Joseph C. Szabo, Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration, discussed high-speed rail, rail security, and on-the-job safety when he addressed BLET delegates during the Brotherhood’s Second National Convention in Reno, Nevada, on October 4.

Szabo is a fifth generation railroader who comes from the ranks of rail labor. He was Illinois State Legislative Director of the United Transportation Union prior to his appointment to the FRA’s top post.

Szabo said that not since the days of Abraham Lincoln has the United States had a President who has put railroading in the forefront of his agenda like Barack Obama has done. He said the Obama administration has made an $8 billion down payment on high speed rail in 2009 with another $2.5 billion follow-up this year. The investment will help increase jobs in the manufacturing and construction fields. More importantly, the investment will create operating jobs for BLET members. He said expanding passenger rail will also help reduce the nation's dependence of foreign oil while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Administrator Szabo also recognized BLET leaders and commended BLET members for participating in the two “High Alert” rail security reports. He acknowledged a recent letter BLET President Pierce calling for improved locomotive cab security following the on-duty murder of a conductor in New Orleans.

He said the FRA has scheduled meetings with the BLET to discuss requirements regarding locking cab doors, window glazing standards, and cab security.

Marcus J. Ruef, BLET National Vice President & Arbitration Director, was elected Vice Chairman of the full National Railroad Adjustment Board (NRAB) at meetings in Chicago on September 22. His term of office began on October 1, 2010.

Vice President Ruef is the longest serving Labor Member on the Board. He will be working with Chairman Mike Lesnik in overseeing the Board’s operations. “This is not only a significant honor for me personally, but also for our Organization,” Vice President Ruef said. Dr. Lesnik is the Board’s Chief Mediator-Railroad.

“With the rail industry and the National Mediation Board (NMB) working together to resolve problems presented to the Board and to find ways to improve the minor dispute resolution process, NMB recently established a new Arbitration Advisory Forum with representatives of labor, industry, and the arbitrator community to work with NMB in a spirit of cooperation to explore ways to improve the Section Three process. Brother Ruef is one of the three labor representatives serving on this important new panel.”

Continued on page 2.

Autumn in New England

The quaint village and the fall foliage combine with the BLET-represented St. Lawrence & Atlantic train crew to create this classic New England autumn scene. Frequent BLET contributor Gary Knapp snapped this photo in Gorham, N.H., on October 9, 2010.

BLET VP Ruef appointed NRAB Vice Chairman

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Continued on page 2.
W hen national Sec-
tion 6 Notices were served last
year, the BLET membership
were more than a year into the worst economic crisis America
has seen since the Great Depres-
sion, and the national unemploy-
ment rate continues to hover
around 10%. BLET members have
ever been spared the harshships of the current recess-
ion. Between May 2008 and
June 2009, T&E employment on
the “Big Four” Class I carriers
dropped over 19%. As recently as last January, employment levels remained
over 19% below May 2008, and are still nearly 12% below that
today. That translates into
nearly 8,000 fewer T&E jobs on
those four carriers, alone.

The carriers are doing much
better than our members are, the-
fact, they’re doing much better
than the economy as a whole.
Net profits for the Big Four to-
taled nearly 55% billion in 2008,
a figure that was surpassed in
less than nine months this year.
Profits for the two-year period
are all but certain to top the $13
billion mark.

The industry continues to
make historic profits in the face
of these lean economic times. In
fact, investing in railroads is such
a good bet that even the legend-
ary Warren Buffett has gone “all
in” on BNSF.

Those profits come in large
measure from the productivity
of BLET members and our Broth-
er and Sister railroad workers.
They also are calculated after
our wage and benefit costs have
been paid.

You’d never know about the
industry’s success or our con-
tribution at the bargaining ta-
ble, though. That’s because the
 carriers are trying to use the
nation’s economic woes to fill
their already bulging pockets
at our expense.

The main focus of the cur-
rent carrier package is a package
of healthcare and wellness ben-
efits. The industry’s negotiators are de-
manding large scale rollbacks in
benefits and huge hikes in what
we pay — both on the front end,
through monthly premium con-
tributions, and on the back end,
with co-pays.

The carriers don’t argue that
they can’t afford to improve or
maintain the current plan; with
the size of their profits no one
could make that claim with a
straight face. Instead, they’re try-
ing to make the case that what
we receive is way out of line with
the rest of the country.

There are two problems with
the carrier’s argument. First, it
deliberately overlooks the fact
our benefits were bought and
paid for at the bargaining table
in past bargaining rounds; we’re
already paying for our benefits.

And, second, the comparisons
made by the carriers are to cor-
union employers who have
slashed their workers’ benefits
in response to the economic
downturn.

