BLET MEMBERS RATIFY NEW CONTRACT AT METRA

SEE PAGE 5

BLET PICKET LINE: From left: BLET Division 71 members Steve Finnegan, John Fulton, Tom McPhillips, John Foulds and Steve Conklin.

Photo: BLET Division 71 Member John Vaccarelli

BLET STRIKE AT SEPTA
PRESIDENTIAL EMERGENCY BOARD ESTABLISHED IN 5-YEAR DISPUTE

About 220 members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen went on strike at the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) in Philadelphia just after midnight on Saturday, June 14. Also on strike were about 210 members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). Together, the two unions shut down Philadelphia’s regional rail system for 24 hours before action by the White House ended the strike.

On Saturday evening, June 14, President Barack Obama issued an Executive Order establishing Presidential Emergency Board (PEB) No. 246 to investigate the contract disputes between SEPTA and the more than 400 union members represented by BLET and IBEW, and to recommend a settlement. Under the order, the workers returned to work after midnight on Sunday, June 15.

The President’s action was in response to a letter earlier that day by Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett, who, on behalf of SEPTA, requested that a PEB be named. The Governor’s request was made pursuant to Section 9a of the Railway Labor Act. Under the terms of the Executive Order, SEPTA and the BLET and IBEW elected to settle their contract dispute.

The 2014 EUMA kicks off here on August 4, 2014.

A view of the downtown Cleveland skyline from The Flats.

Photo: Positively Cleveland

Continued on page 6

Cleveland to host BLET for 76th annual EUMA

Eastern Union Meeting Association (EUMA) Arrangements Chairman Patrick Redmond, Local Chairman of Division 607, cordially invites everyone to Cleveland for the 76th annual EUMA convention, August 4-8, 2014.

Brother Redmond and Co-Chairman James R. Rum, Legislative Representative of Division 526, have planned what is sure to be a memorable EUMA. Guests will stay at the newly remodeled Westin Cleveland Downtown, which is within walking distance of BLET National Division headquarters.

The Westin Cleveland Downtown (777 St. Clair Ave., Cleveland, OH 44114) recently opened on May 15, 2014 following a $64 million renovation. Reservations can be made by calling (888) 627-8085. Be sure to ask for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen group rate to Cleveland to host BLET for 76th annual EUMA.

The 2014 EUMA kicks off here on August 4, 2014. Photo: Positively Cleveland

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

BLET President’s Message
Fighting back in the War on Workers pg. 2

Better Energy Plan Needed
EPA needs a more balanced energy plan for coal pg. 3

Omaha Town Hall
Division 183 hosts informational meeting pg. 5

Register for News Flash email alerts at: www.ble-t.org
Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/BLETNational
Remarks by BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce
At the Third Regular Convention of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division of the Teamsters Rail Conference, June 23, 2014.

Good morning. President Simpson, Secretary-Treasurer Geller, Officers, Brother and Sister Delegates, and honored guests... I want to thank you for inviting me to address the Third National Convention of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division of the Teamsters Rail Conference. I take great pride in serving as your Rail Conference President, and I want to thank you on behalf of your Brothers and Sisters in the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen for the fighting spirit you bring to the Conference, which makes us all so much stronger.

As railroad workers we live in very challenging times. The car- riers confront us at every turn, seeking to change our workplace not for our betterment, but in stead for their own profit... But what we face is just one example of what is happening throughout our great nation today. There is an attack on working class Americans — both union members and non-union members alike — the likes of which have not been seen in several generations. And this attack is changing the face of our nation in ways that should worry all of us.

The America I grew up in was a place where workers and their children had opportunities to become educated, and to pursue careers that would give them steady employment, a living wage with decent benefits, a secure retirement... and a better life to pass along to the next generation. We had a steadily improving social contract, and a culture that encouraged us to band together to work together... to struggle together so that we — as a class and as a nation — could grow and prosper together. And the pursuit of that goal was called the American Dream.

The America of my youth was the product of tremendous struggle... with the workers of America fighting to advance beyond the Great Depression, through battles like Auto-Lite and River Rouge. It was honed on the beaches of Normandy, and when the Greatest Generation came home they seized the opportunity offered by pro-worker legislation like the G.I. Bill and revolutionized the American standard of living.

