



# NEWS

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## BLET fights to stop UTU double dues

### Lawsuit filed against UTU and Carriers to stop illegal 'Letter of Intent'

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) has filed a lawsuit to halt the United Transportation Union's attempt to implement a seniority maintenance and seniority retention agreement reached with the nation's railroads. The implementation of this agreement could require BLET members to pay double dues if they desire to retain their BLET membership while working in train service.

At meetings in Cleveland on November 17 and 18, the BLET's Advisory Board voted unanimously to fight the UTU on the issue of the implementation of this type of agreement. After consultation with the legal department, it was decided to pursue this fight through the federal court system. A lawsuit, seeking a permanent injunction declaring these types of agreements in violation of the Railway Labor Act, was filed on November 24.

UTU International President Paul Thompson stated in a letter dated October 20, 2004 addressed to all UTU U.S. General Committees, "There is no doubt that the BLET will implement similar provisions (as those contained in the UTU agreement)..." However, the fact is that the BLET Advisory Board

voted unanimously not to enter into a similar agreement with the carriers even though the National Railway Labor Conference (NRLC) offered the same agreement to the BLET.

"Our overwhelming belief is that agreements — such as the one signed by the UTU that could require employees to pay double dues — are wrong and we intend to fight it," BLET National President Don M. Hahs said.

The BLET's lawsuit, filed in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia), charges that the seniority maintenance and seniority retention agreement between the UTU and the NRLC is illegal and violates portions of the Railway Labor Act (RLA).

Even though some courts have upheld seniority maintenance agreements in the past, the BLET's position is that the Letter of Intent influences or coerces employees in an effort to induce them to join or remain members of the UTU or not to join or remain members of the BLET in violation of Section 2, Fourth of the RLA.

The suit seeks a permanent injunction to stop implementation of the seniority maintenance and seniority retention agreement and also seeks to re-



The BLET Advisory Board at a meeting of BLET General Chairmen in Cleveland discussing the UTU "double dues" issue as well as the Brotherhood's Section 6 notices. BLET Vice-Presidents in the front row, from left, are: Paul Wingo, Steve Speagle, Rick Radek, Lee Pruitt, Merle Geiger Jr., Raymond Holmes and Paul Sorrow. Back row, from left: National President Don Hahs, National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert, and First Vice-President Ed Rodzicz.

store all seniority rights to employees negatively impacted by the UTU letter of intent.

The BLET also questions the timing of the UTU's Letter of Intent with the rail carriers. The BLET contends that the railroads' offer of this type of agreement coincides with the beginning of contract negotiations and is a purposeful distraction to rail labor.

President Hahs was also critical of UTU leadership for attempting to implement this agreement "as quickly as possible."

In his October 20 letter to UTU Gen-

eral Committees Mr. Thompson wrote, "... it is important that we attempt to implement our provisions as quickly as possible. If we don't have ours in place and we implement after the BLET, then they could contend that UTU and not BLET was responsible on your property for the payment of double dues."

"It is painfully obvious that UTU had hopes of implementing an agreement that could require certain employees to pay double dues and then using BLET as its scapegoat," President

See Double Dues, Page 5

## BLET serves Section 6 Notices

The National Division of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen provided its General Committees of Adjustment with its uniform national Section 6 notices on December 16 in the first step of beginning the next round of collective bargaining.

It is anticipated that each General Committee will promptly serve these notices, along with their individual notices, on the appropriate carrier representative.

The BLET National Division is also working with seven other rail unions to negotiate as the Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition (RLBC) on common issues.

However, the RLBC has not yet been able to finalize a joint proposal, so the BLET served its individual Section 6 notices at this time and will also serve the RLBC Notice when it is completed.

Plans regarding the Section 6 Notices were discussed with BLET General Chairmen at a meeting in Cleveland on November 17.

Provided to the General Committees were the uniform national Section 6 notices, identified as BLET-A (wage, rules and working conditions) and BLET-B (health and welfare).

These approved notices contain common issues to be considered during this wage/rules movement. General Com-

mittees of Adjustment that have issues not covered by the "common" notice will formulate their own notices, which will be served in conjunction with the "common issues" that were provided by the National Division and any other items approved by their Committee(s).

The uniform national Section 6 notice covers a multitude of issues related to pay and working conditions. The notice seeks a 7 percent annual wage increase; a shift differential of 25 percent when required to work between the hours of 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. and on weekends and holidays;

See Section 6 Notices, Page 5

## UTU spreads falsehoods about seniority maintenance timeline

Once again, the United Transportation Union has chosen to skew the facts in its continued smear campaign against the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

In a December 1 post to its website, the UTU called the BLET's lawsuit against the organization "wacky" and wrongly attempted to claim that the BLET had initiated the concept of seniority maintenance agreements in the first place.

The UTU should check its history. The UTU invented the concept of seniority maintenance in the early 1990s in a vain attempt to stem the tide of its dwindling membership. Years later, the BLET followed

suit to protect its own interests on a few properties, including Conrail. However, this was only after the UTU invented this new means of raiding the BLET membership.

The BLET understands that, if its lawsuit is successful, its own, few seniority maintenance agreements would also be voided.

"While the voiding of our own seniority maintenance agreements may initially affect membership growth on those few properties, it is the right thing to do," said BLET National President Don M. Hahs.

"The employees could then freely decide which organization that they would like to join." •

# BLET NEWS

## IN THE LINE OF DUTY

### Kenneth V. Leonard

Brother Kenneth Leonard of BLET Division 5 (Los Angeles, Calif.) was killed in a head-on collision between two Union Pacific freight trains on December 10. Brother Leonard joined the BLE on November 1, 1992.

Brother Leonard, 44, engineer of the eastbound train, was taken from the accident scene to a hospital where he died.

Four other crew members



were taken for medical treatment as a precaution for what were considered minor injuries.

Five locomotives and seven rail cars were derailed.

One train hauling 87 freight cars was en route from Los Angeles to Dallas, the other, with 35 cars, was heading west from Chicago to Los Angeles.

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

"On behalf of the men and women of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, I send my deepest condolences to Brother Leonard's family and friends," said President Hahs.

Brother Leonard's wake was held on December 17 and his funeral was on December 18.