Think about that for a min-
ute. What the carriers seek to
do is piggyback on businesses
that have been devastated by the
recession, and impose les-
sons of concessions on us similar
to that foisted upon workers
who have no union to defend
them, and they make that ar-
cument while they are raking
in record profits!

For most of my railroad ca-
reers, I’ve been witness to the car-
riers crying poverty. Time and
time again the carriers sang the
same, worn out chorus... “La-
bor needs to give us a break so
we can get back on our feet!”
And the carried received plenty
deals that we never agreed
to. The late 80’s and early 90’s
saw a series of concessionary con-
tacts that included givebacks in
wages, benefits and work rules.

We also lost hundreds of thou-
sands of jobs, with employment
drops on Class I railroads dropping
nearly 75%, between 1970 and
last January. On top of that, the
percentage of railroad jobs on
Class I carriers plunged from
more than 88% in 1970 to just
over 70% in 2006.

The carriers got what they
wanted for more than 30 years,
and now are reapng windfall
profits, but they reap those prof-
s because of you. Railroad
worker productivity — as mea-
sured by freight train miles per
employee and freight car miles per
employee — soared by over
250% during that same period.

Maybe the carriers think we’ve
forgotten this history, or maybe
we don’t believe we’re really in
a fight in these tough times, but
they’re wrong either way.

Let me say this loud enough for
the railroads to hear, BLET
WILL NOT ACCEPT A CONCESSIONARY AGREEMENT IN THIS BARGAINING ROUND!

The membership of our great union has given enough, it’s past time for us to receive
wages and benefits commensurate with the contribution we make to the Carrier’s profits.

BLET President Dennis R. Pierce

President Hoffa’s speech to BLET delegates at the Second National
Convention in Reno, Nevada, on October 4, 2010.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce presents a commemorative
watch to Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa following
President Hoffa’s speech to BLET delegates at the Second National
Convention in Reno, Nevada, on October 4, 2010.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce

“Congratulations to Brother Ruff
on this significant achievement,” BLET
National President Dennis Pierce said.

“As background information, the
National Railroad Adjustment Board
(NRAB) is an agency of the Federal
Government located in Chicago.
It was established by an amendment
to the Railway Labor Act (RLA) in 1934.
The Board has jurisdiction over all "mi-
nor disputes" in the railroad industry (i.e., claims and grievances concerning
the interpretation of existing agree-
ments — including challenges to un-
just discipline).

The minor dispute process is vital
to our membership because it is the
mechanism by which the BLET enforc-
es our collective bargaining Agree-
ments and challenges unjustly as-
sessed discipline.

The Board has 34 members divided
evenly between Labor and Manage-
ment, and is comprised of four sepa-
rate divisions, each handling a certain
group of crafts or classes of railroad
employees. The First Division repre-
sents operating employees; the Second
Division the shop crafts; the Third Di-
vision the Maintenance of Way, Cler-
ical, Signal and on-board passenger
service groups; and the Fourth Divi-
sion handles complaints of the mar-
itime trade, the Yardmasters, line lev-
el supervisors and police.

President Pierce serves the BLET
as one of our two Labor Members of
the First Division. He was elected to
that office for a term of office, as a Na-
tionally Designated Vice President, at
the BLET’s First Quadrennial Conven-
tion in June of 2006 and was lat-
er appointed Director of Arbitration
in April of 2009.

BLET President’s Message

National Bargaining Update

BLET member’s watch

Continued from previous page

Continued from page 1

climate control regulations, which would
allow cab windows to remain closed
and secured.

“The content to an ongoing, strong work-
ing relationship with rail labor to improve
cab security,” he said. “You have a pledge from somebody who has walked in
your shoes.”

Szabo said the use of cellular phones
is one of the biggest challenges facing
the rail industry today. He urged
BLET members to police themselves and
to police their fellow Brothers and Sis-
ters while on duty. He said the best pol-
icy is to turn off cell phones and store
them while on duty.

“The safety of employees is a shared
responsibility,” he said, “and we must
make sure that employees are well trained,
have proper certification and have ob-
tained a suitable amount of rest before
making use of their expertise and abil-
ities,” Administrator Szabo told BLET
division. “Our railroad environment is
an absolutely unforgiving environ-
ment. And it’s one that demands abso-
lute situational awareness.”

He concluded by again committing to
an ongoing, positive working relation-
ship with the BLET and all Rail Labor.

“We are laying the groundwork for a
safer rail environment now and for years
to come,” he said.

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BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce
I had the pleasure recently of attending your Second National Convention. As I said from the podium, you truly represent the face of the Teamsters Union and in fact, the face of America. You are the ones who keep America together and moving.

When you merged with the Teamsters Union in 2004, you helped us realize our vision of a great transportation union. Along with your merger and that of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes, you enabled us to claim membership that spanned the air, the highways and the rails. And, today the BLET is stronger because of that merger. We are all stronger together.

