Unions join forces to fight carrier’s implementation of inward cameras

During a meeting with the Presidents of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and the SMART Transportation Division on April 24, 2013, Kansas City Southern Railway announced that it intends to install and begin to use inward-facing cameras in all of its locomotives over the next few weeks. According to KCS, each locomotive will have two (2) cameras, one behind the engineer focused on the control panel and one across the cab focusing on both crew members. (Some locomotives with cameras installed already are in use in Mexico; others are being fitted for cameras in Shreveport.) The carrier told the two Presidents that it has “management prerogative” to take these actions and does not have to, and does not intend to, bargain with the unions over the use of these cameras, or the effects of this dramatic change on its operating craft employees. Without notifying the unions, that same day KCS filed suit in federal district court in Shreveport, LA, to obtain a ruling allowing it to implement its plan.

Upon learning of these developments, BLET National President Dennis Pierce and Mike Futhey, President – SMART Transportation Division, together told the carrier that both unions vehemently disagree that the carrier has the right to install and use inward-facing cameras unilaterally without exhausting the bargaining processes of the Railway Labor Act. The two Presidents and leadership of both unions view this as a serious change in working conditions and have agreed to work closely to resist its implementation. A coordinated effort is being undertaken in response. Not only will both unions be fervently opposing KCS’s lawsuit, they will be asking the court to enjoin the carrier from going ahead with its plan.

As of now, and until the court has issued a ruling regarding the parties’ respective rights, the carrier has agreed not to turn on or use the cameras. Union members who work for KCS on a locomotive that has a camera installed should request assurances from the proper carrier officials that the camera is not turned on and not in use. Any instance where that assurance is not given should be immediately reported to your General Chairperson. Also, to avoid any possibility of discipline, no member should attempt to move, cover or otherwise tamper with the cameras they encounter. Your cooperation in this manner is vital.

Lastly, please rest assured that your unions are diligently working to protect you and your interests in this matter. We will leave no legal stone unturned to oppose the carrier on this issue.

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BLET PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE  
BY DENNIS R. PIERCE

EDUCATION AND TRAINING
THE KEY TO OUR NEXT 150 YEARS

This edition of the Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen News goes to print as we wrap up our celebration of the Brotherhood’s 150th year. An anniversary as significant as ours should not only give all members something to be proud of; it also gives us an opportunity to reflect on where our proud Union will go moving forward, and this month’s message gives me a chance to share some of the things I see as vital to our future.

First, we must redouble our efforts to get more members involved in the union, and in their very future. An active membership is a strong membership, and we are at a time in our history where our strength is being challenged daily. Not only are we under attack from anti-union politicians and corporate sponsors, but technology is bringing changes to the workplace that require our constant attention.

One of our strongest weapons in this fight is our Education and Training Department. We live in an age where an active and educated membership is a powerful membership, and it is imperative that our members and officers are provided with educational opportunities.

As part of the recent class, National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert and Vice President Marcus Ruef both made presentations on the history and the day-to-day workings of the RLA. Rick Inclina, BMWED Director of Safety, also made a powerful presentation to the group on whistleblower protection provided to Railroad Workers through the Railway Labor Act.

As a result of the new rule that BLET is the only rule that BLET and BMWED are being added to the growing number of Bargaining Units under the Railway Labor Act, new Bargaining Units have been added to the growing number of bargaining units working under the Railway Labor Act. Whether it be the grievance handling procedures of Section 3 of the Act, or the bargaining procedures of Section 6, the level of information provided to the class made all who attended better able to represent their membership.

In the next five years, I see our Education and Training program being expanded to include online training. We have an opportunity to take advantage of every opportunity to provide educational opportunities to the membership and to BLET officers. Our very survival relies on us becoming better educated and more active and mobilized. You have my commitment to that goal, and I ask that you join me by participating in every way that you can.

DENNIS R. PIERCE
BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

BLET National Division Electronic Communications Policy

Official communications between BLET members and the National Division require a hard copy of the correspondence, bearing a signature, being received by the National President to be considered an “official communication.” This is to provide that the actual question(s) are addressed, and ensures that when official interpretations are made they have reference to a specific request and can be used in future correspondence.

The volume of e-mails received makes it impossible for the National President to answer all unofficial communications. Therefore, it is the policy of the BLET that e-mails addressed to the National President will be reviewed and forwarded to the appropriate officer or staff for a timely response; however, an e-mail message is not considered an official communication.

Moreover, anonymous e-mails and e-mails that do not provide sufficient information concerning the sender to enable National Division staff to confirm the sender’s membership status will not receive any reply or acknowledgement. This policy is intended to allow the National President to be aware of the opinions and suggestions of the membership, while at the same time providing a timely response to the member’s unofficial communication, if a response is necessary, without needlessly expending limited BLET resources.