He is the eighth member of the BLET to lose his life in the line of duty in 2004. The others are Mike Rogers, Jeff C. York, Anthony C. Rodella, Jeffrey S. Bohler, Dennis Vinson, Heath Pape and Glen A. "Skip" York II. •

## PASSENGER RAIL NEWS BRIEFS

### Study: High-speed rail could benefit Midwest

A high-speed rail network radiating from Chicago's Union Station through nine Midwestern states could carry 13.6 million passengers annually by 2025, according to a new report.

The Midwest Regional Rail System report released December 14 confirms the viability of a 3,000-mile rail network stretching through Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio and Wisconsin, said Mark Wandro, Iowa's transportation director.

Trains would travel at speeds of up to 110 m.p.h., cutting hours off trips between major cities.

The study, led by Transportation Economics & Management Systems Inc., a Frederick, Md.-based consulting firm, said significantly reduced travel times, increased frequency of service, improved reliability and connections to other forms of transportation would be a big draw to passengers.

(From the Associated Press.) •

### Amtrak directed to repay \$100 million loan

Amtrak, the nation's financially troubled passenger railroad, must pay back a \$100 million loan it received from the government to avert a shutdown in 2002.

After deferring repayment for two years, lawmakers included language in the omnibus appropriations bill signed by President George W. Bush to make Amtrak clear the loan from its books over the next five years.

An Amtrak spokesman said the railroad was ready to repay the debt, which was a key component of the financial rescue package spearheaded by the Transportation Department in the summer of 2002.

At the time, Amtrak had virtually run out of cash and had no leverage to borrow more from its banks because of its weak financial condition and heavy debt. Amtrak had threatened to start shutting down service unless it received help from the government.

The bailout triggered a process of tighter Transportation Department oversight of financial matters at Amtrak, which depends on annual federal subsidies to survive.

(From Reuters.) •

### Amtrak insists it owes nothing for emergency help during bomb scare

When a bomb threat forced almost 290 Amtrak passengers to disboard in Portage, Wis., this summer, the community provided medical service, transportation to John Muir Elementary School, law enforcement services and more. Some county officials say Amtrak

promised to give reimbursement but never came through.

"It's a lot like a contract," said Emergency Management Director Pat Beghin. "Amtrak didn't honor that contract."

County Board Chair Sue Martin sent a letter to Amtrak's chairman, David Laney, in October, requesting almost \$13,000 in compensation for various agencies and organizations.

(The Portage Daily Register.) •

### Random ID checks begin on Amtrak trains

Amtrak conductors have begun random checks of passengers' IDs as a precaution against terrorist attacks.

The onboard checks, which started at the beginning of November, are part of a broader program to improve security, Amtrak spokesman Cliff Black said.

"It is a ticket verification program, which is not intended to determine a person's identity but to make sure the person who's traveling with the ticket is the person whose name is on the ticket," Black said.

The checks have not resulted in any arrests, he said.

Amtrak also is requiring passengers to show identification when buying a ticket at ticket counters and to tag all luggage with the owner's address.

(From the Associated Press.) •

### NJ Transit guarantees seats, quiet for \$1,400

A door marked "reserved" divides train No. 3269 on the North Jersey Coast Line into two commuting worlds.

Outside the door, on most of the train, haggard passengers stand in vestibules or cram against each other on uncomfortable seats, next to coffee spillers and cell-phone gabbers.

But on the other side of the door, in the tranquillity of the private car, riders often have two seats to themselves, even during rush hour. And these are like no other seats on NJ Transit trains. They are cushioned and contoured. Press a button and they recline. They have flip-down trays, just like on airplanes.

Commuters looking in from the outside often wondered about the people in the private car.

But the only thing that's exclusive about the reserved car of the Jersey Shore Commuters Club is that its members — about 30 these days — are willing to pay extra for a more relaxing trip.

The dues are \$1,400 a year per member, in addition to passengers' regular fares. Those dues cover the cost of the club's \$56,000 annual lease with NJ Transit for the car.

A couple of years ago, when the car was being rebuilt, the club members kicked in \$27,000 to cover the cost of the customization.

(The Newark Star-Ledger.) •

## Teamsters make bold proposals to overhaul national AFL-CIO

The Teamsters General Executive Board endorsed a bold plan presented by General President James P. Hoffa to restructure the AFL-CIO to focus more resources on organizing. The plan would unite the broadest coalition of AFL-CIO affiliates at the same time as it would dramatically streamline the AFL-CIO so that greater resources could be focused on growing the labor movement. The Teamster Plan includes the following key elements:

- Streamline the national AFL-CIO by eliminating those functions that are duplicated by the affiliates or which are more appropriately done by the affiliates;

- Reduce the per capita tax by half for those unions that allocate at least 10 percent of their national union dues revenue to organizing, and devote rebated resources to organizing in core industries;

- Create incentives to accelerate the merger process in order to create economies of scale and free-up more resources for organizing;

- Reform AFL-CIO jurisdictional dispute mechanisms to establish area standards in key industries and sectors to inhibit unions from growing their unions by undercutting contract standards established by other unions;

- Cut the size of the AFL-CIO Executive Committee and give it real governing authority so that the largest AFL-CIO affiliates, not the AFL-CIO leadership alone, are able to have a real impact on policy;

- Streamline AFL-CIO state and local field operations and structures by eliminating bureaucratic duplication of effort and resources between central and state bodies and the national AFL-CIO; and

- Develop a strategic political and organizing plan

for "swing states" to increase union membership and political influence in order to produce a pro-labor White House and Congress in future elections.

"Combined with other important proposals — such as focusing our political efforts on building a movement for national health care and a workers right to union representation, expanding our efforts in new sectors and globally, developing stronger shop steward structures, and many others — we believe our restructuring proposals will allow us to build a more unified and more effective labor movement," Hoffa said. "We hope that these proposals will contribute to the process that will lead to a stronger labor movement as we head into the coming AFL-CIO Convention and we look forward to discussing them with our brothers' and sisters' throughout the movement in the weeks and months to come." •



# 'Safe Rails, Secure America' campaign rolls on

Rail Conference members continue to submit security information on U.S. rail operations


The Teamsters Rail Conference is continuing its "Safe Rails Secure America" campaign, which is designed to obtain firsthand information about the true condition of safety and security along our nation's railroads.

