BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce has announced the hiring of Brothers Paul T. Aird and Matthew C. Kronyak to full time Special Representative positions with the BLET National Division. Their hiring became effective November 1, 2014. Brother Aird will serve as Director of Organizing and as National Mobilization Coordinator for the Western United States. He will assume the duties of Brother Kent N. Confer, who is retiring effective January 1, 2015. Brother Kronyak will serve in a new Special Representative position to arrange facilities and coordinate meeting space for Brotherhood functions. Both Brothers will also handle other duties as assigned by the National President.

“I am pleased to welcome Paul Aird and Matt Kronyak to our National Division staff and I know they will work tirelessly on behalf of the National Division and all members of our Brotherhood,” President Pierce said. “Brother Aird will have big shoes to fill with the retirement of Kent Confer, but I have every confidence that he has the skill and dedication necessary to meet the challenges that lie ahead.” Brother Kronyak has been with the National Division on a part-time basis for over a year now, and has done an excellent job during that period. It became necessary to add him on a full-time basis to handle the growing number of meetings in the years to come, including the National Division’s increasing involvement in the regional meeting process beginning in 2016,” President Pierce said. A fourth-generation railroad man, Brother Aird is a Wisconsin Central locomotive engineer and member of BLET Division 173 (Fond du Lac, Wis). He hired out in 1993 as a section laborer for the Fox River Valley Railroad. In 1994, he hired on with the Western United States Marine Corps. Immediately prior to his November 1 appointment, Brother Aird served as Legislative Representative of Division 173 and as 1st Vice Chairman of the Wisconsin State Legislative Board, a position he has held since July of 2004. For Brother Aird, one of the most influential experiences in his union career was his participation in the War on Workers protests in Wisconsin in the spring of 2011.

“Having seen first hand how extremist politics can negatively impact us as organized labor is certainly a driving force in

Continued on page 7

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR 2015 BLET REGIONAL MEETINGS

The BLET National Division is pleased to announce the dates and locations of the four regional meetings for 2015. These meetings are beneficial to all BLET members in several ways, offering the opportunity for education and training, networking with fellow railroaders, time for family, and a chance for personal interaction with BLET National Division officers.

The dates and locations of the four 2015 regional meetings are as follows:

JUNE 14-19, 2015
88th Annual Southeastern Meeting Association (SMA)
Atlanta, Ga.
Arrangements Chairman Teresa Bryant, Local Chairman of BLET Division 30, will host the 2015 SMA at the Lake Lanier Islands Resort just north of Atlanta, Ga.

JULY 25-31, 2015
77th Annual Eastern Union Meeting Association (EUMA)
Boston, Mass.
Arrangements Chairman Kevin J. Moore, Springfield Terminal/Delaware & Hudson General Chairman and Legislative Representative of BLET Division 191 (Lynnburg, Mass), will host the 2015 EUMA at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel in historic downtown Boston.

AUGUST 17-20, 2015
75th Annual International Western Convention (IWCM)
Denver, Colo.
Co-Chairmen Jim Wilmesher, Chairman of the Colorado State Legislative Board, and Cory Runion, Chairman of the Wyoming State Legislative Board, will host the 2015 IWCM at the Embassy Suite Hotel in downtown Denver, Colo.

SEPTEMBER 13-17, 2015
80th Annual Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWCM)
Tulsa, Okla.
Co-Chairman Dana Marlow, 1st Vice Chairman of the Union Pacific Southern Region General Committee of Adjustment, and Jeff Tryon, Local Chairman of Division 179, will host the 2015 SWCM at the Hard Rock Casino and Resort in Tulsa, Okla.

Next year will be the last time members will have the opportunity to attend four different regional meetings in a single year. Delegates at the Third National Convention changed the BLET’s regional meeting structure so that there will only be two regional meetings per year beginning in 2016.
Thank you!

While in session, the delegates are the governing body of our proud organization, and they are tasked with setting the course for the union and with ensuring that we are a strong, vital and transparent organization.

VETERANS DAY 2014

On behalf of the entire Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, I offer thanks to the millions of veterans who have served this country with distinction and your sacrifices and devotion have preserved our way of life and our freedoms for generations.

In this our 152nd year, the BLET remains proud to represent the rights and interests of military veterans who have gone on to work as Locomotive Engineers and as Trainmen. Today, our active membership consists of veterans who are part of an unbroken chain of men and women who have served this country with distinction since the time of the Civil War. Many of our earliest members fought in such battles as Bull Run, Shiloh, Antietam and Gettysburg. Our membership over the years has consisted of proud veterans who served in World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Desert Shield, Iraq and Afghanistan — and today includes 75 members who are currently on active duty. These members proudly carry on the traditions established by our founding fathers.

Behind every soldier who serves is a family who also serves. Please join me in thanking not only our soldiers and veterans, but their families as well. Their sacrifice deserves our praise and is part of the reason our country remains strong and free.

On behalf of the BLET Advisory Board and our 54,000 members, we thank you and we salute you. Your duty and devotion has protected our country and has secured our freedoms. God bless.

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 intended to allow the member’s unofficial communication, if a response is necessary, without needlessly expending limited BLET resources.

ADOPTED AT CLEVELAND, OHIO ON JULY 22, 2010. 86
A leading economic group in the state of New Jersey, comprised of labor and business leaders, is supporting national legislation that would mandate two-person train crews throughout the United States.

The New Jersey Society for Environmental, Economic Development (NJ SEED) recently issued a letter supporting the BLET’s efforts to advance H.R. 3040 in the U.S. House of Representatives as well as similar legislation on the state level.

“NJ SEED is committed to working to preserve two-person crews for the...safety of our railways and cities,” wrote Michael K. Drulis, Executive Director of NJ SEED. “The stakes are too high to do otherwise; the safest and securest workplace for the nation’s railroads, their employees and the public at large is one that includes a minimum of a two-person crew.”

New Jersey economic group backs two-person train crews

H.R. 3040, also known as the Safe Freight Act, would mandate that “no freight train or light engine used in connection with the movement of freight may be operated unless it has a crew consisting of at least two individuals, one of whom is certified under regulations promulgated by the Federal Railroad Administration as a locomotive engineer pursuant to section 20135, and the other of whom is certified under regulations promulgated by the Federal Railroad Administration as a conductor pursuant to section 20163.”

Both the engineer and conductor are critical to train operations — working in tandem to ensure the safety and smooth operations of the train. The two-person crew is necessary to maintain safe operations of the railroad in 2010 after suffering from the effects of diabetes. Since then, Brother Cloke’s kidneys have been failing to the point that he needs a kidney transplant.

Brother Cloke and his family have been selling their personal possessions in an effort to raise the $5,000 necessary to pay for the medications required immediately after the transplant. He and his wife of 24 years have one child living at home.

The members of BLET Division 523 (Chickasha, Okla.) have volunteered to set up a fund to take donations, led by 2nd Vice Local Chairman Zac Walton, Secretary-Treasurer David Bulles, and Member Kevin Hayes.

Brother Cloke, 63, was forced to retire from the railroad in 2010 after suffering from the effects of diabetes. Since then, Brother Cloke’s kidneys have been failing to the point that he needs a kidney transplant.

Brother Cloke and his family have been selling their personal possessions in an effort to raise the $5,000 necessary to pay for the medications required immediately after the transplant. He and his wife of 24 years have one child living at home.

The members of BLET Division 523 (Chickasha, Okla.) have volunteered to set up a fund to take donations, led by 2nd Vice Local Chairman Zac Walton, Secretary-Treasurer David Bulles, and Member Kevin Hayes.

Brother Cloke has been a member of the BLET since April 1, 1991, and worked for the Union Pacific Railroad in Kansas and Chickasha, Okla., before his retirement. Brother Cloke was a member in good standing at the time of his retirement.

Donations to help Brother Cloke should be made payable to the “Jerry Cloke Kidney Transplant Fund” and mailed to the following address:

Jerry Cloke Kidney Transplant Fund
First National Bank
602 Grand Ave.
Chickasha, OK 73018

It is clear that now is the time to stop letting massive corporations ship American jobs overseas and in the process dump U.S. wages overboard along the way. This country needs to rebuild the middle class and that will only come if trade deals include provisions that protect workers.

Fair trade deals can protect workers

James P. Hoffa
Teamsters General President
UP General Chairman Bill Hannah reelected by acclamation

Brother D.W. “Bill” Hannah was reelected by acclamation to his fifth term as General Chairman of the Union Pacific-Western Lines General Committee of Adjustment at quadrennial meetings in San Diego, Calif., on September 16, 2014. Brother Hannah is a member of BLET Division 56 (Colton, Calif.). He joined the Brotherhood on February 1, 1979, and has served as General Chairman since 2001, winning reelection by acclamation in 2003, 2007, 2010 and now 2014. Also elected were: 1st Vice Chairman B.P. Carr, Division 692 (Tracy, Calif.); 2nd Vice Chairman C.V. Houston, Division 415 (Rooseville, Calif.); 3rd Vice Chairman J.E. Cayer Jr., Division 123 (Phoenix, Ariz.); Secretary-Treasurer C.H. “Chuck” Fleming III, Division 192 (El Paso, Texas); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer L.J. “Luis” Chavez Jr., Division 283 (Oakland, Calif.).

In addition to General Chairman Hannah, Brother Carr, Brother Fleming and Brother Chavez were reelected by acclamation. Brother Fleming begins his third full term as Secretary-Treasurer.

“Congratulations and thank you to Brother Hannah and all the officers of the Union Pacific-Western Lines General Committee of Adjustment for their service to our Brotherhood,” BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. “Brother Hannah has been elected by acclamation again to the office of General Chairman, which is a rousing endorsement of the great job he has done — and continues to do — representing his membership.”

Representing the BLET National Division at the quadrennial meeting were: National President Pierce; National Vice President E. Lee Pruitt; National Vice President Mike Twombly; and National Vice President Rick Gibbons. Brother Hannah succeeded Lee Pruitt as General Chairman of the UP-Western Lines in 2001, following Brother Pruitt’s election to the Advisory Board.

The following General Chairmen were also in attendance: Dick Crow, Union Pacific-Northern Region; Jim Dayton, Union Pacific-Western Region; and Ronnie Rhodes, Union Pacific-Central Region.

The following Legislative Brothers were also in attendance: Terry Briggs, Texas State Legislative Board Chairman; Nick Johnson, Arizona State Legislative Board Chairman; Tim Smith, California State Legislative Board Chairman; and Ryan Snow, California State Legislative Board 1st Vice Chairman.

The BLET’s Union Pacific-Western Lines General Committee of Adjustment is comprised of 19 different BLET Divisions, representing more than 1,800 active locomotive engineers and trainmen from the Union Pacific Railroad and the Pacific Harbor Line Railroad.

Chairman Ken Kertesz was reelected by acclamation to his fourth term at the Pennsylvania State Legislative Board’s quadrennial meeting in Hershey, Pa., from September 13-15, 2014.

Brother Kertesz is a Delaware & Hudson locomotive engineer and member of BLET Division 263 in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. He first joined the Brotherhood on January 1, 1974. The 2014 quadrennial marked the third consecutive time he has been elected to the Chairman’s position by acclamation. Also elected by acclamation were: 1st Vice Chairman Jim O’Neill, Division 483 (Philadelphia, Pa.); 2nd Vice Chairman Jeff Johnson, Division 71 (Philadelphia, Pa.); and Secretary-Treasurer Tim Laving, Division 325 (Wilkinsburg, Pa.). Members of the Board’s Executive Committee were also elected by acclamation: Pete Fernandez, Division 757 (New Castle, Pa.); and Steve Goethreau, Division 276 (Allentown, Pa.). Representing the BLET National Division at the meeting and addressing the delegates were: National President Dennis R. Pierce; First Vice President E. Lee Pruitt; National Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walport; Vice President and National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman; and National Vice President Stephen J. Bruno.

