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# Locomotive

ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN NEWS

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## BLET reaches tentative agreement to continue CSXT bonus plan

**O**n July 31, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and CSX Transportation reached tentative agreement on a five-year contract that provides general wage increases of 16 percent and continues and improves the current bonus plan.

If ratified, the on-property agreement would cover three CSX General Committees of Adjustment — CSX Eastern Lines, Western Lines and Northern Lines. The tentative proposal is a continuation of the Single System Agreement ratified in April of 2007.

Contract information and ballots were mailed to more than 5,000 BLET members on August 5 and tabulation will begin on September 10.

The tentative agreement includes the following elements:

- 16% in annual GWIs beginning on January 1, 2010 (value is over 17% when compounded).
- An increase in the Maximum Performance Bonus Payout from 10% of total wages in 2009 to 12% each year from 2010 through 2014, regardless of length of service.
- Retention of the \$15.00 per day, \$0.15 per overmile Special Pay Differential.
- An option to “snap back” at the end of 2014 that would include all GWIs from the 2007 National Agreement and upcoming national bargaining round(s).

If the tentative agreement is ratified, the current health and welfare and short-term disability plans will continue without change until the conclu-



BLET Member Michael Marra of Division 532 (Richmond, Va.) captured this image by milepost A80.3 (just north of the Weldon Connection, North End Sub.) in Weldon, N.C., on January 25, 2003. Photo: courtesy Michael Marra, <http://marraphotography.com>

sion of national negotiations, at which time any changes in the National Agreement will be implemented. The tentative agreement also contains a moratorium on Section 6 notice to change any terms of the BLET-CSXT Single System Agreement until November 1, 2014, with future changes to be effective no earlier than January 1, 2015.

National President Ed Rodzwick praised the efforts of General Chairmen Tony Smith (Eastern Lines), Don Moates (Western Lines), and Rick Finamore (Northern Lines), who finalized the tentative agreement with the assistance of Vice President Dennis Pierce. In a letter authorizing ratification of the tentative agreement, Rodzwick said, “These are tough economic

times, and there were many opportunities for your negotiations to fail. The fact that you were able to reach tentative agreement with the carrier is a testament to your determination in providing your members with the best deal available.”

The final results of the ratification vote will be published after the September 10 tabulation has been completed. ©

## Teamster Rail Conference leaders meet with DOT Secretary LaHood

**L**eaders of the BLET, BMWED and Teamsters met with Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood on July 15 to discuss changes to the Hours of Service Law, high speed rail, and a host of additional issues.

The delegation included Teamsters Eastern Region Vice President John Murphy, BLET National President Edward Rodzwick and BMWED President Fred Simpson.

Also in attendance was: BLET First Vice President Paul Sorrow; BLET National Secretary-Treasurer William Walpert; BLET Vice President & National Legislative Representa-

tive John Tolman; BMWED Director of Government Affairs Leon Fenhaus; BMWED Director of Safety Richard Inclima; BLET Director of Research and Assistant to the President Thomas Pontolillo; and BMWED Counsel Donald Griffin.

During the meeting, President Rodzwick talked about the recent changes to the Hours of Service laws and the impact it would have on BLET members. He also discussed the lack of communication between some carriers and Rail Labor regarding the Hours of Service changes,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7 →



DOT Secretary Ray LaHood met with BLET leaders in July to discuss changes to the Hours of Service law.

## Need a replacement CSX ballot?

Members who did not receive a ballot can request a replacement by contacting the BLET National Division in one of two ways:

- 1) Call (216) 241-2630, extension 222.** You will be sent to the CSX BALLOT voicemail box. Leave your name, address, and division number; and the staff person monitoring the voicemail box will send you a ballot.
- 2) Email [csxbalлот@ble-t.org](mailto:csxbalлот@ble-t.org).** Leave your name, address, and division number; and the staff person monitoring the mailbox will send you a ballot.



### Last Runs

Division 28 in Tucson honors two retiring Brothers. **pg 2**



### Winning Scholars

BLET Auxiliary awards \$13,000 in scholarships to children of BLET members. **pg 3**

### Christmas in July

BLET organizes a special train trip for kids with cancer. **pg 6**

2009

## Calendar & Events

### September 13-16, 2009 74th annual Southwestern Convention Meeting, Kansas City, Mo.

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

### June 13-18, 2010 83rd Annual Southeastern Meeting Association, Cincinnati, Ohio

Hosted by the members of BLET Division 110, the 2010 SMA will be held at the Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza. More details to come!

### July 13-17, 2010 70th Annual International Western Convention, Bismarck-Mandan, N.D.

Chairman Mike Muscha and the members of BLET Division 671 host the 2010 IWC at the Radisson Hotel Bismarck. More details to come!

### August 8-11, 2010 72nd Annual Eastern Union Meeting Association, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Hosted by Tom and Sue Caruso, Division 355, the 2010 EUMA will take place at the Sheraton Station Square Hotel in Pittsburgh, Pa. More details to come!

### September 12-16, 2010 75th Annual Southwestern Convention Meeting, San Antonio, Texas.

Hosted by Russell Elley, Local Chairman of Division 197, the 2010 SWCM will take place at the Hyatt Regency on the River Walk at Paseo del Alamo (123 Losoya St., San Antonio, Texas, 78205). More details to come!

### Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conferences

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

#### October 2, 2009 Mason, Ohio

Super 8 Motel, 1-71 Exit 25, 5589 Kings Mill Road

#### October 9, 2009 Grantville, Pa.

Holiday Inn Harrisburg-Hershey, 604 Station Road

#### October 9, 2009 Huntington, W.Va.

The Ramada Limited, 3094 16th Street Road

#### October 16, 2009 Pittsburgh, Pa.

Greater PA Regional Council of Carpenters Union Hall, 650 Ridge Road

#### October 30, 2009 Salt Lake City, Utah

Crystal Inn Hotel & Suites, 230 West 500 South

#### November 20, 2009 Metairie, La.

Four Points by Sheraton, New Orleans Airport, 6401 Veterans Memorial Blvd.

## LAST RUNS



General Chairman Bill Hannah (Union Pacific-Western Lines) presents retirement gifts to Don Bergman (left) and Wally Johnson. Photos: courtesy of Division 28 President Jon Hurst

## Division 28 honors retirees Don Bergman and Wally Johnson

**B**LET Division 28 (Tucson, Ariz.) honored retiring members Don Bergman and Wally Johnson at their regular meeting in July.

Don Bergman joined the Brotherhood on August 1, 1979. During his career, Brother Bergman served Division 28 as Legislative Representative and Local Chairman. He also served as Chairman of the Arizona State Legislative Board for several years.

Wally Johnson joined the Brotherhood on June 1, 1981. According to Division 28 President Jon Hurst, Brother Johnson was always active in union service throughout his career, and served the Division as Local Chairman for several years.

General Chairman D.W. "Bill" Hannah (Union Pacific-Western Lines) attended the meeting to give the Division members an update on the new Hours of Service Law. While he was there, General Chairman Hannah presented the two retiring Brothers with BLET watches and membership pins.

Brother Bergman received a 30-year BLET pin while Brother Johnson received a 25-year pin.

The watches were presented to thank the Brothers for their years of service to the union. The watches were engraved with the BLET's logo and each Brother's name. @@

### ARE YOU RETIRING? DO YOU HAVE 40-YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP? IF SO, LET US KNOW!

The BLET National Division features members who are retiring (or who have retired) in the Last Run segment of the Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen News. In addition, members with 40 or more consecutive years of membership are profiled in the publication's Honor Roll section.

**To submit your information, write or email the following:**  
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BLET AUXILIARY

# BLET Auxiliary Scholarship Recipients - 2009-2010

**T**he BLET Auxiliary awarded \$13,000 in scholarships to the children of BLET members for the 2009-2010 academic school year.

"Thank you so much to everyone who donated to our scholarship fund, those who purchased raffle tickets at regional conventions, members of our auxiliaries who sent in donations and monies received in memorial contributions," said Anita Caruso, National Secretary of the BLET Auxiliary.

"We so very much appreciate all the BLET has done for us in making this program one of the most cherished gifts we can give to our children who benefit immensely from their generosity," she said.

The Auxiliary awarded 13 scholarships valued at \$1,000.00 each. These scholarships are fully funded by the proceeds of various fund raising projects at the four regional conventions, donations and memorial contributions.

THE AUXILIARY AWARDED THREE STUDENTS WHOSE PARENT(S) PARTICIPATED IN THE EASTERN UNION MEETING ASSOCIATION (EUMA):

• **BRETT L. PHILLIPS**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Donnie L. Phillips, is the winner of the John Thomas Collins & Mary M. Collins Memorial Scholarship. He is a sophomore at West Virginia University. His father is a CSX engineer and member of BLET Division 284 (Grafton, W.Va.).

• **KYLE P. WILLARD**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth R. Willard, was the winner of the Leona A. Louis Memorial Scholarship. Kyle is a senior at Calvin College. His father is a Canadian National engineer and member of Division 122 (Port Huron, Mich.), while his mother is an Auxiliary Member-at-Large.

• **WILLIAM B. MUELLER**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Forrest Wayne Lumpkins, is a freshman at the University of Iowa. His father is a

Metra engineer in Chicago and member of Division 294 (Bensenville, Ill.), while his mother is an Auxiliary Member-at-Large.

WINNERS OF THE JOINT IWC-BLET AUXILIARY SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

• **ALLYSON K. BOOTH**, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James H. Booth III, is a senior at the University of Arizona. Her father is a UP engineer and Local Chairman of Division 28 (Tucson, Ariz.), and her mother is an Auxiliary Member-at-Large.

• **DARREN GREEN**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Barry E. Green, is a sophomore at Millikin University. His father is a BNSF engineer and member of Division 180 (Glendive, Mont.).

• **KELLIE HOWARD**, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Howard, is a freshman at Carroll College. Her father is a BNSF engineer and member of BLET Division 758 (Vancouver, Wash.).

• **BROOKE SWITZER**, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ricky Switzer, is a freshman at Clovis Community College. Her father is a BNSF engineer and member of BLET Division 811 (Clovis, N.M.), and her mother is a member of BLET Auxiliary 811.

WINNERS OF AUXILIARY SCHOLARSHIPS THROUGH THE SOUTHWESTERN CONVENTION MEETING (SWCM) ARE AS FOLLOWS:

• **NICHOLAS P. DAVIS**, son of Mr. and Mrs. William E. Davis, is a senior at Pittsburg State University. His father is a UP engineer and member of Division 336 (Oswatimie, Kan.), and his mother is a member of BLET Auxiliary 235.

• **ASHLEY DERDEN (BAILEY-TODD)**, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arlin Todd, is a sophomore at Lone Star College. She is the daughter of Kathie Bailey-Todd and the late G.Y. Bailey. Arlin is a UP engineer and member of Division 914 (Baton Rouge, La.), and Kathie is a BLET Auxiliary Member-at-Large. Arlin is also Chairman of the Louisiana State Legislative Board.

