



Daily news updates
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Locomotive

ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN NEWS

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



Paul T. Sorrow named Acting President of BLET

Paul T. Sorrow is now Acting President of the 59,000-member Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, a Division of the Rail Conference of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

He was promoted to the union's second-highest office on April 8, 2008, and assumed the duties of Acting President on October 15, 2009.

On October 15, the BLET Advisory Board placed National President Edward Rodzicz on a leave of absence pending outcome of the serious charges levied against him by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Acting President Sorrow is the senior member of the BLET Advisory Board. Prior to his elevation to First Vice President, Brother Sorrow was elected to four consecutive terms of office as Vice President.

He was first elected to the office of Vice President in 1991 at the Fourth Quinquennial Convention and then reelected in 1996 at the Fifth Quinquennial Convention in Detroit, Mich. He was subsequently reelected by acclamation twice, first in 2001 at the Sixth Quinquennial Convention in Miami and again in 2006 at the First Quadrennial Convention in Las Vegas.

Prior to his first election in 1991 to vice-president, he was promoted to the office of BLE General Chairman on the CSX Transportation (CSXT) Eastern

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The nine members of the Breaux clan who all work as engineers for the BNSF: Standing on the ground, from left: Louis (Jimmy) Jr.; and Louis (Jim) Sr. Standing on the engine, clockwise, from left: Michael; Eric; Rodney; Ed Jr.; Ed Sr.; Bob (standing behind Ed); and Jason (standing in front of Ed). Photo: Bud Breaux Sr.

All in the Family

BROTHER EDMUND P. (BUD) BREAUX SR., a member of BLET Division 383 in Needles, Calif., is the patriarch of a very large and very proud railroad family.

Not including Bud, who is retired, eight members of the Breaux family are all locomotive engineers currently working for the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway. Seven of the eight work out of Needles, Calif.

"There is a question asked in Needles," Brother Breaux said. "How many Breaux's does it take to run a railroad?"

Brother Breaux retired in 1993 with 38 years of service working for the ATSF out of San Angelo, Texas and Barstow, Calif. And although he is retired, eight of his sons and grandsons carry on the family tradition and work as engineers.

BROTHER BREAUX'S SONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- EDMUND P. BREAUX JR., Division 383 (BNSF);
- BOBBY L. BREAUX, Division 206 in Temple, Texas;
- RODNEY E. BREAUX, Division 383; and
- LOUIS J. BREAUX SR., Division 383.

HIS GRANDSONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- ERIC PAUL BREAUX (SON OF ED JR.), Division 383;
- MICHAEL SHANE BREAUX (SON OF ED JR.), Division 383;
- JASON RYAN BREAUX (SON OF BOBBY); not yet a member; and
- LOUIS JAMES BREAUX JR. (SON OF LOUIS SR.), Division 383.

"Louis Sr. and Louis Jr. are both are both called Jimmy, and Jason is called Ryan," Breaux said. "That gets confusing at times."

He believes his family may have established a record for most sons and grandsons working as locomotive engineers at a single time. While the BLET National Division does not keep records of most family members working as engineers at one time, we daresay Brother Breaux is correct and no one would be able to challenge the record established by the Breaux family of Needles, Calif. ©

BLET acts to halt video surveillance

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) has taken legal action in State and Federal Court in California to halt Metrolink's illegal audio and video surveillance of its members inside locomotive cabs.

"While cell phone use is alleged to have contributed to the fatal Metrolink collision of September 12, 2008, installing video cameras inside the locomotive cabs is an invasion of privacy," said Paul T. Sorrow, Acting President of the BLET. "In fact,

video cameras in the cab are an ineffective deterrent to cell phone use and there are far less intrusive and less expensive measures readily available that actually would prevent such use to accomplish Metrolink's purported goal of improving safety."

Instead of video cameras, the union is proposing a cell phone jamming system that blocks all incoming and outgoing cell phone calls and texts, and can alert others of the attempted cell phone use from the locomotive cab.

On October 20, the union filed a multiple count complaint in the U.S. District Court for California's Central Division, and another multiple count complaint in the Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles. Named in the suits are Metrolink parent, the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA), and Metrolink, along with Veolia Transportation, Inc., and its subsidiary, Connex Railroad, LLC, which provides

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Back to School

Thanks in part to the BLET. **pg 3**

Union Solidarity

BLET Division 3 rallies with Continental Airlines workers. **pg 6**

Short Term Disability

Open enrollment for BLET STD insurance plan. **pg 7**

2009

Calendar & Events

December 6-10, 2009

BLET Education & Training Department hosts a workshop for first-time Legislative Representatives at Teamster headquarters in Washington, D.C. For details, contact Ken Kroeger, Coordinator of the Education and Training Dept., (216) 272-0986 or Kroeger@ble-t.org.

December 13-16, 2009

BLET Education & Training Department hosts a workshop for first-time Secretary-Treasurers in Cleveland, Ohio. For details, contact Ken Kroeger, Coordinator of the Education and Training Dept., (216) 272-0986 or Kroeger@ble-t.org.

March 21-26, 2010

The Rail Workers Hazardous Materials Training Program will conduct a hazardous materials transportation/chemical emergency response training program at the National Labor College, Silver Spring, Md.

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.

July 13-17, 2010

70th Annual International Western Convention, Bismarck-Mandan, N.D.
Co-chairs Mike Muscha and Ron Huff and the members of BLET Divisions 671 and 746 host the 2010 IWC at the Radisson Hotel Bismarck.

August 8-12, 2010

72nd Annual Eastern Union Meeting Association, Pittsburgh, Pa. Hosted by Tom and Sue Caruso, Division 335, the 2010 EUMA will take place at the Sheraton Station Square Hotel in Pittsburgh, Pa.

