



NEWS

NOVEMBER
2005

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

Railroad carriers' toxic brew

Hijacking, chemical explosions, reveal gaps in carriers' rail security plans

Numerous security and safety breaches on the nation's railways in October, including a man who allegedly hijacked a train with a bow and arrow, reinforce the findings of the Teamsters Rail Conference report, "High Alert: Workers Warn of Security Gaps on Nation's Railroads."

The report documents a startling lack of safety and security measures in this post-September 11th era. Employees of Union Pacific, CSX, Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Norfolk Southern and others participated in the report, detailing many examples of carriers' operational security and safety gaps that put the public at risk.

"When a man can take over a train with a bow and arrow, and when an exploding tanker car kills citizens, destroys homes, totals cars in a quarter-mile area and forces the evacuation of hundreds of

people, it's time to pull heads out of the sand," said John Murphy, International Vice President and Director of the Teamsters Rail Conference. "The rail carriers' security systems are woefully inadequate. We need to look no further than Madrid and London for the catastrophic consequences of inaction."

Recent security and safety incidents include:

- October 25: An Amtrak train from Boston to Washington was delayed for more than two hours as law enforcement investigated a bomb threat.

- October 20: At a Senate hearing, lawmakers warned freight rail carriers to devise a way to strengthen tanker cars that hold the most dangerous chemicals. In the U.S., rail carriers transport about 1.7 million carloads of hazardous materials each year. Tank cars carry about 68 percent of hazardous materials and nearly



all of the most dangerous chemicals, like chlorine.

- October 15: Seven empty train cars and a tanker containing a flammable gas derailed in a switchyard, exploding in a ball of fire that killed one person, forced the evacuation of hundreds of homes and left a plume of smoke over the south end of Texarkana, Ark. At least two homes were destroyed and several vehicles were totaled in the quarter-mile area surrounding the accident.

- October 10: In Montclair, California, police shot and wounded a man who allegedly took over a Union Pacific freight train with a bow and

arrow as it was stopped for a signal. The man threatened the engineer and conductor, the only people on board.

"High Alert" details survey responses from more than 4,000 rail employees nationwide and details shocking inattention to security by the nation's largest rail corporations. Rail employees have little, if any, training on the handling of hazardous materials, such as the propylene gas in the Arkansas accident. The practice of leaving locomotives and other rail machinery unlocked is far too common. The report's conclusions are that

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Senate focuses on rail security

The U.S. Senate is currently considering a bill that seeks to improve the security of America's freight and passenger rail transportation system.

The U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation held a hearing on October 20, regarding S. 1052, the Transportation Security Improvement Act. The hearing also examined public and private sector actions taken to enhance the security of passenger and freight rail transportation in light of September 11, 2001, and various attacks on rail systems overseas.

Introduced by Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK), S. 1052 provides for much needed security improvements for the railroad in-

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Latest FRA emergency order off the mark

In a bold step, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has set a November 22 deadline for an emergency order mandating that Union Pacific, Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Norfolk Southern, CSX and all other railroads take specific and immediate steps to fix a growing safety problem which has led to an increasing number of train accidents, resulting in nine serious train crashes, ten fatalities and injuries to more than 600 people since January of 2005. Under the Emergency Order, any railroad company, supervisor or employee who violates the procedures mandated in the order may be liable for a civil penalty of up to \$27,000.

While the Teamsters believe this is a sign that the FRA is finally addressing some of the rail safety issues brought to light in the Rail Conference's recent report "High Alert," this Emergency Order fails to directly address three critical issues:

1. The Emergency Order fails to address the root cause of these preventable accidents: the inherent deficiencies of dark territory operations and non-monitored switches;

2. The Emergency Order fails to address the rail carriers' work rules, which create an overworked and fatigued workforce, becoming a contributing factor in the occurrence of these types of accidents because redundant safety systems are not in place; and

3. The Emergency Order fails to address the rail

FRA questions & answers concerning Emergency Order No. 24

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carriers' lack of thorough and comprehensive worker training to deal with hazardous chemical emergencies, and the carriers' failure to provide the appropriate training and equipment with which workers can protect themselves and the community in the event of accidents and toxic chemical releases.

"While we applaud the FRA for taking action, this is but a baby step in the right direction," said John Murphy, Director of the Teamsters Rail Conference. "This is a stop-gap measure at best that fails to address the root cause of these preventable accidents. Until the FRA affirmatively addresses the inherent deficiencies of dark territory and non-monitored switches, they will not have addressed the problem. Until the FRA affirmatively addresses the issues of crew fatigue, work/rest schedules, manpower shortages, and operating rule deficiencies, the problem will not be solved. The rail carriers all too often hide behind an excuse of 'worker error' in these tragic accidents, yet it is the carriers' own operating rules and work rules that are the root cause of many of these accidents in dark territory."

The hand-operated track switches that the FRA refers to in its Emergency Order are those in "dark territory." These switches exist in areas of track that are not tied into an electronic signaling system that can monitor and report switch positions. While earning record profits, the rail corporations have failed to invest in readily available safety systems that can provide train crews and train dispatchers with advance notice of switch positioning. Such technology has been around for decades, but rail carriers such as Union Pacific, Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Norfolk Southern, and CSX, while enjoying record profits, have not made the investment to improve the safety of dark territory operations, thereby endangering rail workers and the communities they serve.

The Teamsters' Rail Conference will be monitoring and lobbying the FRA and the DOT to address these missing critical elements, which go to the heart of accidents in dark territory.

"While this is but a first step, FRA's Emergency Order should none-the-less serve as a long overdue wake-up call to the rail carriers, who have for too long been left to their own devices," Murphy said. "The rail carriers' safety and security systems are woefully inadequate and the consequences can be devastating. In the hands of the wrong people at the wrong place at the wrong time, it could be catastrophic." •

BLET NEWS

Part II: The 'pretzel logic' of remote control

Carriers, AAR, UTU employ twisted logic to justify implementation, continued use of RCL

(This is the second in a three-part series of articles in which the BLET takes a look at recent actions of the Federal Railroad Administration, the Association of American Railroads, and the United Transportation Union to further expand the use of remote control locomotives to main track territory. Part I was published in the October issue of the Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen News, while Part III will appear in the December issue.)

(In Part II of the series, we examine the reactions of the AAR and UTU to FRA's September 9, 2005 letter. A complete copy of this series is available on the BLET website at the following link: <http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/pretzel.pdf>)

AAR Rolls On

In spite of the AAR's stated position that RCL technology was to be used in yard operations only, some of their members have obviously moved to expand use to the main track. Additionally, AAR has seized the ball and already begun to run by commenting on the overdue Final Report to Congress, AAR predicted that the "report is expected to show that employee safety is enhanced by RCL, with reductions in both injuries and injury rates when compared with conventional operations." This claim apparently is predicated upon a pair of tables published in FRA's May 2004 Interim Report to Congress. These tables fail to support AAR's and FRA's position for two reasons.

First, the tables are based on misleading calculations that actually camouflaged a degradation of safety as a result of RCL implementation. The table identified in the Interim Report as "Enclosure No. 1," covering Part 225 reportable accidents/incidents during the period May 1, 2003, through November 30, 2003, indicates that there were 21.00 RCL accidents per million yard switching miles and 24.28 conventional accidents per million yard switching miles, which represents a ratio of approximately 0.865 RCL accidents per conventional accident. Extrapolating the data for Class I railroads, only, produces RCL and conventional accident rates of 21.24 and 24.67, respectively, for a ratio of 0.861 RCL accidents per conventional accident.

Enclosure No. 2 — covering "casualties" (i.e., Part 225 reportable injuries, occupational illnesses and deaths) — indicates casualty rates of 8.12 for RCL and 18.94 for conventional, again as measured per million yard switching miles, for a ratio of 0.429 RCL casualties per conventional casualty. Extrapolating the data for Class I railroads, only, produces RCL and conventional casualty rates of 7.20 and 19.13, respectively, for a ratio of 0.376 RCL casualties per conventional casualty.

However, this data is of little value in estimating the safety risks associated with RCL operations. RCL assign-

Part 2 of a three-part series

ments and conventional assignments were credited with an identical number of switching miles (6 miles per hour x 8 hours per shift = 48 yard switching miles per shift) for the period covered by the data, even though typical RCL crews are comprised of two members, while conventional crews usually are comprised of three.

In fact, in Safety Advisory 2001-01, FRA's "recommended minimal guidelines" for RCL operations, FRA stated as follows:

Several commentors submitted data that indicate accidents and incidents dropped dramatically as RCL operations increased. Although FRA commends these commentors for their efforts in gathering such data, FRA notes that the data used were obtained without equal exposure metrics to allow valid comparisons between remote control and manual operations (i.e., comparisons were not equalized for the number of labor hours and number of employees). Normalizing safety data is necessary to clarify our understanding of the potential safety risks.

66 FR 10341. Accordingly, in Guideline C.4, FRA recommended "that the railroad keep a record of the total number of labor hours and the total number of employees by location for both RCL and manual switching operations to ensure that accidents and incidents are accurately measured, and that valid comparisons between the two types of operations can then be made." 66 FR 10344.

The industry simply ignored this guideline and, instead, provided only "yard switching miles" data to FRA, despite FRA's determination that data which was not normalized was not valid for comparison purposes. Had FRA promulgated a rule governing RCL, it could have compelled the industry to provide labor hours and headcount data; publishing "guidelines" placed FRA in a position where it was forced to accept whatever data the industry provided. Nevertheless, converting yard switching miles into crew member hours — based on the standard composition of RCL and conventional crews — and recalculating the rates produces a stunning reversal in what is shown.

With respect to reportable accidents/incidents, the appropriate rates are 62.99 RCL accidents per million crew member hours and 48.56 conventional accidents per million crew member hours for all railroads, and 63.72 RCL and 49.34 conventional for Class I railroads only. Based upon the metric

that FRA, itself, has identified as valid, the RCL to conventional accident ratios change from 0.865 to 1.297 for all railroads, and from 0.861 to 1.291 for Class I railroads only.

Similarly, the casualty rates under the valid metric are 24.36 for RCL and 37.89 for conventional for all railroads, and 21.61 for RCL and 38.25 for conventional for Class I railroads only. The ratios of RCL to conventional casualties rise from 0.429 to 0.643 for all railroads, and from 0.376 to 0.565 for conventional. Thus, not only does a valid data analysis demonstrate that RCL is far less safe than its proponents claim, it also establishes that the accident/incident rate for RCL is higher than that for conventional operations.

Second, and even if the flaw with the reported data did not exist, AAR cannot draw conclusions from yard switching data that bear any relationship to the potential level of RCL safety in main track operations. Ignoring both the Gamst/Gavalla Report and FRA's own warnings, AAR has chosen to play Pollyanna while it continues to expand the use of RCL.

Given that AAR, first, withheld from FRA its intention to deploy RCO in main track operations and, second, provided data that FRA had previously stated would not afford a valid basis for comparison, it is small wonder that AAR is confident in its ability to "resolve" FRA's concerns. The fact remains, however, that a shell game remains a shell game, no matter how many times it is played.

UTU Treachery

This brings us to UTU. The banner headline screaming "FRA echoes UTU RCL safety concerns" on September 16th is nothing more than the crudest form of spin. UTU's conduct over the past five years tells a far different story.

It is true that, when FRA held its July 19, 2000 technical conference on RCL, UTU joined BLET in urging a careful, reasoned approach to implementation of the technology. However, UTU abandoned that position shortly thereafter, and — when we filed a Petition for Rulemaking governing RCL in November of 2000, which FRA simply ignored — UTU sat mutely, as it did when FRA published its recommended "guidelines" the following February.

Then, in September of the following year, in the middle of our Seventh Quinquennial Convention, UTU signed an agreement with the National Carriers' Conference Committee ("NCCC") claiming the right to the work. In legal action and arbitration that followed, NCCC argued that "the RCO's use of a remote control transmitter is completely different from what engineers do." See, e.g., NCCC Opening Submission to Special Board of Adjustment ("SBA") No. 1141 at p. 42.

UTU argued that the work of the yard ground crew had not changed with the introduction of RCL; rather, "in-

stead of giving hand or lantern or radio signals to control the movement of the locomotive, electronic signals are transmitted to a microprocessor, a computer on the engine, which then performs the work that was formerly done by the locomotive engineer." Transcript of Proceedings before SBA No. 1141 at p. 213.

These arguments — that the work of the yard engineer had been eliminated — served as the basis for the arbitrator's ruling that the NCCC/UTU agreement was valid. He held that while "operation of the locomotive is the exclusive domain of the engineer ... control is not," because ground crews exercise control to the extent that they provide signals for movement. See Award of SBA No. 1141 at pp. 21-22. The arbitrator also held that operation of remote control locomotive was performed by the "on-board computer," and that all the RCO did was send a signal to the computer via the belt pack. Id. at p. 23.

Since that time UTU has taken another 180 degree turn, and is trying to reclassify RCOs as "mini-engineers." As we reported in August, UTU proposed a scheme whereby the engineer's position on switching crews in two BNSF yards in Washington and Oregon would be eliminated, with the switch foreman becoming trained to operate locomotives to perform the switching in a conventional operation.

This insidious encroachment on the exclusive work of the locomotive engineer by UTU has become the subtext for UTU's "training" mantra, which has been at the center of all UTU efforts since the summer. Significantly, UTU now wraps itself in FRA's letter on main track RCO operations to further this end.

On September 16th, UTU President Paul C. Thompson, right-hand man for Byron Boyd — who is currently serving a two-year sentence in federal prison for corruption and racketeering — at the time the RCL agreement with NCCC was signed, applauded FRA's position, claiming it reflected UTU's desires that the industry "increase the use of mentoring programs that focus on local conditions" and that "more attention must be devoted to upgrading skills to match introduction of new technology."

In other words, Thompson is perfectly willing to place the members he represents, as well as BLET members and all railroad workers who work on or near main track, in harm's way — using RCL well beyond its capabilities in a setting that FRA concedes could result in a catastrophic accident — just for the sake of another job grab. As The Who sang, "Hail to the new boss, same as the old boss."