And we are stronger politically, too. We were one of the first unions to back the presidency of Barack Obama. We met with him and told him we have to have more jobs in America. Now we’ve got $8 billion to rebuild our rail systems. And, I know we are ready and able to take this on. Not only do we need to rebuild the rail beds, but we need new cars for the railroads and other new equipment. It will be up to us to make sure the track rebuilding and equipment are made in America by Americans so that we can put people back to work.

In addition we are focusing on your upcoming national contract bargaining. I have told your leadership that they need to put the rail corporations on notice because we are going to have the entire might of the Teamsters Union—Communications, Research and Strategic Planning—working with you. We are going to be with you at the table. That’s power and that’s what we stand for.

Everybody needs to get involved. Apathy is the worst thing in the world. Work hard for the BLET and work hard for working people. We can do it together.

Fraternally,

James P. Hoffa
Teamsters General President

National Convention photo gallery, pages 3-5

BLET and IBT: Stronger Together

Presentation of the colors during the opening ceremonies.

BLET Advisory Board at the Second National Convention in Reno. Executive Committee, seated (from left): First Vice President E. “Lee” Pruitt, National President Dennis R. Pierce, and National Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walpert. Vice Presidents, standing (from left): National Legislative Representative John Tolman, Willard Knight, Gil Gore, Don Moates, Mike Twombly, Arbitration Director Marcus Ruef, Marie Geiger, and Steve Speagle.

First Vice President Lee Pruitt with Teamsters Eastern Region Vice President John Murphy.

2010 Calendar & Events

October 31-November 4, 2010
BLET Education and Training Department
Local Chairman Workshop
On the campus of the National Labor College in Silver Spring, Md. BLET pays the cost of books, equipment, tuition and a graduation banquet. BLET members are responsible for their own transportation costs as well as room and board. Limited to the first 22 who register. For details, please contact Ken Kroeger, Coordinator of the BLET Education & Training Department, at (216) 272-0986 or kroeger@ble-t.org

December 3, 2010
Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conference
Jacksonville, Fla.
The final RRB Informational Conference of 2010. Registration begins at 8 a.m., with the program beginning promptly at 8:30 a.m. and ending at 12:30 p.m. At the Holiday Inn, 9150 Baymeadows Road.

December 12-15, 2010
BLET Education and Training Department
Secretary-Treasurer Workshop
The Education & Training Department conducts its final workshop of 2010 at the Hyatt Regency at the Arcade in downtown Cleveland, Ohio. Class size is limited to the first 24 who register. For details, please contact Ken Kroeger, Coordinator of the BLET Education & Training Department, at (216) 272-0986 or kroeger@ble-t.org.

2011 Calendar (Tentative)

June 12-17, 2011
84th annual Southeastern Meeting Association
Asheville, N.C.
DoubleTree Biltmore Hotel
Contact host chairman Dewey Brown by phone or email: (828) 683-9371 or drbrown.blet267@yahoo.com.

August 2-7, 2011
73rd annual Eastern Union Meeting Association
Long Island, N.Y.
Hyatt Regency Long Island, Hauppauge, N.Y.
Contact host chairman Jim Brown by email: loco542@optonline.net.

August 21-27, 2011
71st annual International Western Convention
San Luis Obispo, Calif.
Embassy Suites Hotel-San Luis Obispo
Contact host chairman Mike Galvani by phone or email: (805) 927-2967 or SLOBLE664@wildblue.net.

September 18-22, 2011
76th annual Southwestern Convention Meeting
El Paso, Texas
Camino Real Hotel
Contact host chairman Larry Schneider by phone or email: (915) 581-1373 or lschneider@earthlink.net.

A message from Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa

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And we are stronger politically, too. We were one of the first unions to back the presidency of Barack Obama. We met with him and told him we have to have more jobs in America. Now we’ve got $8 billion to rebuild our rail systems. And, I know we are ready and able to take this on. Not only do we need to rebuild the rail beds, but we need new cars for the railroads and other new equipment. It will be up to us to make sure the track rebuilding and equipment are made in America by Americans so that we can put people back to work.

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Everybody needs to get involved. Apathy is the worst thing in the world. Work hard for the BLET and work hard for working people. We can do it together.

Fraternally,

James P. Hoffa
Teamsters General President
Ceremonial gavel: National Guide Jeffrey Valentine, right, presents a gavel to National President Dennis Pierce, which he used throughout the convention. The gavel was handcrafted by Steve Rabenstine, long-time president of BLET Division 158 in Sparks, Nevada. Brother Rabenstine chose not to seek reelection in 2009 due to his pending retirement. President Pierce said a special word of thanks to Brother Rabenstine at the start of the convention and wished him nothing but the best in his upcoming retirement.