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 San Antonio, on the River Walk at Paseo del Alamo (123 Losoya St., San Antonio, Texas, 78205).

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.

November 20, 2009

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

December 11, 2009

Riverview, Fla.
Hilton Garden Inn
4328 Garden Vista Drive.

BLET, UTU jointly oppose Amtrak firearms amendment

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and the United Transportation Union have joined forces to oppose a Senate amendment that would allow Amtrak passengers to carry firearms in their checked luggage.

Citing safety, operational, and financial concerns, the Presidents of the BLET and UTU wrote a joint letter to key members of the Senate and House Appropriations Committees to voice their strong opposition to the Wicker Amendment.

The Wicker Amendment to the Senate 2010 Transportation-House & Urban Development Appropriations Bill would allow Amtrak to transport firearms in passengers' checked luggage.

"We strongly believe that this provision would seriously jeopardize the safety of our membership, of other crew members on Amtrak trains, and of the intercity rail traveling public," the unions wrote in a joint letter.

From a safety and security standpoint, the weapons would be too easily accessible to terrorists or other passengers.

"When firearms are transported in checked baggage on aircraft none of the passengers have access to those firearms because they are stored in a segregated cargo hold," they wrote. "In stark contrast, anyone riding an Amtrak train need only overpower the on-board crew to have access to the baggage car and any weapons being transported therein. This poses an unacceptable risk, in our opinion."

Not only does the amendment significantly diminish safety, it is also wasteful of federal subsidies necessary for Amtrak to fulfill its statutory mandate. The amendment does not provide funding to train Amtrak personnel on handling the baggage with checked firearms. Additionally, adding extra procedures during check-in and baggage handling to accommodate the amendment could



Photo: iStock

Congressional Republicans want to allow firearms in Amtrak's checked luggage, but the BLET and UTU are raising logistical and security concerns.

adversely affect on-time performance.

Even if Amtrak was given additional operating funds to accommodate the transportation of firearms, the unions argue that the money would be better spent elsewhere along the Amtrak system.

"We would oppose the transportation of firearms on Amtrak trains because such additions of resources could better serve the public by increased investment in Amtrak's infrastructure and rolling stock," the unions wrote. "Traditional investments in Amtrak have easily documentable returns such as improved safety and increased ridership. Conversely,

it is difficult to measure the return on investment to transport weapons, given the added costs involved with safely and securely transporting firearms."

The unions are currently supporting a similar Amtrak appropriations measure in the House, which lacks the provision that forces Amtrak to change its current policy of prohibiting firearms on passenger trains. @@

A COPY OF THE LETTER IS AVAILABLE ON THE BLET WEBSITE AT:
<http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/AmtrakGuns.pdf>

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. @@

Transportation Workers protecting each other since 1910



LECMPA

4000 Town Center, Suite 1250, Southfield, MI 48075-1407
phone: 800.514.0010 | fax: 877.633.1910
email: lecempa1910@lecempa.org | web: www.lecempa.org



A locomotive engineer's "Road Trip" through life

If anyone knows about long journeys and road trips, it's a locomotive engineer. But it was another kind of road trip — not a physical trip across land but a personal journey of self-awareness — that inspired one BLEET member to publish a book.

Brother Patrick A. Bruner, a member of BLEET Division 357 (St. Paul, Minn.) and a railroader for the past 25 years, recently published a book titled "Road Trip — The Practical Art of Christian Growth."

"My book is a 'learning how to learn' guide," said Brother Bruner. "There may be times when un-learning something can be as important as learning something new."

Bruner's book compares the learning process and making positive choices in life to a long journey.

"I compare the learning process to an extended journey across this land of ours," Bruner said. "We go on foot, we use motorcycles, ships, cars, and — of course — trains. We find out that as we go, our situations change, our needs change, and, therefore, our modes of transportation must change."

"You will find that near the end of our first leg of the journey in this learning process (the Epilogue in our book),



On the Road Trip: Brother Bruner at the throttle during Advanced Engineer Training (AET) inside a CP Rail simulator.

we will be on board a train and we will have crossed mountains, up hill and down. Then we learn the difference between needed luggage, and the unneeded baggage on such a journey, at times no easy task."

The book is 288 pages. "I often times make reference to biblical scripture for reference," Bruner said. "The readers will find this book instructional, not judgmental. We take pragmatic steps to learn as we go, because as we see, learn-

ing is a step-by-step process."

Brother Bruner hired out on the BNSF Railroad in 1974. He joined BLEET Division 746 on February 1, 1979. He now works for the CP Rail and has been a member of Division 357 since October 10, 2005.

He said the book took many years to write, and that the publishing process took another seven years.

"I have found that getting published was more difficult than being an engineer,"

he said. "It made me actually become a doer, instead of a sayer. I actually had to practice what I was preaching and teaching. This was totally new to me, as non-previously qualified rail and territory of track would be to any railroader."

Thus far, he said that reader feedback has been positive.

"Readers have found this book, humbly offered as a learning guide, to have helped some to learn, and some to change for the better," he said.

He said that locomotive engineers, conductors, carmen, section gangs and mechanical workers — along with supervisory personnel — have found "Road Trip" to be helpful, entertaining and humorous.

"Humor has a healing effect on one, and as many times we see, there are elements of truth to many humorous scenarios," he said.

Brother Bruner is happily married with three grown children and seven grandchildren. "So yes, I know quite a bit about humor," he said.

Brother Bruner also has plans for a second book, tentatively titled "Hi-Ball!"

Copies of "Road Trip" are available for purchase from bookstores, Amazon.com or from Brother Bruner himself, who says he would be honored to autograph copies for BLEET members and their families. The price is \$19.95 plus shipping. Contact Brother Bruner at: (651) 731-9213, or: email patandaddie@msn.com; or 2329 Olivia Ct. E. Maplewood MN 55119. ©©

Photo: courtesy of Brother Patrick A. Bruner

Back to school, with help from the BLEET

When it came time for children of furloughed railroaders to head back to school this fall, members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen generously lent a helping hand.

Due to tough economic times, railroads have had to furlough many employees throughout the United States. Fort Wayne, Ind., and the surrounding areas are no exception.

Together, BLEET members Rick Munoz and Carlos Lizarraga started a drive to collect school supplies to help the children of all railroad employees who have been furloughed or needed help with supplies for school.

Brother Munoz is Vice-Local Chairman of BLEET Division 537 (Fort Wayne, Ind.), and Brother Lizarraga is Local Chairman of BLEET Division 106 (Muncie, Ind.). Both men are Norfolk Southern locomotive engineers.

They began their drive in July and collected items such as

pens, pencils, erasers, markers, book bags, note books, folders, crayons, colored pencils, regular pencils, mechanical pencils, erasable pens, glue, glue sticks, scissors, calculators, memory sticks, compositions books, hand sanitizer, boxes of tissues, and lunch boxes.

The BLEET Brothers also organized a picnic to help collect the donated school supplies.

"Thanks to the tremendous generosity from all their friends and co-workers, they collected enough supplies for a countless number of children," said Laura Munoz, wife of Brother Munoz. "I am very proud of them for what they have done."

The supplies were given to any family that needed them, from elementary school students to college freshmen. The donations primarily went to the family of any railroad employee that was furloughed or in need, regardless of their union affiliation.

The few supplies that were left over were donated to the Woodburn Christian Children's Home, a local orphanage. ©©



From left: Rick Munoz and Carlos Lizarraga at a picnic they organized to collect school supplies to donate to the children of furloughed railroaders.

Photo: courtesy Laura Munoz

BLET to review Designated Legal Counsel program

The Advisory Board of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) announced on October 21 that it will review its attorney referral program for injured union members.

While meeting in St. Louis, the union's governing board unanimously approved appointment of an internal committee to review its longstanding Designated Legal Counsel (DLC) program, and to make recommendations to the full 11-member BLET Advisory Board regarding the way attorneys receive and maintain designation.

"BLET members rightfully deserve and expect that their elected officers, and those DLC attorneys who represent them in FELA matters, will at all times act with fidelity and in the best interests of the union and its members, and in strict compliance with all laws," Acting President Paul T. Sorrow said. "Nothing less will be tolerated by our union and hard working members."

Injured railroad workers are not covered by state work-



ers compensation laws. Instead, the Federal Employers Liability Act (FELA) grants exclusive jurisdiction for claims of recovery for railroad injuries to the federal courts, against rail carriers.

More than 35 years ago, the BLET established a list of designated lawyers who specialize in FELA cases because attorneys handling such matters are generally more effective if they have both experience with federal law relating to FELA and are familiar with the railroad business.

The BLET's DLC program is similar to FELA referral lists utilized by other rail labor unions for the benefit of their members.

Under the BLET's program, FELA attorneys who apply for DLC designation undergo a rigorous examination of their experience, ethics, and professional standards before the 11 member BLET Advisory Board decides whether to include them on its list. The list is then made available to all union members through the BLET's publications and website.

Any FELA attorney approved for DLC designation must also agree to a 22-point written code of conduct developed and periodically reviewed by the BLET. The BLET's code of conduct requires each attorney to act honestly and in a professional manner in all dealings with union members, and others. @@

Rules of Conduct for Designated Legal Counsel

1. Counsel must have an established record of successful litigation experience and must have tried at least 12 cases to verdict.

2. Counsel must have a favorable rating from Martindale-Hubbel.

3. Counsel must have current malpractice insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000.00.

4. Counsel may not be considered as Designated Legal Counsel if he or she holds any elected or appointed position with any labor organization.

5. Counsel will be automatically removed as Designated Legal Counsel if he or she is suspended or disbarred from the practice of law in any state.

6. Counsel is prohibited from engaging, either directly or indirectly, in the Union's politics. This prohibition is all encompassing. Counsel shall not contribute financially, seek support for or against, nor attempt to influence any election or vote of any Union member or any Union issue requiring ballot or vote.

7. Counsel is strictly forbidden from offering or giving any gratuity, payment or gift to any Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen (BLET) member, Officer or others for the purpose of obtaining representation of an injured member. Counsel is strictly prohibited from sharing any portion of a fee earned with any BLET member or Officer.

8. Counsel must give injured member free advice in connection with their injury, and render assistance to them in related matters (RUIA, etc).

9. Counsel may not charge to the injured members he represents more than 25% of the gross settlement or award, or 33 1/3% of the net settlement or award. All costs charged an injured member shall be reasonable and incurred as a direct result of representation of the injured member.

10. When requested, Counsel must provide, in written form, a full accounting and breakdown of all expenses incurred, fees charged, or any other expenditures or deductions from the proceeds of the settlement or verdict.

11. Counsel may not refer the case of an injured member to any other attorney for handling, except one designated by the Union; however, Counsel may, as needed, designate a local attorney to assist with the handling of a member's case, as long as Counsel retains control of the case and remains fully responsible and accountable to the injured employee.

12. Counsel shall take an active part in matters of concern to railroad employees and the rail industry.

13. Counsel will, at all times, be required to support the legislative programs of the Union as the President may request.

14. Counsel will make himself or herself available to attend Regional and Division meetings for the purpose of explaining to members their rights under the Federal Employers' Liability Act.

15. Counsel fully agrees when requested to attend any meeting

(Regional or Otherwise) that it will be approved by the International Division and he or she will abide by the rules that all such meetings are to be jointly and equally sponsored by all Counsel in attendance.

16. The appointment of additional Counsel will take into consideration conditions that exist in a geographical area.

17. Any applicant for designation must be a member of the Academy of Rail Labor Attorneys (ARLA) for three (3) years preceding an appointment, or if in practice less than three (3) years, for the duration of his time in practice.

18. For an applicant to be considered for designation, at least five (5) General Chairmen and/or State Legislative Chairmen must, in written form, recommend such applicant.

19. If a non-designated counsel or his representatives sponsors a competing function or appear at a function sponsored by Designated Counsel, then he/she and his/her firm will forfeit the right to be considered as Designated Legal Counsel for the BLET.

20. Designated attorneys who have more than one office within the same metropolitan area as their primary office may have both offices in the BLET Journal/News within that metropolitan area regardless of the staffing at such offices. Outside the metropolitan area of their primary office, in order for designated attorneys to have additional listings, each such office must be staffed by at least one full-time attorney located at that office and by at least one full-time

additional employee located at that office. Failure to have such employees located full-time at such offices outside the metropolitan area of the attorney's primary office shall result in removal in the attorney's listing for any such location. For any listing, only the name of the Designated Legal Counsel shall be used.

21. The Designated Legal Counsel program is designed so that only an individual attorney is designated and not a law firm. However, it is recognized that members of a Designated Legal Counsel's law firm may perform legal work on behalf of the BLET. It is recognized upon the death or retirement of Designated Legal Counsel, numerous legal matters in progress exist within the firm. For this reason, great weight should be given to the speedy appointment of new Designated Legal Counsel upon the recommendation of the retiring Designated Counsel. Such appointment needs only the approval of the Executive Committee of the BLET.

22. Designated Legal Counsel will not be permitted to test or screen for any occupational injury or any member of the BLET unless the General Chairman for those members gives written approval to Designated Legal Counsel prior to any testing.

23. Members of the Designated Legal Counsel agree not to accept or contract with a client that is already represented by another DLC without first contacting, speaking directly with, and obtaining the approval of the DLC that the client is represented by. @@

Code of Compliance For Officers and Employees Of the BLET Concerning Employers and Designated Legal Counsel

Every officer and employee of the National Division, each General Committee of Adjustment, State and Provincial Legislative Board and Local Division shall comply with the following requirements:

- o Read and periodically review the Rules of Conduct of the FELA Designated Counsel ("DLC");
- o Abide by such rules insofar as they are applicable to officers and employees;
- o Refrain from any action that causes or may cause "DLC," or anyone thereof, to violate the Rules of Conduct.

An officer or employee may not solicit or accept gifts, payments, monies, loans, promises or agreements therefore, or anything of value (including reimbursed expenses) given because of his or her position in the organization, from any employer or "DLC:"

- a. Who is attempting to promote the officer's or employee's candidacy for office; or
- b. Who is attempting to influence any election on any issue within the organization requiring a vote; or
- c. Who has interests that may be substantially affect-

ed by the performance of an officer's or employee's official duties.

A gift does not include items of little value such as plaques and greeting cards.

Unless the frequency would appear to be improper, an officer or employee may accept food, refreshments and materials provided at a conference or widely attended gathering or certain other events which an officer or employee attends in his official capacity.

(Originally published: June 2002 Locomotive Engineer Newsletter)



>> FEDERAL EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY ACT (FELA)

Be proud of our railroad history

“The BLET has a deep and proud history of protecting the security of its working families. As we reach this season of Thanksgiving, we all have much to be grateful for.”

While rail workers enjoy some of the best labor protection in the world, and Designated Legal Counsel can provide you with the best representation in the nation, the best protection an engineer or conductor may have against abuses from the Railroad is maintaining continual contact and participation with their union. This underpinning of fraternity forms the fundamental concept upon which the labor history of our nation was built, a history that too often was never taught in our schools. A history in which our union forbearers lost blood and even sacrificed lives to establish; and a history in which we all should know of and be proud.

The Labor movement in the United States has had a long, hard fought, and often bloody history. Rail labor has been at the forefront of the American labor movement, virtually from its inception. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, founded in 1863, was one of America's first national unions. While some of America's most infamous labor battles were fought in the early 20th century, railroad workers began the fight for labor rights decades earlier as the railroads powered the industrial boom of the 19th century.

In 1873 a lack of regulation in the banking, investment and rail industries lead to an economic crisis which saw nearly a quarter of the nation's railroads fall into bankruptcy between 1873 and 1875. As is too often the case, industry leaders sought to recoup their financial losses by cutting workers wages and perpetuating increasingly poor and dangerous working conditions. On July 14, 1877, rail

workers rose up and stood united against the Railroads. The Great Railroad Strike of 1877 began in Martinsburg, West Virginia in response to a second wage cut that year by the B&O Railroad. Over the course of the next forty-five days, members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and other unions, as well as workers who were unrepresented, halted rail service in major transport hubs such as Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Reading, Chicago, Bloomington, Cumberland and many other rail centers as far west as San Francisco.

Rather than address the workers concerns, the Railroads tried to use their influence to have state and local police and militia break up the strikes by use of physical force and violence. When some of these forces refused to fire upon the striking rail workers, the Railroads began bringing in their own private militias. The Railroads instigated bloody massacres against striking rail workers in Pittsburgh, Reading, and Chicago, but the unions and their members, while sustaining casualties, stood strong and would not be defeated. Eventually the Railroads prevailed on President Hayes to call up federal troops to end the strikes.

This is but one example of the often times bloody and deadly trials faced by our early Brothers in winning labor rights in America. Our national history is rife with periods when workers stood up for their belief in decent working conditions in the face of corporate abuse. This same period saw the rise of national labor movements such as the National Labor Union in 1867, The American Federation of Labor in 1881, and the American

Railway Union in 1893. These unions used a mix of education, political activism and strikes to obtain national respect for the causes of labor in America.

In response, industry in America resorted to black-balling union members and activists, hiring private security to physically break strikes; as well as assert its immense political influence to stymie labor activities.

In 1894, the American Railway Union, headed by Eugene Debs, lead the Pullman strike when the Pullman Palace Car Company (one of the largest railcar manufacturers in the nation at the time) cut hours and wages for skilled laborers, but refused to reduce the rent on company owned homes which its workers were required to lease. The Pullman strike eventually resulted in President Cleveland calling up federal troops to break the strike with force; however, the consequences of the Pullman strike lead to the Erdman Act, a predecessor to the Railway Labor Act, which made it illegal for employers to discipline or discriminate against employees for having union membership.

The various railroad strikes during the latter part of the 19th century (including the strike against Jay Gould in 1885 and the Burlington Railway Strike of 1888) had increased the political influence of the rail labor organizations in the United States and rail labor support in society, as a whole. As the 20th century dawned, these social and political gains began paying dividends for all of rail labor. In 1906 President Theodore Roosevelt and rail labor organizations were successful in convincing Congress to pass the First Federal Employers' Liability Act. By 1916, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers was instrumental in the promulgation of the Adamson Act, mandating an eight hour work day with extra pay for overtime hours.

Rail labor's ability to influence our government and to stand against the

predatory nature of the Railroads is a direct result of the solidarity and brotherhood shared by those earlier labor pioneers who shed blood, risked and lost their lives to stand up for the rights that union families still find security in today. BLET has a long history for which its members should be very proud; a history which we must never allow to fade from our collective memory.

We all owe a large debt of gratitude for the strength, determination, and dignity of our union forbearers. Let us not squander the rights and privileges that so many paid so dearly for. During times of economic crisis, history has shown that the Railroads have often attempted to bolster their fiscal health by taking from the workers. The Railroads would like nothing more than an apathetic Brotherhood membership.

Know your Brothers, go to your local meetings, become involved. There is no advice that Designated Legal Counsel can give you which is better than this. The best protection against the unfair or deceitful conduct by rail management is the fidelity of our Brothers and Sisters. The BLET has a deep and proud history of protecting the security of its working families. As we reach this season of Thanksgiving, we all have much to be grateful for.

Submitted by:



E. J. Leizerman
E.J. Leizerman
& Associates, LLC
717 Madison Avenue
Toledo, Ohio 43624

Ph: (419) 243-1010 (800) 843-3352

Fax: (419) 243-8200
ej@leizerman.com
www.thefela.com

SORROW NAMED ACTING BLET PRESIDENT

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Lines in September of 1985, winning reelection to the post by acclamation twice — once in 1986 and again in 1989.

In 1996, Brother Sorrow was the BLE's appointed member of Operation Life-saver's (OL) National Program Development Council. OL is a highway-rail crossing safety education outreach to the public. He is the first BLE international officer to have this appointment.

He began his professional railway career in 1965, with the Seaboard Air Line. One year to the day after he went firing for the railroad, he earned his promotion to locomotive engineer in 1966. He joined the BLE in 1972, and served as local chairman of his Abbeville, S.C. local division from 1979-83. In 1983, he was elected to the office of Vice-Chairman for the CSX Transportation's Eastern Lines General Committee of Adjustment, and served through August of 1985.

He served as Chief of Staff at BLET National Division headquarters for sev-

eral years during the mid 1990s.

As Vice President, Brother Sorrow he has helped to negotiate several groundbreaking labor agreements at Norfolk Southern, CSX and Grand Trunk Western. His agreements have contained innovative provisions such as bonuses for locomotive engineers tied to the railroad's financial performance and scope rules that protect the craft of locomotive engineer in the face of evolving technology.

“Service to this fine Brotherhood has been a cornerstone of my livelihood for the past three decades,” First Vice President

Sorrow said. “I am proud to serve the BLET and its members as First Vice President.”

His father, Norman R. Sorrow, and brother, Norman F. Sorrow, both served as engineers on the former Seaboard Coast Line Railroad and are now retired.

Before entering the industry, Brother Sorrow attended Erskine College in Due West, S.C. Born August 23, 1946, in Abbeville, he and his wife Lynn have one son, Radd, and three daughters, Haley, Kasey and Ashley. His favorite recreational activity is spending time with his five grandchildren. ©

Cleveland BLET members support airline workers with Hoffa, Kucinich

Several members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen participated in a major Teamster rally in Cleveland on September 18, supporting Continental Airlines fleet service workers in their bid to join the Teamsters.

Acting President Paul Sorrow and members of Division 3 in Cleveland met

with Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa for the rally at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport.

President Hoffa assured the Continental fleet service workers, who are fighting for representation in the workplace, that the power and strength of the Teamsters union is behind them both on the ground and in the nation's courts.

Hoffa announced that the Teamsters have filed a lawsuit against the airline for violating workers' rights to organize. The company has refused to allow its employees to distribute union literature in the workplace, including in break room and public bulletin boards.

While in Cleveland, Hoffa met with workers, listened to their stories and led a group of fleet service workers through

the corridors of the Hopkins International Airport to garner attention and gain support. He was joined by Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-OH), who greeted Continental employees and listened to their concerns.

More than 8,000 Continental fleet service workers nationwide are exercising their right to join a union through a national organizing campaign. @@



From left: Darren Graves, Division 3 member and representative to the Teamsters national Black Caucus; Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa; Effren Feliciano, Division 3 member; John Mackay, Division 3 member; Justin Sterling, Secretary-Treasurer of Division 3; and Dennis Vasko, President of Division 3.



From left: Dennis Vasko, Effren Feliciano, John Mackay, Rep. Dennis Kucinich, Justin Sterling and Darren Graves.