• **SAMUEL WELLS DOWELL**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Dowell, is a junior



at Abilene Christian University. His father is a BNSF engineer and member of Division 871 (Slaton, Texas) his mother is an Auxiliary Member-at-Large.



• **CHRISTOPHER S. KEEFER**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jeffery A. Keefer, is a freshman at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. His father is a UP engineer and member of Division 183 (Omaha, Neb.), and his mother is a member of Auxiliary 12.



• **JAKE G. MCKAY**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Russell J. McKay, is a junior at the University of Texas at Austin. His father is a BNSF engineer and member of Division 206 (Temple, Texas) and his mother is an Auxiliary Member-at-Large.



• **NATALIE H. MCKAY**, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Russell J. McKay, is a senior at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor. Her father is a BNSF engineer and member of Division 206 (Temple, Texas) and her mother is an Auxiliary Member-at-Large.

On behalf of the BLET National Division, President Ed Rodzwick offered congratulations to all the scholarship winners and thanked the BLET Auxiliary officers and members for their hard work and dedication in organizing their annual scholarship program.

Details on applying for a 2010-2011 BLET Auxiliary Scholarship is available on the Internet, <http://www.bletauxiliary.net>, and will appear in the annual BLET Scholarship Directory, which will be published in the January 2010 issue of the Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen News. @@

## BLET Safety Task Force completes NTSB training

Several members of the BLET's Safety Task Force (STF) recently attending an intensive workshop at the National Transportation Safety Board's Training Center in Ashburn, Va.

Titled "NTSB Accident Investigation Orientation for Rail Professions," the workshop was held on May 19-20. Led by NTSB investigators, the workshop detailed how the Safety Board investigates railroad accidents and what it expects of participants in an investigation.

Among other things, the workshop provided an overview of the NTSB go-team and the on-scene investigation; the "party" process; post on-scene investigation; services and support provided to families of accident victims; and role of the NTSB board member and the Office of Public Affairs.

BLET National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert, Chairman of the BLET Safety Task Force, assigned the following STF members to attend the workshop in his absence: Jerry Bullard, Division 212; Justin Sterling, Division 3; Todd Pollard, Division 456; Ken Kroeger, Coordinator of Education and Training, Primary Member of the BLET STF; Ben Blissett, Coordinator BLET STF and Division 301; James Hoskins, Division 182; and Carl Fields, Assistant Coordinator BLET STF and Division 682. @@



Photo: submitted by Ken Kroeger.

# BLET FELA Directory

As of August 28, 2009

Our union has designated attorneys who are qualified to serve as counsel for BLET members in accordance with the Federal Employers' Liability Act (FELA) governing workplace accidents. In the event of an injury or death and before reaching any settlement with a railroad, members or surviving families should contact an attorney listed to get competent advice concerning their legal rights under the FELA. In addition, if you or any members of your family have questions concerning medical malpractice, product liability or other types of injury cases, please don't hesitate to contact one of these law firms for a consultation concerning your rights and remedies. @®



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# BLET members ratify agreement that preserves jobs at Wheeling & Lake Erie

**T**he Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen has always been at the forefront when it comes to protecting union jobs, and the union's recent contract settlement with the Wheeling & Lake Erie (W&LE) railroad is no exception.

Engineers and trainmen belonging to BLET Division 292 (Beach City, Ohio) overwhelmingly ratified new labor agreements for both train and engine service crafts. The BLET members are represented by the BLET's Norfolk Southern - Northern Lines/W&LE General Committee of Adjustment.

Division 292 Local Chairman Steve Fogle said the contract governs about 110 locomotive engineers and trainmen, and was ratified by a 10-to-1 ratio.

The agreement provides substantial wage increases for members and other important quality of life improvements. More significantly, the agreement protects jobs. The BLET successfully fought to maintain two-person train operations in the face of carrier demands for single person operations.

## Seven years without a contract

Negotiations for both agreements had been underway for seven years and for the past several years had been supervised by the National Mediation Board (NMB). BLET is certified to represent both train and engine service crafts at W&LE.

"Morale was low," said Timothy L. John II, Vice President of Division 292. "Seven years took its toll."

He said the main hang up was management's insistence that the BLET submit to cutting jobs and agreeing to single-man train operations. Going seven years without a raise was a sacrifice the W&LE members were willing to make to resist single-man crews.

"The huge sacrifice made by the membership enabled us to ward off the single-man crew," John said. "We held out so long that we lost quite a few employees who got fed up waiting for a raise and got jobs elsewhere."

Local Chairman Fogle said all railroads want single-man crews, but it is important for unions to show solidarity and resist those efforts. He said single-man operations pose deadly safety and security risks, as well as major fatigue and rest issues for train crews.

## BLET National Division steps in

Fogle, Local Chairman of Division 292, said negotiations were nearly at an impasse when the BLET National Division stepped in to lend assistance.

He said BLET National President Ed Rodzwick and First Vice President Paul Sorrow attended what would be the final negotiating session before the National Mediation Board.

"President Rodzwick very plainly told the NMB that the BLET does not recognize one-man crews and forcefully told them that the BLET would not negotiate a one-man agreement," Fogle said. "The NMB then told the W&LE to back off the issue or it would free BLET to go on strike."

The BLET also resisted a late demand by the carrier that it commit in advance to negotiate over this issue during the next round of contract negotiations.

"These were extremely difficult negotiations, and I commend our membership



Wheeling & Lake Erie members made great personal sacrifices to oppose one-man crews.

at W&LE for sticking to their guns," President Rodzwick said. "On behalf of the entire BLET, I thank them for the sacrifice they made to protect the nation from the threat of single-man crews."