Back of the room: Large video monitors enabled delegates to see speakers clearly even from the back of the room, and allowed them to view proposed changes to the Bylaws in real time. Here, delegates enjoy a speech from National President Dennis Pierce.

Cecil Roberts, President of the United Mine Workers of America

Newly-elected Alternate Vice Presidents receive a round of applause.

Additional news articles and photos from Reno will appear in the Winter 2010 issue of the Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal. In the meantime, visit the National Division photo gallery at Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/bletunion
Officer, delegates and members attending the BLET Auxiliary’s First Quadrennial Convention.

Arrangements Committee members with National President Dennis Pierce and First Vice President Lee Pruitt. BLET Special Representative Dave Ditzel, center, served as Chairman of the Arrangements Committee.

Legislative Committee: Seated, from left: Terry Briggs, Texas State Legislative Board Chairman, and George Newman, Massachusetts State Legislative Board Chairman. Standing, from left: C.R. “Rusty” Jones, Tennessee State Legislative Board Secretary-Treasurer; and Vince Verna, Arizona Legislative Board Chairman.

Salary Committee: Seated, from left: Mark Whitchurch, Canadian National-Illinois Central 1st Vice Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer; and Jerry Elmore, Norfolk Southern-Northern Lines Secretary-Treasurer. Standing: Committee Chairman Tim Stipp, BNSF (former STL-ST) Secretary-Treasurer.

Credentials Committee: Seated, from left: Jim Thompson, Union Pacific-Eastern District Secretary-Treasurer; Committee Chairman Charlie Sheets, Local Chairman of Division 13 (LaCrosse, Wis.); and Garrison Best, Local Chairman of Division 498 (Abbeville, S.C.). Standing, from left: Warren Dent, Union Pacific-Southern Region General Chairman; Louise Reich, BLET National Division office staff; and Bill Hannah, Union Pacific-Western Lines General Chairman.

Bylaws Committee: Seated, from left: W.G. Stanich, Local Chairman of Division 504 (Great Falls, Mont.); Jim Chappelle, Secretary-Treasurer of the New Jersey State Legislative Board; and Kevin Peets, Norfolk Southern-Eastern Lines General Chairman. Standing, from left: Committee Chairman Jim L. Dayton, Union Pacific-Western Region General Chairman; and Justine Charvat, BLET National Division office staff.

Work Committee: Seated, from left: Matt Kronyak, New Jersey State Legislative Board Chairman, and Randy Dumey, BNSF (former STL-ST) 1st Vice Chairman. Standing, from left: Committee Chairman Jerry James, Division 284 (Grafton, W.Va.); and Kent Confer, Division 623 (McCook, Neb.).
UP GC Bruce MacArthur reelected by acclamation to seventh term

Bruce D. MacArthur was reelected by acclamation to his seventh term as General Chairman of the Union Pacific-Northern District General Committee of Adjustment during Quadrennial meetings in Reno, Nevada, September 29-30, 2010.

Brother MacArthur is a Union Pacific locomotive engineer and member of BLET Division 125 (Clinton, Iowa). He joined the BLET on January 11, 1973.

First Vice Chairman Mike Elsberry was also reelected by acclamation to his seventh term of office. Brother Elsberry is also a UP engineer and member of Division 125. He joined the Brotherhood on July 1, 1976.

“I offer my sincere thanks to Brother MacArthur and Brother Elsberry for their many years of hard work and dedication to the Brotherhood,” BLET National President Dennis Pierce said. “Their tireless devotion to the membership has been evident for several decades. I congratulate them and all officers of the General Committee for endeavoring to serve the members.”

Brother MacArthur thanked President Pierce for his kind words and thanked the membership for their confidence in him over the years.

Also elected during the meetings were: 2nd Vice Chairman Dick Crow, Division 404 (Chicago); 3rd Vice Chairman Joe Cummins, Division 683 (Chicago); Secretary-Treasurer Mike Abell, Division 964 (Chicago); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Chris Wagner, Division 405 (Milwaukee, Wis.).

Brother Abell will replace outgoing Secretary-Treasurer Mike Mercier (Division 333, St. Paul, Minn.), who did not seek reelection due to his pending retirement. “Brother Mercier has served the Brotherhood with honor and distinction,” President Pierce said. “He has been an asset to the membership and will be sorely missed. I wish him a happy retirement on behalf of the BLET.”

President Pierce was a featured speaker during the meeting. He addressed the delegates regarding a number of national issues effecting locomotive engineers, including health and welfare negotiations, on-duty use of electronic devices, inward facing video cameras, and locomotive cab security.

Additional guest speakers included BLET First Vice President Lee Pruitt, National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert, and Vice President & National Legislative Representative John Tolman.