But the struggles of our nation’s workers go even further back than that... to places like Ludlow and Homestead and Pullman. Our own Brotherhoods were born in an era where a worker had no rights, except as servant to the master... an era when where if the Pinkertons didn’t kill you, your job would do so, long before you reached old age. My Brothers and Sisters, today we are much closer to that shameful period of history than you can imagine. We are in our fourth decade now of an unrelenting and ever-deepening attack against America’s workers and the unions that represent them.

Wealth is more concentrated now than it was even at the beginning of the Great Depression. And political power is concentrated further by the week. American workers today are facing a double-barrel assault that is designed to permanently tip the scales in favor of Corporate America and undo everything we and our forefathers achieved in more than a century and a half. Having bought up virtually all U.S. media, the one percent now wants to spend untold billions to buy the political system outright, cynically arguing that “money equals speech.”

But there’s a third leg to this anti-worker stool that is even more sinister than that. Back around 1886, the notorious Robber Baron Jay Gould — of Erie Railroad and Union Pacific infamy — proudly proclaimed that he could “hire one half of the workers against the other... and on and on.”

And that’s not enough for the richest one percent, they’re taking it even further than that by working to ensure that only those politicians who support their attacks on working class Americans will be elected. Turning workers against workers isn’t enough to accomplish that, so to make it harder...

Continued on page 4

Fighting Back in the War on Workers

By Dennis R. Pierce

Corporate America’s other target, my Brothers and Sisters, is you and me... unions... the organized voice of workers. They peddle workplace freeloading and deceitfully call it “right to work.” And to prevent unions from having the full financial support of all who benefit from union representation, they created the “right to freeload” by pushing legislation that would make us track down every individual member and have him or her write a check under a hypocrical concept called “paycheck protection.”

But there’s a third leg to this anti-worker stool that is even more sinister than that. Back around 1886, the notorious Robber Baron Jay Gould — of Erie Railroad and Union Pacific infamy — proudly proclaimed that he could “hire one half of the workers against the other... and on and on.”

And that’s not enough for the richest one percent, they’re taking it even further than that by working to ensure that only those politicians who support their attacks on working class Americans will be elected. Turning workers against workers isn’t enough to accomplish that, so to make it harder...
the annual state legislation often sees corporate lawmakers to introduce legislation to hack away at workplace rights and wages for millions of middle class families is well under way. And it is failing — again.

Despite the best efforts of the Koch brothers and their friends at the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), right-to-work measures have already gone down in flames in Kentucky, New Hampshire and Oregon. And the path to victory for big business is far from assured in Maine, Missouri, Ohio or Pennsylvania either.

It seems the public is becoming wise to their arguments. People see how the corporate class is putting a reduction in business tax rates first and investment in the future of our communities last. It’s just another attempt by rich CEOs to tip the economic scales even more in their favor at the expense of hard-working Americans.

In Missouri, for example, about a thousand right-to-work opponents showed up at the state capitol late last month to call on lawmakers to defeat a measure current before the House. Many lawmakers there realize the measure is an attempted power grab by the same corporate cronies who have outsourced mid-class jobs overseas and offshore their profits to avoid paying taxes. Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon (D) has promised to veto any such bill that makes it to his desk.

Right-to-work is a ruse. These laws depress wages, resulting in workers making about $1,500 less than those living elsewhere. They are also more likely not to receive health insurance and more likely to work in a dangerous workplace. In addition, it is proven not to be a deciding factor in where businesses locate.

Lawmakers must resist the cheap corporate rhetoric pushed by ALEC and others that makes right-to-work seem like a solution. It isn’t. All it seems to help create is less pay, less freedom in the workplace and maybe most important of all, a smaller middle class. If that’s seen by some as progress, government should be taking a pass on it.

Fraternally,

JAMES P. HOFFA
Teamsters General President
It isn’t quick and it isn’t cheap … but quick and cheap things don’t last very long, and we have to rebuild our unions into fighting machines that will carry the struggle for working class generations into the future.

And for those who are fortunate enough to have the leadership position — like Freddie and me — well, we have an even larger obligation: we have to steer even stronger, even larger rocks straight ahead.

We have to work together … every day … which is easy and especially when it’s hard … and we also have to reinvigorate the cultures in our organizations so that they can they can continue to be the fighting machines you read about in labor history books.