"I appreciate the support of the Teamsters and National President Ed Rodzwick," Tim John said. "His presence definitely brought things to a head and put us over the top."

## Legislative assistance

General Chairman Cole Davis, who negotiated the agreement with the help of Division 292 Local Chairmen Steve Fogle and John Lemmert, was assisted throughout by Vice President Marcus J. Ruef.

In addition to the assistance from President Rodzwick and First Vice President Sorrow, General Chairman Davis also thanked the BLET's legislative leaders for helping to end the carrier's push for single-man crews.

He thanked John Tolman, BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative, and Tim Hanely, Ohio State Legislative Board Chairman, for helping to apply key political and regulatory pressure regarding the issue of one man trains.

"The Teamsters Rail Conference has friends in political office who were not aware of what was happening at the Wheeling & Lake Erie, and we brought the situation to their attention," Hanely said.

## Protecting conductors and trainmen

Securing a contract that protects all operating crafts was a priority for the BLET and its members.

Vice President Marcus J. Ruef assisted General Chairman Cole Davis, Local Chairman Fogle and Local Chairman John Lemmert throughout the negotiating process. He commended the negotiating team for their perseverance and tenacity in protecting two-man crews.

"Our success in resisting W&LE's attempt to dilute the train service crew consist rule demonstrates our commitment to maintaining two crew members, and vindicates our custody of the train service agreement," he said. "It also belies the claim of some that our negotiation of meaningful engineer scope rules threatens the craft of conductor."

"Our handling of the matter on W&LE demonstrated that providing for a rate of pay or an allowance in anticipation of the possible loss of a position by another organization does not equate to agreeing to eliminate the position in dispute," Ruef said. "The facts of the W&LE settlement serve to set this record straight on a national basis."



Members on the Wheeling & Lake Erie enjoy increased pay and guaranteed days off under the new BLET contract.

Andy Kennard, a W&LE engineer for the past six years, said protecting jobs is one of the most important aspects of the new agreement.

"I'm an engineer, so I would have kept my job if we'd gone to a one-man crew," he said. "But it would have created a very unsafe situation."

Local Chairman Fogle said one-man crews was a big issue for conductors when the BLET successfully organized that group of workers in 2004.

"We promised to protect them, and we didn't leave them out to dry," he said. "We kept our word."

## Increased pay, guaranteed days off

The new agreements provide for immediate hourly wage increases for locomotive engineers and trainmen. The total wage packages provide overall wage increases of 21.4% for locomotive engineers and 21.38% for train service employees, as well as longevity bonuses. The agreement expires at the end of 2011.

"The members were ready for a raise," said Fogle, who has worked at the railroad since 1969 when it was owned by the Norfolk & Western. "Once members got their signing bonus, it made them happy."

Both agreements provide significant improvements to the lifestyles of all W&LE train and engine service employees. The agreements provide that all employees assigned to extra boards will have one regular rest day per week, and also provides for improved electronic line up information.

"I'm an extra board engineer, and one of the good things in this contract is that the extra board got a day off per week," Andy Kennard said. "I've gone about four years without a day off."

Additionally, all train and engine service employees will be able to take one

week of their vacations a day at a time.

John said the single-day vacations, used in conjunction with regular days off, gives the members more time away from work to spend with their families. John normally works out of Gambrianus Yard in Canton, Ohio, servicing the Ashland Refinery and a large recycling center. However, he often bounces from job to job due to seniority issues.

## Gap insurance for early retirement

Both agreements provide that retiring employees will now be provided with up to \$415 per month for gap insurance, which will make it easier for W&LE employees to take advantage of early retirement under Railroad Retirement. While the agreement also provides for a modest level of employee cost sharing in line with other W&LE employees, the agreements cap the cost sharing level reached in 2011 pending the negotiation of subsequent agreements.

"The gap insurance was one of the big reasons guys voted for the contract," Kennard said. "We have a lot of guys planning to retire in four or five years, and the gap insurance will help them get there."

Railroad employees are governed by the Railroad Retirement Board — not Social Security. Railroad Retirement allows members to retire with full benefits at age 60, provided they have 30 years of service in the industry.

"The gap insurance helps those who have their years in but are not old enough to retire," Vice President John explained.

## Thank you

General Chairman Davis said negotiations were a long and, at times, tedious process.

"While Fogle, Lemmert, Ruef and I were the principal players during the last year, these negotiations span back through the tenure of the two general chairmen that preceded me, Larry Sikes and Bob Linsey, Vice Presidents Paul Sorrow and Dale McPherson, and many other BLET officers on the property such as Division President Dean Dennis and Vice President Tim Johns."

Davis and Ruef also thanked Federal Mediators Larry Gibbons and Dick Hanusz of NMB, who provided mediation services during the last several years of negotiations.

Finally, Brother Davis thanked National President Ed Rodzwick and First Vice President Paul Sorrow, who attended the final mediation session that culminated in the ratified agreements, noting that their presence served to reinforce the seriousness with which the BLET takes the crew consist issue.

## About the W&LE

Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroad lines interchange with three major Class I railroads (Canadian National, CSX, and Norfolk Southern). The railroad hauls major commodities such as coal, iron ore, stone, coke, steel, lumber, plastic, chemicals and grain, generating approximately 130,000 carloads annually.

The railroad is headquartered in Brewster, Ohio. Branch lines reach as far south as Benwood, W.Va. (just south of Wheeling) and as far east as Connellsville, Pa.

The W&LE currently owns 575 miles of track and retains trackage rights to another 265 miles. ©©

# BLET provides Christmas in July for kids with terminal cancer

Members of Teamsters Joint Council 73 and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen in New Jersey recently helped make some wishes come true for eight special children with terminal cancer.

