President Pierce reelected by acclamation

“...I am humbled. I am honored. It’s a privilege to serve you. This is a great Union, and we can do great things as long as we stick together. So thank you again.” — Dennis Pierce

Dennis R. Pierce was re-elected by acclamation to his third full term as National President of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen at the union’s Fourth National Convention in Las Vegas on October 3, 2018. Additionally, all Advisory Board members were elected without opposition. Their terms of office will begin on January 1, 2019.

“I am humbled. I am honored,” President Pierce said. “It’s a privilege to serve you. This is a great Union, and we can do great things as long as we stick together. So thank you again.”

It also was announced that National Vice President Gil Gore and National Vice President Cole Davis would be retiring.

The following officers of the Advisory Board also were re-elected by acclamation: E. Lee Pruitt, First Vice President; Stephen J. Bruno, National Secretary-Treasurer; John P. Tolman, Vice President; and National Legislative Representative; Marcus J. Ruez, Vice President; Michael D. Twombly, Vice President; Michael D. Priester, Vice President; Richard C. Gibbons, Vice President; James P. Louis, Vice President; David P. Estes, Trustee; and William P. Lyons, Trustee.

Elected by acclamation to the office of National Vice President was current National Division Trustee Mark L. Wallace. Brother Wallace was elected by acclamation as National Division Trustee at the BLET’s Third National Convention in 2014, and he will fill the vacancy created by the pending retirement of Vice President Cole Davis.

New to the Advisory Board is General Chairman Alan Holdcraft, BNSF (former ATSF) GCA, who was elected by acclamation to the office of National Division Trustee. Brother Holdcraft will the vacancy created by the pending retirement of Vice President Gil Gore.

Also new to the Advisory Board is General Chairman Richard E. (Dick) Crow, Union Pacific-Northern Region, who was elected by acclamation to the office of National Division Trustee. Brother Crow fills the vacancy created by Trustee Mark Wallace, who was elevated to the office of National Vice President.

Twelve alternate officer positions also were filled by acclamation. They are as follows: David P. Estes, Alternate Secretary-Treasurer; Vincent G. Verna, 1st Alternate Vice President; and William P. Lyons, Trustee; Richard E. Crow, Union Pacific-Northern Region, who was elected by acclamation to the office of National Division Trustee; Garrison Best, 6th Alternate Vice President; Brian Carr, 7th Alternate Vice President; A. Dan Cook, III, 8th Alternate Vice President; and Jeff Thurman, 9th Alternate Vice President.

Throughout the week, delegates analyzed and voted on changes to the Brotherhood’s Bylaws, and heard reports from numerous guest speakers. The list of speakers included: Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa; Teamsters General Secretary-Treasurer Ken Hall; Teamsters International Vice President & Rail Conference Director John Murphy; BLET Auxiliary National President Serenna Hogan; Railroad Retirement Board Labor Member Walt Barrows; Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown; Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren; Nevada Senator Catherine Cortez Masto; Massachusetts Congressman Joe Kennedy, III; Ohio Congressman Tim Ryan; and National Transportation Safety Board Member Jennifer Homendy.

More in depth reporting will be provided in the next issue of the BLET’s Membership Magazine, Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal.
BLET PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY DENNIS R. PIERCE

United, Moving Forward

That’s 26 years and counting of Local Chairman for Division 98 in Lincoln, Neb.- Dennis Pierce, Ray Helm, Jerry Jensen and L.D. Gordon.

Rail Labor won these fights because the members of our Brotherhood and the other rail unions understood the need for solidarity and principle — and here’s the key part, Brothers and Sisters — unity in action.

In fact, by the first quarter of 2010, unions and the other rail unions understood the need for solidarity and principle — and here’s the key part, Brothers and Sisters — unity in action.

In addition to the eight-hour day law in 1918, a copy of that original legislation, along with a letter from President Wilson and the pen he used to sign that bill, are now on display in our Museums in Independence. We did all that without a union shop agreement, and the Brotherhood already has the actual legal right to exist.

In the recent landscape of union labor, we are like the railroad workers’ rights and progress unfulfilled, as well as the degree of individual involvement and personal sacrifice required to succeed.

Today’s hard to imagine how difficult it was during the early years, when BLE members were killed by federal troops for being on strike in Reading, Pennsylvania, in 1877. Some of you have heard this quote. In 1886, railroad tycoon Jay Gould actually bragged that he could “hire one half of the working class to kill the other half.”

The bosses’ favorite tool back then was divide and conquer. Congressman Ryan talked about it today. And it was done by geography, it was done by national origin, by immigrant accent.

We see it all again today, Brothers and Sisters; it is right in front of us. There are those that demonize people who don’t look like you or speak like you, people who don’t worship the same way you do. These are all attempts to divide us from one another. It’s been a given name. It’s called tribalism. It enters into almost all walks of life in America and most certainly into politics.

If you’ve been watching the news, you know that the days of a civil discourse are gone in this country. Once the average American is convinced that he or she is part of a political tribe, they’ve told to have a fight with everyone in a different tribe. This is completely contrary to the ideas that started our great union movement. We cannot allow the things that we may disagree on to divide us in our fight with the railroads.

Our shared fight for a fair work place requires that we stand together, not stand divided.

Our history and our success as a Brotherhood proves that we can defeat this divide-and-conquer effort by those who wish to remove the union movement from the landscape of America.

So, Brothers and Sisters, what we have to do, we have to get back to our roots as a union, and as a Nation. Getting back to our roots means standing together in solidarity and in pursuit of our common goals as Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

It means each and every member doing his or her part, attend union meetings, voting in elections and contact ratifications, answering the call when the mobilization network reaches out on an important issue.

In that way, we will prevail. I have hope that we will always prevail because we are united and we are moving forward.

Thank you very much.

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 official interpretations are made 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’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.

A adopts Cleveland, Ohio on July 23, 2009. 998
A two-year fact-finding effort by four U.S. House members found that unchecked corporate power is threatening workers and must be altered if the nation’s workforce is going to be able to thrive in the years to come.

Reps. Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.), Donald Norcross (D-N.J.), Mark Pocan (D-Wis.) and Mark DeSaulnier (D-Calif.) unveiled a report recently that shows the growing influence of big business on the policymaking process has led to stagnating wages and a weakening of workers’ rights.

“Our labor policies must keep up with the rapid changes to 21st century has brought,” Dingell said. “We traveled the country hearing directly from workers. They told us the decline in collective bargaining, worker representation and the ability to form unions doesn’t just hurt workers, it hurts our communities and our economy.”

While U.S. workers remain among the most productive in the world, the report stated, they are not profiting from it. Income inequality reigns supreme, thanks to economic changes that have allowed the corporate class to cash in from growth while those who toil for them struggle to make ends meet.

Lax antitrust enforcement, for instance, has allowed companies to consolidate across industries, resulting in fewer and fewer corporations controlling the wages and working conditions of a growing share of workers. The paper notes this is particularly true in rural areas, where only a few employ- ers may be posting jobs at a given time.

While unions have tradition- ally provided support for work- ers, the spread of so-called right-to-work laws and the recent Janus Supreme Court decision have threatened the ability of workers to join together and fight for better wages and working conditions.

That’s why it’s so important that lawmakers unveil a slate of proposals that they say will help tip the scales back in fa- vor of U.S. workers. They in- clude overturning the Supreme Court’s Citizens United ruling; strengthening antitrust en- forcement; banning stock buy- backs and curb the sharehold- er-first economy; and raising the minimum wage.

“With these recommenda- tions, we can create real change and restore the American promise that a job can provide economic security, an oppor- tunity to get ahead, a brighter future for you and your family,” Pocan said.

Fraternally,

JAMES P. HOFFA
Teamsters General President

The full letter can be found here: democrats-transportation.house.gov/imo/media/doc/09-17-18%20KCS%20brake%20inspection%20letter.pdf
ryan T. Aldridge was re-elected by acclamation to his third full term as Chairman of the Kentucky State Legislative Board at its quadrennial meeting in Louisville, Ky., August 28-30, 2018.

Brother Aldridge is a CSX locomotive engineer and has been a member of BLET Division 78 (Louisville, Ky.) since September 1, 2003. He was elected 1st Vice Chairman of the Board in October of 2006 and was elevated to Chairman in September of 2008 following the passing of long serving Chairman Tommy G. Mayne.

Brother Aldridge was subsequently re-elected by acclamation at quadrennial meetings in 2010, 2014 and 2018.

Also elected by acclamation were: 1st Vice Chairman Jeff P. Jones of BLET Division 199 (Danville, Ky.); 2nd Vice Chairman Justin Dzanz of BLET Division 365 (Louisville, Ky.); Secretary-Treasurer Daniel K. Maynard of Division 271 (Russell, Ky.); and Alternate Secretary-Treasurer David D. Marlin of BLET Division 508 (Fulton, Ky.). For Brother Jones and Brother Marlin, this represents their second full term of office. Brother Maynard begins his third term as Secretary-Treasurer.

Elected to serve on the Audit Committee were: Ken Ganote, Division 489 (Covington, Ky.); David Marlin, Division 508 (Fulton, Ky.); and Mark Elkins, Division 271 (Russell, Ky.). Brother Elkins also served as Guide during the meeting, along with Mark Kimbler, Local Chairman of BLET Division 78 (Louisville, Ky.).

Representing the BLET National Division at the meeting were: National President Dennis R. Pierce; First Vice President E. Lee Pruitt; National Secretary-Treasurer Stephen J. Bruno; and Director of Regulatory Affairs Vincent G. Verna.

“I am proud to congratulate Brother Aldridge and all officers of the Kentucky State Legislative Board, and I thank them for their commitment to our hard-working Brothers and Sisters in the proud state of Kentucky”, President Pierce said.

Guest speakers included Jeff Donohue, a member of the Kentucky State House of Representatives (47th District). Donohue is a 37-year member of the United Auto Workers and he has sponsored a two-person crew bill in the Kentucky State House each year for the last several years. Renel Brown, a challenger to represent the 29th District in the Kentucky State House of Representatives, also addressed the delegates. Brown is a 22-year City of Louisville firefighter and is a former member of the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen (BRC).

The BLET’s Kentucky State Legislative Board represents approximately 650 active members in 12 different BLET Divisions. They work for Norfolk Southern, CSX, and the Canadian National railroads.
2018 BLET NATIONAL CONVENTION PHOTO GALLERY

The new BLET Advisory Board that will be sworn in to office on January 1, 2019, from left: VP Mike Priester, VP Alan Holdcraft, VP Marcus Ruef, VP Jim Louis, Trustee Bill Lyons, First Vice President Lee Pruitt, VP and NLR John Tolman, National President Dennis R. Pierce, VP Mike Twombly, National Secretary-Treasurer Steve Bruno, VP Mark Wallace, VP Rick Gibbons, Trustee David Estes, Trustee Dick Crow, and Parliamentarian/BLET General Counsel Mike Wolly.

Salaries Committee, from left: G.W. Lund, S.P. Alexander, C.R. Jones and R.J. Dumey (Chairman).

Credentials Committee, from left: C.R. Hyde, M.J. Gaab (Chairman), B.H. Fransen, and C.J. Wagner.

Legislative Committee, from left: M.D. Frank, B.J. Farkas, D.K. Brown (Chairman), P.S. Pfeifer, and V.G. Verna (Liaison).

Bylaws Committee, from left: G.D. Best, L.R. Fannon Jr. (Chairman), B.P. Carr and K.J. Sexton.


The new slate of Alternate Officers of the BLET National Division elected by acclamation at the Fourth National Convention.

Members of the Arrangements Committee, chaired by Megan Mead.

Retiring Vice Presidents Cole Davis (left) and Gil Gore.
Piekarski elected to third term as Illinois SLB Chairman

S hane Hubbard was elected Chairman of the Indiana State Legislative Board at its 14th Quadrennial Meeting in Indianapolis on September 12-13, 2018. Brother Hubbard is a Norfolk Southern locomotive engineer who has held continuous membership in BLET Division 343 (Princeton, Ind.) since May 1, 1995. He was elected Alternate Secretary-Treasurer at the Board’s 2014 quadrennial meeting. Outgoing Chairman Brian J. Farkas said, “Brother Shane brings to the table many years of union activism to the board, which will no doubt benefit from his past experience. I wish him all the success as he begins his new term this fall.”

The Indiana State Legislative Board represents approximately 2,300 active and retired members in 40 different BLET divisions. Piekarski said all seven Class I railroads operate within the state, and approximately 25% of the nation freight passes through Illinois. It is also home to Metra, the nation’s second largest commuter rail system.

Piekarski elected to third term as Illinois SLB Chairman

D aniel Piekarski was elected to his third full term as Chair- man of the Illinois State Legislative Board at the Board’s 15th quadrennial meeting in Springfield, Ill., September 5-7, 2018. Brother Piekarski is a Union Pacific (formerly C&NW) locomotive engineer and one of the BLET’s three full time state legislative board chairman (California and Texas being the others). He has been a proud member of BLET Division 683 (Chicago) for over 44 years.

Also elected to the Board’s Executive Committee were: 1st Vice Chairman Chris Falaney of Division 683 (Chicago); 2nd Vice Chairman Rick Leschina of Division 32 (Aurora, Ill.); 3rd Vice Chairman Cory Martin of Division 135 (Beardstown, Ill.); and Secretary-Treasurer, Doug Pope of Division 444 (Granite City, Ill.).

Elected to serve on the Audit Committee were: Dan Thielemann of Division 613 (Dolton, Ill.); Rick Leschina of Division 32 (Aurora, Ill.); and Charles Greig of Division 602 (Champaign, Ill.).

Representing the BLET National Division were National President Dennis R. Pierce; National Secretary-Treasurer Stephen J. Bruno; Vice President and National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman; and Director of Regulatory Affairs Vincent G. Verna.

On behalf of the National Division, I am proud to congratulate Brother Piekarski and all officers of the Illinois State Legislative Board,” President Pierce said. “I also thank them for their dedication and willingness to serve our Brotherhood. I have every confidence they will do an outstanding job representing the interests of BLET members throughout the state.

Additional BLET guests included Minnesota State Legislative Board Chairman David Brown. Piekarski became 1st Vice Chairman of the Illinois State Legislative Board in 2004 and was elected by acclamation to that position at the Board’s 2006 quadrennial convention. He was promoted to the Chairman’s position following the retirement of C. Edward Way on May 31, 2010. Brother Piekarski was then elected by acclamation to continue serving as Chairman at the Board’s 2010 and 2014 quadrennial meetings.

The Illinois State Legislative Board represents approximately 2,000 members in 40 different BLET divisions. Piekarski said all seven Class I railroads operate within the state, and approximately 25% of the nation freight passes through Illinois. It is also home to Metra, the nation’s second largest commuter rail system.
Brother Brian P. Carr was elected by acclamation to the first full term as General Chairman of the Union Pacific-Western Lines General Committee of Adjustment during the GCA’s quadrennial meeting in San Diego, Calif., September 17-19, 2018.

Brother Carr has been a member of Division 692 (Tracy, Calif.) since he first joined the Brotherhood on March 1, 2000. He was elected by acclamation to serve the GCA as 1st Vice General Chairman in 2014, and was elected to the office of General Chairman effective October 1, 2017, following the retirement of D.W. (Bill) Hannah.

Also elected by acclamation were: 1st Vice Chairman Paul R. Ansberry, Division 158 (Sparks, Nevada); 2nd Vice Chairman Curt V. Houston, Division 415 (Roseville, Calif.); and 3rd Vice Chairman Kenneth B. Walker Jr., Division 28 (Tucson, Ariz.). Brother C.H. (Chuck) Fleming III of BLET Division 192 (El Paso, Texas) was reelected by acclamation to his fourth term as Secretary-Treasurer, and Paula-Tortozie of Division 5 (Los Angeles) was elected Alternate Secretary-Treasurer.

Appointed to serve as Trustees were: Curt V. Houston, Division 415 (Roseville, Calif.); Paolo Tortorizie, Division 5 (Los Angeles); and Jose L. Covarrubias, Division 214 (Long Beach, Calif.).

Representing the BLET National Division at the meeting were: National President Dennis R. Pierce, First Vice President E. Lee Pruitt; Vice President and National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman; National Vice President Michael D. Twombly; National Vice President Michael D. Priester; National Vice President R.C. (Rick) Gibbons; Director of Benefits A. Dan Cook III; and Director of Regulatory Affairs Vincent G. Verna.

“I am proud to congratulate Brother Carr and all officers of the UP-Western Lines General Committee of Adjustment,” President Pierce said. “I thank them for their service to our Brotherhood and I know they will do an excellent job of representing their members.”

Additional Brotherhood guests included: Texas State Legislative Board Chairman Gary Pedigo; California State Legislative Board Chairman Ryan Snow; National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman; National Vice President Michael D. Twombly; National Vice President Michael D. Priester; National Vice President R.C. (Rick) Gibbons; Director of Benefits A. Dan Cook III; and Director of Regulatory Affairs Vincent G. Verna.

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Dick Crow reelected UP-Northern Region General Chairman

Richard E. (Dick) Crow was elected to his second full term as Chairman of the Union Pacific-Northern Region General Committee of Adjustment during the GCA’s quadrennial meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada, September 26-27, 2018.

Brother Crow is a Union Pacific locomotive engineer and member of BLET Division 404 (Chicago, Ill.). He was elected to the office of 2nd Vice Chairman at the GCA’s quadrennial meeting in 2010, and was elected to the office of General Chairman in December of 2012 following the retirements of long-serving General Chairman Bruce MacArthur and 1st Vice Chairman, Mike Elsbury. Brothers MacArthur and Elsbury had each held office for seven terms. Brother Crow was elected to his first full term of office at the GCA’s quadrennial meeting in 2014. Elected by acclamation during the meeting were: 1st Vice Chairman K.J. (Joe) Cammins, Division 683 (Chicago, Ill.); 2nd Vice Chairman Daniel J. Lanan, Division 96 (Chicago, Ill.); and 3rd Vice Chairman Jason J. Carnes, Division 333 (St. Paul, Minn.). Brother Chris J. Wogener, Division 405 (Milwaukee, Wisc.), was elected to serve as Secretary-Treasurer, and Brother Tim W. McCue, Division 125 (Boise, Idaho), was elected Alternate Secretary-Treasurer.

Appointed to serve as Trustees were: Greg J. Vogel, Division 404 (Chicago, Ill.); Joel J. Mueller, Division 9 (Waseca, Minn.); and Joseph N. Gish, Division 6 (Boone, Iowa).

Representing the BLET National Division at the meeting were: National President Dennis R. Pierce; First Vice President E. Lee Pruitt; National Secretary-Treasurer Stephen J. Bruno; