The BLET’s Education and Training Department is proud to announce the availability of online video courses to provide convenient, repeatable, and cost-effective training for Division Secretary-Treasurers and Local Chairmen. The program made its debut on February 6, 2019. During the BLET Fourth National Convention, National President Dennis R. Pierce announced to the delegates “This is an important step in providing better educational opportunities for BLET members,” and that “online classes will not replace the actual classes that the BLET will still offer during the year. Rather, the online training will assist newly elected officers in the field get started on the right foot and act as an enhancement to the regularly scheduled classes.”

E&T Director Jason Wright said, “This project is in its beginning stages and as we move forward we hope to make even more essential training more readily available to the field, which will make us stronger as a Union as we move into the future. These online enhancements will allow us to take a much deeper dive into these subjects in class, with more time for discussion, strategy, and address questions that may arise during your time in office.”

The training will be available in secure online forums using Adobe Connect virtual collaboration tools, and will eventually be accessible across different platforms and devices. Training can be done at the user’s own pace during their free time. Once a member enrolls they will receive an email information package from the BLET Education and Training Department on how to access the material. Currently, users must access these modules using a desktop or laptop computer, but in the future the training will be available using tablets.

For additional information pertaining to Online Training, please visit: www.ble-t.org/departments/et. Any questions regarding online training can be addressed by contacting Director of Education and Training Jason Wright at TrainingSupport@ble-t.org.
BLET NATIONAL DIVISION ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Of even more concern is that many railroads refuse to consider the introduction of actual scheduling for our work shifts in road freight service. There is no consistent “precision scheduled railroading” insofar as BLET members are concerned.

The railroad infrastructure by the machinery of power and production, and the railroading industry must be rebuilt. The New York Central railroads were a good match, a system-wide capitalization and liquidation of the railroad. In 1968 the Pennsylvania and the New York Central railroads merged to become the Penn Central. When it became apparent that the two operations were not a good match, a system-wide capitalization and liquidation of assets began so that stock prices could be maintained and dividend payments continued. Penn Central’s shippers and workers were more afterthoughts. Less than two and a half years after the merger, the Penn Central became the largest corporation in U.S. history — to that point — to declare bankruptcy and the carcass of the railroad was dumped on the nation’s taxpayers to rebuild.

Significantly, Burlington Northern Santa Fe, which is the only privately-owned Class I railroad in the country, has said “Thanks, but no thanks” to PSR. Perhaps BNSF understands this history, or maybe it knows that short-term gain for a few ultra-wealthy investors at the cost of long-term pain for everyone else is not a plan for long term success.

Former Republican President Theodore Roosevelt said in 1903, four years after he left the White House, that “Of all forms of tyranny, the least attractive and the most vulgar is the tyranny of mere wealth, the tyranny of a plutocracy.” Time will tell if PSR is what the railroad industry needed. Unfortunately, much harm could come to the nation’s railroad infrastructure by the machinery of power and production, and the railroading industry must be rebuilt.

Denise R. Pierce
BLET National President

BLET PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE
BY DENNIS R. PIERCE

Precision Scheduled Railroading: Short Term Gains at What Cost?

Official communications between BLET members and the National Division require a hard copy of the correspon-
dence, bearing a signature, being received by the National President to be considered an “official communication.” This is to provide that the ac-
tual 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 im-
possible for the National President to answer all un-
official communications. Therefore, it is the policy of the BLET that e-mails addressed to the National President will be reviewed and forward-
ed to the appropriate officer or staff for a timely response; however, an e-mail message is not con-
sidered an official communication.

Moreover, anonymous e-mails and e-mails that do not provide sufficient information con-
signing 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 sug-
gestions of the membership, while at the same time providing a timely response to the mem-
ber’s unofficial communication, if a response is necessary, without needlessly expending limit-
ed BLET resources.

Adopted at Cleveland, Ohio on July 22, 2000; 907.