BLET safety team meets with NTSB chair



Leaders of the BLET's Safety Task Force were recently in Washington, D.C., for meetings with the head of the National Transportation Safety Board.

The Honorable Deborah A.P. Hersman was sworn in as the 12th Chairman of the NTSB on July 28, 2009, following her nomination to the post by President Barack Obama and confirmation by the United States Senate. Her two-year term as Chairman runs until July 2011. She is also serving a second 5-year term as a Board Member, which expires on December 31, 2013.

Chairman Hersman has been a Member of the NTSB since June 21, 2004. Since then, she has chaired a number of public events hosted by the Board.

The BLET Safety Task Force actively investigates major rail accidents from the engineers' perspective and provides valuable insight to the NTSB during the investigation process.

From left: Bill Walpert, BLET National Secretary-Treasurer and Chairman of the BLET Safety Task Force; Debbie Hersman, NTSB Chairman; Ben Blissett, Coordinator of the STF and member of Division 301; and Carl Fields, Assistant Coordinator of the STF and member of Division 682. **Photo:** courtesy BLET Safety Task Force

Two BLET families suffer tragic losses

Two BLET families have recently endured unimaginable loss, and their respective Divisions have established memorial funds to help the families through these difficult times.

Brother Josh R. Kyles, a member of BLET Division 144 (Amtrak) in Sacramento, Calif., died unexpectedly in his sleep on October 10, 2009. He was 35 years old.

Brother Kyles is survived by his widow, Kimberly, and their two young children, Joshua (5) and Amanda (4).

Brother Kyles was hired by Amtrak in the fall of 1998 as a Conductor and was promoted to engineer in November 2000, when he joined the BLET. Brother Kyles is also survived by two railroaders in his family: his father Noel Kyles, a former UTU Local Chairman, of Reno, and his uncle, Don Johnson, former Local Chairman of UTU Local 1732z (Amtrak-Oakland) from 1994-1998.

Division 144 is accepting donations on behalf of the Kyles family.

Donations may be payable to "BLET Div. 144", and sent to Kyles Family Fund, c/o BLET Div. 144, P.O. Box 24594, Oakland, Calif., 94623. Or contact Mike Poirier, Secretary-Treasurer at bletdiv144s-t@lospadres.info.

The wife of Brother Steven R. Booth, Gabriela Booth, recently passed away after a long difficult battle with cancer. She was just 32 years old. Brother Booth, 38 years old, is a member of BLET Division 692 in Tracy, Calif. The couple had two young children, ages 2 and 3.

The Brothers and Sisters of Division 692 have established the Gabriela Booth Memorial Fund to help Brother Booth pay for child care. He works full-time as a locomotive engineer for the Union Pacific.

Donations can be made payable to the Gabriela Booth memorial fund and submitted to the Webster Valley Federal Credit Union, or contact Mike Conner, Secretary-Treasurer, at (916) 315-8912; or email Local Chairman Brian Carr at: bcarr92@comcast.net. @@



Open enrollment begins November 1 for BLET Short Term Disability plan

Open Enrollment for 2010 under the BLET's Short Term Disability insurance begins on November 1, 2009, and runs through December 15, 2009.

If you are a locomotive engineer working on a railroad that participated in the Wage Rules portion of the national agreement dated December 16, 2003, your coverage under Part A (described below) of the BLET Short Term Disability Plan will automatically continue.

Last year, if you opted out of Part B coverage (also described below), then you can opt back in during this enrollment period. If you currently participate and wish to opt out of Part B coverage, you can also do so during this enrollment period.

PART A – NON-OCCUPATIONAL DISABILITIES

Effective January 1, 2010, there will be no changes to Part A coverage:

- Your eligibility and \$40 premium is submitted by the railroad on a monthly basis.
- Part A pays \$402 per week for non-occupational disabilities only.

- Occupational disabilities are not covered.
- Each eligible member is insured for \$50,000 of Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D) coverage.

PART B – OCCUPATIONAL DISABILITIES

Effective January 1, 2010 there will be no changes to Part B coverage:

- Part B is voluntary. Participation in this additional occupational coverage is not required.
- The weekly benefit for occupational disabilities is \$402 per week.
- Each eligible member is insured for \$50,000 of AD&D coverage.
- The benefit is not subject to repayment upon receipt of a FELA settlement (no repayment after a personal injury settlement).
- The benefit is not considered taxable income.
- The cost is \$23 per month and will be payroll deducted with your monthly union dues.

NOTE: UTU members working as engineers are eligible for Part A and may purchase Part B coverage by making an annual payment of \$276 to the BLET Trust Fund.

IMPORTANT:

- Eligibility for Part B is dependent on your eligibility for Part A. In order to be eligible for Part A, you must have seven starts in a month with one start as an engineer.

If you are furloughed to train service and become ineligible for Part A coverage, you must notify the Secretary-Treasurer of your local division immediately. At that time, you have three options:

1. Continue coverage of Part A and Part B by paying \$40 directly to the BLET Trust Fund by the 10th of the month and continuing payroll deduction of \$23 for Part B. Coverage may only be continued for six months under this option. If you choose this option, you will need to contact the Plan Administrator (information below) for additional instructions.
2. Discontinue coverage of Part B temporarily until you return to engineer status and become eligible for Part A. An engineer, who loses Part A coverage due to no fault of his own, may resume coverage for Part B once he returns to engineer status and becomes eligible for Part A. You must keep the Secretary-Treasurer of your local division informed of your status.

3. OPT-OUT of Part B by completing an OPT-OUT form. If you choose to opt-out of Part B, you may only resume coverage during a subsequent annual enrollment period.

If you currently do NOT participate and choose to do nothing, you will continue to be only eligible for Part A coverage.