The UP Northern District GC of A represents approximately 1,200 locomotive engineers and trainmen who work for the Union Pacific and Metra commuter lines.

Indiana Chairman Bill Verdeyen reelected by acclamation to fifth term

Bill Verdeyen was reelected by acclamation to his fifth term as Chairman of the Indiana State Legislative Board at Quadrennial meetings held in Indianapolis, Ind., on September 28-29, 2010.

Brother Verdeyen is a member of Division 754 (Elkhart, Ind.). He joined the BLET on June 1, 1974, and is a CP Rail System-U.S. locomotive engineer.

Also elected during the meetings were: 1st Vice Chairman C.R. Ford, Division 742 (Evansville, Ind.); and 2nd Vice Chairman Jim Radtke, Division 548 (Peru, Ind.). Reelected by acclamation to serve his second term as Secretary-Treasurer was Carl Fields of Division 682 (Hammond, Ind.). Elected by acclamation to serve as Alternate Secretary-Treasurer was Mike Harting, Division 754 (Elkhart, Ind.).

BLET National President Dennis Pierce attended the meeting and gave the delegates an update on the state of the union.

“Congratulations to all the officers of the Indiana State Legislative Board,” President Pierce said. “Brother Verdeyen represents approximately 1,000 locomotive engineers and trainmen in Indiana.”

Bill Verdeyen is one of the longest serving officers in our Brotherhood. Our Brothers and Sisters in Indiana will continue to benefit from his hard work, and his many years of experience.”

Also in attendance were John Tolman, BLET Vice President & National Legislative Representative, and Mike Priester, CP Rail System-U.S. General Chairman and National Vice President elect.

The INSLB consists of 22 Divisions representing more than 1,200 locomotive engineers and trainmen in Indiana.
Illinois SLB Chairman Paul Piekarski reelected by acclamation

Brother Paul Piekarski was elected by acclamation to continue serving as Chairman of the Illinois State Legislative Board at the Board’s 13th quadrennial meeting in Schaumburg, Ill., from September 23-24, 2010.

Brother Piekarski was serving as 1st Vice Chairman when he assumed the office of Chairman after the retirement of C. Edward Way on May 31, 2010. Brother Piekarski is a Union Pacific locomotive engineer who is a proud member of Division 683 (Chicago). He joined the Brotherhood on November 1, 1974. He became 1st Vice Chairman in 2004 and was elected by acclamation to that position at the Board’s 2006 quadrennial convention.

Also elected to the Executive Board were: First Vice Chairman James McGovern, Division 644 (Galesburg, Ill.); 2nd Vice Chairman David Hiligoss, Division 96 (Chicago); 3rd Vice Chairman Tony Belscamper, Division 603 (Champaign, Ill.); and Secretary-Treasurer Tim Dunn, Division 24 (Centralia, Ill.).

The following alternate officers were also elected: 1st Alternate Vice Chairman Pat Randolph, Division 613 (Chicago); 2nd Alternate Vice Chairman Norm Eisengart, Division 184 (Schiller Park, Ill.); 3rd Alternate Vice Chairman Chris Falaney, Division 683 (Chicago); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Dan Tolman, Division 613 (Dolton, Ill.).

“I would like to thank all those who have given me their support. I consider it to be an honor and a privilege to serve my Brothers and Sisters of the BLET as Chairman of the Illinois State Legislative Board,” Brother Piekarski said. “I am looking forward to the challenges that may lie ahead and to continue efforts to strengthen the Brotherhood.”

BLET National President Dennis Pierce attended the meeting and addressed the delegates.

“Illinois is one of our largest states in terms of railroad track mileage as well as BLET membership,” President Pierce said. “The Brothers of the Illinois State Legislative Board are a strong and united group that works hard for the membership.”

President Pierce also offered congratulations to Chairman Piekarski and the other officers elected by the delegates.

“I know they will continue doing a professional job representing the legislative needs of our members in the proud state of Illinois.”

Also in attendance from the National Division were: First Vice President Lee Pruitt; National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert; and Vice President & National Legislative Representative John Tolman.

Retired officers Don Lindsey, former BLET International Vice President & U.S. National Legislative Representative, Terry Briggs, Texas; Scott Palmer, Oregon; John Passi, Nevada; and the Pacific Harbor Line Railroad. Brother Piekarski was also in attendance as a special guest.

Several BLET State Legislative Board Chairmen from nearby states were in attendance, including: Dave Brown, Minnesota; Jeff Kurtz, Iowa; and Greg Powell, Michigan.

Leaders of the BLET Auxiliary also attended, including BLET Auxiliary National President Becky Schneider and National Legislative Representative Serena Hogan.