Cover Illustration: Shock.com/Jonak Kita
The Struggle for Workers is Real

S
ometimes statistics don’t
tell the whole story. That’s certainly the case with today’s economy. So-called experts point to increased jobs and decreased unemployment as if it means that hardworking Americans should be instantly OK. But they shouldn’t be fooled by those numbers, and neither should the working public. Increasingly workers aren’t making enough to get by. While the rich have gotten immensely richer over the past few decades, pay at most middle-class jobs has remained stagnant. In some cases, such workers are finding themselves on the chopping block, like what happened at General Motors in November when the mega-profitable company decided to “restructure” and ended up cutting some 14,000 jobs.

Additionally, federal workers and contractors were dev-astated by a partial government shutdown that left them with out paychecks for 35 days. That’s more than 800,000 peo ple who had to struggle to feed their families, pay their bills, and keep a roof over their heads. While federal workers will get that money back, tens of thousands of low-wage service contract workers will be left to pick up the pieces of their tattered wallets on their own. Most likely, they will never get that money back.

There are the facts: 22.5 percent of workers are in a low-wage job that doesn’t pay above the poverty threshold for a family of four; and 40 percent of American households lack a basic level of savings that would allow them to subsist at a poverty level for three months if they lost their income. That means there are tens of mil lions of workers who are struggling to make ends meet. That is a bright, flashing sign that the nation’s current path isn’t working. It’s time for elected leaders to stop telling lies that things are going in the right direction for families. Because when push comes to shove, it is clear they’re not. The wealthy continue to glean their monetary gains off the backs of the working class, padding their pockets while the people who play by the rules continue to fall behind.

That’s where unions come in. The median union worker makes almost $10,000 more per year than the median nonunion worker. Plus, they are more likely to receive benefits and have a retirement plan. Unions like the Teamsters bargain hard to provide fair pay for everyone, no matter their gender, race or ethnic background. That can’t be understated at a time when equality is not happening in most workplaces. Workers must join together and demand a better deal from their employers and from lawmakers. Don’t be fooled by the top-line numbers — hardworking Americans deserve more.

Fraternally,

James P. Hoffa
Teamsters General President

Registration open for BLET’s St. Louis regional meeting, June 24-28, 2019

Registration is now open for the BLET regional meeting at the Hilton at the Ballpark in St. Louis, Mo., June 24-28, 2019. The BLET National Division is planning a meeting filled with educational opportunities and entertaining leisure time activities. Guests will stay at the Hilton at the Ballpark (1 South Broadway, St. Louis, Mo., (314) 421-1776). BLET convention registration as well as hotel registration can be made through the BLET’s regional meeting website, http://bletregionals.org. If making reservations by telephone, you must mention the group code “BLE.” Room reservations must be made by May 22, 2019.

The St. Louis regional meeting kicks off with registration and a welcome reception on Monday, June 24 (Ticket required). Opening ceremonies will take place the morning of Tuesday, June 25, with a closing meal for BLET members that afternoon. A golf tournament will be held on Wednesday, June 26, at the Far Oaks Golf Club. There is an additional cost to register for the golf tournament. Non-golfers will be on their own to explore the many entertainment options that St. Louis has to offer. Those attending the St. Louis regional meeting will have the opportunity to attend a Major League Baseball game as the St. Louis Cardinals host the Oakland A’s on the evening of Tuesday, June 25. Tickets for this event are $21 each and are available for purchase from the BLET website. Tickets sales are by cred it card only and the deadline for purchase is Wednesday, May 22. Other St. Louis attractions include: the famous Gateway Arch; Six Flags St. Louis; the Saint Louis Zoo; the historic Anheuser-Busch Brewery and the Budweiser Clydesdales; the City Museum; casinos; various art and history museums; and the sprawling restaurant and entertainment district surrounding the Hilton at the Ballpark. Workshops will be held for Local Chairmen, Secretary-Treasurers and Legislative Representatives throughout the day on Thursday, June 27. The BLET’s St. Louis regional meeting will conclude with a dinner dance the evening of June 27. Attendees will travel home on June 28.

There is no cost for BLET members who wish to attend the June 25 meetings and June 27 workshops only; however, there will be fees for those members who choose to attend the meals. The cost of full registration (including all meetings, workshops, the dinner dance and all BLET sponsored meals) is $225.00 per person. The cost is $175.00 to register for all of the above EXCEPT the dinner dance. Reduced children’s registration and a la carte meal registration options are also available. Please visit http://bletregionals.org for more information about the registration process.