The data is still being collected and thus far has provided important information to arm the Rail Conference in addressing dangerous practices by the carriers and in communicating our concerns to the general public and federal authorities.

Members are encouraged to keep up the good work and continue submitting the Safe Rails Secure America forms (reproduced at right).

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

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



Date \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Railroad \_\_\_\_\_

Department \_\_\_\_\_ Subdivision \_\_\_\_\_

**Yard/Equipment**

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

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

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

**Eyes & Ears**

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

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**Remote Control:**

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

**General:**

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

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

Feel free to add additional information related to security concerns.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

## Rail Labor opposes plan for National Mediation Board fees

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, along with other rail labor unions belonging to the AFL-CIO's Transportation Trades Department, has been actively opposing a National Mediation Board proposal to impose fees on rail employees seeking arbitration services from the NMB and, in certain cases, restrict payment to the neutral arbitrators appointed by the board.

This opposition has been joined by 126 members of the U.S. House of Representatives, who signed on to a letter opposing to the agency's plan. The changes would apply only to workers,

not to management. The NMB oversees labor-management relations in the rail and airline industries.

The NMB has no authority to establish or collect fees for arbitration cases. Nor does it have the authority to restrict payment to the neutral arbitrators in those cases. The Railway Labor Act states that the Federal Government, not the disputing parties, is responsible for the payment of arbitration services.

Imposition of filing fees will discourage rail employees from pursuing grievances. Under the NMB's proposal, the fees for a claim, from initial dock-

eting through arbitration, would be a minimum of \$75 and as high as \$350. Many claims are for contract violations where the employee involved suffers a financial loss that is less than the proposed filing fees; examples include loss of a day's pay, loss of overtime, or denial of skill differential or other special pay, travel pay or travel expenses. The proposed fees would discourage the filing for arbitration over such claims.

"Rail workers owe a debt of gratitude to Representatives Jim Oberstar and Corrine Brown and 124 other lawmakers for opposing a plan that demonstrates how out of touch the NMB is on this issue," said Edward Wytkind,

President of the Transportation Trades Dept., AFL-CIO. "With all the safety and security challenges facing the railroads, it is both illogical and dangerous to make it harder for front-line workers to speak up and hold management accountable."

Senators Arlen Specter, Tom Harkin, and Edward Kennedy, all senior members of congressional panels overseeing the NMB, have also sent letters in opposition to this proposal.

In the recent Omnibus appropriations bill, Congress directed the NMB to hold hearings to, "examine any potential negative impact of the proposed fees." •

## Citing past, present aggression, Hoffa urges AFL-CIO to deny UTU request for reaffiliation

International Brotherhood of Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa recently wrote to AFL-CIO President John Sweeney on the behalf of the 1.4 million members of the Teamsters to convey his opposition to the United Transportation Union's request to reaffiliate with the AFL-CIO.

In the letter dated November 30, President Hoffa stated that the UTU's behavior prior to its disaffiliation several years ago makes it hard to believe that the organization will comply with the AFL-CIO Constitution if it is allowed to reaffiliate. Hoffa wrote that, "Based on its history of continued pursuit of raiding

activities in the face of Executive Council's orders, there is no reason to think so."

The UTU has a long history of attempting to raid the membership of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, which is contrary to the "basic trade union principles set forth in the AFL-CIO Constitution," according to President Hoffa. The UTU was twice found guilty of non-compliance with Article XX of the AFL-CIO Constitution and pulled out of the federation rather than comply with the AFL-CIO's rulings.

Hoffa goes on to reiterate that the UTU's contin-

ued actions against the BLET as a reason to disallow its reaffiliation. He also cites the AFL-CIO Constitution's provisions against putting out information that brings another affiliate into "public disrepute." Hoffa then quotes several stories that recently appeared on the UTU's website, which he said "unequivocally constitute a violation of the AFL-CIO Constitution."

A copy of President Hoffa's letter is available on the BLET website at:

[http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/hoffaltr\\_UTUreaffiliation.pdf](http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/hoffaltr_UTUreaffiliation.pdf) •



# BLET NEWS

## UTU to pay management's legal bills

### UTU to pay carrier legal bills with dues money from memership

When legal proceedings begin in the BLET's lawsuit regarding "double dues" against the United Transportation Union (UTU) and the National Railway Labor Conference (NRLC), the UTU will be paying the legal fees of the Union Pacific Railroad.

And the Burlington Northern.

The UTU will also pay the legal fees of CSX and Norfolk Southern.

Sound wacky?

It's true.

There's an indemnity clause in the November 1 Letter of Intent signed by the UTU and the carriers. By signing the Letter of Intent, the UTU leadership agreed to pay for all carrier legal fees that arise from any legal challenges to the Letter of Intent.

So even though the Union Pacific Railroad is the most powerful and wealthiest railroad corporation in America, its legal fees will be paid for by the dues of UTU members.

UTU members should question the type of leadership that would make such a deal with the devil. •



# Happy Holidays!

From the BLET National Division Officers & Staff

Canadian Pacific Railway's Holiday Train, decorated with thousands of Christmas lights, runs in partnership with the Canadian Association of Food Banks (CAFB) and U.S. food collection agencies to raise donations and awareness for the issue of hunger. The Holiday Train program allows employees, customers and communities to come together to help people in need.

## NEWS BRIEFS

### Rail trespassers to face sticky thicket

Using a relatively simple method to fight a potentially deadly problem, Union Pacific will plant hundreds of prickly rose bushes and barberries along its North Line in Chicago to prevent trespassers from crossing its tracks.



Racing against Mother Nature's wintry wrath and a year-end deadline to spend federal funds, Union Pacific crews will dig holes in Highland Park and Lake Forest for 300 bushes that will be put along stretches of track near the municipalities' high schools.

The \$6,500 in plantings are thanks to a federally funded pilot program that the Illinois Commerce Commission hopes will create an effective and aesthetically pleasing solution to a deadly problem: trains hitting pedestrians crossing the tracks.

While it appears to be a simple task, implementing it was no easy matter. Officials spent months consulting with botanists and railroad officials to pick the right shrub and the best places to plant them.