“Congratulations and thank you to Brother Kertesz and all members and officers of the Pennsylvania State Legislative Board,” President Pierce said. “Brother Kertesz and his officers will have a lot of work ahead in the realm of politics as Pennsylvania will once again play an important role in the November elections and again in 2016. I have every confidence they will do a fine job.”

Serenia Hogan, Vice President and National Legislative Representative of the BLET Auxiliary, was also in attendance and addressed the delegates. Additional BLET guests included: Dave Kearnsing, New York State Legislative Board Chairman; Herb Harris, District of Columbia Legislative Board Chairman; Matt Kronyak, New Jersey State Legislative Board Chairman; and Tim Price, 1st Vice Chairman of the Ohio State Legislative Board.

Other guest speakers included: State Representative Jim Marshall (R-14); Pennsylvania AFL-CIO President Rick Bloomingdale; Pennsylvania AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Frank Snyder; and Mark McDermott, a motivational speaker from Washington state who, among other items, discussed labor history.

The BLET Pennsylvania State Legislative Board represents more than 2,300 active members from seven different railroad belongs to 19 Divisions, representing more than 1,800 active locomotive engineers and trainmen from the Union Pacific Railroad and the Pacific Harbor Line Railroad. They live and work primarily in California, Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas and Kansas.
Timothy R. Hanely was reelected by acclamation to his third term as Chairman of the Ohio State Legislative Board at the Board’s 15th Quadrennial Convention held in Columbus, Ohio, May 1-2, 2014.

Chairman Hanely is a member of BLE&T Division 34 in Columbus, Ohio, and has been a member of the BLE&T since 1995.

Also reelected by acclamation were:
- First Vice-Chairman Tim T. Price, Division 607 (Cleveland, Ohio); 2nd Vice Chairman Daniel A. Deselms, Division 4 (Toledo, Ohio); Secretary-Treasurer Edward J. Patterson, Division 894 (Columbus, Ohio); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Brian D. Garrison, Division 306 (Crestline, Ohio).
- BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce congratulated these Brothers on their election. Representing the National Division at the meeting were First Vice President E. Lee Pruitt and Vice President & National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman.

Chairman Hanely addressed the group. “I thank Brother Hanely and all officers of the Ohio State Legislative Board for their ongoing dedication to our Brotherhood, and I have every confidence that they will continue doing an excellent job of representing our members in the Buckeye state,” President Pierce said. “They will have their work cut out for them as Ohio will once again play a key role in national elections in November and in 2016.”

Sereena Hogan, National Vice President of the BLET Auxiliary, addressed the group. Special BLE&T guests included:
- General Chairman Billy Lyons, CSX-Northern Lines General Committee of Adjustment;
- State Legislative Board Chairman Tony Dimond, Wisconsin; and State Legislative Board Chairman Ken Kertesz, Pennsylvania; and State Legislative Board Chairman B.J. Trumble, Michigan.
- Robert E. Hagan, a member of BLE&T Division 757 and State Representative of Ohio District 58, also addressed the group regarding his plans for Ohio’s seat in the United States Senate. 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 27 years, he has served in both the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio State Senate.
- Additional guest speakers included: State Representative Connie Pillich, Ohio’s 28th District; State Representative Tim Leston, District 64; Heather Miller, Oregon City School Board; Matt Diepraam, Executive Director of the Ohio Rail Development Commission; and Kenny Yuko, candidate for Ohio’s 22nd Senate District.

