**President Pierce announces staff changes at National Division**

In mid-August, Presidential Emergency Board 248 issued its recommendations to settle the four-year contract dispute between New Jersey Transit and the Rail Labor Coalition of 14 unions representing 4,300 union workers, which includes members of the BLE.

The recommendations on the major issues of wages and health insurance contributions fall much closer to the terms proposed by the Coalition than those proposed by New Jersey Transit, although the board did backload its wage recommendations to accommodate the railroad's budgetary concerns. The PEB found that the Coalition proposals were appropriately based on settlements in the commuter industry, while the company's unprecedented reliance on a state worker concessionary contract was not persuasive.

Labor coalition spokespersons said, “The Presidential Emergency Board, composed of three veteran, distinguished neutrals, has proposed terms that represent a reasonable compromise approach to settlement. We sincerely hope that New Jersey Transit will now take this opportunity to bring this protracted dispute to an end.” A full copy of the press release issued by the New Jersey Transit Rail Labor Coalition is available at the National Division website: www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/NJT_PEB248_Report_press_release.pdf

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**RARE SUMMERTIME MEET**

Heavy thunderstorms and flash flooding across the Midwest wreaked havoc for Amtrak’s westbound California Zephyr. Here, Train No. 5 and Train No. 6 idle alongside each other for several hours at Denver’s Union Station on June 28, 2015, creating an unusual meet between the Zephyrs. Photo: Chase Gunnoe

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**EB 248 RECOMMENDS TERMS TO SETTLE LABOR’S FOUR-YEAR CONTRACT DISPUTE WITH NJ TRANSIT**

On July 10, BLE National President Dennis R. Pierce announced a number of changes to the BLE National Division staff. Megan C. Mead is the BLE’s new Director of the Compliance Department effective July 7, 2015. She takes the position formerly held by Dr. Elaine Reese, who retired on July 6, 2015. Dr. Reese began working for the Brotherhood in 1989. Mead is a member of BLE Division 197 (San Antonio, Texas). Sister Mead hired out as a brakeman with the Union Pacific Railroad in 1990 and earned promotion to locomotive engineer in July of 1993. She first joined the BLE on November 1, 1994 and has held continuous membership ever since. She was elected to serve her Division as Secretary-Treasurer, and was serving as Secretary-Treasurer of the Union Pacific-Southern Region General Committee of Adjustment at the time National President Dennis R. Pierce appointed her to the position of Special Representative and BLE Short Term Disability Liaison, effective July 1, 2013. She was the first female Special Representative in the 152-year history of the BLE. The full story continues on page 3.
As your National President, and speaking on behalf of the Advisory Board, I can tell you that improved education remains our goal, too. The more training we can provide, the better and stronger our Organization will be.

Over the past five years, we have done our best to achieve that goal. Many workshops are held throughout the year at various locations in an effort to reach as many members as possible. Countless members have benefited from training classes at our Training Center in Cleveland, from the workshops we take on the road, and from sessions held at regional meetings.

However, it eventually became apparent that what we needed to do more. The time constraints placed on BLET’s officers, who are also hardworking locomotive engineers and trainmen, make it difficult for them to attend one of our workshops. In addition, the costs associated with training are often more than our small Local Divisions can afford. All of this lead us to conclude that if our officers could not attend one of our training sessions, then we needed to figure out a way to make our workshops more readily available to them. That, in turn, meant developing the tools that we need to be successful.

I am also proud of the work and Special Representative Jason Wright, Director of the Education and Training Department, our classroom instructors were able to conduct a “digital class” for delegates to the Minnesota State Legislative Board meeting while, at the same time, presenting the same Trustee-based curriculum to students attending our Advanced Local Chairmen’s class in Cleveland.

This real-time interaction with members several states away is a small step, but an important one. It helped move us one step closer to realizing the vision established by our 2010 delegates when they approved a dedicated funding stream for our Education and Training Department.

I am also proud of the work by Vice President Jim Louis, Department Head of the Education and Training Department, and Special Representative Jason Wright, Director of the Education and Training Department as they implement new technologies to strengthen our training program.

Utilizing new technologies in an effort to better educate and train BLET members is what we had in mind when we built our new Training Center in Cleveland. Our intent, and I think we have been successful in this regard, was to create a Training Center that is much more than a “bricks and mortar” facility. We invested heavily in the technological aspects of the Training Center, which helped us to launch our “digital class” on August 31. All of this technology will go with us when we move into our new National Division headquarters in 2016. The new classroom center will provide room to grow as we develop new and better ways to bring our workshops to you.