The Illinois State Legislative Board represents more than 3,500 active and retired BLET members from 40 different BLET Divisions. Their members work for: Union Pacific; Norfolk Southern; BNSF Railway; CSX Transportation; Belt Railway of Chicago; Elgin Joliet & Eastern; Canadian National-Illinois Central; Iowa, Chicago & Eastern; and Metra.

UP General Chairman Bill Hannah reelected by acclamation

Brother D.W. “Bill” Hannah was reelected by acclamation to his fourth term as General Chairman of the Union Pacific-Western Lines General Committee of Adjustment at triennial meetings in San Diego, Calif., from September 21-23, 2010.

Brother Hannah is a member of BLET Division 56 (Colton, Calif.). He joined the Brotherhood on February 1, 1979, and has served as General Chairman since 2001, winning reelection in 2003, 2007 and 2010.

Also elected were: 1st Vice Chairman J.R. “Larry” Law, Division 56; 2nd Vice Chairman J.R. “John” Eutler, Division 158 (Sparks, Nevada); 3rd Vice Chairman M.R. “Mike” Arnold, Division 800 (Portola, Calif.); Secretary-Treasurer C.H. “Chuck” Fleming, Division 192 (El Paso, Texas); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer L.J. “Luis” Chavez Jr., Division 283 (Oakland, Calif.).

In addition to General Chairman Hannah, Brother Law and Brother Fleming were reelected by acclamation.

BLET National President Dennis Pierce attended the meeting and addressed the delegates.

“Congratulations to Brother Hannah and all the officers of the Union Pacific-Western Lines General Committee of Adjustment,” President Pierce said. “Brother Hannah is one of the hardest-working General Chairmen in the Brotherhood and his unanimous reelection is a testament to the fantastic job he has done these many years.”

Also in attendance from the National Division were: First Vice President Lee Pruitt; National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert; National Vice President Steve Speagle; National Vice President Gil Gore; and Special Representative Ken Kroeger.

Brother Hannah succeeded Lee Pruitt as General Chairman of the UP Western Lines in 2001, following Brother Pruitt’s election to the Advisory Board.

The following State Legislative Board Chairmen were also in attendance: Tim Smith, California; John Passi, Nevada; Terry Briggs, Texas; Scott Palmer, Oregon; and Vince Verna, Arizona.

Brother Dave Grimes, Local Chairman of BLET Division 42 (St. Louis, Mo.), delivered a time claims presentation to the 19 delegates who were in attendance.

John Conklin and Mike Sanders of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) were also in attendance to address the delegates.

The BLET’s Union Pacific-Western Lines General Committee of Adjustment is comprised of 19 different BLET Divisions, representing more than 1,800 active locomotive engineers and trainmen from the Union Pacific Railroad and the Pacific Harbor Line Railroad. They live and work primarily in California, Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas and Kansas.
Linda Chavez-Thompson, candidate for Lieutenant Governor of Texas and former Executive Vice President of the AFL-CIO, addressed more than 300 members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) during opening ceremonies of the union’s 75th annual Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWCM) in San Antonio, Texas, on September 14, 2010.

Chavez-Thompson received a warm welcome and several standing ovations from BLET members and their families in attendance. She served as executive vice president of the AFL-CIO from 1995 to 2007.

She discussed the challenges of running for political office and the importance of the labor movement in electing candidates that are friendly toward working families.

“I can speak for people who haven’t had a voice in Austin for a long time,” Chavez-Thompson said.

She urged BLET members to take an active role in the upcoming November elections by encouraging their families, friends and neighbors to go to the polls and vote.

In his opening remarks, Brother Russell Elley, arrangements chairman of the 2010 SWCM, thanked his wife Alissa for her help and support — not only in organizing this convention — but over the past several years when he has served as a union officer. He also recognized several members of BLET Division 197 in San Antonio for their assistance.

He introduced National President Dennis Pierce, who spoke briefly about various issues of importance to all BLET members, including: railroad security; Hours of Service and the Rail Safety Improvement Act (RSIA); contract negotiations; health and welfare issues; the use of electronic devices during on-duty hours; and issues related to video cameras inside locomotive cabs.

Becky Schnieder, National President of the BLET Auxiliary, conducted a memorial service for BLET members killed in the line of duty since 1989. She was assisted by Anita Caruso, BLET Auxiliary National Secretary.

Sister Margo Storsteen, a member of BLET Division 57 (Boston), serves as the BLET’s National Representative on the Teamsters Human Rights Commission. She said that some BLET Divisions have appointed a local representative (or representatives) to the Teamsters Human Rights Commission, but that many more still need to do so. Members interested in volunteering for the Human Rights Commission should contact Sister Storsteen at (781) 883-3443, or email Margoblet57@comcast.net.

Brother Brad Thompson, a member of BLET Division 442, gave a brief testimonial about the help he received from the BLET National Division and Designated Legal Counsel in obtaining experimental treatment for cancer, which he credits for helping to save his life.