Also addressing the body was Jennifer Garrison, a candidate for Ohio’s 6th Congressional seat. Her brother, Matt F. Dierig, a CSX locomotive engineer and Vice President of BLE&T Division 489 (Covington, Ky.)

T he Ohio State Legislative Board represents more than 2,600 active and retired members in 25 local Divisions.

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Brian J. Farkas elected chairman of Indiana State Legislative Board

Brian J. Farkas was elected by acclamation to serve as Chairman of the Indiana State Legislative at the Board’s quadrennial meeting in Indianapolis, October 8-9, 2014. Brother Farkas is a CSX locomotive engineer who has held continuous membership in BLET Division 121 (Indianapolis, Ind.) since September 1, 1997.

Also elected to the Board’s Executive Committee were: 1st Vice Chairman James R. Radke, Division 548 (Peru, Ind.), re-elected by acclamation; 2nd Vice Chairman Michael Harting, Division 754 (Elkhart, Ind.), re-elected by acclamation; Secretary-Treasurer Carl W. Fields, Division 682 (Hammond, Ind.), re-elected by acclamation; and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer Chris Hubbard, Division 343 (Princeton, Ind.), elected by acclamation.

All terms of office become effective November 1, 2014. Incumbent Chairman C. Ray Ford, Division 742 (Evansville, Ind.), who has served in that role since August 2013 following the retirement of Bill Verdeyen, will continue serving as Chairman until November 1.

Officers representing the BLET National Division at the meeting were: National President Dennis R. Piecz, and Vice President and National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman.

“I offer my congratulations and sincere thanks to all officers of the Indiana State Legislative Board for their commitment to representing our members in the proud state of Indiana,” President Pierce said. “Brother Farkas is a bright young man and a dedicated union officer. I have every confidence that he will excel in his new role as Chairman of the Indiana State Legislative Board. I would also like to thank Ray Ford for his leadership during his chairmanship of the Board after Brother Verdeyen retired.”

Additional BLET guests included Illinois State Legislative Board Chairman Paul Pieczanski and retired Indiana State Legislative Board Chairman Bill Verdeyen, who held the Chairman’s position for five terms prior to his retirement in 2013.

Brother Carl Fields, Coordinator of the BLET Safety Task Force (STF), gave a presentation regarding hazardous materials that focused on crude oil and ethanol transportation by rail.

Representative Scott Pelath (D-District 9, Michigan City, Ind.), the ranking minority leader of the Indiana House, was on hand to address the delegates. Also, the delegates heard a presentation from Mr. Sherrill Benjamin, U.S. Department of Labor, regarding the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) whistleblower program.

The Indiana State Legislative Board consists of 22 Divisions representing more than 1,200 locomotive engineers and trainmen throughout Indiana.

SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT for BLET DISABILITY AND WELFARE BENEFIT TRUST FUND

This is a summary of the annual report for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Disability and Welfare Benefit Trust Fund, 30-0262854/501, for the period from January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2013. The annual report has been filed with the Employee Benefits Security Administration, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

The plan has two contracts with Metropolitan Life Insurance Company to pay certain claims incurred under the terms of the plan. The total premiums paid for the plan year ending 12/31/2013 were $7,656,568.

Basic Financial Statement

The value of plan assets, after subtracting liabilities of the plan, was $8,286,046 as of 12/31/2013, compared to $8,983,377 as of 01/01/2013. During the plan year the plan experienced an increase in its net assets of $1,300,669. This increase includes unrealized appreciation or depreciation in the value of plan assets, that is, the difference between the value of the plan’s assets at the end of the year and the value of the assets at the beginning of the year or the cost of assets acquired during the year. The plan had total income of $8,202,293, including: earnings of $6,911,382, earnings from investments of $2,053,325, gains of $104,137 from the sale of assets and earnings from investments of $133,239. Plan expenses were $7,659,535 to insurance carriers for the provision of benefits.

