniffing dogs.

The regulations were to go into effect on May 23, but operators said they hadn't been issued copies of the requirements.

Fears for the nation's rail systems rose after Sept. 11, 2001, and again af-

ter the Madrid train bombings in March. The announcement of new rules prompted pleas for more money from rail operators, who say that although airlines have received billions in direct assistance for anti-terror measures, the country's railway systems have been given relatively little.

A Transportation Security Administration (TSA) press release briefly mentioned these topics: that rail operators must designate coordinators for communicating with the TSA; that passengers and employees will be asked to report unattended property and suspicious behavior and that similar inspections will be conducted; that in certain locations, trash receptacles must be bomb-resistant or made of clear plastic; that canine explosive detection teams may be used; and that rail operators will ensure that security is at "appropriate levels consistent with the DHS established threat level."

(Washington Post). •

AFL-CIO groups tackle remote control safety issues

As this issue of the *Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen News* goes to press, 21 different AFL-CIO state federations have passed remote control safety resolutions.

The AFL-CIO and its subordinate bodies have continually demonstrated their support of the BLET and stand behind the organization in opposition to this dangerous practice.

In addition to the State Feds, five other AFL-CIO bodies have adopted similar resolutions.

Most recently, the Wyoming and Ohio State Federations and the Washington State Labor Council have passed remote control safety resolutions, thanks to the hard work of dedicated BLET members.

Wyoming AFL-CIO

The Wyoming AFL-CIO became the 21st state federation to pass a remote control safety resolution on September 11. The resolution was passed at the state AFL-CIO convention.

BLET Wyoming State Legislative Board Chairman Terry R. Jones thanked BLET Division 115 (Cheyenne, Wyo.) Legislative Representative Joe Barrett and Division 103 (Cheyenne) Legislative Representative Charlie Fanning for their work. Brother Barrett introduced the resolution and Brother Fanning presented it to the convention.

Ohio AFL-CIO

On August 24, the Ohio AFL-CIO

passed a hazmat resolution that calls for strict controls of automated train technology. Federation President William Burga confirmed the resolution's passage at the 24th Biennial AFL-CIO Ohio State Convention.

The 704 delegates in attendance unanimously passed Resolution 10: HAZMAT. These delegates represented 147 affiliated locals from 38 labor unions.

The Ohio AFL-CIO is the 20th State Federation to adopt a resolution that addresses remote control, but is the first to address new automation technology being developed by rail carriers and the Association of American Railroads. Resolution 10 also calls upon the FRA to require remote control protection zones to be used where remote control is operated.

Ohio State Legislative Chairman James F. Ong, Vice-Chairman Timothy R. Hanely, and Division 234 Legislative Representative Mike Goebel attended the convention.

Chairman Ong thanked Ohio AFL-CIO President Burga, Federation Secretary-Treasurer Pierrette M. Talley and the Delegates of the 24th Convention for their support.

Chairman Ong said that the resolution was drafted and proposed by Vice-Chairman Tim Hanely, who also serves as the delegate for BLET Division 36 (Newark, Ohio) to the Ohio AFL-CIO.

Hanely said that nationally, the

AFL-CIO represents over 13 million sisters and brothers who share a common cause with the BLET.

"Safety in the workplace has to be our greatest concern, and operator safety was the inspiration behind Resolution 10," Hanely said. "We have hundreds of members who are paying too high of a price for rail carriers to make elevated profits."

Washington State Labor Council

The Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO, unanimously passed a "Safe and Secure Railroad Operations" resolution at the 2004 convention in Tacoma, Wash., on August 26.

The resolution calls for railroads operating within the state to use fully rested (by society's standard) railroad workers; locomotive engineers certified to the highest possible skill level to operate locomotives in all railroad operations; and demands that the Federal Railroad Administration promulgate rules to ensure railroad workers are not unnecessarily fatigued.

"I think it sends a strong message that organized labor is not going to stand by and let the railroads dictate the level of safety, training, and rest railroad workers require to safety perform their duties," said Dr. Mark Ricci, Chairman of the BLET's Washington State Legislative Board. "Railroad workers demand a higher level and the people of Washington State demand a higher level."

Ricci has spearheaded a campaign to secure a state-level regulation of remote control locomotive operations.

The passage of the AFL-CIO resolution follows on the heels of a similar resolution adopted last month by the King County Labor Council of Seattle, Wash. The Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO, represents over 400,000 union brothers and sisters throughout the state.