Finally, in late August, we announced our intentions to move ahead with the Albert M. Higley Co. to provide construction services related to the renovation of our new headquarters building in Independence, Ohio, to include our new Training Center. Our selection of the AM Higley Co. also gives us the opportunity to put our “Proud to be American, Proud to be Union” campaign to work. The AM Higley Co. has a 100 percent union workforce, and any subcontractors who work on our building will also be union members. I hope all BLET members will take pride in our new headquarters, especially the fact that it was built with union carpenters, cement finishers, laborers and others. Our new National Division Headquarters will be a facility that our members can be proud of.

This is a new and exciting time in our Brotherhood’s history. We continue to expand Education and Training while working toward moving into our new headquarters building. I hope you will join me for our ribbon-cutting ceremony, which is planned for the Spring of 2016.

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
CEO Pay Rule Will Help Close Wage Gap

The new measure, companies will have to disclose median worker pay and compare it to CEO compensation. There is reason to believe the numbers will be shocking.

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General Chairman Peter M. Semenek was reelected by acclamation at the CP Rail System-U.S. General Committee of Adjustment’s quadrennial meeting in Las Vegas, June 8-9, 2015.

Brother Semenek is a member of BLET Division 790 (Chicago) and he joined the Brotherhood on March 10, 1995. This is his second full term of office, having won election at the GCA’s quadrennial meeting in 2011. He began serving his second full term of office, having won election at the GCA’s quadrennial meeting in Las Vegas, June 8-9, 2015.

The delegates elected three Trustees, all by acclamation: Jim Olson, Division 160 (Harvey, N.D.); Paul Rippelinger, Division 671 (Endertin, N.D.); and Gordon Kepka, Division 357 (Minneapolis, Minn.).

Representing the BLET National Division at the meeting was: Stephen Bruno, National Secretary-Treasurer; John Tolman, Vice President and National Legislative Representative; Marcus Ruel, National Vice President; Mike Priester, National Vice President and former General Chairman of the CP Rail GCA; and Cole Davis, National Vice President.

“I congratulate Brother Semenek and all officers of the General Committee of Adjustment, and thank them for their service to our great Brotherhood,” BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. “Under Brother Semenek’s determined leadership, I know they will do an excellent job protecting the rights of our membership in the face of Canadian Pacific’s aggressive management style.”

Also attending from the BLET National Division was: Matt Krynyk, Special Representative; Jason Wright, Special Representative and Coordinator of Education and Training; and Doug Davidson, Assistant Director of the Arbitration Department. Brother Davidson and Brother Wright presided over a two-day Local Chairman workshop for all delegates in attendance.

The Committee represents locomotive engineers on the Canadian Pacific-U.S. (former Soo Line) and Metra; locomotive engineers, conductors and trainees on the Indiana Southern Railroad; and locomotive engineers and train service employees on the former Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad.

Robert F. Hagan appointed Director of Political and Legislative Affairs for BLET

Robert F. Hagan of BLET Division 757 is the new Director of Political and Legislative Affairs for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen. BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce, who appointed Hagan to the position, said the appointment will become effective July 13, 2015, and that Brother Hagan will be headquartered at the BLET’s National Legislative Office in Washington, D.C.

Most recently a State Representative of Ohio District 58, Brother Hagan has 44 years of railroad experience and has been a member of BLET since 1977. He is a CSX locomotive engineer. 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 28 years, he has served in both the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio State Senate. He 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. His wife, Michele Lepore-Hagan, was elected to fill his former seat as Representative of House District 58.

At the time of Brother Hagan’s election in 1986, his father, Robert E. Hagan, was also serving in the House. Between 1986 and 1990, the Hagans were the first father and son to simultaneously hold seats in the Ohio House of Representatives.

Among other assignments, Brother Hagan will lobby for legislative issues and handle political education under the direction of National President Pierce and Vice President and National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman.

“With his wealth of knowledge, Brother Bob Hagan is a valuable addition to our National Legislative Office staff,” President Pierce said. “All BLET members will benefit from his presence on Capitol Hill thanks in large part to his railroad experience of more than 40 years and his 28 plus years in the political arena. There are many important political and legislative issues facing our Brotherhood, and I have every confidence that Brother Bob Hagan will do an excellent job of educating legislators and representing the best interests of our members.”
Members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) and their families gathered at Lake Lanier Island in Buford, Ga., from June 14-19, 2015, for the 88th annual Southeastern Meeting Association (SMA).

SMA Arrangements Chairman Teresa L. Bryant, Local Chairman of Division 30, and Co-Chair Scott Frederick, Division 30, hosted the 2015 SMA.

Sister Bryant called the meeting to order during opening ceremonies on June 15. She introduced Lawana Poss, SMA Auxiliary Chairperson, who presided over the annual presentation of state flags by members of the Auxiliary, a tradition that dates back nearly 100 years. States flags presented in the ceremony included Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. Sereena Hogan, National President of the BLET Auxiliary, carried the United States flag and later addressed the members and families in attendance. Sister Hogan also introduced Kathleen Bisbikis, the Auxiliary’s National 2nd Vice President and National Legislative Representative, who addressed the body regarding the Auxiliary’s various fundraising endeavors.

