The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen reached a tentative national agreement (TNA) with the nation’s railroads on December 1. Ratification packets were sent to nearly 21,000 BLET members who will be governed by portions of the TNA. The ratification vote is being conducted by TrueBallot, Inc., and eligible members will have the option of voting either by calling a toll-free phone number or via the Internet. The vote began at 9:00 a.m. E.S.T. on Friday, December 16, 2011, and will end at 3:00 p.m. E.S.T. on Thursday, January 5, 2012.

Locomotive engineers in active membership status (other than company officers) employed by the following railroads are entitled to participate in the ratification vote: Belt Railway of Chicago; BNSF Railway; Conrail; CP Rail-US (Soo Line); CSX Transportation; Indiana Harbor Belt; Kansas City Southern System (KCS/L&A, Gateway Western, MidSouth, South Rail, and Tex Mex); Longview Switching; Portland Terminal; Union Pacific Railroad; and Winston-Salem Southbound. In addition, all train service BLET members employed by Texas Mexican Railway are entitled to vote.

Members eligible to vote will receive a packet from TrueBallot that includes a synopsis of the TNA, along with a ballot and voting instructions. In addition to the materials being mailed, voters will be able to access numerous resources on a dedicated page on the BLET website that will inform them on the issues related to the TNA ratification vote. That page is www.ble-t.org/agreement, and can be accessed from a button at the top of the main page of the BLET website.

Members who are eligible as defined above and have not received a ratification packet by December 20 should call (216) 241-2630, extension 222. When connected with the extension, please leave the following information:

- your name, address and phone number;
- the division to which you belong;
- the railroad for which you work;
- the date you were promoted to locomotive engineer;
- your date of birth;
- your Social Security number; and
- an e-mail address if you would like your ballot and voting instructions e-mailed to you.

E-mail requests for ballots will not be accepted because personal information is required to verify eligibility before a ballot can be issued.

**BLET reaches tentative national agreement with carriers**

**Happy Holidays!** The 2011 Canadian Pacific Railway Holiday Train passes through Fort Edward, N.Y., on November 26, 2011. Each year, the Holiday Train distributes food and money to local food banks to raise awareness in the fight against hunger. The 2011 Holiday Train will make about 150 stops from November 26 through December 17. Since the program’s inception back in 1999, more than $5.6 million and over 2.45 million pounds of food has been collected in Canada and the United States. Photo: Gary Knapp
I promised you as recently as September that we would put every ounce of our energy into the fight, and I can assure you that my promise has been kept. We have left no stone unturned, we have played out every scenario, and we have tried to overcome every obstacle the Carriers — and the system — placed before us.

The decision is yours.
The New Year brings with it the opportunity for more of America's workforce to join the Teamsters Union and enjoy the strong wages and benefits that are part of every Teamster contract. Yet, the New Year also brings the possibility of a struggle that we will undoubtedly see as part of the presidential campaign this fall. The struggle will be to encourage growth in the U.S. economy and to beat back the tide of anti-union, tea party rhetoric which the GOP candidate will champion. We will be up to these challenges and we will intensify our efforts in the fight for all working families.

Rail transportation via commuter rail, Amtrak or freight is critical to the nation's health. When sales of goods plummet it has a negative ripple effect that impacts our way of life. Wages can decline, housing prices stagnate and more, but just the opposite occurs when the situation is reversed. Michigan, for example, has seen resurgence of its economy now that the auto manufacturers are bringing jobs back to the state.

We will never let up in the ongoing battle to provide good wages, benefits and working conditions for our 1.4 million members across North America, and to organize tens of thousands of unemployed workers. The right-wing corporate interests that are trying to destroy America's middle class will find an energized and mobilized Teamsters Union that will fight to defend the principles that made this country great.

Collective bargaining works. Collective bargaining rights make a decent, middle-class life possible for millions of U.S. workers. But many corporations and elected officials are hell-bent on taking them away. And it isn’t just organized labor they’re attacking.