We have to be prepared to work in solidarity for the great — good … and we have to do that whether or not each of us is going to get a seat in Congress or she wants … so long as all of us get everything we need. And we have to involve all of Rail Labor — even unions we may have clashed with over the years — because there’s just too much at stake to leave anyone on the sidelines.

When we lead that charge, my Brothers and Sisters, and when the Labor Movement joins that march, all of our rights as working class Americans, and all of the other civil rights under our American Dream, are secure.

And when the Labor Movement marches forward on the advance, all civil rights become secure still, as we reinvigorate American culture and our political system with working class values.

I am proud of the BLET’s association with the BMWED, the Union Conference, and I am privileged to serve as your Rail Conference President. During my tenure, your leadership and work will be consistent, and you consistently looked for ways to advance the interests of Rail Conference members, and to set the table for all of Rail Labor.

We’re going to be doing that again in a few short months when we return to the national bargaining table.

We need to strengthen ourselves — internally and externally — to meet that challenge. I commit to you that the BLET is working to be even stronger next week, next month and next year than it is today.

And I am confident that the BMWED will continue to fight by my side as strong as it has always been, not just at the bargaining table, but in the never-ending struggle for workers’ rights, upon which all of our other rights depend.

Thank you and let’s move forward together.

DENNIS R. PIERCE
BLE National President
For students attending a community college, 4-year institution or a technical/vocational program, age 23 and younger, who are the son, daughter or financial dependent of an eligible Teamster Member Relation (as defined in the application).

“The vast majority of union members make more than the minimum wage. Why should Teamsters care what the minimum wage is?”

For an application, contact your Teamsters Local Union office or visit www.teamster.org

Deadline for submissions is September 30, 2014

For students attending a community college, 4-year institution or a technical/vocational program, age 23 and younger, who are the son, daughter or financial dependent of an eligible Teamster Member Relation (as defined in the application).

“The vast majority of union members make more than the minimum wage. Why should Teamsters care what the minimum wage is?”

For an application, contact your Teamsters Local Union office or visit www.teamster.org

Deadline for submissions is September 30, 2014

The officers of BLET Division 183 hosted a Town Hall Meeting on Monday, June 9, in Omaha, Neb. All BLET 183 and 699 Division members, as well as BLET members working in the Western Iowa, Eastern Nebraska area, were invited to attend.

Guest speakers included BLET National President Dennis Pierce, BLET First Vice President Lee Pruitt, Union Pacific Eastern District General Chairman Dave Geisler, Nebraska State Legislative Board Chairman Pat Pfeifer and Iowa State Legislative Board Chairman Orlando Penrod.

The Town Hall meeting provided an opportunity for members to get informed, ask questions and voice concerns.

BLET members ratify new contract at Metra

Over 96% of voting members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen ratified a new five-year collective bargaining agreement with Metra on May 19. The agreement covers approximately 200 members.

The agreement provides for five general wage increases and two retroactive payments totaling a compounded value of 21.2 percent over the life of the agreement, which runs through January 1, 2019. Members will also receive a $3,000 signing bonus. Wage increases will become effective July 1, 2014, and include retroactive payments for affected employees to July 1, 2012.

The agreement also governs numerous work rules and employee health and welfare benefits. The BLET secured a 23.8 percent increase to the membership’s deferred compensation plan, and Metra’s contribution will increase to $10.40 per member, per day by the end of the agreement. Other improvements include a 38 percent increase in certification pay for locomotive engineers to $18 per day. Also, members will now be allowed to bank personal leave days accumulated while working in other crafts prior to earning promotion to locomotive engineer.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce thanked the BLET’s Metra membership for their participation in negotiations and their strong turnout in the ratification process. He also commended the members of the negotiating team, which included General Chairmen C. E. Craddock, P. M. Semenek and M. A. Taylor, as well as National Vice President S. J. Bruno.

“This new contract with Metra ensures that our members will continue receiving fair and equitable compensation,” President Pierce said. “Our members were involved throughout the negotiating process, and we negotiated the best possible contract with wage and bonus increases and maintained our level of excellent benefits.”

“I would like to thank the local officers and especially the members for their determination and unqualified support for our negotiating team during these negotiations,” Vice President Bruno said.

The BLET’s 200 Metra locomotive engineers serve more than 100 communities at 241 stations in the Chicago area.

The James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund

Announces This Year’s Essay Contest Topic

“The vast majority of union members make more than the minimum wage. Why should Teamsters care what the minimum wage is?”

Win CASH for Class

For an application, contact your Teamsters Local Union office or visit www.teamster.org

Deadline for submissions is September 30, 2014

BLET DIVISION 183 HOSTS TOWN HALL MEETING IN OMAHA

The officers of BLET Division 183 hosted a Town Hall Meeting on Monday, June 9, in Omaha, Neb. All BLET 183 and 699 Division members, as well as BLET members working in the Western Iowa, Eastern Nebraska area, were invited to attend.

Guest speakers included BLET National President Dennis Pierce, BLET First Vice President Lee Pruitt, Union Pacific Eastern District General Chairman Dave Geisler, Nebraska State Legislative Board Chairman Pat Pfeifer and Iowa State Legislative Board Chairman Orlando Penrod.

The Town Hall meeting provided an opportunity for members to get informed, ask questions and voice concerns.
2014 EUMA in Cleveland
Continued from page 1

receive the discounted room rate of $145 per night. The hotel is only 15 minutes from Cleveland Hopkins airport and is in close proximity to top downtown attractions such as the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, Progressive Field, Horseshoe Casino, Great Lakes Science Center, and the new East Fourth entertainment district. The deadline for hotel reservations is July 21.

Brother Redmond and Brother Blum have established an exclusively online reservation system for the 2014 EUMA. There will be no paper registration forms used this year. All parties planning to attend the 2014 EUMA must register online, and links are on the National Division website (see below).

This year EUMA begins on Monday, August 4, and the day’s itinerary includes a tour of BLET National Division headquarters, featuring the Brotherhood’s historic murals and recently updated historical museum featuring BLE and railroad artifacts dating to the 1850s. There is also a welcome reception in the evening at the nearby House of Blues.

The convention kicks off on Tuesday morning, August 5, with the opening ceremony featuring guest speakers. Following lunch, BLET members will participate in a closed meeting while the BLET Auxiliary will hold an open informational meeting. During the on-line registration process, members also can purchase $15 tickets to Progressive Field as the Cleveland Indians will host the Cincinnati Reds.

The annual EUMA golf outing will be held at Cleveland’s Manakiki Golf Course on Wednesday, August 6. For non-golfers, nearby attractions include the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Great Lakes Science Center, Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, Greater Cleveland Aquarium, Cleveland Zoo and Rainforest, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland Museum of Natural History, A Christmas Story House and Museum, Horseshoe Casino, Cedar Point Amusement Park, and many other family-friendly locations.

Members will participate in numerous workshops on Thursday, August 7, including training sessions for Secretary Treasurers, Local Chairmen, Legislative Representatives and Division Trustees. The 2014 EUMA is also offering sessions on hazardous materials, Railroad Retirement, health and welfare, Federal Railroad Administration regulations, and the BLE Mobilization Network. The 76th annual EUMA concludes with a banquet the evening of August 7.

“We look forward to seeing all of you in Cleveland for the 76th annual EUMA,” Brother Redmond said. @

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT THE NATIONAL DIVISION WEBSITE:
WWW.BLE-T.ORG/INFO/MEETINGS/EUMA

BLET’s Western General Chairmen conclude annual meeting

The BLET Western General Chairmen’s Association (WGCA) held its annual meeting in Las Vegas from May 12-14, 2014. All officers were reelected to one-year terms: Chairman Matt O. Wilson (General Chairman, BNSF/MRL); Vice Chairman John W. Reynolds (General Chairman, CN-Wisconsin Central); and Secretary-Treasurer J. Alan Holdcraft (General Chairman, BNSF-former AT&SF). Also reelected were Executive Committee Members Sam W. Parker (General Chairman, Kansas City Southern) and J. Warren Dent (General Chairman, Union Pacific-Southern Region).

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce congratulated all officers and thanked them for their ongoing dedication to the Brotherhood. National President Pierce addressed the body along with: First Vice President E. Lee Pruitt; National Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walpert; and Vice President & National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman.