Also during the opening ceremonies, Brother Terry Briggs, Chairman of the Texas State Legislative Board, donated an original charter from Division 530 to the BLET National Division. The charter is for the Division in Commerce, Texas, and is dated August 1, 1894.

Throughout the remainder of the week, members attended separate closed meetings for members of the BLET and BLET Auxiliary, participated in Education & Training Department workshops for Local Chairmen, Secretary-Treasurers, Legislative Representatives, a mobilization workshop, and a presentation by the Federal Railroad Administration regarding whistleblower protections.

San Antonio hosts BLET for 75th annual SWCM

BLET National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert, who has attended many SWCM conventions throughout his career.
Linda Chavez-Thompson, keynote speaker

Larry and Becky Schneider will host the 2011 SWCM in El Paso

From left: Rick Gibbons, BNSF (former STL-SF) General Chairman; Jim Nelson, BNSF-MRL Secretary-Treasurer; Roland Klaimsoege, BNSF-Santa Fe Secretary-Treasurer; and National President Dennis Pierce.

From left: Vice President Merla Geiger; Vice President Mike Twombly; and Vice President & National Legislative Representative John Tolman.

From left: Marcus Ruef, BLET Vice President and Director of Arbitration

From left: Mike Priester, CP Rail System-U.S. General Chairman, John Koonce, CNIC General Chairman, and President Pierce. Brother Koonce was recognized for his many years of service and his pending retirement.

First Vice President Lee Pruitt

Larry and Becky Schneider will host the 2011 SWCM in El Paso

From left: Vice President Merle Geiger, Vice President Mike Twombly, and Vice President & National Legislative Representative John Tolman.

Marcus Ruef, BLET Vice President and Director of Arbitration

From left: Larry and Becky Schneider will host the 2011 SWCM in El Paso

From left: First Vice President Lee Pruitt

From left: Dean Amos, Local Chairman of Division 197 (San Antonio), and Jeff Fancki, 1st Vice Local Chairman of Division 197.

Linda Chavez Thompson, keynote speaker

Presentation of the flags

From left: President Pierce presents Chuck Fleming with a 30-year pin.

From left: Dinner at the Buckhorn Saloon

Director of Arbitration Marcus Ruef, BLET Vice President and Director of Arbitration

Presenting Terry Briggs presents his PGA-style golf swing

Dinner entertainment at the Buckhorn Saloon

President Pierce presents Chuck Fleming with a 30-year pin.
Open enrollment begins November 1 for BLET Short Term Disability plan

Engines and Trainmen News

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 (BNSF and NS did not participate and this information does not apply to engineers working on either of these properties), 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), you may 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, 2011, there will be no changes to Part A coverage:
- Your eligibility and $40 per week, for non-occupational disabilities only.
- Each eligible member is insured for a maximum of $50,000 of Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D) coverage.
- Occupational disabilities are not covered.

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

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.

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.

Filing & Claim for BLET Short Term Disability

- Call 1-800-858-6506 – MetLife Claim Center
- Provide information requested, including contact information on your attending physicians.

A Case Manager will be assigned and you will receive a file number which you must keep available for future reference.

Following the call, you will receive an authorization for release of medical information. Sign the document and return it to MetLife.

IMPORTANT:
- 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 an additional $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 premium will be payable deducted with your monthly union dues.

Eligibility for Part B is contingent upon your eligibility for Part A. If you purchased coverage for 2010, your coverage will be $23 monthly with no additional changes:
- Effective January 1, 2011, 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 an additional $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 premium will be payable 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. (Complete the form below and return to address noted by December 15, 2010)

Filing & Claim for BLET Short Term Disability

- Call 1-800-858-6506 – MetLife Claim Center
- Provide information requested, including contact information on your attending physicians.
- A Case Manager will be assigned and you will receive a file number which you must keep available for future reference.
- Following the call, you will receive an authorization for release of medical information. Sign the document and return it to MetLife.

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.
- Effective January 1, 2011, 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 an additional $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 premium will be payable deducted with your monthly union dues.

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fficial communications between BLET members and the National Division require a hard copy of the correspondence, because, 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.

The volume of e-mails received makes it impossible for the National President to answer all unofficial communications. Therefore, it is the policy of the BLET that e-mails addressed to the National President will be reviewed and forwarded to the appropriate officer or staff for a time limited response. However, an e-mail message does not constitute an official communication. Moreover, anonymous e-mails and e-mails that do not provide sufficient information concerning the sender to enable National Division staff to confirm the sender’s membership status will not receive any reply or acknowledgement. This policy is intended to allow the National President to be unaware of the opinions and suggestions of the membership, while at the same time providing a timely response to legitimate communications. If a response is necessary, without needlessly expending limited BLET resources.

ADOPTED AT CLEVELAND, OHIO ON JULY 22, 2010. 68

BLET National Division Electronic Communication Policy
Carl Fields new Coordinator of BLET Safety Task Force

Brother Carl W. Fields has been appointed to serve the BLET as Coordinator of the Safety Task Force. The BLET Safety Task Force (STF) is the rail industry’s first and oldest union-based accident investigation team. It was organized in 1989 for the purpose of participating in accident investigations conducted by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) with the goal of contributing to both the accident cause-finding phase, and the safety recommendation phase from the viewpoint of locomotive engineers and trainmen.

Brother Fields also serves the Brotherhood as Secretary-Treasurer of Division 682 (Hammond, Ind.) and as Secretary-Treasurer of the Indiana State Legislative Board. Brother Fields will report directly to BLET National Secretary-Bill Walpert, who is the Safety Task Force Director.

"Brother Fields will do an excellent job representing the viewpoint of locomotive engineers and trainmen and assisting the NTSB during accident investigations," NST Walpert said.

Brother Fields began his railroad career on April 1, 1978, as a trainman for the Norfolk & Western Railroad (Nickel Plate Road) at Calumet yard in Chicago, Ill. He began working for the Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad on January 19, 1990.

Throughout his career he worked as a trainman, yardmaster, and car retarder operator prior to earning promotion to Locomotive Engineer on August 2, 1991.

He has proudly served the BLET since July 29, 1993, holding various positions within the organization such as: Legislative Representative of Division 682 since 2000, Secretary-Treasurer of the Indiana State Legislative Board (since 2006), and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer of the Indiana SLB (2002-2006).

"Brother Fields has admirably represented the BLET in numerous accident investigations over the past several years, most notably the tragic Norfolk Southern crash in Graniteville, S.C., which occurred on January 6, 2005," BLET National President Dennis Pierce said. "His experience and skills are great assets to the Brotherhood."

The toll-free Safety Task Force Hotline number is (800) 306-5414.

For more information about the BLET Safety Task Force, visit the BLET website: www.blet.org/departments/stf
Notice of Election of National Division Officers

A n election by secret ballot is being conducted among the eligible voters of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (the “BLET”) to fill the following offices:

One (1) National President
One (1) National Secretary-Treasurer
One (1) Vice President, Alternate, or Vice National Legislative Representative
Two (2) National Division Officers
Three (3) National Division First Vice Presidents
Two (2) National Division Second Vice Presidents
Two (2) National Division Third Vice Presidents
Two (2) National Division Fourth Vice Presidents

You may vote for a slate of candidates or individual candidates. If you vote for a full slate, no other marks on the ballot will be counted. If you vote for a partial slate, you must check the boxes for each candidate for the two other open offices (i.e., One (1) President and One (1) Alternate Vice President & One (1) National Legislative Representative). If you do not vote for either a full or partial slate, you must check the boxes for individual candidates (no more than one) for any of the four open offices.

The term of office for each elected officer is for 10 years, commencing January 1, 2011. The Election of Officers shall be by BALLOT at the October/November 2010 BLET Convention. All members must have dues paid up through October 2010. No member whose dues have been withheld for his/her employer for payment to the Local Division pursuant to his/her voluntary authorization provided in a collective bargaining agreement shall be deemed ineligible to vote in reason of a delay in payment of dues by the employer to the Local Division.

Persons eligible to vote include, but are not necessarily limited to, each person who is an officer, steward or other person, including, but not limited to, recommending to impose the most severe sanctions for violation of the prohibition against voting for candidates or individual candidates. If you do not vote for a partial slate, you may also vote for candidates for the two other open offices. If you do not vote for any of the four offices, you may vote for a slate of candidates or individual candidates for the two other open offices (i.e., Vice President No. 4 and Alternate Vice President)

If you do not receive a BALLOT by MONDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2010, PLEASE CALL THE AMERICAN ARBITRATION ASSOCIATION (A.A.A.) BALLOT HOTLINE AT (800) 529-5218, MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY, 9:00 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M. EST FOR A REPLACEMENT.

Your BALLOT MUST be mailed to reach P.O. BOX 9966, CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101-9965, NO LATER THAN 1:00 A.M., WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 15, 2010.

No person or entity shall limit or interfere with the right of each BLET ballot qualifier to independently determine how to cast his/her vote, and there shall be no requirement to surrender the ballot. Each BALLOT received must be treated with the utmost care, and all ballots and related paperwork must be destroyed.

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

Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen

Notice of Election of National Division Officers

In cooperation with Norfolk Southern, members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers andTrainmen in Cleveland helped organize a community outreach event in the form of a special “Wish Train” ride for sick children. Brother C.R. “Bud” Ramkey, a member of...