- If you currently do NOT participate and would like to sign-up for Part B coverage during this open enrollment period, or if you do currently participate and would like to opt-out of Part B coverage, you must notify the Secretary-Treasurer of your local division by completing and returning the attached form by December 15, 2009. Your election will become effective on January 1, 2010.

Members that OPT-OUT of Part B coverage effective January 1, 2010, will not be eligible to enroll for the coverage until the next annual enrollment period.

Anyone with questions can contact Jim Bradford, BLET Short Term Disability Administrator, at (216) 241-2630, ext. 205, or email: Bradford@ble-t.org.

OPT-IN/OUT FORM IS ONLINE AT:
[HTTP://WWW.BLE-T.ORG/PR/PDF/STD-OPT-INOUT.PDF](http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/std-opt-inout.pdf)



BLET Engineers Enrollment 2010 Opt-In/Opt-Out Form

Part B – BLET Short Term Disability Insurance Plan

If you desire to OPT-IN or OPT-OUT of Part B coverage under the BLET Short Term Disability Insurance Plan, complete the remainder of this form. Be sure to include your signature and the date and deliver to your Division Secretary-Treasurer by December 15, 2009.

"I, _____ (Print your name here and sign below), hereby choose to: (Mark with an "X")

OPT-IN **OPT-OUT** of the BLET Short Term Disability Insurance Plan, Part B. I understand that if I OPT-OUT, I may only seek enrollment in Part B during a future open enrollment period."

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Phone Number: _____

DEADLINE IS DECEMBER 15, 2009



UTU-E Engineers Enrollment 2010 Opt-In Form

Part B – BLET Short Term Disability Insurance Plan

If you desire to OPT-IN to Part B coverage for 2010 under the BLET Short Term Disability Insurance Plan, you must be eligible for Part A. If you purchased coverage for 2009, your coverage will end on Dec. 31, 2009. Complete the remainder of this form. Be sure to include your signature and the date. A check made out to the "BLET Trust Fund" for \$276 should be sent by DECEMBER 15, 2009 to:

Jim Bradford, BLET STD Administrator
222 Lake Ridge Rd. Kerrville, Texas 78028

"I, _____ (Print your name here and sign below), hereby choose to OPT-IN to the BLET Short Term Disability Insurance Plan, Part B."

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ Phone #: _____

E-mail: _____ Railroad: _____ UTU Local #: _____

DEADLINE IS DECEMBER 15, 2009

BLET Acts to Halt Video Surveillance

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

operating crews for Metrolink commuter rail service.

The Federal lawsuit charges the installation of video cameras inside locomotive cabs violates the Railway Labor Act. The cameras were installed in violation of the railroad's collective bargaining agreement with the BLET.

SCRR/Metrolink and Veolia/Connex failed to meet, confer and bargain in good faith over the installation of the cameras, or to discuss the potential use/abuse of recorded video images and audio sounds captured by the system.

The union also states that the installation of cameras violates federal wire tap laws as well as the Federal Rail Safety Act of 1970.

The BLET further asserts that Federal law pre-empts Metrolink's attempted safety and policy making efforts. Shortly after the fatal crash of 2008, the Federal Railroad Administration — the primary rail safety regulator in the United States — addressed the issue of locomotive engineer cell phone use by issuing Emergency Order No. 26, which prohibits the use of cell phones inside locomotive cabs, except under narrow circumstances.

In the state court, the BLET asserts that the video monitoring system is a "severe breach" of the State of California's constitutional right to privacy, and further states that it violates the due process rights of BLET members, the California Labor Code, and that SCRR/Metrolink lacks rule-making authority under California law.

"Our goal is to protect the safety of the traveling public while also enforcing the contractual and privacy rights of our members," BLET Acting President Sorrow said. "A cell phone jamming device would be more effective in prevention, less costly for taxpayers, and less invasive of the privacy of our members."

"We will work closely with federal and state rail regulators to permanently solve the problem as quickly as possible. We also hope that these lawsuits force Metrolink to operate constructively and within the law as a problem solver, rather than offering ineffective and expensive solutions. Instead of being driven by political expediency, Metrolink needs to consider a realistic solution to the problem that does not rely upon a huge waste of existing limited tax funds" Sorrow added. ©©

Breaking News!

BLET statement on BNSF acquisition by Berkshire Hathaway

As this issue went to press, it was announced that billionaire investor Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Inc. planned to purchase 100 percent of the BNSF Railway for \$34 billion. BLET Acting President Paul Sorrow has spoken



Brother Sorrow advised Mr. Rose that, in large part, it is the continued hard work of BLET locomotive engineers and all other union workers that has made BNSF Railway such an attractive investment target for Mr. Buffett. It is the BLET's position that the contribution of BLET members must be recognized during the upcoming round of contract negotiations. ©©



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NOVEMBER 2009 PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Painted in 1937, the BLET's 'History of Locomotives' mural not only depicts the evolution of American locomotives, it also shows the intricate working relationship between engineers and firemen. Measuring 102 feet in length and consisting of 15 panels, the mural is on display in its entirety at BLET National Division headquarters in Cleveland. **Photo:** Jesse Kramer

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Advisory Board September Activity

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

Acting President Paul T. Sorrow — Performed various duties in Office Administrator capacity; Various duties assigned to First Vice President; Various correspondence and telephone communications; General supervision of Special Representatives; RIBC negotiations mtg., Washington, D.C.; CN/GTW mtgs., Detroit, Mich.; Teamsters' Women's conference, Las Vegas; Southwestern Convention Meeting, Kansas City, Mo.; CRLO meetings, 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; Teamsters' women's conference, Las Vegas; SWCM, Kansas City, Mo.

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; Bell Railway of Chicago; Great Western Railway; and Panhandle Northern Railway; Advisory Board meeting, Kansas City, Mo.; Holiday.