(In the final part of this series, we pose numerous questions to FRA, AAR, and UTU, that their position on remote control have raised.) •

Senate Hearing

Continued from Page 1

dustry. When introducing the bill, Senator Stevens said that transportation security is "a national security function and an economic necessity."

Among other things, S. 1052 directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish a task force (including the TSA, the DOT, and other appropriate agencies) to complete a vulnerability and risk assessment of freight and passenger rail transportation. It requires the Secretary, based on the assessment, to develop specific prioritized recommendations for improving rail security. It also authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security to make grants to Amtrak for certain security upgrades, including fire and life-safety improvements and infrastructure upgrades to Amtrak tunnels on the Northeast Corridor.

The bill also provides for grants to railroads (including Amtrak), hazardous materials shippers, universities and research centers, and state and local governments for freight and passenger rail security

upgrades to prevent or respond to acts of terrorism or sabotage.

These provisions could address some of the gaps in railroad security that members of the Teamsters Rail Conference have identified in a report titled "High Alert: Workers Warn of Security Gaps on Nation's Railroads." In it, rail workers reported that America's rail system is no better protected than before terrorist bombings in Madrid and London, despite repeated warnings from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) that trains are a likely terrorist target. Employees of Union Pacific, CSX, Burlington Northern and others completed surveys that led to the report's findings. A copy of the report is available at: <http://www.ble-t.org>.

Eighty-three percent of respondents said that they have not received any, or additional, training related to terrorism prevention and response over the past 12 months, a security oversight that will be addressed by S. 1052.

The legislation contains provisions for a rail worker security training program that will prepare front-line workers for potentially threatening conditions, and it also sets forth certain whistleblower pro-

tections for rail employees or other persons who have provided information regarding a perceived threat to security to the employer, Federal Government, or Congress, or who have refused to violate or assist in the violation of any regulation related to rail security. The worker protection provisions are among the items on the BLET's most wanted list for a railroad security bill.

"S. 1052 includes many items that the BLET wanted included in a rail security bill," BLET National President Don M. Hahs said. "This legislation is a much needed step in the right direction in order to ensure the safety of our nation's railroads, the communities they run through and all rail workers employed by them."

The legislation currently has 11 cosponsors, including: Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA); Senator Thomas R. Carper (D-DE); Senator Byron L. Dorgan (D-ND); Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ); Senator John D. Rockefeller (D-WV); Senator Olympia J. Snowe (R-ME); Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA); Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY); Senator Daniel K. Inouye (D-HI); Senator Mark L. Pryor (D-AR); and Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY). •

Election Supervisor's first report to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen

Overview of the Procedure for Electing delegates to the 27th IBT International Convention from the IBT Rail Conference

As a result of the Merger Agreement between the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, ("Merger Agreement"), BLET members are now part of the IBT Rail Conference and known as the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen ("BLET"). Pursuant to the Merger Agreement, BLET General Committees of Adjustment must elect delegates to send to the 27th IBT International Convention, to be held in Las Vegas, Nevada in June 2006. General Committees must conduct the election of IBT convention delegates and alternate delegates using the procedures in the proposed 2006 Rules for the 2005-2006 IBT International Union Delegate and Officer Election (the "2006 Rules"). The election of IBT Convention delegates and alternate delegates must be conducted entirely separately from the election of delegates to the BLET Convention. Delegate and alternate delegate nominations to the IBT Convention will be held in the BLET General Committees from January 1, 2006 through March 10, 2006. The election time period is from February 20, 2006 until April 30, 2006.

I. Introduction to the Process

The rules and procedures for electing IBT convention delegates are basically those that the IBT has followed in its International Officer elections every five years since 1991. In broad outline, IBT local unions elect delegates to the IBT International Convention. Under the merger agreement, the BLET General Committees are treated as IBT local unions for the purpose of electing convention delegates.

At the convention, the delegates nominate candidates for IBT International Office. To obtain nomination, an individual must receive at least 5% of the delegate votes from the relevant voting pool (that is, a candidate for an office voted on by the entire membership must receive votes of at least 5% of all the delegates; a candidate for regional office (that is, IBT Regional Vice-President) must receive votes of at least 5% of all the delegates from the particular geographic region). A period for candidate campaigning follows the convention. The members then vote by secret ballot, distributed and returned through the mail, in a direct referendum to elect the IBT's International Officers. The schedule calls for the balloting to be completed in November, 2006.

The entire process is overseen by an Election Supervisor appointed by the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, with the mutual agreement of the IBT and the United States government. The Election Supervisor: a) oversees the General Committees' conduct of the delegate elections; b) enforces the election rules, including the adjudication of election protests filed during the conduct of the election and the enforcement of campaign finance rules; c) conducts the nomination for International Officer candidates at the IBT International Convention; and d) conducts the balloting for the International Officers. The Election Supervisor is respon-

sible for insuring that the 2005-2006 IBT International Officer election, including all delegate elections, is conducted in a free, fair and democratic manner.

II. Contacting the Election Supervisor's Office

The Election Supervisor is Richard W. Mark. The Election Supervisor's office is located in Washington, D.C., at the following address:

Richard W. Mark
Office of the Election Supervisor for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters
1725 K Street, NW, Suite 1400
Washington, DC 20006
Phone: 1-202-429-8683 or 888-IBT-2006 (Toll free)
Facsimile: 202-429-0030
Email: ElectionSupervisor@IBTvote.Org

The Election Supervisor has established a website to make information about election procedures, necessary forms, and election protest decisions accessible to the entire IBT membership, including those IBT members in the BLET. The web address is: www.ibtvote.org

Regional Directors for the Election Supervisor's Office are in place around the United States and in Canada to provide information about the election and to provide assistance to General Committees of Adjustment conducting delegate elections, and to members, as needed. The contact information for the Regional Directors follows:

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III. Election of Delegates from General Committees of Adjustment

The Merger Agreement provides that each GCA with 100 or more active members is entitled to nominate and elect delegates and alternate delegates according to the representation formula of the IBT Constitution — one delegate for up to the first 1,000 members, with one additional delegate for each additional 750 members or major fraction thereof. Article § 6.16 of the Merger Agreement requires the consolidation of GCAs with less than 100 active members, only for the purpose of electing IBT Convention delegates. Consolidated entities are entitled to elect delegates in accordance with the IBT Constitutional provisions for electing delegates as though they constituted a single GCA. The Office of the Election Supervisor expects to provide notice shortly after October 31, 2005 to those GCAs with less than 100 active members that will be subject to consolidation. For purposes of electing IBT Convention delegates and alternate delegates only, GCAs will be merged into consolidated entities according to IBT regions in which they are located. The BLET National Division requested and the Election Supervisor has agreed, to conduct the election for IBT convention delegates and alternate delegates in the consolidated entities.

Each GCA has been instructed to prepare a delegate election plan in accordance with the 2006 Rules and has been sent written guidance on how to prepare the plan.

The completed plan must be submitted to the Election Supervisor by November 16, 2005. The delegate election plan spells out how your GCA will carry out the procedures for conducting the nomination and election of IBT convention delegates, including dates and procedures for nominating candidates for delegate and alternate delegate, dates and procedures relating to the mail ballot election for IBT convention delegates and alternate delegates, and the person at the GCA responsible for conducting the delegate election. Interested persons have 15 days after a plan is sent to the Election Supervisor to request a copy of the plan from your GCA and to submit comments to the Election Supervisor on the provisions of the GCA delegate election plan. As delegate election plans are reviewed and approved, the Election Supervisor's website, www.ibtvote.org, will post a master calendar of dates relating to the election of convention delegates. You should also receive individual notice by mail of delegate nomination and election events at your GCA, and schedule information should also be posted on the BLET website and (where feasible) union bulletin boards.

In order to be eligible to run as a delegate or alternate delegate candidate from your GCA, you must be in one month good standing through the month prior to the month in which the nomination meeting is held. The Rules allow for the nomination and seconding of candidates in writing, submitted to your GCA one day prior to the scheduled nomination meeting, and also allow for a candidate to accept nomination in person, or if absent, in writing, at the time of nomination. These provisions allow members interested in running for convention delegate, and their nominators and seconders, to participate in the process even though they may not be able to attend a nomination meeting in person. Consult Article II of the 2006 Rules, and your delegate election plan for details on how to accomplish candidate nominations, seconds and acceptances in writing.

IV. The 2006 Rules

Copies of the 2006 Rules were previously transmitted to all General Committees within the BLET. You may obtain a copy of the proposed 2006 Rules yourself by visiting our website at www.ibtvote.org, or by calling or writing the Election Supervisor's Office to request a copy.

V. Candidate Accreditation

The 2006 Rules provide that members interested in running for IBT International Office may become accredited and be eligible to obtain access to membership lists and have campaign literature published in the Teamster. Article X, §1 of the 2006 Rules explains the procedures and requirements for becoming accredited. The Election Supervisor's official forms for accreditation and the number of member signatures required to become accredited are available at www.ibtvote.org

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We will continue to provide updates on our work for the 2005-2006 IBT International Union Delegate and Officer Election in upcoming issues of the Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen News, Rail Teamster and Teamster. •

PASSENGER RAIL NEWS

Metra engineers reinstated, thanks to BLET

Neutral arbitrator finds BLET members were wrongfully dismissed by carrier without a fair trial

Thanks to the efforts of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, three locomotive engineers were reinstated — with back pay — after being wrongfully discharged by Metra following a 2004 accident that claimed the life of a 10-year-old boy at the River Grove Metra Station.

A federal arbitrator ruled that Metra had materially violated the engineers' due process rights to a fair hearing and prevented the engineers from making a defense.

Metra did not summon a single material eyewitness to the accident and excluded all evidence offered in defense of its members by the BLET, said BLET National Vice President Rick Radek said. And instead of trying to conduct a fair trial, Metra management attempted to prove the engineers' guilt through the media.

"Metra built a hearing record consisting solely of what it wanted in it, and then found the engineers guilty of the safety rule violations it had already

pronounced them guilty of in the press the very same night of the accident," Radek said. "It can surprise no one that the arbitration board overturned the result of such bias and manipulations."

A Metra safety rule was at issue in River Grove case. The rule requires that when trains are "receiving or discharging passengers... a passenger train must not depart a station when a train or engine is seen approaching until the leading end of approaching train has passed rear of standing train, unless communication has been established to ensure safe guards."

The eastbound train had finished receiving and discharging its passengers and was already departing the station when the approaching express train was seen, which was still some distance away.

A literal application of the rule did not require the eastbound to remain stationary. The crew judged that their train would be well east of the station before the express train arrived, and

that pedestrians about the station would be able to see and hear the express train approach, allowing them to take precaution to the train's passing. An eyewitness, which Metra did not summon, said this was exactly what transpired.

Instead, Metra argued that the engineers could have seen the express train sooner, before they had finished loading their passengers, and then the rule would have required that they remain stationary. The engineers testified the headlight of an on-coming freight train prevented them from seeing the express train sooner.

Rather than calling the crew of the freight train to testify, Metra relied upon conjecture that the freight train's reported location later indicated it could not have been where the BLET engineers claimed it was at the critical time and accused our engineers of lying about the presence of the freight train. This became known in the Chicago media as the "phantom train."

Metra announced to the media it justified the permanent firing of the three engineers because of their "lie."

Vice-President Radek extended sincere sympathy to the family of Michael DeLarco, the 10-year-old boy killed in the accident. "Many of us are parents, too, and we can all appreciate how difficult it is to cope with the loss of a child, regardless of the circumstances."

As a result of the entire River Grove accident, the BLET began a program to increase public awareness about the need for better safety in and around Metra train stations.

"We detected glaring inconsistencies in the level of safety accorded passengers on the various Metra lines," Radek said. "We have been working with state officials and with officials in the communities Metra serves to enhance the level of protection for pedestrians at train stations. Preventing another accidental death should be Michael DeLarco's legacy." •

Senate passes Amtrak long-term funding provision; Bush threatens veto

An amendment giving long term funding to Amtrak passed in the U.S. Senate on November 3. Amendment 2360 to S. 1932, the Deficit Reduction Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 2005, was passed 93-6. S. 1932 passed by a vote of 52-47.

The amendment was introduced by Senators Trent Lott (R-MS) and Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ). The amendment is the same as S. 1516, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2005.

However, President Bush has threatened to veto the legislation. The administration objected to a provision that deletes a Medicare fund the White House believes ensures that private health-care plans take

part in the federal health care program.

"This is an important step to securing long-term funding for our nation's passenger rail system," BLET National President Don M. Hahs said. "I would like to thank the 93 members of the Senate who voted in favor of this important legislation. They have shown that there is wide bipartisan support for Amtrak, and stood up against the Bush administration."

The following Senators voted against the amendment: James DeMint (R-SC); John Ensign (R-NV); Judd Gregg (R-NH); Jeff Sessions (R-AL); John Sununu (R-NH); and George Voinovich (R-OH).

The Rail Conference is now working the House

side to obtain legislation with similar language.

On the same day that the bill was passed, the General Accounting Office released a report on the state of Amtrak's finances. According to the report, Amtrak needs to improve the way it monitors performance and oversees its finances to reach solid financial ground. The GAO recommended that the Transportation Secretary direct the Federal Railroad Administrator to: require Amtrak to submit a plan laying out specifically how it will improve its financial operations; provide Amtrak with direction on how to do so; and monitor the railroad's performance and report to Congress on Amtrak's progress. •

Rail security threats on the rise

U.S. rail system vulnerable to terrorist attack, 'High Alert' report says

Toxic Brew

Continued from Page 1

the U.S. rail system is vulnerable to terrorist attack, and rail corporations have not taken seriously the safety of their employees and the public.

A week after the release of "High Alert," the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released its own report on rail security, prompting Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-ME) to declare: "We are in a situation where our individual rail services across the country have no clear understanding of what the best means are of securing their rail systems."

On October 19, 2005, Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) took a small step in the right direction and issued an

emergency order mandating that railroads take specific and immediate steps to fix a growing safety problem with hand-operated track switches in "dark territory" which has led to an increasing number of train accidents, resulting in nine serious train crashes, 10 fatalities and injuries to more than 600 people since January 2005, but until the FRA

affirmatively addresses the inherent deficiencies of dark territory and non-monitored switches, as well as the issues of crew fatigue, work/rest schedules, manpower shortages, and operating rule deficiencies, the hand-operated

track switches problem will not be solved.

"Railroads must put an end to these avoidable and deadly mistakes," Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta said, admonishing the carriers.

The Teamsters again call on the rail carriers to implement the recommendations detailed in "High Alert." If they refuse, the Teamsters Rail Conference will press Congress to institute regulations that compel them to do so.

A copy of the report is available online at <http://www.teamster.org/divisions/rail/pdfs/railsecuritybook.pdf>•



BNSF General Committee (Santa Fe) elects officers

Pat Williams reelected General Chairman

In meetings concluded in Las Vegas on October 19, the delegates attending meetings of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe General Committee of Adjustment (former Santa Fe) have reelected incumbent General Chairman Pat Williams to serve another three-year term. Mark Banton was reelected as First Vice-Chairman.

Regional Chairman elected were: Mike Lane, Eastern Lines; Chris Mosser, Western Lines; Alan Holdcraft, Northern & Southern Lines; and Gary Harper, Coast Lines. Current Secretary Treasurer Roland Kleinsorge was reelected to another term. Williams commended

the work of the delegates during the meetings.

"The meeting was very productive, we accomplished our meeting goals, and I feel the member's money was well spent in bringing the GCofA together," Williams said.

Delegates concluded their three-day meeting on October 19 after considering several resolutions, conducting an audit of the financial records of the GCofA, and hearing numerous reports, including those from officers of the BLET National Division, including BLET National President Don Hahs, First Vice-President Ed Rodziewicz, and National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert. •

Moates elected new CSXT-Western Lines General Chairman

Don Moates was elected General Chairman of the CSX Transportation-Western Lines General Committee of Adjustment at meetings in Jacksonville, Fla., on August 1. He is a member of Division 782 (Etowah, Tenn.).

David A. Bowen of Division 332 (Montgomery, Ala.) was elected Senior Vice-General Chairman and Bill Hardbarger is the new Junior Vice-Chairman and

Secretary-Treasurer. He is a member of Division 38 (Clifton Forge, Va.).

The Committee represents 30 divisions, including two shortlines (Indiana Railroad and the Alabama State Docks). In addition to electing new officers, the delegates addressed a number of important business issues. Attending from the National Division were Vice-Presidents Paul Sorrow and Dale McPherson.

A veteran locomotive engineer, General Chairman Moates served as Senior Vice-Chairman from 1978-1985 on the former Louisville & Nashville General Committee of Adjustment and as General Chairman from 1985 to 1994.

He noted that the General Committee office has relocated to Etowah, Tenn., from Jacksonville Beach, Fla., effective October 1. •



Seated, from left: J.L. Freimuth, Local Chairman (LC) of Division 489; G.T. Robinson, LC of Division 211; T.J. Braden, LC of Division 271; P.D. Henry LC of Division 190, E.W. Rice, Southern Region Vice General Chairman; D.L. Moates, General Chairman; D.A. Bowen Sr., Vice General Chairman; W.L. Hardbarger Jr., Vice GC and S-T; Jane Schaffer, Secretary; W.R. Skidmore, 1st Jr. Vice GC; J.L. Sanders LC of Division 204; J.R. Lyons LC of Division 473; R.W. Haley, LC of Division 610; and R.A. Johnson, LC of Division 101.

Standing, from left: National Division Vice President Dale McPherson; W.P. Page, LC of Division 275; L. Hinkle, LC of Division 463; J.B. Smith, LC of Division 495; G.L. Abell, LC of Division 365; M.A. Wofford, LC of Division 78; S.E. Utley, LC of Division 742; T.E. Hudson, LC of Division 156; W.M. Pulley, LC of Division 41; P.W. Culpepper, LC of Division 547; W.E. Singleton, LC of Division 829; D.R. Neal LC of Division 30; J.V. Pedro, LC of Division 26; D.M. Wicks, LC of Division 154; M.A. Thornton, Eastern Region Vice GC; Carl Watson, LC Alabama Docks; and S.A. Salmons LC of Division 698. (Present but not pictured: National Division Vice President Paul T. Sorrow.)

Finamore elected new CSXT-North Lines General Chairman

R.A. "Rick" Finamore of BLET Division 757 (New Castle, Pa.) was elected General Chairman of the CSX Transportation-Northern Lines General Committee of Adjustment at meetings held in Jacksonville, Fla., from September 26-28.

The 41 delegates in attendance also re-elected three incumbent General Committee Officers: First Vice-Chairman W. P. "Bill" Lulias, a member of Division 231 in Philadelphia; Second Vice-Chairman D.M. "Danny" Knorek of Division 937 in Toledo, Ohio; and Secretary-Treasurer R.D. "David" Welter of Division 132 in St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada. The GCofA's newly-elected

Third Vice-Chairman is Russ Holden of Division 757 in New Castle, Pa.

"BLET National Vice-President Paul Sorrow attended the meeting and was a great help as always to the committee in the handling of the business over the three days," General Chairman Finamore said.

The delegates also handled a number of business and contract related issues during the three days of meetings.

He noted that the offices of the Committee will remain in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.

The officers began serving their four-year terms immediately. •



Seated, from left: D.L. Humphrey, Western Regional Vice Chairman; W.P. Lulias, First Vice Chairman; R.A. Finamore, General Chairman; D.M. Knorek, Second Vice Chairman; and R.D. Welter, Secretary-Treasurer.

Standing, from left: W.P. Lyons (Div. 34), Midwestern Regional Vice Chairman; T.E. Danner, Jr., Eastern Regional Vice Chairman; E.F. (Ted) Doorley, Central Regional Vice Chairman; and D.J. Norman, Northern Regional Vice Chairman.

Davis elected new General Chairman of NS-Northern Lines GCA



Clockwise, from bottom left: Dan Cook III, Alt. S-T; Carlos Lizarraga, 4th VGC; Rodney Cutlip, 2nd VGC; David Fernald, 3rd VGC; Bob Linsey, 1st Vice Chairman; Cole Davis, General Chairman; and Jerry Elmore, S-T.

Brother Cole W. Davis, a member of BLET Division 86 in Moberly, Mo., was elected the new General Chairman of the Norfolk Southern-Northern Lines General Committee of Adjustment at meetings held in Cleveland, Ohio, from September 12-14.

Other officers elected during the meetings include: Robert Linsey, 1st Vice General Chairman (Division 659, Buffalo, N.Y.); Rodney Cutlip, 2nd Vice General Chairman (Division 385, Toledo, Ohio); David Fernald, 3rd Vice General Chairman (Division 2, Jackson, Mich.); and Carlos Lizarraga, 4th Vice General Chairman (Division 106, Muncie, Ind.).

Jerry Elmore, a member of Division 120 (Kansas City, Mo.) was elected Secretary-Treasurer and Dan Cook III of Division 1 (Detroit, Mich.) was elected Alternate Secretary-Treasurer. General Chairman Davis noted that long-time Secretary-Treasurer Steve Jackson has retired, and thanked him for his years of service to the Brotherhood.

BLET National Division President Don Hahs attended the meetings and gave a presentation on numerous topics, including an update on current wage/rule negotiations and health and welfare. First Vice-President Ed Rodzicz and National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert also attended the

meeting and gave presentations.

General Chairman Davis noted that Special Representatives Gene Imler and Tom Miller attended, as did John Tolman, BLET Chief of Staff and Political/Legislative Director.

Larry Sykes, retired NS General Chairman, and Frank Lacy, retired Local Chairman of Division 260 (Ashtabula, Ohio), attended the meeting. Dick Myers of the Brotherhood's Relief & Compensation Fund and Richard Edmonds of the Locomotive Engineers & Conductors Mutual Protective Association also attended the meetings, as did representatives of BLET designated law firms. •

BLET NEWS

FRA publishes Q&A on Emergency Order No. 24

Full text of 29 questions and answers available for download from BLET website

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) published 29 questions and answers concerning Emergency Order No. 24 (EO 24), which will take effect on November 22. You can view or download the questions and answers from the BLET website (link below).

EO 24 is intended to address ongoing problems with hand-operated main track switches in dark territory. Misaligned switches have caused a number of serious accidents in recent years, the most recent of which claimed the life of Division 62 Local Chairman G. Y. Bailey.

Violations of EO 24 are punishable by civil fines up to \$27,000. Therefore, it is imperative that all BLET members become familiar with its requirements and comply strictly with them.

The following information is not intended to be a complete listing of requirements for operating rules associated with EO 24. It is to serve only as a preliminary review of YOUR responsibilities for compliance with the FRA's and railroad's instructions on EO 24.

1. Each employee must receive initial instructions on EO 24 covering these subjects:

- Operation of main track switches
- Position of main track switches
- Restoring main track switches to their normal position.
- Securing (locking) main track switches
- Correspondence of switch targets to switch position
- Clearing limits of main track authority; job briefings
- Switch Position Awareness Form (SPAF)

2. These instructions are expected to be face-to-face and must include examples or real time applications of the EO and you must be given an opportunity to ask questions.

3. Additionally, railroads are to provide periodic instruction on the EO as part of their usual rules instruction.

4. You must receive a PAPER copy of EO 24 from the railroad and you must provide a written receipt or acknowledgement (electronic record is acceptable) indicating you have re-

ceived it, which must be retained by the railroad.

5. You cannot operate a hand operated main track switch in non-signalized territory unless you are qualified on the operating rules relating to their operation. Most likely you are already qualified.

6. You are individually responsible for the proper operation of these switches, including restoration to their normal position after use.

7. Both the Engineer and the Conductor must initial the SPAF as required and are individually responsible for its proper completion.

8. The Engineer's initials must appear for each entry as soon as practicable after the switch is reversed and restored to its normal position.

9. The Conductor's signature must appear on the form when it is completed.

10. All information required on the SPAF must be entered before an employee reports clear of the limits of the main track authority.

11. SPAFs must be retained for a

period of five days and made available to FRA for inspection and copying.

12. You must conduct job briefings in connection with operation of hand operated switches in non-signalized territory.

13. Radio communication (or an alternate form of intra-crew communication that "afford[s] an equivalent level of communication integrity relevant to the prevailing operating conditions" is required to be used each time a switch is operated. That communication details much information relative to use of the switch.

14. Operational (efficiency) tests will be conducted on this EO.

15. FRA can impose a fine of up to \$27,000.00 for your willful violation of EO 24.

16. The effective date is November 22, 2005.

A copy of the FRA's question and answer document is available on the BLET website at:

<http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/Final-QA1104051.pdf> •

November election results represent win for working families

(Anna Burger, chair of Change to Win, issued the following statement on November 9.)

The election results in California, New Jersey and Virginia are a win for working families. In California, voters have soundly defeated the anti-worker policies of Governor Schwarzenegger and his big business backers, rejecting their attempts to silence workers' voices. In New Jersey and Virginia, voters have chosen as their next Governors leaders who are committed to standing up for the right of workers to join a union.

In this election, workers turned out as never before to make a real difference for all of us, and the Change to Win unions were an integral part of that effort. In California, we had thousands of volunteers

working for months around the state to communicate with our members and the public the disastrous effects the corporate and conservative-backed initiatives of the Governor would have on working families. This culminated in several thousand Change to Win volunteers who worked statewide on Election Day.

In New Jersey, our unions engaged in a get-out-the-vote program that turned out our members in record numbers to vote for candidates who support working families. Through our member-to-member outreach we talked to workers in their homes and in their workplaces, with hundreds of volunteers canvassing neighborhoods and making calls to turn out the vote, including more than a thousand volunteers on Election Day. In Virginia, in spite of the smaller

presence of the Change to Win unions, we made more than 250,000 phone calls and recruited hundreds of volunteers to help in the days and weeks before the election.

As the November 8 results have shown, in spite of the money and resources poured into the election by large corporations, when workers unite they can change lives.

Voters have shown today that they are tired of policies that put corporate profits ahead of the well-being of working families. We urge elected officials in Washington to take heed and reconsider tax cuts for the wealthy offset by drastic cuts in funding for health care and other services that working Americans depend on. Americans have sent a message. It's time for Congress and the administration to listen. •

LM-30 advisory: 'De minimis' exemption increased from \$25 to \$250

(The U.S. Department of Labor issued the following news release on November 7.)

The Department of Labor, Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS), issued an advisory regarding Form LM-30 on November 7. An interim rule has been established by the DOL that increases the amount of the "de minimis exemption" from \$25 to \$250.

In other words, any gifts of \$250 or less are considered "insubstantial" by the DOL and will not need to be reported on Form LM-30.a

The Form LM-30 (Union Officer and Employee Report) informs filers that they "do not have to report any sporadic or occasional gifts, gratuities, or loans of insubstantial value, given under circumstances and terms unrelated to the (filer's) status in a labor organization." (Form LM-30 Instructions, General Instructions.) This test has been referred to as a "de minimis exemption." If the test is satisfied, the filer need not report the gift or gratuity on

Form LM-30. If the test is not satisfied, the gift or gratuity must be reported on Form LM-30.

Guidance previously issued by OLMS on "de minimis" situations included examples of an employer picking up a lunch tab or an employer giving a union officer a Christmas gift of nominal value. A car was given as an example of a gift that would require a report. In March 2005, in order to provide more guidance on this issue, OLMS revised its LMRDA Interpretative Manual to quantify as "de minimis" an item with a value of \$25 or less.

Between March and October 2005, because of a grace period, Form LM-30 reporting increased dramatically compared to historical practice. Based on a review of these reports, and considering comments from union officers and employees that the de minimis threshold was too low, OLMS has concluded that setting the reporting threshold at \$25 places an unnecessary reporting burden on union officials without a corresponding benefit to

union members or the public. As an interim measure, pending issuance of a final rule establishing revised Form LM-30 reporting obligations, OLMS has determined that gifts, gratuities or loans with a value of \$250 or less received by a union officer or employee will be considered insubstantial for the purposes of Form LM-30 reporting. However, if the aggregate value of multiple gifts or loans from a single employer to a single union officer or employee exceeds \$250 in a fiscal year, the transaction will no longer be treated as "de minimis," and the aggregate value of the transactions will be reportable. Gifts or loans from multiple employees of one employer should be treated as originating from a single employer when calculating whether the \$250 threshold has been exceeded.

Although offers of numerous small gratuities would appear to be outside the de minimis exemption because they are not provided on an "infrequent or sporadic" basis, the Department will not seek to enforce the reporting re-

quirement, so long as the aggregate value of these gratuities does not exceed \$250 per union officer or employee. For example, a union officer or employee who receives coffee, provided by an employer, at bi-weekly meetings over the course of a year would not be required to report this gratuity on a Form LM-30.

In a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, published in the Federal Register on August 29, 2005, concerning the Form LM-30, the Department has sought comment on this standard and the dollar threshold. (70 Fed. Reg. 51166, 51175.) The comment period has been extended to January 26, 2006. (70 Fed. Reg. 61,400.) The Department encourages comments from all members of the public on all aspects of this rulemaking.

For general guidance on Form LM-30, see Current Form LM-30 Information on the DOL website at:

http://www.dol.gov/esa/regs/compliance/olms/lm30_information.htm •

GIA Dialogue

Working to preserve everything we're thankful for

By Pat Murphy
Grand International Auxiliary, 2nd Vice-President and Assistant Legislative Representative (U.S.)

If you have been reading the articles that have preceded this one in the GIA Dialogue series, then you already have a good sense of what the GIA is all about. I would like to share a personal experience with you and explain why I joined the GIA. Perhaps you will see the value of membership for yourself and your family, as I did.

I came to understand and appreciate the importance of belonging to a union after comparing my position with my husband's BLE membership. After working many years in the financial industry, I had no job security. My wages and benefits were not equal to those of my male counterparts, and most troublesome of all, I worked knowing that I was on my own.

In contrast, my husband's union, the BLE, provides job security. The BLE provides protection for members along and has negotiated good wages and benefits. He is part of a larger organization that provides a united front to stand up for workers in the face of a hostile management.

In one notable instance, a group of tellers banded together and insisted they be given a raise. They did so after executives received increases because the company's profit margins were high. In the face of this inequity, the president agreed to grant their request. However, he then instructed the payroll clerk to withhold the cost of medical benefits from the tellers' future paychecks. Unlike

my husband, these tellers were without representation and had no voice in the formidable industry they served so well. The company's retribution was costly for the tellers and the rest of us got the message.

So the idea of joining an organization with a focus that supported a union like the Brotherhood was an instant attraction for me. Outside of the BLET itself, the GIA is one of

the only organizations that could understand my railroaders' household of unpredictable work schedules and canceled commitments.

I decided to join the GIA even though I had many other duties and obligations. There were long stretches of time when the only thing I could do as a member was to send in my dues and call my Representative or write him a letter when

asked to so. My GIA sisters more than understood my situation; they appreciated my efforts no matter how small they seemed to me. So being a member of the GIA is not only easy — it makes sense. What continues to amaze me is how much I get out of the meetings that I do attend.

So at this time of year when the holiday season approaches, I add the BLET and

the GIA to the list of things for which I am grateful. Combined, they are the force that keeps my husband's job security alive and protects a standard of living worth protecting.

If this makes sense to you, then I invite you to join us now. This application will get you started. When we receive it, one of our officers will call to welcome you and to answer the questions you might have. •



OFFICIAL APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Grand International Auxiliary

to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen



To the Officers and Members of the GIA to the BLET: I, the undersigned, hereby present myself as a candidate for admission into your Organization. If accepted, I promise to abide by all the laws, rules, and regulations of the Order that are now in force, or may hereafter be enacted.

Applicant's Signature _____

Date of Birth _____

Please Print Name _____

Home Address (include city, state and zip code) _____

Home Phone _____

Cell Phone (optional) _____

E-mail (optional) _____

Have you ever applied for membership in the past? If yes, give Auxiliary No. _____

Have you ever been a member of the GIA? If yes, give Auxiliary No. _____

Your sponsor must be a BLET member. Please print the following information:

Sponsor's Name _____

Relationship (husband, wife, child, etc...) _____

Sponsor's Address (include city, state and zip code) _____

Sponsor is a member of BLET Division No. _____ City & State of Division _____ Railroad _____



Enclose your check for \$25.00 payable to "G.I.A." to cover a one-time application fee of \$5.00

and your first Annual Dues of \$20.00. Mail check and form to:

Onita Wayland · 1301 McLennan St. · Mart, TX 76664 · (254) 876-2509



Do you have a special talent or hobby? Tell us about it!

Do you have, or do you know of a co-worker who has, a special hobby, talent, skill, interest, or other spare-time activity that you would like to share with other members of the Teamster Rail Conference? If so, then the BLET Public Relations Department would like to hear from you.

The Rail Conference has begun publishing a new quarterly magazine exclusively for Teamster rail members called Rail Teamster. Each issue will include a feature story about a BLET or BMWED member that focuses on his or her away from work hobbies and/or activities.

Maybe you are a musician,

writer, inventor, builder, craftsman, record holder or a stand-up comic. Maybe you're a scout leader, a coach, a mentor or a leader within your community or club. We know you are out there and we would love to hear from you.

All entries will be acknowledged and mutually convenient interviews will be arranged as publication schedules

permit. Please send your name, address, phone number, and a brief description of your special talent or hobby to:

John Bentley
BLET Public Relations Dept.
1370 Ontario St., Mezzanine
Cleveland, OH 44113-1702
bentley@ble-t.org

BLET NEWS

A message from Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa

Organizing our priorities



Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma not only ravaged our country, they also exposed the scandal of our nation's poverty.

The tragedy in New Orleans was shameful: Needy Americans without adequate food or medicine. Unsanitary living conditions. Underprivileged citizens unable to access medical care. A federal government that was unresponsive to the plight of our nation's poor. And that was before the storm hit.

Ever since Ronald Reagan, so-called "big government" has been demonized.

Tax cuts for the wealthy and a free ride for corporations are religion in Washington. Workers dealing with disappearing jobs, declining wages, no health insurance and a paycheck-to-paycheck existence get pushed aside because they don't contribute big money to political campaigns.

In the wake of the worst disaster in our nation's history, some questions need to be asked and answered.

Do we want a political system that rewards only the wealthy and neglects the working poor?

Is it good for America to have the divide between the upper and lower classes grow greater every year?

Why is national health care treated as a budget issue instead of a matter of human dignity?

Standing Together

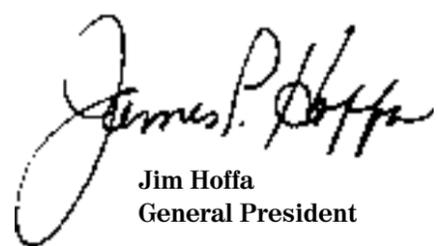
Teamsters from across the country are operating trains, driving trucks and delivering supplies as part of the hurricane relief effort. Others are donating food, clothing and volunteering their time. America is at its best when its citizens pull together during times of crisis and despair. And Teamsters have always answered the call when their nation needed them most.