A war is being waged against American workers. Yet, the re-doubling of our efforts to fight to protect our hard-won wages and benefits will result in a stronger country. The path is clear but we must all join together as brothers and sisters to win.

Our Teamsters Union will continue to be a force for change and will lead our nation in efforts to improve the lives of working families.

Fraternally,

James P. Hoffa
Teamsters General President

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**Challenges in the New Year**

A war is being waged against American workers. Yet, the re-doubling of our efforts to fight to protect our hard-won wages and benefits will result in a stronger country.

## Railroad Retirement Board announces 2012 benefit increases

### Railroad retiree earnings limits to rise in 2012

These railroad retirement annuities subject to earnings restrictions 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 2001 law is also entitled to an increased government benefit, her or his railroad retirement survivor annuity may decrease.

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 any increase in Medicare premium deductions.

For most beneficiaries covered by Medicare, the standard Part B premium generally deducted from monthly benefits is expected to increase from the 2011 amount, with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services expected to announce the 2012 premium amounts in the coming weeks. In late December the Railroad Retirement Board will mail notices to all annuities providing a breakdown of the annuity rates payable to them in January 2012.

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**General President's Message by James P. Hoffa**

December 2011

**Locomotive Business & Transportation News**

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## Railroad Retirement Board announces 2012 benefit increases

### Railroad retiree earnings limits to rise in 2012

These railroad retirement annuities subject to earnings restrictions can earn more in 2012 without having their benefits reduced, as a result of increases in earnings limits imposed to average national wage increases.

Like social security benefits, some railroad retirement benefits 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. For employees and spouse annuants, full retirement age ranges from age 65 for those born before 1938 to age 67 for those born 1960 or later. For survivors annuitants, full retirement age ranges from age 65 for those born before 1940 to age 67 for those born in 1962 or later.

For those under full retirement age throughout 2012, the exempt earnings amount rises to $14,640 from $14,160 in 2011. For beneficiaries attaining full retirement age in 2012, the exempt earnings amount, for the months before the month full retirement age is attained, rises to $38,880 in 2013 from $37,680 in 2011.

For those under full retirement age throughout 2012, the earnings deduction is $1 in benefits for every $2 of earnings over the exempt amount. For those attaining full retirement age in 2012, the deduction is $1 for every $3 of earnings over the exempt amount in the months before and in the month full retirement age is attained.

When applicable, these earnings deductions are assessed on the tier I and vested dual benefits 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 service 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 non-railroad employer or other past-retirement employment.

Special work restrictions continue to be applicable to disability annuants in 2012. The monthly disability earnings limit increases to $790 in 2012 from $790 in 2011.

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.
The voices of holidays past

A look back at holiday messages from the Brotherhood’s 148-year history

B rotherhood leaders have traditionally shared holiday messages with the membership throughout the long and distinguished history of our great organization. These messages of peace and good will date to 1869 — two years after the Locomotive Engineers Monthly Journal was first published. Today’s BLET members take great pride in the deep roots of our organization. And it is with deepest appreciation of our treasured past that we take a look back on holiday greetings from years past.

The Brotherhood, founded on May 8, 1863, is the oldest labor union in the Western Hemisphere. The Journal, first published in January of 1867, is the oldest rail union publication in the world.

Today, members of the BLET Executive Committee continue this tradition in several ways, including the mailing of holiday cards, web postings, and holiday greetings in the various Brotherhood publications. Holiday greetings from the BLET Executive Committee, as well as from the BLET Auxiliary, may be found on Page 5 of this issue. Happy Holidays!

30 YEARS AGO

"President Reagan and his Administration are determined to cut back on government spending, and while such a course might be desirable in some areas, the stripping of benefits from retirees is certainly a most undesirable way to do it."

“When I use the term ‘stealing,’ that is exactly what I mean. “This will be a bleak Christmas for many retired railroad workers, and their families, who have been victimized by the Reagan budget cutters through having their so-called ‘windfall benefits’ reduced.”

— December 16, 1981
President John F. Sytsma
The Locomotive Engineer

40 YEARS AGO

"The Grand Officers of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers extend to each and every member, along with the families of all members, warmest greetings at this joyous season of the year.”