Your Rights to Additional Information

You have the right to receive a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, on request. The items listed below are included in that report:

1. An accountant’s report;
2. Financial information and information on payments to service providers;
3. Assets held for investment;
4. Transactions in excess of 5% of plan assets; and
5. Insurance information including sales commissions paid by insurance carriers.

To obtain a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, write or call the office of Benefits Security Administration, 1370 Ontario Street, Standard Building, Cleveland, OH, 44113-1702, (216) 241-2630. The charge to cover copying costs will be $4.50 for the full annual report, or $.25 per page for any part thereof.

You also have the right to receive from the plan administrator, on request and at no charge, a statement of the assets and liabilities of the plan and accompanying notes, if any, or a statement of income and expenses of the plan and accompanying notes, if any, or both. If you request a copy of the full annual report from the plan administrator, these two statements and accompanying notes, if any, will be included as part of that report. The charge to cover copying costs given above does not include a charge for copying of these portions of the report because these portions are furnished without charge.

You also have the legally protected right to examine the annual report at the main office of the plan at 1370 Ontario Street, Standard Building Building, Cleveland, OH, 44113-1702 or at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, DC, or obtain a copy from the U.S. Department of Labor upon payment of copying costs. Requests to the Department should be addressed to: Public Disclosure Room, Room N-163, Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington DC 20210.

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*Accidental Death coverage is not available in California. Beneficiary Accidental Death coverage is not available in Texas.

(800) 514-0010 www.lecmpa.org

Retired ISLB Chairman Bill Verdeyen

National President Dennis Pierce

VP & NLR John Tolman

Members, officers and guests during the 2014 meeting of the Indiana State Legislative Board.
ICK CROW was elected by acclamation to his first full term as General Chairman of the Union Pacific-Northern Region General Committee of Adjustment at the GCA’s quadrennial convention in Las Vegas, Nevada, September 24-25, 2014. Brother Crow is a Union Pacific locomotive engineer and member of BLET Division 235 in 2000 and has held the position of Local Chairman of BLET Division 235 since 2010, and then reelected by acclamation four times. As a trainman on February 23, 1993. He serves as Chairman of the New Jersey State Legislative Board (NSLJB). It marked the first time in the United States that a BLET subordinate body became affiliated with a Teamster Joint Council, which represents over 62,000 Teamsters within New York and New Jersey. It is never an easy thing for loved ones to go through. Ryan’s family and friends have our deepest sympathy, and I extend the thoughts and prayers of all BLET members to Brother Frank and all of Ryan’s family and friends.”

A memorial service was held for Ryan on October 19, 2014, at the Centre at Arbor Place. In lieu of flowers or cards, the family requests that memorial gifts be made to the college funds of the children of Ryan Frank.

The BLET was saddened to hear of the passing of Ryan Frank, “I approach my work as a union officer,” Aird said. “The challenges that face us today are no different than the struggles that our forefathers in this organization faced at the time of our inception. We must stand together in these turbulent times to face the attacks of those who seek to destroy our way of life.”

Brother Kronsby served as Chairman of the New Jersey State Legislative Board (NSLJB). He was first elected to that position on March 26, 2010, and then reelected by acclamation in March of 2013. Brother Kronsby also represents approximately 1,000 locomotive engineers and trainmen, who work for the Union Pacific Railroad and Metra commuter lines.

The Union Pacific Northern Region General Committee of Adjustment represents approximately 1,000 locomotive engineers and trainmen, who work for the Union Pacific Railroad and Metra commuter lines.