Registration will be open soon for the BLET’s second regional meeting in 2019 — at the Hilton hotel in Clearwater Beach, Fla., which will be held July 22-26, 2019. Please visit the BLET website, Facebook page, and http://bletregionals.org for the latest information.
Cory L. Runion was reelected by acclamation to his fifth term as Chairman of the Wyoming State Legislative Board during its triennial meeting held in Cheyenne, Wyo., February 5-6, 2019.

A member of BLET Division 115 (Cheyenne), Brother Runion is a Union Pacific locomotive engineer who joined the Brotherhood on December 1, 2000. He was elected Vice Chairman of the State Legislative Board in 2007 and assumed the Chairman’s office on September 28, 2008, following the retirement of former State Chairman Terry R. Jones. Brother Runion was reelected by acclamation in 2010, 2013 and 2016.

Also elected by acclamation to three-year terms were: 1st Vice Chairman Mark E. Stokes, Division 103 (Cheyenne, Wyo.); 2nd Vice Chairman George W. Johnson, Division 207 (Casper, Wyo.); Secretary-Treasurer Anthony P. Lecholat, Division 624 (Sheridan, Wyo.); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Russell E. Sapp, Division 142 (Rawlins, Wyo.). Brother Lecholat was reelected to his third term of office and Brother Johnson was reelected to his second term. Brother Stokes and Brother Sapp were elected to their first terms of office.

Rueled to serve as Trustees were: Larry L. Nelson, Division 94 (Gillette, Wyo.); Steven S. Dyer, Division 31 (Bill, Wyo.); and Michael L. Fielder, Division 869 (Greybull, Wyo.). Elected to serve as Alternate Trustees were: Brett A. Taylor, Division 44 (Cheyenne, Wyo.); and George W. Johnson, Division 207 (Casper, Wyo.).

Representing the BLET National Division at the meeting were: National President Dennis R. Pierce; National Vice President Michael D. Twombly; National Division Trustee/UP-Northern Region GCA General Chairman R.E. (Dick) Crow; Division 1 General Chairman Robert E. Johnson; Division 2 Western Region Affairs Vincent G. Verna; Director of Political and Legislative Affairs Robert F. Hagan; and Special Representative and Director of Mobilization Western Region Paul T. Aird. Additional BLET guests included: BNSF/MRL GCA 3rd Vice General Chairman Steve Halbrook; and UP Eastern District General Chairman Dave Geisler.

“I congratulate Brother Runion and thank all officers of the Wyoming State Legislative Board for their willingness to serve our Brotherhood,” President Pierce said. “I am also proud to thank them for the great job they’ve done in lobbying for the state’s two-person crew bill, which would protect jobs and preserve safety.”

Chairman Runion welcomed the three newest members — Brother Taylor, Brother Stokes and Brother Sapp — to the Board and expressed optimism for the years to come. “Our new and existing Board members have an energy and willingness to advance the Board’s mission in advocating for Rail Labor in Wyoming,” Chairman Runion said. He also noted that Brothers Taylor and Stokes have hit the ground running and have attended a grassroots lobbying training conference hosted by Wyoming’s Equality State Policy Center (ESPC).

Members of the Board have been active in lobbying the Wyoming legislature regarding H.B. 104, which is a rail safety bill that would require a minimum of two crew members on trains operating in the state of Wyoming. Chairman Runion reported that the bill has passed the House and that Board members are prepared to begin lobbying again when debate begins on the Senate side. He also expressed pride in the efforts of the newest Board members to lobby for the H.B. 104, and extended his gratitude to the BLET’s counterparts in SMART TD’s Wyoming Legislative Board for their efforts in advocating on behalf of the bill.

Following the conclusion of the Board meeting, a Town Hall was held the next day for all rail union members in the area. Speakers representing the BLET at the Town Hall were President Pierce, Brother Verna and Brother Hagan.

The BLET’s Wyoming State Legislative Board represents approximately 1,000 active and retired members from 9 different Local Divisions.

A group of railway workers out of Calgary, who all worked with these Brothers on a daily basis, have established a Go Fund Me account to help take care of the men’s families. The funds raised are 100% going to go to their families to help them with whatever they need. The funds raised will be distributed with the TCRC’s involvement.

TO MAKE A DONATION, PLEASE VISIT: www.gofundme.com/looggan-relief-fund

**RELIEF FUND TO ASSIST FAMILIES OF FALLEN CP RAIL BROTHERS**

A relief fund has been established to assist the families of three members of the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference (TCRC) who died as a result of a major Canadian Pacific Railway (CP Rail) derailment on February 4, 2019.

According to media reports, locomotive engineer Andrew [Last Name] [Deed Kill] and trainee Dylan Waidenbarger-Bulman suffered fatal injuries when their westbound freight train left the tracks about 1 a.m. just east of Field, B.C., some 124 miles west of Calgary. The train, which had three locomotives and 112 cars, left the tracks while crossing a bridge over the Kicking Horse River, plunging some 197 feet to the icy waters below.

“Our thoughts and prayers go out to the friends and families of our Canadian Brothers who are going through the most difficult of times,” BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said.

Eight railway workers have now died in Canada since November 2017. Investigations into these accidents are still ongoing.

Members of the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference (TCRC) who died as a result of a major Canadian Pacific Railway (CP Rail) derailment on February 4, 2019.

**0**
T he U.S. Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) has announced its schedule of Pre-Retirement Seminars for the spring of 2019. Designed for railroad employees and spouses planning to retire within five years, Pre-Retirement Seminars will familiarize attendees with the retirement benefits available to them, and also guide them through the application process. Sponsored by the Office of the Labor Member, the program began in 2014 on a pilot basis. Pre-Retirement Seminars are held at a number of locations annually. However, persons wishing to attend must register in advance through the RRB website.

RRB field service representatives conduct each Pre-Retirement Seminar using a Pow- erPoint slide presentation covering the various benefits provided to retired rail workers and their families. Attendees receive a program booklet, seminar attendees receive a retirement kit full of informational handouts and other helpful materials. Online and downloadable versions of items included with seminar kits are available the RRB’s Educational Materials webpage. Registration is required to ensure accommodations and materials for all attendees.

• Unless otherwise noted, Pre-Retirement Seminars begin at 8:30 a.m. and are held over the course of 4 hours. (Doors open for attendees 30 minutes before the seminar start time.)
• Security screening required for seminars hosted inside any Federal buildings. Bring a current, valid photo ID (issued by State/Federal Government); no weapons permitted.
• Parking fee for seminars marked with • Attendees are encouraged to bring original records (or certified copies) of documents required in order to file a Railroad Retirement application (such as proof of age, marriage, or military service), along with an additional copy of each item to leave with field service staff.
• Please let the RRB know if you sign up for a seminar and become unable to attend.
• Those who are unable to attend a seminar but may still be interested in learning about the railroad retirement program and application process should contact the RRB field office where they live. Search here via the RRB’s Field Office Locator or call toll-free (1-877-772-5772) for pre-retirement information.

Important links regarding this article can be found in the Labor Member’s area of the RRB website: www.rrb.gov/prs

PRE-RETIREMENT SEMINARS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

DATES AND LOCATIONS OF THE RRB’S SPRING 2019 PRE-RETIREMENT SEMINARS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

APRIL 12, 2019:
Ronald V. Dellums Federal Building, 1301 Clay Street – North Tower, 5th Floor (Room II), Oakland, California*

APRIL 12, 2019:
Drury Inn & Suites, St Louis Forest Park, 2111 Sulphur Avenue, St Louis, Missouri

APRIL 26, 2019:

APRIL 26, 2019:
Patrick V. McNamar Federal Building, 477 Michigan Avenue, Suite 1100, Detroit, Michigan*

APRIL 26, 2019:

MAY 3, 2019:
Hilton Garden Inn, 2465 Grant Avenue, Billings, Montana

MAY 3, 2019:
Richard Bolling Federal Building, 601 East 12th Street, Room G-41 (Dogwood Conference Room), Kansas City, Missouri

MAY 10, 2019:
Holiday Inn Denver Lakewood, 7290 West Hampden Avenue, Lakewood, Colorado

MAY 17, 2019:
Sheet Metal Workers Local 33, 17251 Corporate Drive Park, Ohio

MAY 17, 2019:
Joseph K. Javits Federal Building, 26 Federal Plaza, 6th Floor Conference Room, New York, New York*

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PARA 1: Locomotive Business & Financial News

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PARA 1: Locomotive Business & Financial News
Q&A: RRB appeals procedure

Persons claiming retirement, disability, survivor, unemployment, or sickness benefits from the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) have the right to appeal unfavorable determinations on their claims. The following questions and answers describe the appeals process and time limits.