President Pierce, a former Chairman of the WGCA, addressed the body regarding the major issues being handled at the National Division. First Vice President Pruitt provided information regarding his assignments and NST Walpert provided an update on the Brotherhood’s finances. Vice President Tolman updated the group regarding the latest in Washington, D.C.

The group also heard from three additional guest speakers. BLET Director of Regulatory Affairs Vincent G. Verna brought everyone up to speed on the RSAC process. General Counsel Mike Wolly gave a presentation outlining the relationship between New York Dock and Article IX of Arbitration Award 458. The group also heard from Joe Riley, a railroad safety specialist with the Federal Railroad Administration.

The WGCA’s membership includes the General Chairmen from the Western region of the United States. They meet annually for the purpose of discussing a wide range of issues.

Cleveland will offer many outstanding attractions during the 2014 EUMA.
Teamsters, Rail Conference demand crackdown on cheap Korean steel imports

In a letter sent to Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker dated June 5, Hoffa was joined by Teamsters Rail Conference President Dennis Pierce, President of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET), and Freddie Simpson, president of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division (BMWED), in raising objections to a preliminary ruling regarding Oil Country Tubular Goods (OCTG) imported into the U.S.

The Teamsters join the United Steelworkers, the U.S. Steel Corporation and the Alliance for American Manufacturing in voicing concerns about the ongoing investigation.

OCTG production is a critical segment of the steel industry and helps provide solid middle-class jobs to several sectors, including the 70,000 members of the BLET and BMWED. But those are threatened when others are allowed to dump cheap product in the U.S. OCTG imports have doubled since 2008 and Korea is responsible for almost half of the increase.

“American steel producers employ 8,000 workers across the country making OCTG and each of those jobs supports seven more in the supply chain,” Hoffa, Pierce and Simpson wrote. “The steel produced for the U.S. energy market accounts for almost half of the increase.

Noting that the agency is set to make a final ruling next month, the Teamsters urged Pritzker to devote “all available resources” to make sure the information sought from the countries being investigated is accurate. Hoffa, Pierce and Simpson also suggested that Commerce officials review and revise its preliminary decision so that it incorporates “the true costs of production and profit margins among the Korean producers of high-end OCTG pipes.”

To register, just go to www.ble-t.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.
Montana’s “Last Train” runs in state of the art railcars

JUNE 2014

I n mid-May, Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper signed legislation to preserve the current route of Amtrak’s Southwest Chief, helping to secure the jobs of locomotive engineers and other unionized workers.

Supported by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, the new law listed in a Commission charged with securing the means necessary to keep the Southwest Chief running through Southwest Kansas, Southeast Colorado and Northern New Mexico.

With the signing of HB 14-1161, Colorado joins Kansas and New Mexico in a multi-state partnership applying for $24.5 million in grant funds from the U.S. Department of Transportation to pay for repairs to the railroad tracks that the Southwest Chief travels on. Amtrak had reported that it may need to re-route or cancel the Southwest Chief service if tracks were not upgraded.

Members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen in Colorado were active in lobbying their state legislature to pass HB 14-1161, reports Colorado Legislative Laboratory Board Chairman Jim Wilmesher. Brother Wilmesher attended the signing ceremony on behalf of the BLET.

“The Governor spoke briefly about this new law being demonstrative of Colorado’s commitment to helping keep the Southwest Chief on the rails to keep the possibility of adding a couple of additional stops,” Brother Wilmesher said. “His comments were in response to the points guys spoke to all the funding agencies — County Commissioners, Representatives of La Junta, Lamar, Walsenburg, Pueblo, Trinidad in Colorado, and Las Vegas, Raton, and other municipalities in New Mexico and Kansas that have banded together to gain this passenger rail service.”

The route also has in important role New Mexico’s economy. Brother Pat Lynch, Chairman of the BLET New Mexico State Legislative Board, has been extremely active in lobbying his state’s legislative leadership to fund the necessary repairs and preserve the route.

BLET National President Dennis R. Priece thanked Brother Wilmesher, Brother Lynch and all members of both states who have played a role in keeping the Amtrak Southwest Chief and its current route in New Mexico in the state’s legislative agenda.

“The passage of HB 14-1161 into law shows maintaining and improving our passenger rail corridor through Colorado,” President Priece said. “I am proud to thank Chairman Wilmesher and Chairman Lynch and all involved members for a job well done.”