Over the past 16 years, an Australian organization known as Challenge has conducted an overseas trip to the United States for 10 seriously ill children. Challenge is Australia's version of the Make a Wish Foundation, which grants wishes to children living with cancer and other life-threatening disorders. They range in age from 12 to 17.

Challenge typically comes to the United States area every other year as part of their "Trip of a Lifetime" program, an all expenses paid, month long trip to the United States. And when Challenge comes to New York/New Jersey, Teamsters Joint Council 73 in New Jersey pulls out all the stops in hosting the Challenge Kids. Past activities have included helicopter rides, Broadway shows, and behind the scenes trips to movie sets.

This year, the Joint Council 73 President Anthony Artificio enlisted the help

of the BLET to provide the kids with a new experience. Brother Matt Kronyak of BLET Division 235 (Ridgefield Park, N.J.), worked with Conrail to organize a special "Santa Train in July" excursion through New York and New Jersey, featuring the railroad's Santa Claus train.

"All the kids this year had some form of terminal cancer," Kronyak said. "There were supposed to be 10 kids this year, but only eight made it. In past years, some of the kids have been so sick they had to go home early.

"It was a rewarding and fulfilling experience to be able to organize the Santa Train in July trip for these kids," Kronyak said.

The July 11 train ride provided the children with exclusive views of the Statue of Liberty and the New York City skyline.

Brother Kronyak enjoyed bonding with the kids on the train trip. Known for his thick New Jersey accent, Kronyak said he taught the Australian kids to say, "How you doin'?" during the train ride. They in turn taught him how to say "G'day, mate," using the proper Australian accent.

The BLET National Division provided shirts and hats for the children, while



**Matt Kronyak**, fourth from left, helped organize a special train ride for eight kids with cancer (standing on the engine) who visited the United States in July.

CSX provided hats and backpacks.

Brian Baginski, Local Chairman of BLET Division 601 (Newark, N.J.), served as the Locomotive Engineer for the day. Tony Maldonado, UTU Local 1447, was the conductor.

Brother Kronyak said the children were treated to an incredible amount of entertainment during their two-week stay in the States, including: dinner with actor Bruce Willis; seats at the Broadway play "Wicked" and a meet-and-greet with the performers after the show; a meeting with Edie Falco, star of The

Sopranos television show who is married to a Teamster; a taping of CSI New York; a trip through New York Harbor on a New York City Fire Department fire boat; and tickets to a New York Mets baseball game, where the kids got to play catch on the field with some of the Mets players.

Kronyak said Teamster Joint Council 73 Organizer and PAC Chairman Cliff Nolan and his wife Nancy drove the kids all over the Tri-State area. Nolan drove the Joint Council tour bus, which was the main mode of transportation for the kids while they were in the States. They stayed at the Helmsley Hotel in New York City and the Hershey Hotel in Seaside Heights, N.J. during their stay.

The BLET in New Jersey has been working more closely with Joint Council 73. Kronyak said the BLET recently helped the Teamsters organize a non-union car inspection company on the CSX property, which brought about 50 new members in the union.

In addition to serving the Brotherhood as Local Chairman of Division 235, Brother Kronyak is also a Vice General Chairman of the Conrail SAA/CSXT Northern District General Committee ©©

Photo: submitted by Matt Kronyak.

# Bean recognized for career devoted to safety

Jerry L. Bean of BLET Division 155 (Decatur, Ill.), is retiring from Norfolk Southern after an accident free, 41-year railroad career.

In March, he was recognized by Norfolk Southern with its top, system-wide safety award at a banquet in Norfolk Va. Shortly afterwards, he received a national safety award from Ray LaHood, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation, at ceremonies in Washington, D.C.

BLET National President Ed Rodzwick sent Brother Bean a congratulatory letter and a 40-year membership pin in mid-August. His retirement became effective September 1, 2009. He has held continuous membership in Division 155 since September 1, 1968.

He hired out as a locomotive fireman on the Norfolk & Western Railroad on June 7, 1968, and earned promotion to locomotive engineer in April of 1972.

"I've been with the BLE since Day 1," Bean said proudly. "I never joined any other union."

Brother Bean's contributions to railroad safety are impressive. He has worked with the Decatur Terminal Safety Committee for 17 years, including several years as Secretary-Treasurer. He has served as Committee Chairman for the last few years. The Committee is comprised of representatives from all departments and all unions at the Decatur terminal.

The group promoted safety for not only rail workers but for their families, too. The committee organized cookouts and picnics for NS workers and their families during the summer, and a Santa Train excursion in the winter.

The Santa Train was organized in con-



**Jerry L. Bean**, a Norfolk Southern engineer and member of BLET Division 155 (Decatur, Ill.), receives a Certificate of Commendation from DOT Secretary Ray LaHood for his commitment to safety.

junction with Operation Lifesaver. The families were asked to bring canned goods to the Santa Train, which were donated to local food banks. Last year, Bean said they ran four and five trains a day for two days, teaching railroad safety to approximately 1,400 people while collecting more than 2 tons of food for the needy.

His safety award from Norfolk Southern was based on his efforts as Chairman of the Decatur Terminal Safety Committee.

Earlier this year, Bean organized an emergency evacuation plan for the ter-

terminal. He worked with the Decatur Fire Department to give them a tour of the terminal and to educate them on basic railroading principles so they would know how to better respond in the event of an emergency or hazmat release. He also organized evacuation routes for NS employees and established rally points at safe areas outside the terminal.