1. How does a person initiate a review of an unfavorable decision on a claim and what are the time limits?

   For all claims under the Railroad Retirement and Railroad Unemployment Insurance Acts there is a three-stage review and appeals process within the RRB. An individual dissatisfied with the initial decision on his or her claim may first request reconsideration from the RRB unit which issued that decision. The person may then file an appeal using the RRB’s Bureau of Hearings and Appeals. In cases involving overpayments under the Railroad Retirement Act, an individual may seek a waiver of recovery and also a personal conference. For cases involving overpayments under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act, if the case involves a benefit overpayment of more than 10 times the maximum daily benefit rate, the claimant may request a waiver of recovery. In order for recovery of the overpayment to be deferred while a waiver request is pending, the waiver request must be in writing and filed within 60 days from the date on which notice of the overpayment was mailed to the beneficiary. A request for waiver received after 60 days will be considered but will not defer collection of the overpayment, and any amount of the overpayment recovered prior to the date on which the waiver request is filed will not be subject to waiver.

2. What are the second and third stages of the appeals process and their time limits?

   If dissatisfied with the reconsideration or waiver decision on a retirement, disability, survivor, unemployment, or sickness claim, a person may appeal to the RRB’s Bureau of Hearings and Appeals, which is independent of those units responsible for initial and reconsideration decisions. An appellant has 60 days from the date on which notice of the reconsideration or waiver decision is mailed to the claimant to file an appeal. This appeal must be filed using RRB Form HA-1 (https://rrb.gov/sites/default/files/2017-06/HA1%5B1%5D_0.pdf), which may be obtained online or at the agency’s field offices. The Bureau of Hearings and Appeals may, if necessary, further investigate the case and obtain reports through the RRB’s field representatives, designated medical examiners, and others who may be in a position to furnish information pertinent to the appellant’s claim. When the appeal involves a question of fact, the appellant has the right to an oral hearing before a hearing officer. In most cases, video conferencing or phone hearings are held. In cases where an in-person hearing is held, it may be conducted in the RRB office closest to the appellant’s home.

3. What are the criteria applied to requests for waivers of retirement, disability, survivor benefit overpayments, and unemployment or sickness benefit overpayments?

   A person’s obligation to repay any erroneous benefit payments may be waived only if the following conditions are met:

   1. The person was not at fault in causing the overpayment; and
   2. Recovery of the overpayment would cause financial hardship to the extent that he or she would not be able to meet ordinary and necessary living expenses, or recovery would be against equity or good conscience. "Against equity or good conscience" is defined in the regulations of the RRB as meaning that the claimant has, by reliance on the payments made to him or her, or on notice that payment would be made, relinquished a significant and valuable right or changed his or her position to his or her substantial detriment.

   In cases involving unemployment or sickness benefits, there is an additional requirement that the overpayment must be more than 10 times the current maximum daily benefit rate.

   Persons requesting waiver may be asked to complete a financial statement on a form provided by the RRB.

4. What happens if a person’s appeal is not filed within the prescribed time limit?

   Failure to request reconsideration or to file an appeal within the allocated time period will result in forfeiture of further appeal rights, unless there is good cause for the delay. Some examples of good cause include: serious illness; a death or serious illness in the appellant’s immediate family; destruction of important or relevant records; failure to be notified of a decision; an unusual or unavoidable circumstance which demonstrated that the appellant could not have known of the need for timely filing or which prevented the appellant from filing in a timely manner; or the claimant thought that his or her representative had requested reconsideration or appeal. If good cause is not established, further appeal is forfeited, except that the appellant may contest the determination that the request for reconsideration or appeal was not filed timely.