Ultimately, officials chose barberries and the white, pink and purple flowering rugosa rose bushes for their hardness, height and most importantly, dense thorny branches that should be a menace to trespassers.

(The Chicago Tribune) •

### KCS buys control of Mexican railroad

Kansas City Southern (KCS) has agreed to buy a controlling stake in Mexico's busiest railroad in a deal worth at least \$550 million, ending a bitter legal dispute with Mexican company TMM.



TMM said on Dec. 14 it was selling its 41 percent stake in railroad group TFM to KCS for \$200 million in cash, 18 million shares and a \$47 million two-year promissory note.

A similar deal was first reached in 2003, but TMM backed out, sparking a legal battle between the companies.

The amended acquisition pact for TFM would help increase rail competition and give shippers moving goods between the United States and Mexico an alternative to trucks, the companies said.

(From Reuters) •

### Railroads to mirror 2005 U.S. output

The performance of the nation's railroad industry will follow U.S. manufacturing output higher in 2005, with the capacity and efficiency of the rail system still issues, according to Fitch Ratings.

The railroads will most likely return excess cash next year to shareholders, as they have in the past, rather than reduce debt load.

The report said coal volumes, which account for 21 percent of the revenue at the major Class 1 railroads Union Pacific, Burlington Northern Santa Fe, CSX Corp. and Norfolk Southern, would remain robust. That's because electric utilities' demand for coal will stay strong while prices for natural gas remain elevated.

(CBS MarketWatch) •

### Louisville seeks better yard security

Louisville Metro Mayor Jerry Abramson is calling on the federal government to tighten requirements for railroad facilities where especially hazardous chemicals are parked or stored.

In a letter to U.S. Department of Transportation officials, the mayor also joined police and firefighters across the nation in opposing efforts to eliminate placards that identify hazardous materials inside railroad cars.

And Abramson said cars that contain toxic chemicals should not be allowed to park indefinitely in rail yards and spurs near industrial areas.

His comments were among those from dozens of individuals, groups and businesses that the Transportation Department recently made public in response to several potential changes in railroad security regulations.

But the government has so far declined to release written comments from the railroad industry.

Rail security has been a point of contention for years among some Louisville residents who live near rail yards, but increasingly since the 2001 terrorist attacks.

The mayor wrote that the community's greatest risk from toxic chemicals is from "routine handling, transfer and storage of these materials" and not international terrorists.

(From the Louisville Courier-Journal.) •

### CN, UP routing agreement avoids Chicago congestion

Canadian National Railway and Union Pacific Railroad have reached an agreement to streamline their exchange of rail traffic at major gateways to reduce rail congestion in Chicago.



The two large railways said November 23 they will use three of each other's yards to direct rail traffic flows through the most efficient interchange locations, to improve transit times and save costs.

Rather than going through Chicago, the continent's largest rail hub, the two railways will exchange some of their traffic in Superior, Wis., Salem, Ill., and in Memphis, Tenn.

CN and Canadian Pacific Railway have also announced recent track and asset sharing agreements.

The new CN-UP routing protocol will be implemented over a three-month period.

(The Canadian Press) •



# LIRR negotiations heat up

## Engineers reject management's latest contract proposal

Locomotive engineers on the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR), the largest commuter railroad in the United States, have overwhelmingly rejected management's latest contract proposal.

According to Bob Evers of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET), the contract proposal is based on a previous agreement reached between management and its shop craft and clerical workers. But that contract does not address issues that are unique to lo-

comotive engineers, Brother Evers said.

Evers, who is General Chairman of the LIRR engineers, also said management has refused to negotiate an hourly wage increase for engineers who operate new equipment, even though a similar increase was granted to track workers who belong to another union.

Finally, Evers said that part of management's proposal seeks to penalize union members who suffer on-the-job injuries and use sick days by forcing them to pay a financial penalty for losing time from work.

"Management's refusal to negotiate and its proposed behavioral modification policies have created a hostile work environment that deprives locomotive engineers of their dignity and respect in the work place," Evers said.

The BLET and management have entered into mediation and continued the negotiating process at meetings on December 7 and 8.

The LIRR locomotive engineers have worked without a contract for almost two years, Brother Evers noted. •

# BLET to implement new dues collection system

## Internet based system set to start on Jan. 1

The BLET will be implementing a new dues collection and reporting system on January 1. The system is internet based and all Division Secretary-Treasurers are required to file their reports via the BLET website, [www.ble-t.org](http://www.ble-t.org).

As a result of the new reporting system, all divisions must be current, as of January 1, on their filings or payment of dues. If a division is delinquent, they will not be given access to their January status report until they have filed and the National Division has processed all of the delinquent reports.

If the reports are delinquent, the General Committee

will hold all of the division's local dues until the current report is filed. Timely filing will affect a division's ability to pay their local bills.

Throughout October and November, National Division officers and staff have conducted numerous online demonstrations with Division Secretary-Treasurers as well as with General Committee Secretary-Treasurers. The demonstrations have been followed up by conference calls to help work out the bugs. The tests have been successful as the S-Ts and National Division continue working together to familiarize themselves with the new system. •

# BLET seeks improved pay, working conditions in Section 6 Notices

## Section 6 Notices

Continued from Page 1

elimination of entry rates and the two-tier pay system; a certification allowance of \$25 per start or tour of duty worked for locomotive engineers; guaranteed extra boards; job security pro-

visions; climate controls within locomotive cabs; and additional personal leave days and an improved sick leave plan.

The BLET National Division also provided a courtesy copy of the Section 6 Notices to the National Carriers Conference Committee, which bargains on behalf of Class 1 railroads Burlington Northern Santa Fe, CSX Transporta-

tion, Kansas City Southern and Union Pacific, in addition to numerous other non-Class 1 lines.

The Health & Welfare Notice covers the national vision plan, dental plan, medical plan, and other related items, and is usually handled jointly by all of rail labor under the CRLO.

It is expected that negotiations will

commence shortly after the beginning of the year. National negotiations will be handled by members of the BLET's Wage & Rules Committee, headed up by BLET National President Don Hahs.

The Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition is expected to submit its joint Section 6 Notices after the first of the year, on or around January 3, 2005. •



From left: General Chairmen Dennis Pierce (BNSF-MRL); Pat Williams (BNSF former AT&SF); M.D. Priester (CP Rail/U.S.); and Rick Gibbons (BNSF former St. Louis-Santa Fe).



From Left: General Chairman Gil Gore (Union Pacific-Southern Region) and General Chairman Ray Wallace (Norfolk Southern-Southern Lines).



From Left: General Chairman Tony Smith (CSX-Eastern Lines) and Norfolk Southern-Southern Lines Second Vice-Chairman W.A. Thompson.



From left: General Chairman Sam Parker (Kansas City Southern); General Chairman Bruce MacArthur (Union Pacific former C&NW); and General Chairman Tom Donnigan (Union Pacific-Western Region).

## Double Dues

Continued from Page 1

Hahs said. "I am confident that the BLET will prevail for doing what's right and looking out for the best interests of rail operating employees." •

Unlike the BLET, the UTU is not affiliated with the AFL-CIO. The UTU has a history of conspiring with rail management to preserve the UTU enterprise rather than maximizing the earnings and safety of rail operating employees. •



# BLET NEWS

## Applying for a Railroad Retirement Annuity

Railroad employees who are planning to retire should be aware of what steps to take and what documents are required when applying for an annuity from the Railroad Retirement Board. Being prepared can prevent needless delays and insure that payments from the Board begin as soon as possible after retirement. The following questions and answers describe this Railroad Retirement Board application process and other related items that retiring employees should be aware of.



### 1. How are railroad retirement annuity applications filed?

Applications are filed through the Railroad Retirement Board's field offices. Applicants may file in person or by telephone and mail. Those filing in person may do so at any Board office or at one of the office's Customer OutReach Program (CORP) service locations. Applicants filing by telephone receive the same information and instructions that are provided to those filing in person; forms requiring signatures and other documents are then handled by mail.

The addresses and phone numbers of all the Board's field offices are available on the Board's Web site at [www.rrb.gov](http://www.rrb.gov) or by calling the toll-free RRB Help Line at 1-800-808-0772. The RRB Help Line is an automated telephone service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Most Board field offices are open to the public from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on Federal holidays.

### 2. Can an application be filed prior to a person's actual retirement date?

The Board accepts annuity applications up to three months in advance of an annuity beginning date, which allows the Board to complete the processing of most new claims by a person's retirement date. However, applications for employee disability annuities cannot be filed until an employee is no longer in compensated railroad service. Compensated service includes the receipt of pay for time lost, some wage continuation payments, or any other employer compensation precluding the payment of railroad retirement benefits.

To expedite the filing process, applicants should contact the Board to schedule time for a pre-retirement consultation and also to confirm their eligibility and be advised as to the required documents. The consultation can be conducted in person, or by telephone, with a Board representative who will provide an annuity estimate, explain a retiree's benefit rights and responsibilities, and answer related questions.

Railroad employees can also get estimates of their future annuities over the Internet. Employees can access this service, called "Retirement Planner,"

by visiting the Board's Web site at [www.rrb.gov](http://www.rrb.gov) and clicking on "Mainline Services" for directions on establishing an RRB Internet Services account.

### 3. What are some of the documents required with an application?

- All applicants have to furnish proof of their age.
- All applicants should be prepared to furnish the notice of any social security benefit award or other social security claim determination.
- An employee may be required to submit information regarding any other Federal, State or local government pension for which he or she also qualifies, as well as certain other payments not covered by railroad retirement or social security, such as from a non-profit organization or from a foreign government or a foreign employer.

- An employee or survivor filing for a disability annuity is required to submit supporting medical information from his or her treating physician, as well as any reports or records from recent hospitalizations. He or she may also be asked to go for one or more specialized medical examinations. If an employee disability applicant is receiving workers' compensation or public disability benefits, notice of the amount and beginning date of such payments must be submitted.

- An employee will have to furnish proof of any military service claimed.

- A spouse, divorced spouse or widow(er) applying for a railroad retirement annuity must furnish proof of marriage to the employee. A divorced spouse must furnish proof of marriage and divorce from the employee, as well as proof that any subsequent marriages have terminated.

- A spouse, divorced spouse or survivor also qualified to receive a public service pension must submit information regarding that pension.

- All applicants have to provide banking information necessary for the Direct Deposit of their benefit payments.

A booklet, "Furnishing Evidence to Support Your Claim" (Form RB-3), gives detailed information as to the types of proofs that are required when filing for an annuity, as well as sources from which these documents can be obtained. The booklet is available free of charge at any Board office or on the Board's Web site.

### 4. Can proofs be filed in advance of retirement?

Railroad employees are encouraged to file proofs of their correct birth date and their military service well in advance of retirement. The information will be recorded and stored electronically until they actually retire. This will expedite the annuity application process and avoid any delays resulting from inadequate proofs.

If employees do not have an official

record of their birth or military service, their local Railroad Retirement Board office will explain how to get acceptable evidence. All evidence brought or mailed to a Board office will be handled carefully and returned promptly.

### 5. What is the retroactivity of a railroad retirement application?

The retroactivity of a railroad retirement annuity application is limited to one year for disability annuities and six months for full age annuities. Reduced age annuities to those ages 60-61 with 30 years of service and their spouses can also have up to six months' retroactivity; there is no retroactivity for reduced age annuities to those employees under full retirement age with less than 30 years of service.

The maximum retroactivity for widow(er)s ages 60-61 is six months if it does not increase the age reduction (this does not apply to surviving divorced spouses or remarried widow(er)s). Otherwise, there is generally no retroactivity for reduced age widow(er)s' annuities.

### 6. Are retiring railroad employees required to relinquish their rights to their railroad jobs?

An employee annuity based on age cannot be paid until the employee stops railroad employment and gives up any rights to return to work for a railroad employer. While an annuity based on disability is not paid until an employee has stopped working for a railroad, employment rights need not be relinquished until the employee attains full retirement age. However, in order for a supplemental annuity to be paid by the Board, or for an eligible spouse to begin receiving annuity payments, a disabled annuitant under full retirement age must relinquish employment rights. And, regardless of age and/or earnings, no railroad retirement annuity is payable for any month in which a retired or disabled employee annuitant, a spouse annuitant or a survivor annuitant works for a railroad employer.