The desire for respect and dignity never changes. As long as working people are underpaid, overworked or otherwise mistreated, there will be a need for a union. I believe the dignity of American workers cannot be exported, privatized or downsized. And I don't believe the government should set up barriers to discourage working Americans from joining a union and improving their lives.

What the government and the people of our great country need is to be better organized. Government needs to better organize its priorities — including its emergency management. And working people need organized labor like never before.

"I believe the dignity of American workers cannot be exported, privatized or downsized."

— General President Jim Hoffa



Jim Hoffa
General President

NOVEMBER 2005 CALENDAR & EVENTS

DECEMBER 4-7, 2005... Secretary-Treasurer Compliance Workshop, Cleveland, Ohio
This is the final S-T workshop of 2005. It begins on Sunday, December 4 at 7 p.m. and concludes at noon on Wednesday, December 7. Workshop will include an online demonstration of the BLET National Division's new Internet-based dues reporting and collection system, that was implemented earlier this year. Register online at: <http://www.ble-t.org/st>. For other details and registration information, please contact Ken Kroeger of the BLET Education & Training Department, (216) 861-0932 or Kroeger@ble-t.org.

JUNE 4-9, 2006... 79th Annual BLET-GIA Southeastern Meeting Association (SMA)
Hosted by SMA Chairman T.L. Reed and the members of BLET Division 205, the 79th annual SMA will be held at the Chattanooga Marriott at the Convention Center in Chattanooga, Tenn. More information to come when available.

JUNE 12-16, 2006... 68th Annual BLET-GIA Eastern Union Meeting Association (EUMA)
Hosted by EUMA Arrangements Chairman R.J. Chapter and the members of BLET Division 157, the 68th annual EUMA will be held at the Tropicana Casino & Resort on the Boardwalk in Atlantic City, N.J. More details to come.

JUNE 19-22, 2006... BLET National Division Convention, Las Vegas, Nevada
The First Quadrennial Convention of the BLET National Division will be held at Bally's in Las Vegas. More details to come when available.

JULY 18-23, 2006... 66th Annual BLET-GIA International Western Convention (IWC)
Hosted by S.V. Halbrook and the members of BLET Division 94, the 66th annual IWC will be held at the Holiday Inn Rapid City—Rushmore Plaza in Rapid City, S.D. More details to come when available.

AUGUST 20-24, 2006... 71st Annual BLET-GIA Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWCM)
Hosted by A.L. Williams and the members of BLET Division 182, the 71st annual SWCM will be held at The Peabody Little Rock in Little Rock, Ark. More details to come.

Advisory Board September 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; IBT Eastern Region meeting, Atlantic City, N.J.; Midwest Rail Craft Scholarship event, Beatrice, Neb.; Norfolk Southern-North Lines GCoFA Quadrennial mtg., Cleveland; CRLD negotiation mtg., Washington, D.C.; RLBC-NCCC mtgs., Washington, D.C.; Change To Win Founding convention, St. Louis; NARR 2005 annual mtg., Chicago; Div. 98-621 Town Hall mtg., Lincoln, Neb.
- 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; NS organizing campaign; Numerous Town Hall meetings at multiple locations, including Danville, Fort Mitchell, Cleveland, Knoxville, Chattanooga, Atlanta, Birmingham, Macon, Waynesburg, Shire Oaks, Conway, Norfolk, Crewe, Roanoke, Bluefield, Charleston, Williamson, Portsmouth, Charlotte, Linwood, and Greenville.
- 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; Rail Craft Scholarship Event, Beatrice, Neb.; Joint Division mtg., Lincoln, Neb.; Norfolk Southern-Northern Lines GCoFA mtg., Cleveland; IBT Finance Committee mtg., Cleveland; Change To Win inaugural convention, St. Louis, Mo.
- Vice-President Paul T. Sorrow**—CSX Western Lines GCoFA mtg.; Mtgs. w/ CSX General Chairmen regarding dual track bargaining; Public Law Board 1063, NS; CSX Family Day event, Greenwood, S.C.; Mtg. w/ President Hahs; Assisted Grand Trunk Western GCA for planning session with upcoming negotiations and day-to-day issues; Assisted CSX, NS and GTW committees and performed general office duties.
- Vice-President Richard K. Radek**—ND Office; BLET Decertification Helpline services; Director of Arbitration Dept; National Railroad Adjustment Board (NRAB); Illinois Central; Wisconsin Central; Indiana Harbor Belt; METRA; Belt Rwy. of Chicago; Paducah & Louisville; Chicago Central & Pacific; PLB 6844 Exec. Session, Chicago; WC/WSOR general assistance; National Office staff mtg., Cleveland; Div. 394 mtg., general assistance, IHB & BRC; Metra award distribution & instructions to claimants, re: reinstatements; IHB exec. cmte.; Arrangements/set up @ BMWE for press conference; Press conf., re: River Grove award, pedestrian-station safety awareness program; Metra post-accident management & organization; Metra contract negotiations; Bauman retirement & mtg., Metra; NRAB annual mtg., employee interviews, re: 9/17 accident, Chicago; Public-civic awareness mtg., Metra; CN/IC contract negotiations; Follow-up employee interviews, re: 9/17 Metra accident; FRA Part 240.409 dockets: EQAL 01-06, 03-47.
- Vice-President Dale McPherson**—CP Rail; Port. Term. RR; Longview Portland & Northern; Longview Switching Co.; Indiana RR; W&LE RR; Utah Railroad; UP Eastern Dist.; UP former CNW; DM&IR RR; Portland & Western RR; Great Western RR; Appalachian & Ohio RR; Public Law Boards 5604, 5681, 5721, 6040, 6281, 6558, 6589; UP work/rest projects; RSAC positive train control cmte.; National wage/rules; General office duties, telephone, correspondence; Arbitration, PLB 6449 and 6440, UP, Cheyenne; National wage/rule contract mtgs., Washington, D.C.; Portland & Western contract mtgs., Salem, Ore; National Association of Railroad Arbitrators mtg., Chicago.
- Vice-President & U.S. Nat'l Legislative Representative Raymond A. Holmes**—BLET Washington D.C. office; General office duties, telephone, correspondence; Rep. Don Young's Midnight Sun PAC, Alaska.
- Vice-President Merle W. Geiger Jr.**—Assigned to: BLET Trainmen's Department; Kansas City Southern; Gateway Western; Midsouth Rail; Southrail; Texas-Mexican Rwy.; Springfield Terminal, Delaware & Hudson; Indiana & Ohio RR; Louisville & Indiana RR; St. Lawrence & Atlantic RR; Indiana Southern RR; Preparation for Public Law Board (PLB); PLB 6884 (KCS) session, Chicago; International Fatigue Management Conference, Seattle; Research, correspondence and general office duties.
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Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen
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VOLUME 19 • NUMBER 11 • November 2005

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

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

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