Last year, he obtained a \$2,000 grant to fund the placement of key box entry systems on the homes of low-income elderly citizens in the Decatur area. A secure box is mounted on the exterior

door of elderly citizen's homes, allowing the fire department to enter in the event of an emergency. The secure key boxes can only be accessed by the fire department.

Also this year, Bean obtained another \$2,000 grant, which was donated to the local Fire Department for a cadet training program. It was a summer program that taught children about fire safety, including hands-on instructions on how to use fire extinguishers.

Winning the top safety award at Norfolk Southern entered him into the running for the Association of American Railroad's annual Harold F. Hammond Award for railroad safety. And while he did not receive first place in the Hammond competition, he was satisfied with his work at Norfolk Southern.

"The Norfolk Southern award was quite an honor," Bean said. "I felt like that was the most important award because it came from my company. That's where I dedicated myself to make things safe."

During his career Bean worked the extra board early in his career. Later he qualified for a regular assignment from Decatur to Peru, Ind., and Frankford, Ind. He also worked as a yard engineer in the Decatur Yards while instructing safety classes and giving Operation Lifesaver presentations.

He and his wife Carole (known affectionately as "Susie") have two adult children — Jarrod and Justin. His father, Orville Bean, was a fireman and engineer on the former Wabash Railroad.

"It's been a good career for me," bean said. "When I first hired out I had no intentions of staying, but things got a lot better. I don't regret it." ©©

Photo: Ralph Alswang, courtesy Association of American Railroads



# BLET, UTU file joint comments on FRA HOS Interpretations

In a joint submission aimed at improving safety and the security of member paychecks, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and United Transportation Union have asked the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to clarify and simplify its interim policies relating to, and interpretations of, the Rail Safety Improvement Act's changes to hours-of-service limitations that went into effect July 16.

The sought after clarifications and simplifications fall into three categories:

1. The Rail Safety Improvement Act's (RSIA) prohibition of communication with employees during statutory off-duty periods;
2. The RSIA's provisions pertaining to mandatory off-duty time following the initiation of an on-duty period for a specified number of consecutive days; and,
3. The maximum number of hours that may be worked in a calendar month.

The joint BLET-UTU comments observe that the hours-of-service provisions in the safety act "produced the most far

reaching effects on hours-of-service of safety critical railroad workers since enactment of the original Hours-of-Service Act in 1908." In fact, the FRA, itself, observes that the hours-of-service amendments "are extraordinarily complex and comprehensive."

Because of the complexity, said the BLET and the UTU, "the statute itself fails to adequately address a number of important issues that will almost certainly have a substantial effect on our members. Moreover, FRA has been forced to provide interpretations that must address goals that sometimes are in conflict. It is our sincere hope that these (joint BLET-UTU) comments will provide a basis for improvement of FRA's policies and interpretations in a way that is faithful to the intent of Congress."

The BLET and the UTU also asked the FRA "to further clarify their stated interpretations in plain language to the maximum extent possible, so there is no room for debate concerning the application of those interpretations."

The BLET and the UTU noted also that they were "not" commenting on each policy and interpretation "because we do

not want to unnecessarily burden the record. However, FRA should not conclude that we concur with each of the policies and interpretations with which we strongly disagree, but we are withholding comment concerning them because FRA's position has been dictated by the statute itself, and FRA cannot depart from statutory requirements; therefore, comments concerning these subjects would be futile."

"The comments are intended to provide greater clarity to the sometimes confusing provisions of the law, and to assist BLET and UTU general committees in their efforts to negotiate a better balance between maintaining earnings and the new requirements," said BLET National President Ed Rodzicz and UTU International President Mike Futhey. ©©

**TO READ THE JOINT COMMENTS, CLICK HERE:**  
[HTTP://WWW.BLE-T.ORG/PR/PDF/FRA-2009-0057-BLET-UTU.PDF](http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/FRA-2009-0057-BLET-UTU.pdf)

**FOR CONTINUOUS UPDATES ON THE HOURS OF SERVICE ACT, VISIT THE BLET WEBSITE:**  
[HTTP://WWW.BLE-T.ORG/HOS/](http://www.ble-t.org/hos/)

## Memorial fund for fallen IC&E members

The members of BLET Division 266 in Savanna, Ill., have established a memorial fund to honor the memories of Josh Osborn and Andrew Reed, who were killed in a tragic accident on July 14.

"The families are really struggling financially right now, and we want to help them through this difficult time," said Division 266 Secretary-Treasurer Todd Poffenberger.

Osborn was engaged to marry Jennifer Schreiner. The couple had a two-year-old daughter, Kaliann Schreiner, as well as Jennifer Schreiner's daughter, Bailey Baker.

Reed was also engaged to be married. He is survived by his fiancée, Jamie Diercks, their one-year-old daughter, Brynn, and Jamie's daughter, Delaney Holmes.

Brother Poffenberger is the fund's administrator. Donations will be divided equally between the two families.

**Donations can be made to:**  
BLET Local 266 Memorial Fund  
c/o The National Bank  
229 Main St.  
Savanna, IL 61074

Anyone with questions may contact Brother Poffenberger at (815) 291-9546.

### >> FEDERAL EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY ACT (FELA)

# Witnesses in FELA cases

**"Rail carriers have tried their best to destroy the rights of injured railroad workers by trying to break unions."**

Like a chain, a union is only as strong as its weakest link. Union rights, including rights of injured workers under the FELA, are linked together with and depend upon union members who witness such injuries telling the truth in carrier investigations and in Court. Railroad worker witnesses are protected from carrier harassment and intimidation by Section 60 of the Federal Employer's Liability Act and the new federal Whistleblower laws found in 49 CFR 20109. Section 60 of the FELA provides for up to a \$1,000 fine and a year in prison and under the new Whistleblower Act 20109 it also provides

for \$250,000 punitive damages fee for any company official who harasses a witness in an FELA case.