ADOPTED AT CLEVELAND, OHIO ON JULY 22, 2010. 88
The following is a statement by Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa and General Secretary-Treasurer Ken Hall on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

We want to congratulate the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen on attaining 150 years of strong union representation for countless hardworking men and women in the rail industry across North America.

As America’s earliest labor union, the BLET’s perseverance guided and protected the employees who worked the railroads, creating the early foundations of our country’s economy. No amount of praise should be spared when congratulating you on 150 years of solid representation. As the first union to hammer out a contract with the railroads, the BLET set the standard for others to follow. Teamsters are honored to count BLET members among our Teamster brothers and sisters.

William P. Lyons was elected General Chairman of the CSX-Northern Lines General Committee of Adjustment at meetings in Detroit, Mich., that concluded on May 8.

Immediately prior to his election, Brother Lyons had served the GCA as 1st Vice General Chairman and Acting General Chairman. Brother Lyons is a CSX locomotive engineer and a member of BLET Division 34 (Columbus, Ohio). He first joined the Brotherhood on September 1, 2003.

The following officers were also elected during the meeting. 1st Vice General Chairman J.D. Scott, Division 34 (Columbus, Ohio); 2nd Vice General Chairman Rod R. Bloedow, Division 937 (Toledo, Ohio); Secretary-Treasurer Ted E. Mann, Division 100 (Dayville, Ill); Eastern Region Vice General Chairman Marry G. Cothran, Division 231 (Philadelphia, Pa.); Western Region Vice General Chairman Abe Vasquez, Division 582 (Blue Island, Ill.); Midwest Region Vice General Chairman Don Zottman, Division 286 (Grand Rapids, Mich.); and Central Region Vice General Chairman Bill E. Romaniski III, Division 370 (Pittsburgh, Pa.). The following Alternate GCA officers were also elected: 1st Alternate General Chairman David W. Woods, Division 246 (Evansville, Ind.); 2nd Alternate Vice General Chairman John S. Dickey, Division 894 (Columbus, Ohio); Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Chris C. Colacy, Division 526 (Willard, Ohio); Alternate Eastern Region Vice General Chairman Greg L. Rapson, Division 934 (Columbus, Ohio); Alternate Western Region Vice General Chairman Robert L. Casad, Division 7 (Lafayette, Ind.); Alternate Central Region Vice General Chairman Dan Rapson, Division 481 (Columbus, Ohio); Alternate Western Region Vice General Chairman Brian R. Gerald, Division 95 (Cincinnati, Ohio); and Alternate Central Region Vice General Chairman Marc Hively, Division 481 (Parkerburg, W.Va.).

Lyons elected General Chairman of CSX-Northern Lines GCA

We salute your founding President, William D. Robinson, for his vision and the thousands of rank and file members of the BLET who have stepped forward over the years to continue the legacy of strong leadership and membership protection that have been hallmarks of your union.

The men and women of the BLET are among the most dedicated members in the Teamsters Union. Thank you for that, and keep up the good work. We look forward to the successes ahead in the next 150 years of the BLET.

Fraternally,

James P. Hoffa
Teamsters General President and Ken Hall
General Secretary-Treasurer

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The News Flash alerts are news articles from the BLET National Division website that are sent automatically emailed to you.

To register, just go to www.blet.org. In the lower right hand corner of the page, you will find an area to enter your email address to begin receiving the most current news from the BLET National Division.

It is a great way to keep informed on the most recent issues impacting your job, your contract and your Brotherhood.
White House recognizes BLET’s 150th anniversary

Members of U.S. Senate, House also honor BLET on milestone achievement

The BLET has received proclamations and congratulatory letters from the following:

White House
Vice President Joe Biden

U.S. Senate
Elizabeth Warren (D-MA)
Tim Johnson (D-SD)
Sherrod Brown (D-OH)
Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)
Joe Donnelly (D-IN)
John D. Rockefeller IV (D-WV)
Senators Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ) (joint letter)

U.S. House of Representatives
Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)
Bill Shuster (R-PA)
Corrine Brown (D-FL)
Jeff Denham (R-FL)
Nick J. Rahall, II (D-WV)
Richard M. Nolan (D-MN)
Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD)
Richard M. Nolan (D-MN)
Timothy J. Walz (D-MN)

State
Governor of Illinois
Illinois Senate
Illinois House of Representatives
Missouri House of Representatives
California State Assembly
Governor of Massachusetts
Ohio House of Representatives

Cities
Detroit, Mich
Marshall, Mich

BLET 150TH ANNIVERSARY – 1863-2013

Pierce thanked these members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives for recognizing the many achievements of the Brotherhood and its members.

“Our anniversary celebration is a time to mark 150 years of achievement by our Organization as a whole, but it is equally important that we honor and thank our members as well,” President Pierce said. “They are the ones who have made this great the Organization that it is today.”