— December 17, 1971
BLET Advisory Board
The Locomotive Engineer

50 YEARS AGO

“Railroading itself probably is the greatest Christmas gift that this nation ever received. It was on December 25, 1830, in Charleston, S.C., that a locomotive pulled a string of cars along the South Carolina Canal & Railroad Co. tracks and thus inaugurated regular train service on this continent.”

— December 15, 1961
The Locomotive Engineer

55 YEARS AGO

“Often in this busy and troubled world we lose sight of the real meaning of Christmas and selfishly think of it only as a season for merit and wills to do. We can make this so in this great country through free unions such as ours by working together and trying to understand each other’s problems.”

“Christmas, particularly, signifies personal peace and happiness. The real meaning of Christmas is the promise of a better way of life — and its fulfillment is more joysy living all the year round.”

— December 1956
Grand Chief Engineer
Guy L. Brown
Locomotive Engineers Journal

60 YEARS AGO

“The spirit of giving is reflected throughout the entire Christmas Season. Many companies give their employees a substantial cash bonus. Christmas day is a holiday with pay, or, should employees be required to work, they receive double-time or at least time-and-one-half for that day.”

“ ‘Railroad management grants none of these advantages to locomotive engineers and other operating employees. In sharp contrast to the spirit of giving, Railroad management is making every effort, in the current Rules-Wage case, to take away from locomotive engineers some of the important working conditions which have been in effect for more than 50 years.”

— December 1951
Locomotive Engineers Journal

75 YEARS AGO

“Before another copy of the Journal reaches you, the holidays will have come and gone. Take this opportunity of wishing each of you the Season’s Greetings with the hope that the coming year will be a happy and prosperous one.”

— December 1916
Grand Chief Engineer
Asaaylan Johnston
Locomotive Engineers Journal

100 YEARS AGO

"Christmas-tide, the season of the festival of the Nativity, ought to be an incentive to all to put into practice the principles and examples of Him who personified ‘peace’ and ‘good will toward all men.’”

— December 1911
Charles H. Salmons
Locomotive Engineers Journal

125 YEARS AGO

"This past year has been a successful one in the many endeavors confronting the Organization, and while we will always face with problems of interest to the membership, the loyal support of the rank and file is in good hands. Christmas is knocking on the door, and all of us will be faced with the pleasant problems of the season.”

— December 1911
Charles H. Salmons
Locomotive Engineers Journal

135 YEARS AGO

"Many who celebrated the last New Year with us have been victims of the ‘perspiration’ — their work is finished, their course is run, and there remains to us but their memory and their example. Shall we who remain for a brief time to carry the work before we give place to others who shall fill our places, have it said of us that through our negligence the golden opportunity was lost?”

— January 1876
Locomotive Engineers Journal

140 YEARS AGO

"This number completes the fifth volume of our little Journal, Brothers, do you realize that the Journal belongs to you? Do you not feel a pride in making it a success in every point of view? We will leave the matter in your hands, knowing that it is within your power to make the Journal and the Brotherhood a success to that degree that it will be the proudest monument of your lives, and worthy the best efforts of all good men.”

— December 1871
Charles Wilson
Grand Chief Engineer
Locomotive Engineers Journal

From the vault

This old-time rotary snow plow was at the height of cutting-edge technology when this photograph was taken in 1890. The Rotary helped Southern Pacific crews fight the snow high up in the Sierra Nevada mountains. Powered by its own boiler and steam engine to what the huge “Tom,” it supplanted the earlier “push” and cyclone plows that required a flock of locomotives and an army of shovellers.

The voices of holidays past
When the members of your Executive Committee were sworn in on January 1, 2011, none of us had any idea of the challenges that were waiting for us throughout the year. From attending rallies in state capitols to testifying at Congressional hearings on Capitol Hill to intensive labor negotiations, the year 2011 was loaded with challenges that taxed the will and strength of us all.