Railroad retirement annuitants may work in nonrailroad employment, but benefits may be reduced if a beneficiary under full retirement age works after retirement and earnings exceed annual exempt amounts. Additional earnings deductions are assessed if a retired or disabled employee annuitant, or a spouse annuitant,

See Applying for Annuities, Page 7

## COLA increases in 2005

### Railroad Retirement benefit increases announced

Most railroad retirement annuities, like social security benefits, are scheduled to increase in January 2005 on the basis of the rise in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) during the 12 months preceding October 2004.

Cost-of-living increases are calculated in both the tier I and tier II benefits included in a railroad retirement annuity. Tier I benefits, like social security benefits, will increase by 2.7 percent, which is the percentage of the CPI rise. Tier II benefits will increase by 0.9 percent, which is 32.5 percent of the CPI rise. The vested dual benefit payments and supplemental annuities also paid by the Railroad Retirement Board are not adjusted for the CPI rise.

In January 2005, the average regular railroad retirement employee annuity will increase \$35 a month to \$1,692 and the average of combined benefits for an employee and spouse will increase \$48 a month to \$2,390. For those aged widow(er)s eligible for an increase, the average annuity will increase \$21 a month to \$884.

However, widow(er)s whose annuities are being paid under the Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2001 are not receiving annual cost-of-living adjustments until their annuity amount is exceeded by the amount that would have been paid under prior law,

counting all interim cost-of-living increases otherwise payable. Almost 33 percent of the widow(er)s on the Board's rolls are being paid under the 2001 law.

If a railroad retirement or survivor annuitant also receives a social security or other government benefit, such as a public service pension or another railroad retirement annuity, the increased tier I benefit is reduced by the increased government benefit. However, tier II cost-of-living increases are not reduced by increases in other government benefits. If a widow(er) whose annuity is being paid under the new law is also entitled to an increased government benefit, her or his annuity may decrease. However, the total amount of the combined railroad retirement widow(er)'s annuity and other government benefits will not be less than the total payable before the cost-of-living increase and before increased Medicare premium deductions.

For those beneficiaries covered by Medicare, the basic Part B premium generally deducted from monthly benefits increases from \$66.60 to \$78.20 in 2005.

In late December the Railroad Retirement Board will mail notices to all annuitants providing a breakdown of the annuity rates payable to them in January 2005. •

# Retirees can earn more next year

## Railroad Retirement Board changes allow retirees to avoid reduced benefits for extra income

Those railroad retirement annuitants subject to earnings restrictions can earn more in 2005 without having their benefits reduced, as a result of increases in earnings limits indexed to average national wage increases.

Like social security benefits, some railroad retirement benefit payments are subject to deductions if an annuitant's earnings exceed certain exempt amounts. These earnings restrictions apply to those who have not attained full social security retirement age, which ranges from age 65 for those born before 1938 to age 67 for those born in 1960 or later.

For those under full retirement age throughout 2005, the exempt earnings amount rises to \$12,000 from \$11,640 in 2004. For beneficiaries born in 1940 and attaining full retirement age in 2005 (age 65 and 6 months), the exempt earnings amount, for the months before the month full retirement age is attained, rises to \$31,800 in 2005 from \$31,080 in 2004.

For those under full retirement age, the earnings deduction is \$1 in benefits for every \$2 of earnings over the exempt amount. For those attaining full retirement age in 2005, the deduction is \$1 for every \$3 of earnings over the exempt amount in the months before the month full retirement age is attained.

When applicable, these earnings deductions are assessed on the tier I and vested dual benefit portions of railroad retirement employee and spouse annuities, and the tier I, tier II, and vested dual benefit portions of survivor benefits.

All earnings received for services rendered, plus any net earnings from self-employment, are considered when assessing deductions for earnings. Interest, dividends, certain rental income or income from stocks, bonds, or other investments are not considered earnings for this purpose.

Retired employees and spouses, regardless of age, who work for their last pre-retirement

nonrailroad employer are also subject to an additional earnings deduction, in their tier II and supplemental benefits, of \$1 for every \$2 in earnings up to a maximum reduction of 50 percent. This earnings restriction does not change from year to year and does not allow for an exempt amount.

A spouse benefit is subject to reduction not only for the spouse's earnings, but also for the earnings of the employee, regardless of whether the earnings are from service for the last pre-retirement nonrailroad employer or other post-retirement employment.

Special work restrictions applicable to disability annuitants do not change in 2005.

Regardless of age and/or earnings, no railroad retirement annuity is payable for any month in which an annuitant (retired employee, spouse or survivor) works for a railroad employer or railroad union. •

## Applying for Annuities

Continued from Page 6

works for his or her last pre-retirement nonrailroad employer, regardless of age or the level of earnings.

Special restrictions also apply to any earnings by disabled employees.

### 7. How soon after filing can an applicant expect payment?

Under the Board's Customer Service Plan, persons who filed for their railroad retirement employee or spouse annuity in advance will receive their first payment, or a decision, within 35 days of the beginning date of their annuity. Persons who did not file in advance will receive their first payment, or a decision, within 65 days of the date they filed their application. Those who filed for a railroad retirement survivor annuity or lump-sum benefit will receive their first payment, or a decision, within 65 days of the date they filed their application, or became entitled to benefits, if later. Widows or widow(er)s who are already receiving a spouse annuity will receive their first payment, or a decision, within 35 days of the date the Board receives notice of the employee's death.

For disability annuities, no payment can be made until all medical evidence has been evaluated. Consequently, an annuity based on disability takes longer to process than an annuity based on age and service. And, a waiting period of five months is required after the onset of disability before disability annuity payments can begin. In any case, persons who filed for a railroad retirement disability annuity will receive a decision on their claim within 105 days from the date they filed their application. If they are entitled to disability benefits, they will receive their first payment within 25 days of the date of that decision, or earliest payment date, whichever is later.

Of course, claims for some benefits may take longer to handle than others

# 2005 tax rates announced

## Year 2005 Railroad Retirement, unemployment insurance taxes

The amounts of compensation subject to railroad retirement tier I and tier II payroll taxes will increase in 2005. However, the tier I tax rate on employees and employers remains unchanged. Under the Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2001, tier II tax rates are now determined annually by an average account benefits ratio. Based on this ratio, the tier II tax rate on both employees and employers will decrease in 2005. Railroad unemployment insurance tax rates paid by employers will continue to include a 1.5 percent surcharge in 2005.

**Tier I and Medicare Tax** — The railroad retirement tier I payroll tax rate on covered rail employees and employers for the year 2005 remains at 7.65 percent. The railroad retirement tier I tax rate is the same as the social security tax, and for withholding and reporting purposes is divided into 6.20 percent for retirement and 1.45 percent for Medicare hospital insurance. The maximum amount of an employee's earnings subject to the 6.20 percent rate will increase to \$90,000 in 2005 from \$87,900 in 2004, but there is no maximum on earnings subject to the 1.45 percent Medicare rate. The increase

in the amount of earnings subject to railroad retirement and social security taxes is based on indexing to increases in average national wages.

**Tier II Tax** — The railroad retirement tier II tax rate on employees will decrease by 0.5 percent, from 4.9 percent to 4.4 percent in 2005, and the rate on employers will also decrease by 0.5 percent, from 13.1 percent to 12.6 percent. The maximum amount of earnings subject to railroad retirement tier II taxes, however, will increase to \$66,900 in 2005 from \$65,100 in 2004. Tier II tax rates under the 2001 Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act are based on an average account benefits ratio reflecting railroad retirement fund levels. Depending on this ratio, the tier II tax rate for employers can range between 8.2 percent and 22.1 percent, while the tier II rate for employees can be between 0 percent and 4.9 percent.

**Unemployment Insurance Tax** — Employers, but not employees, also pay railroad unemployment insurance taxes, which are experience-rated by employer. The basic tax rates range from a minimum of 0.65 percent to a maximum of 12 percent on monthly earnings up to \$1,150 in 2005, up from \$1,130 in 2004. However, the Railroad

Unemployment Insurance Act also provides for a surcharge in the event the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Account balance falls below an indexed threshold amount, and such a surcharge of 1.5 percent applied in 2004.

Since the accrual balance of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Account was \$98.6 million on June 30, 2004, which was less than the indexed threshold of \$112.9 million, a surcharge of 1.5 percent will again be added to the basic tax rates in 2005, but will not increase the maximum 12 percent rate.

The unemployment insurance tax rates on railroad employers in 2005 therefore will range from 2.15 percent (the minimum basic rate of 0.65 percent plus the 1.5 percent surcharge) to a maximum of 12 percent on monthly compensation up to \$1,150.

The 1.5 percent surcharge will not apply to new employers in 2005, and new employers will initially pay a tax rate of 3.43 percent, which represents the average rate paid by all employers in the period 2001-2003.

For 77 percent of covered employers, the unemployment insurance rate assessed will be 2.15 percent in 2005.

if they are more complex, or if information from other people or organizations is needed. If this happens, the Board will provide an explanation and an estimate of the time required to make a decision.

### 8. How are railroad retirement payments made?

Persons applying for railroad retirement benefits will be automatically enrolled in the U.S. Treasury's Direct Deposit Program, which electronically

transfers Federal payments into individuals' checking or savings accounts. Direct Deposit waivers are, however, available to individuals who determine that Direct Deposit would cause a hardship, and to individuals without bank accounts. •



# BLET NEWS

A message from IBT General President James P. Hoffa

## Teamsters are growing



Although the Teamsters Rail Conference was established less than a year ago, it has already grown to nearly 70,000 members. We now represent rail employees working as engineers, trainmen, rail maintenance and production crews as well as other rail crafts. Our rail conference representatives actively participate with the Rail Labor Division of the AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Department as well as other rail union coalitions. We want to make certain that our members' livelihoods are protected and encouraged. This is an historic time for rail workers.

We have been making great strides in growing the union in many industries. School district workers in Washington state, city employees in Florida, solid waste haulers in Florida and Alabama, farm workers in California, DHL subcontractors from Oregon to Texas to Virginia and thousands of airline workers have contributed to our membership growth. In December, the 60,000 members of the Graphic Com-

munications International Union voted to merge with us, too.

Despite the election loss in November, we will continue to inform the White House of your priorities. We know that locomotive engineers and trainmen have some of the most dangerous jobs on the rails and that higher wages, safer workplaces and the rising cost of insurance are just a few of your concerns. We will be fighting for increased homeland security funding for the rails and reducing the cost of health insurance in 2005.

When I traveled the country prior to the election I met with members who were eager to tell me of their family's needs and I assured them, as I do you, that we will be here for the long haul.

Let's stay United and Strong!

**Jim Hoffa**  
General President

## 2005 Time Books have been shipped

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen is currently mailing 2005 Time Books to all active BLET members.

The Time Books are valuable tools for keeping track of mileage, arbitrations, on and off duty locations, train numbers, overtime, and pay earned. The 2005 Time Books have

been redesigned to include larger areas for writing engine numbers and will feature advertising from the Brotherhood's Relief and Compensation Fund (BRFC) and the Locomotive Engineers & Conductors Mutual Protective Association (LECMCA).

The Time Books will be mailed to each BLET member via USPS. •

## DECEMBER 2004 CALENDAR & EVENTS

**JUNE 12-16, 2005...**

**78th Annual Southeastern Meeting Association, Montgomery, Ala.**

Hosted by Brother David Bowen and the members of BLET Division 740, the 78th annual SMA will be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel, 300 Tallapoosa St., Montgomery, Ala. More details to come when available.

**JUNE 26-30, 2005...**

**67th Annual Eastern Union Meeting Association, Saratoga Springs**

Hosted by Arrangements Chairman Bill Kearsing and the members of Division 46, 67th annual EUMA will be held at the Prime Hotel Saratoga Springs, 534 Broadway, in Saratoga Springs. Brother Kearsing reports that the hotel is now accepting early-bird reservations by calling (518) 584-4000 or (888) 999-4711. Members should ask for the EUMA rate when making reservations, which is \$126 per night. Brother Kearsing can be contacted at (518) 869-2297 or <BKearsing@aol.com>.

**JULY 3-8, 2005...**

**65th Annual International Western Convention, Calgary, Alberta**

Hosted by Mike Linkletter and the members of BLET Division 355, the 65th annual IWC will be held at the Fairmont Palliser, 133 9th Ave. SW, in Calgary. Room rates are \$144 per night (Canadian). For details, contact Brother Linkletter at <ble355leg@yahoo.com>.