State governments recognized the BLET’s achievement as well. The Brotherhood received proclamations and congratulatory letters from: the Governor of Illinois; the Illinois House of Representatives and Senate; the Massachusetts House of Representatives; the California State Assembly; the Governor of Massachusetts; and the Ohio House of Representatives.

In addition, two cities with significant historical ties to the Brotherhood’s founding—Marshall, Mich., and Detroit, Mich.—also issued proclamations recognizing the Organization’s 150th anniversary. James Dyer, the Mayor of Marshall, Mich., signed a proclamation declaring May 5 through May 11, 2013, as Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Week. Dave Bing, the Mayor of Detroit, signed a proclamation recognizing May 8, 2013, as “Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Day” in the city.

In 1863, locomotive engineers working for the Michigan Central Railroad met in Marshall, Mich., and agreed to form a protective society to improve their pay, working conditions, and standing in society. The men met in secret in members’ homes for fear of reprisal from railroad management. Thus, Marshall is honored as the birthplace of the Brotherhood, and several hand-some monuments grace the township signifying its status as such. On May 8, 1863, delegates representing locomotive engineers from various railroads met in Detroit and signed documents formally establishing the Brotherhood of the Footboard, the predecessor organization to today’s BLET. So while Marshall is recognized as the birthplace of the Brotherhood, the city of Detroit is recognized as the city where the Brotherhood was founded.

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The BLET’s 150th anniversary celebration has included a variety of events and activities, such as a special commemorative postage stamp and a new logo. The BLET has also worked to improve workplace safety and health, and to promote the importance of unions to the economy and society.

In recognition of the Brotherhood’s contributions to the nation, the White House has congratulated BLET members on the Organization’s 150th anniversary in a letter dated May 8, 2013.

Dear Friends:

Congratulations to all the members and officers of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) on celebrating your 150th Anniversary. It is a pleasure to send my best wishes to all of the BLET on this occasion.

Since its inception in 1863 as the Brotherhood of the Footboard, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen has grown into one of the oldest and most respected labor unions in the United States. The Brotherhood was founded at a time when locomotive engineers worked for low wages and in unsafe conditions, and for the past 150 years, the BLET has worked to improve the safety and working conditions for its members. BLET members are dedicated to ensuring the dignity, respect, and equality of America’s railroad workers, and in turn, have given a voice to all American workers.

The BLET has helped shape the foundations of our country’s labor laws through legislation originally passed to protect BLET members. From the Federal Employers Liability Act to the Adrain Act, the laws the BLET has fought for have paved the way for regulations in industries that stretch far beyond the railway. Thank you for always placing the rights of American workers in your top priority.

Again, congratulations. I wish you continued success in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
**BLET’s Hagan run for U.S. Senate**

CSX locomotive engineer & Division 757 member seeks to represent Ohio

Robert F. Hagan, a member of BLET Division 757 and State Representative of Ohio District 58, announced on May 8, 2013, in Detroit, Mich., that he is running for United States Senate at the BLET’s 150th anniversary celebration in Detroit. Michigan.

Brother Hagan has 42 years of railroad experience and has been a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) since 1997. He is a CSX locomotive engineer and was one of 24 guest speakers at the BLET’s 150th anniversary celebration on May 8, 2013, in Detroit — the city where the Brotherhood was founded on May 8, 1863.

“I’ve spent 26 years in the legislature, and I’m proud of that,” Hagan said. “I’m a locomotive engineer and union man, and I’m damn proud of that.”

In 1986, Hagan was first elected to a seat in the Ohio House of Representatives, representing the 53rd Ohio House district, centered in Youngstown, Ohio. Over the next 26 years, he has served in both the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio State Senate.

At the time of Brother Hagan’s election in 1986, his father, Robert E. Hagan, was also serving in the Ohio House of Representatives. During his speech to BLET members on May 8, Hagan said he sometimes runs into career politicians who don’t understand what working people go through each and everyday. He said he hopes to remedy that by giving working Americans a voice in the United States Senate.

Brother Hagan is seeking the Senate seat currently occupied by Rob Portman.

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**Historical exhibit displays 150 years of BLET pride**

One of the featured attractions during the BLET’s 150th anniversary celebration in Detroit was a history museum of railroad and Brotherhood artifacts, dating to 1863 and earlier.

The intent was to honor the Brotherhood’s rich history by displaying priceless artifacts, while at the same time educating today’s members regarding the struggle of our union forefathers and instilling a sense of pride in our Brotherhood.

Ot display were historic, one-of-a-kind items such as the original hand-written minutes from the first meeting of the first Division of the Brotherhood of the Footboard, dated May 8, 1863. The original, hand-written Constitution and Bylaws of the Brotherhood of the Footboard were also on display. These items are of great historical significance to not only the Brotherhood, but to the entire American labor movement as a whole. They were brought from the BLET National Division archives in Cleveland.