A month after swearing in, organized labor fell under attack from extremist politicians in Wisconsin and Ohio. In spite of the severity of the attacks against the rights of unions to collectively bargain, it was heartening to see how quickly labor, and BLET members in particular, rose to the occasion. Many BLET members in Wisconsin stepped to the front lines in the War on Workers and rallied with that public sector unions who were under attack. In Ohio, many members joined the fight at rallies in the state capitol. We applaud each and every one of you for putting up the good fight.

And when your elected leaders were not in the trenches showing solidarity with other labor unions, we were fighting for your rights on Capitol Hill. We testified before Congress regarding ways to improve the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008. We testified again regarding the important role railroad safety regulations play in the day-to-day working lives of our members. We also worked on countless behind the scenes issues, including a petition to improve numerous locomotive safety standards.

Your elected leaders were also kept busy at the negotiating table. Countless hours and resources were exhausted in national negotiations on a contract that will impact the majority of our members in one way or another. We participated in on-property negotiations at the Union Pacific Railroad all throughout the year, not to mention numerous contract negotiations on various commuter (MBCR) and short line (Maine, Montreal & Atlantic) railroads.

You were there with us throughout the year, thanks to your participation in our Mobilization network. The BLET ramped up our mobilization efforts this year, and your participation helped to energize the entire organization from coast to coast. Your participation will be even more necessary as we approach a final resolution of our national contract settlement.

Looking back, the year 2011 has been a whirlwind of activity. And as the year draws to a close, your Executive Committee would like to take the time to thank you for your participation. Let us take time during this holiday season to pause, catch our collective breaths, and reenergize ourselves for the coming year. Please take the time to focus on the important things in life — your health and your family and friends. Your BLET Executive Committee wishes each and every one nothing but the best this holiday season.

Fraternally,
DENNIS R. PIERCE
National President

E. LEE PRUITT
First Vice President

WILLIAM C. WALPERT
National Secretary-Treasurer

A LOOK BACK AT THE YEAR THAT WAS

Happy Holidays from the BLET Auxiliary!

When your elected leaders were not in the trenches showing solidarity with other labor unions, we were fighting for your rights on Capitol Hill. We testified before Congress regarding ways to improve the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008. We testified again regarding the important role railroad safety regulations play in the day-to-day working lives of our members. We also worked on countless behind the scenes issues, including a petition to improve numerous locomotive safety standards.

While running around this holiday season, please remember to take care of yourself, your family, and especially your railroader! The holidays often cause great anxiety for the families of railroaders as we never know if our spouse will be home or working. This comes with the territory, but it never gets easier to adjust to the uncertainty of those crazy work hours. We all do our best to adapt, but even the most seasoned spouse feels a bit weary with all the chaos that ensues. We just keep plodding along, hoping for the best, knowing that someday this too shall pass.

Have fun shopping, baking, visiting with friends and family, traveling, or whatever you choose to do to celebrate the holidays. But most of all, be careful while enjoying the blessings of the season and creating memories that you will cherish forever.

Here’s wishing everyone a happy, healthy holiday season and a joyous New Year! ☺

Although the National Auxiliary, I send my warmest holiday greetings to all of our BLET and Auxiliary brothers and sisters, and everyone in our extended railroad family. We are thankful for the BLET National Officers, General Chairmen, Legislative Board Chairmen, Local Division Officers, Designated Legal Counsel, job insurance and income protection companies, and everyone who works hard all year long on our behalf.

Our BLET sister, Anita Caruso, was elected to the National Executive Board at the 2011 National Convention in Las Vegas on October 27. Brother Holdcraft has held continuous membership in the Brotherhood for more than 31 years. He joined Division 776 on February 1, 1980. Immediate- ly prior to his election as General Chairman, Brother Holdcraft served as the GCA’s 1st Vice Chairman. He will take over for outgoing General Chairman Pat J. Williams of BLET National Negotiations Committee (New York) who retired after a 40-year railroad career. Also retiring is Brother Roland Kleinsorge, the GCA’s long-serving Secretary-Treasurer. Brother Chris A. Mosser of BLET Division 871 (Slaton, Texas), was elected as the GCA’s new Secretary-Treasurer. Also elected were: 1st Vice Chairman M. R. (Robby) Cunningham, Division 134 (Winlock, Ariz.); 2nd Vice Chairman R. J. Maloy, Division 299 (Amarillo, Tex.); 3rd Vice Chairman J. B. Gomex, Division 264 (El Paso, Texas); 4th Vice Chairman O. A. Barroza, Division 839 (Richmond, Calif.); 5th Vice Chairman R. E. Young, Division 256 (Denver, Colo.); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer R. D. Sawyer, Division 134 (Winlock, Ariz.).

Brothers Holdcraft, Cunningham and Mosser will serve the GCA on a full-time basis. The delegates considered numerous resolutions during their meeting, adopting a resolution that makes the Secretary-Treasurer job a full-time position with the requirement that the elected officer also handle protective matters in addition to regular GCA financial duties. The assembled delegates heard reports from BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce, First Vice President E. Lee Pruitt; National Secretary Treasurer William C. Walpert; and National Vice President Michael D. Priester. Brother Holdcraft thanked the National Division officers for their participation.

Also attending the meeting were BNSF/MRL General Chairman Matt Wilson and BNSF (former STL-SF) General Chairman Rick Gibbons. BLET Special Representative and National Mobilization Director Kent Confer presented a mobilization training class to the delegates.

Retiring General Chairman Williams first joined the BLET on August 1, 1977. He was elected General Chairman three times, most recently in 2008. Brother Kleinsorge joined BLET Division 398 (San Bernardino, Calif.) on January 1, 1980. He was elected to the GCA’s Alternate S-T position in 2002, assuming the full Secretary-Treasurer job in 2004 upon the retirement of Bill Wood. Brother Kleinsorge was reelected Secretary-Treasurer in 2005 and 2008.

“I offer my congratulations to General Chairman Holdcraft and all members of the BNSF (ATSF) General Committee of Adjustment,” National President Pierce said. “I thank them for inviting me and it was an honor to attend their triennium meeting.”

“They know they will do an excellent job of upholding the standard of excellence established in the coming days as the new Committee wishes each and every one nothing but the best this holiday season.

The BNSF (Santa Fe) General Committee is composed of 36 Divisions representing nearly 2,900 engineers and trainmen. ☻

Alan Holdcraft elected BNSF (former ATSF) GC

Alan Holdcraft of BLET Division 776 (Richston, Texas) was elected General Chairman of the Barl- ington Northern Santa Fe (former ATSF) General Committee of Adjustment at the GCA’s triennial national convention held in Las Vegas on October 27. Brother Holdcraft has held continuous membership in the Brotherhood for more than 31 years. He joined Division 776 on February 1, 1980. Immediately prior to his election as General Chairman, Brother Holdcraft served as the GCA’s 1st Vice Chairman. He will take over for outgoing General Chairman Pat J. Williams of BLET National Negotiations Committee (New York) who retired after a 40-year railroad career. Also retiring is Brother Roland Kleinsorge, the GCA’s long-serving Secretary-Treasurer. Brother Chris A. Mosser of BLET Division 871 (Slaton, Texas), was elected as the GCA’s new Secretary-Treasurer. Also elected were: 1st Vice Chairman M. R. (Robby) Cunningham, Division 134 (Winlock, Ariz.); 2nd Vice Chairman R. J. Maloy, Division 299 (Amarillo, Tex.); 3rd Vice Chairman J. B. Gomex, Division 264 (El Paso, Texas); 4th Vice Chairman O. A. Barroza, Division 839 (Richmond, Calif.); 5th Vice Chairman R. E. Young, Division 256 (Denver, Colo.); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer R. D. Sawyer, Division 134 (Winlock, Ariz.).

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The BNSF (Santa Fe) General Committee is composed of 36 Divisions representing nearly 2,900 engineers and trainmen. ☻
BLET helps Santa Train spread good cheer

The 69th annual CSX Santa Train ran safely and on-time again this year, thanks in large part to the locomotive engineers and trainmen of BLET Division 781 in Erwin, Tenn.

Every November, Santa Claus trades his sleigh and reindeer for a CSX train ride through Appalachia. On November 19, Santa and his elves distributed 15 tons of donated gifts to children of all ages at the 14 stops along the 110-mile route through eastern Kentucky, western Virginia and northeast Tennessee.

The annual event is sponsored by CSX Transportation, Food City Grocers of Abingdon, Va., Kids Wish Network (a Florida-based nonprofit group) and the Kingsport, Tenn., Chamber of Commerce. The Kids Wish Network made a $500,000 donation of toys this year.

In addition to Santa, this year’s special guests were Thompson Square, a Grammy-nominated husband-and-wife country music duo.

The members of BLET Division 781 normally run CSX freight trains along the route from Shelby, Ky., to Kingsport, Tenn. It is difficult terrain and the BLET members are intimately familiar with the route’s many challenging hills and curves. They are uniquely qualified to operate trains along the territory and are extremely proud of their contributions to the Santa Train heritage.

Typically, the senior member of the Division will bid on the Santa Train job. This year, the honor went to Brother T.L. “Tuck” Bradley, a 25-year member of the BLET.

Brother Bradley helped out as a brakeman in October of 1981 on the former Clinchfield Railroad in Dante, Va. He stayed with the railroad through various mergers and acquisitions over the years, which included the Seaboard, L&N, Chessie System and eventually CSX.

Brother Bradley knows first-hand the importance of the Santa Claus train to the Appalachian region. “I went to the Santa Claus train myself as a kid growing up,” he said. “It’s good for the kids. For some this may be the only Christmas present they get.”

Coming full circle and working behind the throttle of the Santa Claus train was a fulfilling experience for Brother Bradley. Also, it was particularly rewarding for him to know that two of his grandchil- dren — Abby, 6, and Parker, 5 — were in the crowd as the train stopped in St. Paul, Va. In fact, they were a large reason he bid on the Santa Train job in the first place.

“My grandkids wanted me to do it,” he said. “They were more excited about it than I was.”

Brother Bradley admits he was nervous about the large crowds along the route and the potential for a tragic accident, but he took heart in knowing his fellow BLET Brothers and Sisters would be along the route to help with crowd control.

In addition to providing a pool of locomotive engineers to operate the Santa Train, the members of BLET Division 781 also coordinate safety teams designated to be at each of the 14 stops along the route. According to Division 781’s Justin Wilcox, these safety teams keep crowds away from the tracks as the Santa Train prepares to stop.

“It helps give the engineer and crew a better feeling as they approach,” Wilcox said. “Sometimes hundreds of men women and children who are close to the tracks.”

Wilcox concluded by thanking Brother Bradley for his years of service to BLET members. “Tuck was one of the best trainers of new engineers as we came through Cum- berland in the late 1990s,” Wilcox said. “He not only taught us to run a train in good conditions, but did things to simulate problems and showed us how to get out of them. He’s one of the best.”

In keeping with a core item of National President Dennis Pierce’s administration, Vice President Mike Twombly attended the meeting of BLET Division 228 in Pocatello, Idaho, on September 27.

The members of Division 228 work for the Union Pacific Railroad and are part of the BLET’s Union Pacific-Western Region General Committee of Adjustment.

Vice President Twom- bly was in Burley, Idaho, on September 26 to assist General Chairman Jim Dayton (Union Pacific-Western Region) in con- tract negotiations with the Eastern Idaho Railroad. The next day they travelled to Pocatello, Idaho, for Division 228’s meeting.

“Attending Division meetings is an important job for everyone on the BLET’s Advisory Board,” President Pierce said. “My grandkids wanted me to do it,” he said. “They were more excited about it than I was.”

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Santa Claus distributes toys with the help of Country music duo Thompson Square (Shawna and Keifer Thompson).

Locomotive engineer T.L. “Tuck” Bradley of BLET Division 781 safely and expertly piloted the 2011 Santa Claus Train along its 110-mile route.
Ohio voters reject attack on collective bargaining

By a 61 percent majority, Ohio voters resoundingly rejected legislation that would have reduced the collective bargaining power of about 360,000 public workers in the state.

The defeat of Ohio’s Issue 2 on November 7 was a substantial victory for organized labor and a “major black eye” for the governor” John Kasich, according to Ohio’s Republican governor had made the scaling back of collective bargaining rights a signature issue in his administration, so the defeat of Issue 2 was a major setback.

BLET National President Dennis Pierce was one of many BLET members who participated in rallies to oppose the issue. He thanked those who fought the measure and voted against it.

In particular, President Pierce recognized John Tolman, BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative, and Tim Hanley, Chairman of the Ohio State Legislative Board, for their efforts in fighting the measure. Hanley and their families from wage loss.

A Win for Labor: BLET National President Dennis Pierce (center) of BLET members at a rally to protest attacks on unions and collective bargaining in Columbus, Ohio.

President Pierce also recognized the countless BLET members who participated in the pre-election process, worked phone banks, handed out fliers, and engaged in various get out the vote efforts with their fellow members to ensure the defeat of Issue 2.

Issue 2 would have nearly eliminated collective bargaining for government workers. It included provisions that would have banned strikes by public workers, removed binding arbitration and eliminated union negotiations over health care and other benefits.

In March, the issue passed out of committee by the smallest margin possible — one vote — but only after Governor Kasich’s political strong-arm tactics. Just before the vote, Ohio Senate President Tom Niehaus (R) pulled Sen. Bill Setz (R) off the committee that was considering the measure because Setz had opposed a Republican amendment to the bill and the process in which the bill was being considered. Setz was replaced with another Republican who supported the measure, clearing the way for a 5-3 vote that otherwise would have ended in a tie.

MSNBC news analyst Lawrence O’Donnell said it was “the dirtiest legislative maneuver I have ever seen. I have never seen a more corrupted legislative process.”

After the hateful, anti-union measure was passed into law through questionable political maneuvering, Ohio’s labor unions began gathering signatures for a “citizen’s veto,” giving citizens the right to veto it in a special referendum in November. A total of 231,000 signatures were needed to put the measure before voters, and thanks to the power of unionism, a parade of 6,000 citizens delivered 1.3 million signatures to the state capitol in June. That set the stage for Tuesday’s vote and sweeping victory for labor.

While labor should enjoy this hard-earned victory, President Pierce cautioned that the War on Workers is a long way from over.

“Working class Americans won this battle but the war is far from over. We are already receiving word that Ohio’s Republicans are planning to re-introduce portions of Issue 2 again next year. It will require our constant vigilance to oppose these anti-union measures.”

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2012 Calendar of Events

March 20-24, 2012
Hazmat Training Workshop
National Labor College
SILVER SPRING, MD.
The Hazardous Materials Transportation/Chemical Emergency Response training course addresses OSHA and DOT required training for the safe handling of hazardous materials. The course covers procedures and different levels of response and worker protection in a hazardous materials or emergency response. Course also covers weapons of mass destruction terrorism. Federal funding for this course covers transportation, lodging and meals for training participants. This training course is also available from May 1-5, 2012, and May 8-12, 2012. For more information or to register online, please visit www.hazmatgmc.org.

June 24-29, 2012
85th annual Southeastern Meeting Association (SMA)
WALT DISNEY WORLD, ORLANDO, FL.
Chairman Earl Karper (Division 35) and Vice Chairman Mike Turner (Division 769) are hosting the 2012 SMA at Disney. For details, visit www.SMA2012.com. Contact Brother Karper: skaper@sm2012.com.

July 15-16, 2012
Member Emergency Response Radiologic Transportation Training (MERIT)
NATIONAL LABOR COLLEGE, SILVER SPRING, MD.
The amount and variety of radioactive material shipped by rail is expected to increase in coming years. With the increase in rail shipments comes the increased risk for rail incidents. A federal grant covers the cost of training workers to increase their knowledge of the transportation of radiologic materials, and covers the cost of transportation, lodging and meals on the campus of the George Meany Center, National Labor College.

This training course is also available on August 17-18, 2012, or more information or to register online, please visit www.hazmatgmc.org.

July 29-August 1, 2012
73rd annual International Western Convention (IWC)
CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL, BILLINGS, MONT.
Hosted by Arrangements Chairman Craig Gilchrist (Montana State Legislative Board Chairman, BLET Division 298) and Co-Chair D.B. Kenner (Division 195). At the Crown Plaza Billings (27 North 27th St., Billings, Mont. 59101, phone: (406) 252-7600). Contact Brother Gilchrist: blcag@montel.com or Brother Kenner: karper@sma2012.com.

August 19-24, 2012
74th annual Eastern Union Convention (EUMA)
ATLANTIC CITY, N.J.
Hosted by Arrangements Chairman Matt Kronyak (New Jersey State Legislative Board Chairman and Division 231 local Chairman), the 2012 EUMA will be at Bally’s Park Place and the Boardwalk (1900 Pacific Ave.). Atlantic City, N.J. 08401, phone: (800) 343-7253, www.ballysac.com). Contact Brother Kronyak: mckronyak@aol.com or (201) 978-6436.

September 9-13, 2012
77th annual Southwestern Convention (SWCM)
GALVESTON, TEXAS
Hosted by Arrangements Chairman Jack Sweany, Division 77 local Chairman, the 2012 SWCM will be at the Moody Gardens Hotel (7700 Hope Blvd., Galveston, Texas 77554, phone: (888) 388-8484, www.moodygardenshotel.com). Contact Brother Sweany: jsweany@coastal-link.net.

December 2011

2012 Calendar of Events

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National Labor College
SILVER SPRING, MD.
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**Photo of the Month: December 2011**


december 2011

**NEITHER RAIN, NOR SNOW, NOR SLET SHALL HALT THE RAILROADS: BNSF locomotive 7855 at the Amtrak station in Flagstaff, Ariz., on December 29, 2010. Two feet of snow fell in Flagstaff at the end of 2010, canceling all flights and shutting down highways. The only way to travel in and out of the city was via Amtrak. The conservative politicians who frequently attack our nation's passenger rail system would do well to remember the reliability of rail travel during harsh winter conditions.**

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**Photograph courtesy Greg Funnell, www.glugles.com**

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**Advisory Board September and October 2011 Activity**

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

**Vice President Stephen J. Bruno**

- December 2011

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**National Secretary/Treasurer William C. Waipert**

General supervision of accounting dept., records dept., online services dept., tax compliance dept., Education & Training Dept.; Internal Organizing, Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; Safety Task Force, Meetings with vendors and financial institutions; Publica-

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**Vice President Richard W. Peebles**

Assigned to all BSNFR (former AT&SF, former C&NW, CRIPK, FWD, formerly STL-SF, BNSF/MRL), Panhandle Northern, Missouri & North Arkansas, Montana Raillink; Amtrak Western, Amtrak Northwest, Central Region, Chicago, Fort Wayne & Eastern, Central Region,

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**President Michael W. Kupp**

Assigned to various Rail Safety Advisory Committees (RSAC), Regulatory duties as assigned by the President, Long Island Island Rail Road; Amtrak – New York & Metro; Northeast New Jersey; Amtrak – Amtrak – Midwest, SouthWest, Southeast, SouthEast, DWP New York Dock Section 4 arbitration, Albany, N.Y.; Eastern Idaho RR contract negotiations, Portland, Ore.; Eastern Idaho RR contract negotiations, Portland, Ore. and Las Vegas, Nev.; Southern Region (New Orleans & Gulf Coast), Tucson Belt RR, Utah RR, and Longview Portland & Northwestern & Longview Southern; Union Pacific contract

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**Vice President William L. Knecht**

Assigned to all CSX (former AT&SF, former C&NW, CRIPK, FWD, formerly STL-SF, BNSF/MRL), Panhandle Northern, Missouri & North Arkansas, Montana Raillink; Amtrak Western, Amtrak Northwest, Central Region, Chicago, Fort Wayne & Eastern, Central Region,