MEMORIAL SERVICE TO BE HELD FOR SON OF ALABAMA SLBC M.D. FRANK

David Frank

**Photograph**

**AIRD, KRONYAK HIRED**

**Photograph**

**RAILROAD UNEMPLOYMENT AND SICKNESS BENEFITS**

**Photograph**

**RAILROAD UNEMPLOYMENT AND SICKNESS BENEFITS WILL SLIGHTLY DECREASE UNDER ADJUSTED SEQUESTRATION RATE**

Begninging October 1, 2014, the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) reduced railroad unemployment and sickness insurance benefits by 7.3 percent, up from the current 7.2 percent reduction, due to federal budget cuts first implemented in March 2013. These reductions are under the Budget Control Act of 2011 and a subsequent sequestration order to implement the mandated cuts. The law exempts social security benefits, as well as railroad retirement, survivors, and disability benefits paid by the RRB, from sequestration. The adjusted reduction amount is based on revised projections of benefits claims and payments under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act. It will remain in effect through September 30, 2015, the end of the fiscal year. Reductions in future fiscal years, should they occur, will be calculated based on applicable law. The daily benefit rate is $70, so the 7.3 percent reduction in railroad unemployment and sickness benefits will reduce the maximum amount payable in a 2-week period with 10 days of unemployment from $700.00 to $648.90. Certain railroad sickness benefits are also subject to regular tier 1 railroad retirement taxes, resulting in a further reduction of 7.65 percent. Applying the 7.3 percent reduction to these sickness benefits will result in a maximum 2-week total of $399.26. When sequestration first took effect in March 2013, railroad unemployment and sickness benefits were subject to a 9.2 percent reduction. This amount was then adjusted to 7.2 percent in October 2013. In fiscal year 2013, the RRB paid more than $11.7 billion in retirement and survivor benefits to about 592,000 beneficiaries, and net unemployment and sickness benefits of $95.7 million to more than 26,000 claimants.
 Are you a photographer? The National Division’s Public Relations Department, which produces the News-Letter each month, has received numerous inquiries lately from BLET members volunteering to contribute their images to the “Photo of the Month” section of the News-Letter. If you’d like to submit a photo for consideration, you may call Editor John Wesley at (216) 241-2630, ext. 248, or you can email him at News-Letter@blet.org. Please note only high resolution images can be used. Members are also encouraged to review their employer’s policies regarding the use of cameras and other electronic devices while on duty.

BLET MEMBERS TO KEEP HEALTH FA FSA PLAN FOR 2015

Your Track to Health

2015 Plan Year or the Carriers would have to right the plan down. Following the conclusion of the Open Enrollment period, effective for the 2015 Plan Year, 79% of eligible BLET members had enrolled in the plan. This number is down from last year’s participation number of 8.6% but still above the 7.5% threshold to keep the plan. All Future Plan Years, from 2015 forward, have to meet a minimum of 7.5% participation level in order to avoid possible cancellation of the FSA plan. As excepted as noted at the end of this paragraph, members eligible for the plan include locomotive engineers and Text service train employees. Enrollment for the 2015 Plan Year is expected to be below the required 64,625 members to keep the plan. This is a good program that will help members save money,” President Pierce said. “I am optimistic that par- ticipation levels will increase as mem- bers spread the word about its bene- fits and becomes more familiar with the possible benefits of the plan.”

Any members questions regar- ding the FSA should call United Healthcare at (877) 311-7849 or visit https://www.yourtracktohealth.com/.

BLET Members to Keep Health FSA Plan For 2015

In accordance with the BLET Bylaws, summaries of BLET Advisory Board members’ activities are published monthly:

NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER William C. Walpert—In accordance with the BLET Bylaws, summaries of BLET Advisory Board members’ activities are published monthly:

• National Division Office, Cleveland; General supervision of ac- \n• First Vice President E.L. (Lee) Pruitt: National Division Office, Cleveland; General supervision of activity, records department, internal communications, education and training departments, internal operations, strategic planning, strategic plan, National Division, Chicago, IL; 2014 Departmental Advisory Board meetings; 2014 First Vice Presidents Departmental Advisory Board meetings; Northeast, Midwest, Central, and Southern Region meetings; Supervision of local offices; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications; Supervision of the 2014 First Vice Presidents Departmental Advisory Board.

BLET Members to Keep Health FSA Plan For 2015

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The BLET Members to Keep Health FSA Plan for 2015...