Also, many other unique and historic artifacts were on display from the personal collection of Brother Larry R. James, a member of BLET Division 284 (Parkersburg, W.Va.) and ND National Mobilization Coordinator-East.

Many reproductions of group photographs from Brotherhood conventions, ranging from 1885 through 2006, were included in the exhibit. Coupled with many individual portraits of locomotive engineers at work, the images helped to put a human face on the Brotherhood’s 150-year mission to fight for safety, dignity and respect. In all, the Brotherhood portion of the exhibit encompassed 10 display cabinets of memorabilia and more than 30 wall hangings.

The BLET partnered with the Center for Railroad Photography & Art to broaden the scope of the museum exhibit to include select photos showing railroad engineers at work. It included prints from many famous railroad photographers such as Lewis Hine and Jack Delano. The center for Railroad Photography & Art is America’s foremost organization for interpreting the intersection of railroad art and culture with America’s history and culture. Founded in 1997, the Center is headquartered in Madison, Wisc.

Those who toured the exhibit space were given a commemorative pamphlet. Each person’s pamphlet was individualized by embossing with an official seal of the BLE Grand International Division to document their visit.

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The app makes choosing a union hotel easy. Use the map to locate a union hotel by current location, or plan ahead and search by city. Another bonus of the app is that it also guides you away from any potential travel disruptions. If you don't want to cross a picket line, the app informs you of any hotels that are under boycott or at risk of dispute.

If you don't have an iPhone or iPad and still want to find union hotels, check out UNITE HERE online: www.hotelworkersrising.org/hotelGuide.

For more information, please visit www.ble-t.org/euma or contact Arrangements Chairman Fred Cox at (717) 578-7262 or fmccox@aol.com.

Make Your Reservations

Hotel: Hyatt Regency Baltimore on the Inner Harbor

Reservations: (410) 528-1234 or (888) 591-1234, or www.ble-t.org/euma

Deadline: July 5, 2013

EUMA Registration Forms: www.ble-t.org/euma

Deadline: July 1, 2013

Note: Registrations accepted after July 1, but fee increases by $20 per person.
Kronyak reelected by acclamation as New Jersey SLB Chairman

Matt Kronyak was reelected by acclamation to his second full term as Chairman of the New Jersey State Legislative Board at meetings in Newark, N.J., on March 12, 2013.

Brother Kronyak is a CSX (former Conrail) locomotive engineer and member of BLET Division 235 (Union City, N.J.). He has been a BLET member since December 1, 1995. He was first elected Chairman of the New Jersey State Legislative Board in 2010 following the retirement of Brother Jim Chappelle.

Also elected by acclamation during the meeting were: 1st Vice Chairman Sean Simon, Division 226 (Newark, N.J.); 2nd Vice Chairman John Calia, Division 272 (Dover, N.J.); Secretary-Treasurer Brian Baginski, Division 601 (Newark, N.J.); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Randy Duncan, Division 171 (Hoboken, N.J.).

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce and Vice President & National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman presented a plaque to retiring Secretary-Treasurer Mike Luteran. Brother Luteran served as Secretary-Treasurer of Division 601 for many years and also for nine years as S-T of the New Jersey State Legislative Board.

“I congratulate all officers of the New Jersey State Legislative Board and thank them for their hard work and dedication to our Brotherhood,” President Pierce said. “I have every confidence Brother Matt and his team will continue doing an excellent job in the legislative arena.”

Brothers Pierce, Tolman and Kronyak presented a plaque to retiring Secretary-Treasurer Mike Luteran.

“I am sure all of us will continue to work diligently for our Brotherhood,” Brother Luteran said. “I hope that all of us will continue to support Brother Matt. He is an excellent job in the legislative arena.”

Matt Kronyak and John Tolman (far left) and National President Pierce (far right) present a plaque to Brother Mike Luteran along with his wife Ida for his many years of service to Division 601 and the New Jersey State Legislative Board.

Seated, from left: Jim Louis, General Chairman Conrail SAA & CSX Northern District; Brian Baginski; S-T NSBL; Mike Luteran, outgoing S-T NSBL; Dennis Pierce, National President; John Tolman, VP & National Legislative Rep; and Matt Kronyak, Chairman NSBL. Second row: Dave Decker, GC New Jersey Transit; Andy Arias; Rich Medei; Rich Vogt; Barbara Moore; Ken Kertesz, Chairman Pennsylvania SLB; Mark Robb, BRCF International President; Randy Duncan; and Dave Kearns, Chairman NYSLB. Third row: John Calia; Dave Hamilton; Dave Ziegler; and Bob Fallon.
April/May 2013

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