The vast majority of union members gladly tell the truth in company investigations or in court. We salute those union Brothers and Sisters who quietly do the right thing day in and day out.

Rail carriers have tried their best to destroy the rights of injured railroad workers and their families by trying to break unions, abolish the FELA and have failed in all such attempts.

The injured union members and witnesses of union members gladly enjoy the wages, benefits, and protections of their union that have been earned by

the blood, toil, sweat, and tears of other union members and their families who were willing to sacrifice wages, intimidation, and in some cases their lives to fight for the rights of ALL union members.

Statistically most railroad workers will either be injured or be a witness in a case where another worker is injured in their career. When deciding what to do in such a situation, union members should be guided by the Golden Rule of witness testimony: Testify truthfully on behalf of your union Brother if you would want your union Brother to testify truthfully for you.

If every union member would follow this rule, there would be no weak link in the chainmail of union armor defending truth, justice, and the American way.

Submitted by:



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**Above:** Bill Jungbauer testifying before Congress on the harassment and intimidation of railroad employees.

### TEAMSTER LEADERS MEET WITH LAHOOD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and asked for the Secretary's assistance in working with the carriers and unions to achieve the best possible results for BLET members.

BMWED President Simpson discussed roadway worker protection with the Secretary, and the impact it has on his members.

Additionally, the labor leaders discussed high speed rail Secretary LaHood, noting that there have already been 278 proposals for high speed grants made by various entities around the country, which is a sign of the overwhelming demand for high speed rail. The BLET/BMWED/IBT delegation made sure that Secretary LaHood understood the potential impact high speed rail will have on our member-

ship, especially in light of the trends toward contracting out work from the rail labor crafts in commuter rail.

Funding for the Federal Railroad Administration and its on-going safety projects were also discussed, especially in light of the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 and the additional responsibility given to the Administration.

"It was a great feeling to have a Secretary of Transportation who really understands the needs of our workers and the importance of railroads to this country," BLET President Rodzicz said. "I think the commitment to fund high speed rail by this administration and its vow to protect railroad workers is a refreshing change from the past. I look forward to working with the Secretary and the Federal Railroad Administration in the future." ©©

### Electronic Communications Policy

The policy currently in effect is that official communications between BLET members and the National Division require a hard copy of the correspondence — with a signature — being received by the National President — to be considered an "official communication."

This is to provide that the actual question(s) are addressed, and ensures that when official interpretations are made they have reference to a specific request and can be used in future correspondence.

Due to the volume of e-mails it would be impossible for the

President to answer all unofficial communications. Therefore, it is the policy of the BLET National Division Office that e-mails addressed to the National President will be reviewed and forwarded to the appropriate officer or staff for a timely response. In other words, an email message is not considered an official communication.

This will allow the President to be aware of the opinions and suggestions of the membership, while at the same time providing a timely response to the member, if a response is necessary. ©©



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9/09

**SEPTEMBER 2009 PHOTO OF THE MONTH**



**This depiction of a Union Pacific Streamliner**, likely based on the M-10003 class, graces the walls of BLET National Division headquarters in Cleveland. It is part of the History of Locomotives Mural commissioned by the BLE in 1937 and painted by Artist Earl J. Neff. **Photo:** Jesse Kramer

**Advisory Board July Activity**

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

**National President Edward W. Rodziewicz** — National Division office: General supervision of BLET activities; General office duties; Various correspondence & phone calls; President, Teamsters Rail Conference; National Association of State Legislative Board mtg.; EUMA meeting; Mtg. w/ Department of Transportation Secretary LaHood; Merrill Lynch meeting; Rail Conference meeting, re: Section 6 notices.

**First Vice-President and Alternate President Paul T. Sorrow** — Performed various duties in Office Administrator capacity; Various duties assigned to First Vice President; Various correspondence and telephone communications; NASLBC mtg., Philadelphia; EUMA, Philadelphia; Mtg. w/ DOT Secretary LaHood; Transportation Trades Department, Washington, D.C.; CSXT SSA negotiations; Joint Rail Chiefs mtg., Washington, D.C.

**National Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walpert** — General supervision of accounting dept., records dept., online services dept., IT Dept., tax compliance dept.; public relations dept.; Education & Training Dept.; Internal Organizing, Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; Safety Task Force; Meetings with vendors and financial institutions; Standard Building operations oversight; NASLBC mtg., Philadelphia; EUMA, Philadelphia; Mtg. w/ DOT Secretary Ray LaHood, Washington, D.C.

**Vice-President Merle W. Geiger Jr.** — Assigned to: Kansas City Southern; Texas Mexican Railway; MidSouth Rail; SouthRail; Gateway Western; CP Rail System/US; Utah Railway; Indiana Harbor Belt; Belt Railway of Chicago; Great Western Railway; and Panhandle Northern Railway; Mtg. w/ GC Kaulins (Belt RR) and Division 394, Chicago; PLB 7239 session w/ GC Koonce and KCS, Hendersonville, N.C.; Holiday; Vacation; Research, correspondence and general office duties.

**Vice-President Stephen D. Speagle** — Assigned to Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Montana Rail Link, Pacific Harbor Line, Missouri & Northern Arkansas (M&NA), National Wage/Rule Committee; General office duties; Pacific Harbor Line Section 6 notices, San Pedro, Calif.; EUMA, Philadelphia; Division 155 mtg., Decatur; Vacation days; Mtg. w/ GC Gibbons and BNSF, Fort Worth, Texas; Mtg. w/ General Chairmen, Fort Worth.

**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; UP-Eastern District; EUMA, Philadelphia; 2008 Rail Safety Improvement Act (RSIA) implementation mtgs., all UP GCAs; SBA 180 arbitration, UPWL, Chicago; Office work, paper work, filing, calls, etc., assisting General Chairmen, UP and Tacoma Belt & STD.

**Vice-President & National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman** — Assigned to BLET Washington, DC office; BLET Security Officer; General

Office Duties, telephone, correspondence; Coordinate content of NLO website; NASLBC and EUMA, Philadelphia; IBT state lobby mtg., delivered presentation on high speed rail, Washington, D.C.; National Conference of State Legislators, Philadelphia; 31st National Democratic Club Golf Tournament, Potomac Falls, Va.; Midwest High Speed Rail Conference, Chicago; Guest speaker at District of Columbia State Legislative Board 2009 Quadrennial Convention; Nomination markup, Harry Hoglander, Washington, D.C.; DC Railroad Labor Emergency and Security team mtg., AFL-CIO, Washington, D.C.; Reception hosted by House majority leader Steny Hoyer for Rep. Gerry Connolly; Attended various fundraisers; Attended several lobbying meetings on the Hill, Washington, D.C.

**Vice-President Marcus J. Ruef** — Labor member-NRAB, Vice Chairman, First Division; Director of Arbitration Dept; Assigned to Amtrak; Port Authority Trans Hudson (PATH); Long Island Railroad (LIRR); Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA); New Jersey Transit (NJT); MNR; and NYAL; FRA passenger rail forum with passenger GCs, Philadelphia; Assist GC Koonce with research, CN/IC; Review/edit NRAB concurrence & dissent w/ Doug Davidson (DWD); EUMA, Philadelphia; Research for GC Jim Dayton, UP-West; Assit VP Pierce with PLB, CSX; Adopt awards on SBA 1063, NS-N; Arth 13 Manning case, study record of property handling, organize and scan record, BRC; Review R.J. Darcy dismissal transcript, NJT; Draft letter to SL 20 GEB and RSIA for WER; Referee hearings, NRAB, Chicago; Prepare appeal for dismissal and LERB petition for GC Darcy, NJT; Various NRAB administrative matters; Assist GC Koonce develop negotiating strategy, CN/IC; Assist VGC Thornton w/ discipline case submission preparation, CSXT-W.

**Vice-President Dennis R. Pierce** — Assigned to all CSX General Committees — Eastern Lines, Western Lines, Northern Lines, Conrail (SAA/CSX-Northern District) — and Indiana Rail Road, Alabama State Docks; Special projects, BNSF GCofAs; General office duties; Executive session PLB 7302 conference call; Vacation; EUMA, Philadelphia; BLET/CSX SSA bonus plan negotiations, Ft. Worth; PLB 7263 executive session conference call; BLET, UTU & BNSF ebb & flow mtg., Fort Worth; BLET/CSX SSA bonus plan negotiations, Jacksonville, Fla.

**Vice-President Mike Twombly** — Assigned to Delaware & Hudson; Springfield Terminal; St. Lawrence & Atlantic; Montreal, Maine & Atlantic; Union Railroad; Birmingham Southern; New York, Susquehanna & Western; New England Central; South Buffalo Rwy.; Iowa, Chicago & Eastern; Indiana & Ohio; Indiana Southern; Louisville & Indiana; Meridian Southern; Talleyrand Terminal Railroad; EUMA, Philadelphia; IC&E contract negotiations, Sioux Falls, S.D.; WNYP contract mediation, Buffalo, N.Y.; Union Railroad mediation, Pittsburgh, Pa.

**Vice-President Willard E. Knight** — Assigned to: All Norfolk Southern General Committees and Wheeling & Lake Erie; EUMA, Philadelphia; Division 292 mtg., Brewster, Ohio; Division 607 mtg., Cleveland, Ohio; Public Law Board 6556 and PLB 7159, Norfolk, Va.; General office duties.

A message from  
 Teamsters General President  
 James P. Hoffa

**Now is the time to take action!**

**For the first time in almost 50 years, Congress is close to enacting major health care reform.**

It's important to all of us that we fix America's dysfunctional health care system.

Though the vast majority of Teamsters have health insurance, many are paying more for copayments, deductibles or premiums. Teamster employers are paying more for their share of premiums.

The high cost of health care is burdening American workers, crippling U.S. companies, hurting the economy and adding to the deficit.

Meanwhile, insurance companies and their executives are reaping windfall profits.

Right now, Congress is working on legislation that would let you keep the insur-



ance you have and provide affordable coverage, if you don't. It would let you continue to be insured if you change jobs, lose your job or start a small business. It would forbid insurance companies from denying coverage if you have a pre-existing condition.

This is good for our union, good for working families and good for America. Unfortunately, powerful special interests in Washington are fighting reform. Recently, one Republican senator said, "If we're able to stop Obama on this, it will be his Waterloo. It will break him."

If the defenders of the status quo succeed this year, the drive to reform health care will falter. We may never have a shot at health care reform again in our lifetimes.

Your help is urgently needed. Write a letter, make a phone call or send an email. This Web site is designed to give you the information and the tools you need to pitch in and help President Obama succeed in passing health care reform this year.

Teamstersforhealthcarereformnow.com will help you help the country put its health care system on the right track.

Fraternally,

*James P. Hoffa*

**James P. Hoffa**  
 TEAMSTERS GENERAL PRESIDENT