Total

In addition to Wyoming, Ohio and Washington, the following AFL-CIO State Federations have taken action to improve the safety of remote control locomotives: Arizona; Texas; Michigan; Nevada; North Carolina; Missouri; North Dakota; Nebraska; Wisconsin; Georgia; Illinois; Pennsylvania; Kentucky; Alabama; Iowa; West Virginia; Utah; Colorado; and Florida.

Four other AFL-CIO bodies have acted on the issue of remote control trains. They are: Harris County AFL-CIO (Texas); Toledo Area AFL-CIO Council (Ohio); Detroit Central Labor Council (CLC), AFL-CIO; Iowa Democratic Party; and the King County Labor Council, AFL-CIO, Seattle, Wash.

More information about remote control trains, and copies of the resolutions adopted by the organizations mentioned in this article, are available for download from the BLET website at:

<http://www.ble-t.org/remotecomtrol> . •

Iowa Democrats take a tough stand on remote control safety

The Iowa Democratic Party included a section of language opposing unregulated operation of remote control locomotives in its party platform, which was passed without issue at its convention on June 26. It was part of the Transportation/Infrastructure plank.

The delegates to the convention included the following phrase in the party platform: "We support... banning remote control operations until FRA enacts

comprehensive rules and regulations."

The effort to include remote control on the party's platform was spearheaded by BLET Division 125 (Clinton, Iowa) member Pat Johnson. Brother Johnson took the resolution from the county level all the way to the state level. It was passed without issue at each level. Brother Johnson served on committees at the various levels and helped to push the issue through.

"The platforms at each level are issues the Democrats stand for, and want their respective legislators to fight to enact," said Brother Johnson. "These are issues that we expect the Democratic candidates to campaign on during their bids to become elected officials."

A copy of the Iowa Democratic Party Platform will be available at: www.iowademocrats.org . •

PASSENGER RAIL NEWS BRIEFS

Lawmakers warn House is underfunding Amtrak

Lawmakers warned that Amtrak could go out of business next year if Congress goes along with a \$900 million funding level supported by the Bush administration.

"At this level, there should be no surprise next spring when Amtrak must curtail services," Rep. John Olver (D-Mass.) told the Associated Press as the House began debate on an \$89.9 billion bill to fund Transportation and Treasury Department programs in the coming budget year.

The administration, said Rep. James McGovern (D-Mass.), is engaged in the "the continued conscious and deliberate underfunding of Amtrak."

A Senate subcommittee approved \$1.2 billion for Amtrak, while Amtrak officials say \$1.8 billion is needed to keep the railway operating.

(From the Associated Press) •

SEPTA warns of deep cuts

On September 9, SEPTA officials said they would have to eliminate all weekend service, increase fares an average of 25 percent, and fire 16 percent of its employees by January 1 if the state legislature did not increase the agency's funding and erase a \$62 million deficit.

In June, SEPTA adopted a \$920 million budget for 2005, but with a \$62 million deficit. The agency said if it did not receive money to close that gap by October, it would propose service cuts and fare increases.

In the past, SEPTA has detailed dramatic service cuts to cope with funding shortfalls, but those measures never included reducing the workforce. And the agency eventually received or found enough money to avert the worst-case scenarios, such as last year's threat to eliminate four Regional Rail lines and the C bus route.

(Philadelphia Inquirer) •

SEPTA electrician inadvertently causes security scare

A mysterious motion detector — spray painted black and concealed in ballast along SEPTA tracks in Philadelphia — caused a great deal of concern among security officials in light of recent terrorist threats to America's railroads. One Philadelphia television station reported that the device could be used as a triggering device for a bomb. The FBI and SEPTA police launched an investigation. Turns out device was not hidden by a terrorist, but by a sleepy employee. A veteran SEPTA electrician, who worked the 11 p.m.-7 a.m. shift, came forward and admitted to placing the device along the tracks. He rigged the motion detector to signal an alarm in his work shed that would wake him up when the boss was coming.

(Philadelphia Inquirer) •

National Division clarifies policy on interpretation of BLET bylaws

Effective immediately, any requests for an interpretation of National Division Bylaws received by e-mail will not be answered.

Instead, the sender should be informed that in keeping with National Division policy, it will be necessary for him or her to submit the request for an interpretation of the Bylaws in written form to the National Division President.

Any questions regarding this policy should be directed in writing to: BLET National President Don M. Hahs, 1370 Ontario St., Mezzanine, Cleveland, OH 44113-1702.