Vice-President Stephen D. Speagle — Assigned to Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Montana Rail Link, Pacific Harbor Line, Missouri & Northern Arkansas (M&NA), National Wagon/Rule Committee; General office duties; Mtg. w/ BNSF and GC Gibbons and UTU, Fort Worth; Southwestern Convention Meeting, Kansas City, Mo.; Public Law Board 6659; PHL mtg., Washington; Public Law Board 9151 and 7092, Chicago; Railroad Referee Arbitration mtg., Chicago; Vacation; Holiday.

Vice-President E.L. "Lee" Pruitt — Assisted general chairman & members of: UP Western Lines; UP Western Region; UP-Central Region; UP Southern Region; UP-Tacoma Belt; UP Eastern District; Office duties and paper work, filing, correspondence, etc.; Southwestern Convention Meeting, Kansas City, Mo.; PIB 6833; UPSR/GCA, Chicago; NARR, Chicago; PIB 7143, UPED/GCA, Chicago.

Vice-President and 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; Hosted Congresswoman Corrine Brown fundraiser, Washington, D.C.; Attended Sec'y of Labor-Hilda Solis luncheon, Chicago; Southwestern Convention Meeting, Kansas City; Attended Divisions 182, 858, 278 and 585 mtgs., Little Rock, White Hall, Sheridan, Sherwood, Ark.; Mtg. w/ Amtrak President Joe Boardman to discuss high speed rail and other

issues; Rail Labor Security team mtg.; legislative Task Force conference mtg.; to discuss nominations, trade and allies lobby day; Monthly State legislative Board Chairman's conference call; T&T Committee hearing; Attended monthly legislative mtg., Washington, D.C.; National Democratic Club general membership mtg. and several breakfast lunch and dinner receptions with various U.S. Representatives, 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 NVAL; D.L. No. 303; Referee Kahn and D.L. No. 310; Referee Miltenhal; NRAB, Chicago; Assist GC Quinn and VP Pierce with dissent; LRR, CSX; HOS conference call; ND; SWCM Local Chairman class; Advisory Board mtg., Kansas City; Prep. for Section 3 Comm., ROAR and NARR mtgs.; Mtg. w/ BWWE to prepare for ROAR, NRAB, Sec. 3, Chicago; ROAR mtg., National Association of Railroad Referees mtg.; Mtg. w/ MWG & TAP with various arbitration and contract research questions; Draft reports on Section 3 Committee and NARR mtgs.; NRAB administration issues.

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; Vacation; General office duties; National Division/General Chairmen conference call; Rail Safety Improvement Act; SWCM, Kansas City, Mo.; CSX/Conrail (SAA/CSX-Northern District) General Committee negotiations conference call; Arbitration planning mtg., Conrail SSA/CSX-ND, Buffalo; National Association of Railroad Referees mtg.; Chicago; labor/management mtgs., CN/WC GCA, Green Bay, Wisc.; Norfolk Southern-Northern Lines GCofA mtg., Cleveland.

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; CF&E claims conference; Indianapolis, Ind.; Union Railroad mediation talks; Pittsburgh, Pa.; SWCM, Kansas City; Advisory Board mtg.; Kansas City; Springfield Terminal Railroad contract talks; Billerica, Mass.; D&H PIB 6560; Chestnut Hill, Mass.; DM&E (C&E) labor/management mtg., Moline, Ill.; Talleyrand Terminal contract talks; Jacksonville, Fla.

Vice-President Willard E. Knight — Assigned to: All Norfolk Southern General Committees; Wheeling & Lake Erie; New York, Susquehanna & Western; New England Central; Connecticut Southern; Western New York & Pennsylvania; PIB 7159 and PIB 7238; Norfolk, Va.; R3A mtg. with all General Chairmen and NS management; Conference call with Advisory Board, all General Chairmen and all Legislative Chairmen; SWCM, Kansas City, Mo.; General office duties.

A message from
Teamsters General President
James P. Hoffa

Our country is experiencing a retirement security crisis.

Right now, many pension funds don't have enough money long-term to provide the secure retirement promised to millions of Americans. The largest U.S. pension funds had only 79 cents for every dollar owed to current and future retirees at the end of 2008. Median 401(k) account balances for workers in their 50s were less than \$60,000 even before the stock market plunged.

That's why an estimated 40 percent of workers recently said they plan to delay retirement.

The stock market crash and the global economic crisis are two big reasons for the troubles facing U.S. pension funds. A third



is the Pension Protection Act of 2006. The act greatly and unnecessarily accelerated the funding requirements for plans and has hastened the funding crisis that threatens most private pension plans and the companies that contribute to them.

Rep. Earl Pomeroy (D-N.D.) is responding to requests from unions and from management to stabilize pension plans.

His goal is to pass manageable and predictable funding rules that will stabilize multi-employer plans and shield employers from unsustainable obligations. He also is proposing that the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) assume the pension obligations for certain retir-

ees who worked for companies that have gone out of business without making sufficient contributions to cover the benefits their employees earned. The PBGC already guarantees the obligations of single-employer pension plans.

Rep. Pomeroy deserves our thanks and support in his effort to avert a further weakening of our economy. His work will likely inspire critics who will complain about bailouts for unions. It is nothing of the kind.

Rep. Pomeroy is seeking to provide the retirement security that employees have earned throughout their entire working lives. He is trying to strengthen companies that invest in our economy and in our jobs. We need to work together to avert the crisis in retirement security. Call your elected leaders and let them know how you feel about protecting pensions and the retirement security of working Americans. Now is the time to get involved. We can make a difference.

Fraternally,

James P. Hoffa

James P. Hoffa

TEAMSTERS GENERAL PRESIDENT