**OCTOBER 2-6, 2005...**

**70th Annual Southwestern Convention Meeting, Oklahoma City**

Hosted by John Salisbury and the members of BLET Division 141, the 70th annual SWCM will be held at the Renaissance Oklahoma City Convention Center Hotel, (405) 228-8000 or (800) 468-3571. More details to come when available.

## Advisory Board October Activity

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

**National President Don M. Hahs**—National Division office: General supervision of BLET activities; General office duties; Florida legislative meeting, Tampa; Mtg. w/ dispatchers, Cleveland; Sonny Hall retirement, New York; TTD Rail Labor Division mtg., Washington, D.C.; Rail labor coalition mtg., Richmond, Va.; Virginia legislative board mtg., Richmond, Va.; IBT Southern Region Conference, New Orleans; BNSF mtgs., Belton, Texas, and Fort Worth, Texas.

**First Vice-President & Alternate President Edward W. Rodzicz**—Assisted President in general operation of National Division Office; Vice President assignments; Special Representative assignments; Organizing department; Shortline department; Passenger department; Various correspondence & phone calls; New England Central RR mtg.; TWU President Sonny Hall retirement dinner; Virginia SLB meeting; IC&E and NMB discussions.

**National Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walpert**—National Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walpert-General supervision of BLET financial, record depts.; ND office; BLET Education & Training Dept.; Internal Organizing, Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; Safety Task Force; Meetings with vendors and financial institutions; Meeting with National Officers of Teamsters Canada Rail Conference; Iowa State Legislative Board mtg., Ames, Iowa; Local Chairman Workshop, George Meany Center, Silver Spring, Md.; Online demonstrations and conference calls with Secretary-Treasurers, re: New reporting system; Local Chairman Advanced Class, George Meany Center, Silver Spring, Md.

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

**Vice-President Richard K. Radek**—ND Office; BLET Decertification Helpline services; Director of Arbitration Dept; National Railroad Adjustment Board (NRAB); Illinois Central; Wisconsin Central; Indiana Harbor Belt; METRA; Belt Rwy. of Chicago; Paducah & Louisville; Chicago Central & Pacific; IJ&E negotiations, Joliet, Ill., tentative agreement reached; Metra projects mtgs., IBT, Chicago, Mtg. w/ David White/Koehler case, Metra safety initiative; IHB negotiations assistance, Gary, Ind.; Metra Div. 185 mtg., Crestwood, Ill.; NRAB Section 3 arbitration, Madison, Wisc., referee/neutral orientation mtgs.; CN/WC PBIP mtg., Chgo. Cons. Vote, Rosemont, Ill., re: CN/WC bonus; Metra engineer trainor agreement, Chicago; Local Chairman's Seminar, Silver Spring, Md.; Metra mtg., safety dir., Chicago; IHB general assistance, Joliet Ill., grievances/negotiations; FRA Part 240.409 dockets this month: EQAL 02-01 (Metra).

**Vice-President Dale McPherson**—CP Rail; Port. Term. RR; Longview Portland & Northern; Longview Switching Co.; Indiana RR; Missouri & Northern Arkansas RR; Utah Railroad; UP Eastern Dist.; UP former CNW; BLET National Bargaining Cmte.; Public Law Boards 5604, 5681, 5721, 6040, 6281, 6589; UP work/rest projects; RSAC positive train control cmte.; General office duties, telephone, correspondence; Ratification mtgs., B&S RR contract, Birmingham, Ala.; Soo Line contract mediation, Chicago; SWCM, Houston; PLB 6040 arbitration, Miami; Salem OR-P&W contract negotiations, Salem, Ore.; Div. 416 mtg., Salem, Ore.

**Vice-President & U.S. Nat'l Legislative Representative Raymond A. Holmes**—BLET Washington D.C. office; General office duties, telephone, correspondence; National Association of State Legislative Board Chairmen; Event for Don Young (R-AK); Fundraiser for Cong. Martin Frost (D-TX).

**Vice-President Merle W. Geiger Jr.**—Assigned to: BLET Trainmen's Department; Kansas City Southern; Gateway Western; Midsouth Rail; Southrail; Texas-Mexican Rwy.; Springfield Terminal, Delaware & Hudson; Indiana & Ohio RR; Louisville & Indiana RR; New York, Susquehanna & Western RR; St. Lawrence & Atlantic RR; Indiana Southern RR; New England Central RR; Mtg. w/ GC Clark and Division 244, Laredo, Texas; Contract mtgs. w/ Louisville & Indiana RR, Jeffersonville, Ind.; ST/D & H/SLA General Committee of Adjustment mtg., Albany, NY; Contract meetings w/ GC Martin and NYS&W, Oneonta, NY; Correspondence, research, and general office duties.

**Vice-President Stephen D. Speagle**—Assigned to Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Montana Rail Link, Pacific Harbor Line; General office duties; MRL; meetings w/ carrier, Missoula, Mont.; Wabash Hospital Insurance meeting, West Palm Beach, Fla.; Public Law Board 5393, Decatur; Attend Division 155 meeting, Decatur; Executive Session for PLB 6523, Decatur; Mtg. w/ Don Hahs and BNSF CEO Matt Rose, Fort Worth; Wabash Hospital Board of Managers meeting, Decatur.

**Vice-President E.L. "Lee" Pruitt**—Assisted general chairmen & members of: UP-Western Lines; UP-Western Region; UP-Central Region; UP-Southern Region; UP-Tacoma Belt; General office duties, telephone paperwork; Arbitration Board 6729, 6730, 6731, 6732, Las Vegas; Assisting GC Donnigan, GCoFA mtgs., West Yellowstone, UPWR GCoFA; Assisting General Chairman Gore, New Orleans, UPSR GCoFA; Trip Rate mtgs., Dallas/Fort Worth, UPSR GCoFA.

**Vice-President Paul L. Wingo Jr.**—Assigned to NS-Southern Lines and Eastern Region GCoFAs; Iowa, Chicago & Eastern GCoFA; Meridian Southern; BLET Rail Security Officer; Special projects regarding rail security; Work with IBT on IC&E Railroad project; Division 85 issues; General office duties.

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