Sister Bryant then introduced Brother Mike Lambert, Local Chairman of BLET Division 110, who led the group in prayer. Brother Mike Poss, Secretary-Treasurer of the Georgia State Legislative Board, led a memorial ceremony to honor BLET members killed in the line of duty. An empty chair was left at the front of the meeting hall to honor the Organization’s departed Brothers and Sisters.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce introduced members of the BLET Advisory Board and National Division staff who were in attendance, and also acknowledged the presence of retired BLET National President Paul Sorrow. President Pierce spoke briefly about the nation’s political climate, the upcoming presidential election, and the current round of national bargaining.

The afternoon session concluded with a closed meeting for BLET members and an open meeting for the BLET Auxiliary. Members participated in various educational opportunities throughout the remainder of the week.

This was the final SMA. Delegates to the Third National Convention changed the BLET’s regional meeting structure so that there will be two annual regional meetings sponsored by the National Division beginning next year. It is fitting that this final SMA was held in the Atlanta area, as the inaugural SMA was held in Atlanta on March 28-29, 1921.

The 88th annual SMA concluded with a dinner banquet the evening of June 18. As this was the final SMA, flags from the Auxiliary’s flag ceremony were auctioned off as a fundraiser for the BLET Auxiliary. Several flags went for well over $100.
Approximately 200 members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and their families convened in Boston from July 27-29, 2015, for the 77th annual and final Eastern Union Meeting Association (EUMA).

EUMA Chairman Mark Kenny opened the ceremonies on July 27 while Arrangements Chairman Kevin Moore welcomed all members, families and guests to Boston.

After presentation of the flags, the Boston Police Gaelic Column performed introductory music on the bagpipes to kick off the meeting. Sereena Hogan, National President of the BLET Auxiliary, presided over the traditional empty chair ceremony. An empty chair, as well as various tools of the engineers’ craft, were left at the front of the meeting hall to honor the Organization’s departed Brothers and Sisters.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce introduced members of the BLET Advisory Board and National Division Staff who were in attendance. President Pierce spoke briefly about the nation’s political climate, the upcoming presidential election, and the current round of national bargaining.

Guest speakers included: International Brotherhood of Teamsters Vice President John Murphy, who is also Director of the Teamsters Rail Conference; Congressman Mike Capuano (D-MA); IBT International Vice President Sean O’Brien, who is also President of Teamsters Local 25; and Massachusetts AFL-CIO President Steven Tolman, brother of BLET Vice President & National Legislative Representative John Tolman.

Union business concluded following a closed meeting for BLET members and open meetings for the BLET Auxiliary on July 28. Members took advantage of numerous educational opportunities throughout the remainder of the week.

This was the final EUMA convention. Delegates to the Third National Convention changed the BLET’s regional meeting structure so that there will be two annual regional meetings sponsored by the National Division beginning next year.

The 77th and final EUMA concluded with a dinner banquet the evening of July 29. A highlight of the banquet was a video presentation featuring photographic highlights of past EUMA meetings. The EUMA tribute video was created by Brother Dino Raptis, a retired member of BLET Division 12 (Fort Wayne, Ind.).
2016 FEES OBJECTOR POLICY

I. EMPLOYERS' RIGHTS

A. Employers are permitted by a union or agency shop agreement in the United States has the legal right to be or remain on the membership roll of a designated union. Employers have the legal right (1) to object to paying for Union activities not related to bargaining, contract administration and governance, and (2) to obtain a reduction in the severance costs for those contributions.

B. The employer is entitled to be paid only for the union members belonging to the Union's local contractor parties.

II. MAKING OBJECTION KNOWN

Objecting members must provide notice of objection by notifying the Union's Executive Secretary of the objection in writing by first class mail postmarked during the month of November preceding the calendar year to which the objection relates. No objection is effective until it has been postmarked and received by the Union within thirty (30) days after the protested event.

III. ALL EXPENSES CONCERNING THE NEGOTIATION OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS

All expenses concerning the negotiation of collective bargaining agreements, including the Eaton Corporation headquarters and the construction services related to the renovation workforces to bid on the project. Although we are bidding processes that allowed area builders with union forces to bid on the project. We are confident that our partnership with the AM Higley Co. will bring the project in on budget and on time. The AM Higley Co. is the culmination of a complex construction company that will use only union labor to complete high-profile projects in the Cleveland area, including the Eaton Corporation headquarters and the Brotherhood's Relief and Compensation Fund. Members receive...

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- Earn $50 for each approved increase to existing members
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