BLET NEWS

A message from IBT General President James P. Hoffa

Electing a labor-friendly president



The November election

With only one month until Election Day, we must renew our commitment to electing a President who will help workers — not hurt them. A President who will find solutions to the health crisis — not ignore it. A President who will create good jobs in this country — not send them overseas. A President who will give workers a leg up — not a kick in the rear.

John Kerry and John Edwards both have proven records of support for the values of working men and women. The Bush White House, in contrast, has been the most prolific supporter of corporate interests in years. We deserve better. Our families deserve better. And Rail Labor deserves better.

Since you chose to merge with us last year, the power of Rail Labor has been building. I believe we have already made great strides to communicate with the White House and rail corporations that the Teamsters Rail Conference is committed to the needs of all

rail employees. There are still many issues to work on including the upcoming rail negotiations this November and security crisis on the rails. These issues affect not only our rail members and their families but also the public who depend on the transport of goods and the commuter rails daily.

John Kerry — for working families

This election may be the most important ever for the labor movement. I urge each and every one of you to stand up for working families and dedicate your energy to electing public officials like John Kerry who will build our nation rather than destroy it. The future of all working families is at stake.

Fraternally,

James P. Hoffa
Teamsters General President

New BLET merchandise available

Brand new merchandise bearing the BLET logo is now available from the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

Members can download order forms from the website, <http://www.ble-t.org/store>, to purchase union-made items such as BLET golf balls and towels, golf shirts, coffee mugs, hats, and t-shirts. The order form will be updated as new merchandise arrives.

To make room for the new merchandise, older BLE items are being sold at a discount of 10 percent or higher. These items — bearing the logo of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers — include sweatshirts, jackets, golf shirts and other merchandise. The BLE merchandise is only available in limited sizes and quantities, and is being sold on a first come, first served

basis. An order form is available at: <http://www.ble-t.org/store>.

All of the items sold by the BLET are union-made. •

SEPTEMBER 2004 CALENDAR & EVENTS

OCTOBER 15... U.S. Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conference, Pittsburgh, Pa.
The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board will conduct an informational conference for BLET officers in Pittsburgh, Pa. The meeting will take place at the Greater Pennsylvania Regional Council of Carpenters Union Hall—Green Tree, 495 Mansfield Ave. Registration for the conference begins at 8:00 a.m. and the program begins promptly at 8:30 a.m., ending at 12:30 p.m.

OCTOBER 22... U.S. Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conference, Portland, Ore.
The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board will conduct an informational conference for BLET officers in Portland, Ore. The meeting will take place at the Hilton Garden Inn (12048 NE Airport Way), with registration beginning at 8 a.m. The program begins promptly at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 12:30 p.m.

OCTOBER 31-NOVEMBER 5... Advanced Local Chairman Workshop, Silver Spring, Md.
The Education & Training Department of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers will conduct an advanced Local Chairman Workshop on the campus of the George Meany Center's National Labor College in Silver Spring, Md. For details, contact Ken Kroeger, Coordinator of the BLET Education & Training Dept., at (216) 272-0986 or e-mail: Kroeger@ble-t.org

NOVEMBER 15-19... BLET General Chairman Workshop, Cleveland, Ohio
The BLET Education & Training Department and the BLET Arbitration Department are offering a General Chairman's workshop in the BLET Arbitration Department offices on the fifth floor of the Standard Building, Room 500, in Cleveland, Ohio, the week of November 15, 2004. See article on Page 2 of this issue for more details, or contact Ken Kroeger, Coordinator of the BLET Education & Training Dept., at (216) 272-0986 or e-mail: Kroeger@ble-t.org.

JUNE 12-16, 2005... 78th Annual Southeastern Meeting Association, Montgomery, Ala.
Hosted by Brother David Bowen and the members of BLET Division 740. More details to come.

JUNE 26-30, 2005... 67th Annual Eastern Union Meeting Association, Saratoga Springs
Hosted by Arrangements Chairman Bill Kearsing and the members of Division 46. Details to come.

JULY 3-8, 2005... 65th Annual International Western Convention, Calgary, Alberta
Hosted by Mike Linkletter and the members of BLE Division 355. More details to come.

Advisory Board July Activity

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

National President Don M. Hahs—National Division office: General supervision of BLET activities; General office duties; National Carriers Conference Committee mtgs., Washington, D.C.; Disability insurance mtgs., D.C.; AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Dept. mtg., D.C.; Mtg. w/ Betty Munro, Acting FRA Administrator, D.C.; Mtg. w/ Congressman Oberstar, D.C.; Ohio Conference of Teamsters mtg. & address, mtgs. w/ Jim Hoffa, Cincinnati, Ohio; Democratic National Convention mtgs. w/ key Senators and Representatives, mtgs. w/ John Kerry, Bill Clinton, Boston.

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; BNSF-MRL general committee session; Wheeling & Lake Erie organizing campaign; South Buffalo contract negotiations; Democratic National Convention, Boston.

National Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walpert—General supervision of BLET financial, record depts.; ND office; BLET Education & Training Dept.; Internal Organizing, Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; Safety Task Force; Meetings with vendors and financial institutions; Local Chairman's Workshop, BNSF North Lines GCoFA, Las Vegas; Joint mtg. w/ Divisions 120, 155, 444, Moberly, Mo.

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

Vice-President Richard K. Radek— ND Office; BLET Decertification Helpline services; Director of Arbitration Dept; National Railroad Adjustment Board (NRAB); Illinois Central; Wisconsin Central; Indiana Harbor Belt; METRA; Bell Rwy. of Chicago; Paducah & Louisville; Chicago Central & Pacific; NRAB admin, Chicago; L/M mtg., BRC; EJ&E arbitration (PLB) screening; 2/23 Metra accident interview, arb. assistance, IHB; PLB 6603/CN-IC, EJ&E; Metra contract negotiations; UP NRAB arbitration; CN L/M mtg.; IHB general assistance; Metra safety program photography, Chicago & vicinity; NRAB, UP & KCS; Sec. 3 committee, Metra, IHB; Safety program, River Grove accident, appeal stop, etc.; Metra; FRA Part 240 dockets this month: EQAL 00-79, 01-16, 02-52, 02-04, 01-29.

Vice-President Dale McPherson— CP Rail; Port. Term. RR; Longview Portland & Northern; Longview Switching Co.; Indiana RR; Missouri & Northern Arkansas RR; Utah Railroad; UP Eastern Dist.; UP former CNW; BLET National Bargaining Cmte.; Public Law Boards 5604, 5681, 5721, 6040, 6281, 6589; UP work/rest projects; RSAC positive train control cmte.; PLB 6040, review awards; Great Western RR contract negotiations, Denver; On-property issues w/ UP GCoFAs and UP, St. Paul, Minn.; General office duties, telephone, correspondence.

Vice-President & U.S. Nat'l Legislative Representative Raymond A. Holmes— BLET Washington D.C. office; General office duties, telephone, correspondence; Operation Lifesaver symposium, San Antonio, Texas; AFL-CIO Workers' Voice Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah; National Conference of State Legislatures, Salt Lake City; BLET mtgs. in Kalispell, Mont.

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; New York, Susquehanna & Western RR; St. Lawrence & Atlantic RR; Indiana Southern RR; Mtg. w/ GC Clark and Division 244 (Tex-Mex), Laredo, Texas; Contract negotiations w/ Louisville & Indiana RR, Jeffersonville, Ind.; Research, correspondence, general office duties.

Vice-President Stephen D. Speagle—Assigned to Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Montana Rail Link, Pacific Harbor Line; General office duties; BNSF Northern Lines GCoFA mtg., Las Vegas; Mtg. on Chicago Terminal consolidations, Fort Worth; Public Law Board 6540, Fort Worth; Safety Summit mtg., Fort Worth; Division 86 mtg.; General office duties, 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; General office duties, telephone paperwork; Arbitration Board 6729, 6730, 6731, 6732, Las Vegas; Assisting GC Donnigan, GCoFA mtgs., West Yellowstone, UPWR GCoFA; Assisting General Chairman Gore, New Orleans, UPSR GCoFA; Trip Rate mtgs., Dallas/Fort Worth, UPSR GCoFA.

Vice-President Paul L. Wingo Jr.— Assigned to NS-Southern Lines and Eastern Region GCoFAs; Iowa, Chicago & Eastern GCoFA; Meridian Southern; BLET Rail Security Officer; Norfolk Southern-Alabama Division Local Chairmen's mtg.; Rail security projects; AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Dept. mtg., Washington, D.C.; NS short term disability work; IC&E issues w/ National Mediation Board; Preparation for Public Law Board; Office work.



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www.ble-t.org • (216) 241-2630
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