5. Are there avenues of appeal beyond the RRB?

   Appellants dissatisfied with the three-member Board’s final decision may then file a petition with the appropriate U.S. Court of Appeals to review the Board’s decision. In cases involving retirement, disability, or survivor claims, the appeal rights, unless there is good cause for the delay. Some examples of good cause include: serious illness; a death or serious illness in the appellant’s immediate family; destruction of important or relevant records; failure to be notified of a decision; an unusual or unavoidable circumstance which demonstrated that the appellant could not have known of the need for timely filing or which prevented the appellant from filing in a timely manner; or the claimant thought that his or her representative had requested reconsideration or appeal. If good cause is not established, further appeal is forfeited, except that the appellant may contest the determination that the request for reconsideration or appeal was not filed timely.

6. Can employers contest the claims of their employees for unemployment and sickness benefits?

   When an employer is a party to the claim for benefits, that employer may protest the payment of benefits, but such protests do not prevent the timely payment of benefits. However, an employee may be required to repay benefits if his or her employer’s protest is ultimately successful. The employer also has the right to appeal an unfavorable decision to the RRB’s Bureau of Hearings and Appeals.

7. Where can a person obtain retirement, disability, survivor, unemployment, or sickness benefit appeal forms and assistance in completing the forms?

   Requests for reconsideration of an initial decision must be in writing, but do not have to be on any specific form. The appropriate form for waiver of recovery of a benefit overpayment is similarly enclosed with the overpayment notice. As stated earlier, RRB Form HA-1 (https://rrb.gov/sites/default/files/2017-06/HA1%5B1%5D_0.pdf), which must be used to appeal to the Bureau of Hearings and Appeals, is available online or from the RRB’s Bureau of Hearings and Appeals, 844 North Rush Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611-1275. This form can also be obtained from any RRB field office, as can assistance in filling a request for review at each of the administrative levels.

Field Office Locator (https://rrb.gov/Field-Office-Locator) provides easy access to every field office webpage where the street address and other service information is posted, as well as the option to email an office directly using the feature labeled Send a Secure Message. The agency’s toll-free number, 1-877-772-5772, is equipped with an automated menu offering a variety of service options, including being transferred to an office to speak with a representative, leave a message, or find the address of a local field office. The agency also maintains a TTY number, 312-751-4701, to accommodate those with hearing or speech impairments. Most RRB offices are open to the public on weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., except on Wednesdays when offices are open from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. RRB offices are closed on Federal holidays.
Every three years, the Railroad Retirement Board’s Chief Ac- 
utury conducts a study of the longevity of its annuitants, as 
part of a valuation of future 
revenues and benefit payments. The 
following questions and answers summa-
"rize the results of the most recent lon-
gevity study.
1. What were the study’s findings on 
the life expectancy of retired male 
railroaders?

The most recent data reflected a con-
tinued improvement in longevity. Us-
ing data through 2016, the study indi-
cated that, on the average, a male 
railroader retiring at age 62 can be ex-
pected to live another 20.8 years (ap-
proximately 250 months), while the pre-
vious three studies indicated life expec-
tancies of 20.7, 20.1, and 19.6 years, 
respectively. A male railroader retiring 
at age 65 can be expected to live anoth-
er 18.3 years (approximately 220 
months). The previous studies indicat-
ed life expectancies of 18.2, 17.7, and 
17.1 years, respectively, for this catego-
ry of beneficiary.

2. How did these life expectancy 
figures compare to those of 
disabled annuitants?

As would be expected, disabled annu-
itants have a shorter average life expec-
tancy than those who retire based on age. 
At age 60, a disabled railroader has an av-
erage life expectancy of 18 years, or 4.5 
years less than a nondisabled male annu-
itant of the same age. Studies done three, 
six, and nine years ago indicated life ex-
pectancies of 22.4, 21.9, and 21.3 years, re-
spectively, for this category of beneficiary. 
The study also indicated that a male 
railroader retiring at age 62 can be ex-
pected to live another 20.8 years (ap-
proximately 250 months), while the pre-
vious three studies indicated life expec-
tancies of 20.7, 20.1, and 19.6 years, 
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ed life expectancies of 18.2, 17.7, and 
17.1 years, respectively, for this catego-
y of beneficiary.

3. What were the study’s findings on 
the life expectancy of retired female 
railroaders?

For example, at age 60 a retired female 
railroader is expected on the average to 
live 25.6 years, 3.1 years longer than a re-
tired male railroader of the same age; and 
at age 65, a retired female railroader is ex-
pected on the average to live 21.1 years, 
2.8 years longer than her male counter-
part. Spouses and widows age 65 have av-
erage life expectancies of 21 years and 19 
years, respectively.

4. Can individuals use life 
expectancy figures to predict 
how long they will live?

Life expectancy figures are averages for large groups of people. Any particu-
lar individual’s lifetime may be much lon-
ger or shorter than the life expectancy of 
his or her age and group. 

According to the study, from a group of 
1,000 retired male employees at age 65, 933 
will live at least 5 years, 822 at least 10 years, 
658 at least 15 years, and 448 at least 20 
years. Of female age annuitants at age 65, 
578 will be alive 20 years later.

5. Where can I access the Railroad 
Retirement Board’s longevity study?

The entire longevity study is available 
under Financial and Reporting (Finan-
cial, Actuarial and Statistical) at www. 
rrb.gov.

Q&A:
Longevity of Railroad Retirement beneficiaries

Snow bound in Minnesota

Three Union Pacific train 
crews were stranded over-
night in their locomotives 
when an epic snow storm 
engulfed southern Minne-
sota in late February.

At about 9:30 p.m. on February 24, 
a northbound Union Pacific train on the 
Albert Lea Subdivision got stuck in 
a massive snow drift near milepost 264.

It takes a lot of snow to stop a locomo-
tive, and it is estimated that the 
train was 14 feet deep. There were two crews 
on the stalled train, including one that 
was dead under the Hours of Service 
law, which had been picked up from 
another train because no cabs were 
available due to impassable roads.

A southbound crew was sent out of 
South St. Paul with three light engines 
to rescue the stranded train. However, 
the rescue crew got stuck in a 12-foot 
drift at about milepost 267.5.

All three crews spent the night in-
side their locomotives before help ar-
ived at about 10 a.m. the next day.

They were rescued by the Minnesota 
National Guard, with assistance from 
the Freeborn County Sheriff’s Office.

The National Guard deployed a Small 
Urban Support Vehicle (SUSV), which 
is a tracked vehicle specially designed 
for large groups of people. Any particu-
lar individual’s lifetime may be much lon-
ger or shorter than the life expectancy of 
his or her age and group. 

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under Financial and Reporting (Finan-
cial, Actuarial and Statistical) at www. 
rrb.gov.
According to the Federal Rail Road Administration (FRA), the 41 railroads required by Congress to implement positive train control (PTC) systems by December 31, 2018, have submitted documentation that they are sufficiently meeting the statutory requirements for system activation or the statutory requirements to qualify for an alternative schedule (“extension”) for up to two additional years to complete full implementation. On October 29, 2015, the Positive Train Control Enforcement and Implementation Act of 2015 (PTCEI Act) was signed into law and extended the original statutory deadline for full implementation of PTC systems from December 31, 2015, to December 31, 2018. Under the PTC Act, railroads must self-report to the Congressional Track Work authorizing bill for each railroad subject to the congressional mandate must fully implement an FRA-certified and interoperable PTC system on all required main lines by December 31, 2018, unless a railroad qualifies for and obtains FRA’s approval of an alternative schedule and sequence pursuant to the PTC Act. A railroad must maintain an alternative schedule and sequence, if any, must contain a deadline for full PTC system implementation that is as soon as practical, but not later than December 31, 2020. As of December 31, 2018, 4 railroads have self-reported that they fully implemented an FRA-certified and interoperable PTC system on all of their required main lines. These railroads are: Idaho Central (IDCM); Lake Washington Link; Sound Transit; East Link Extension; and Veterans Transit Authority. Significant work remains to be done in order to ensure additional field testing, interoperability, and full implementation are necessary as soon as possible.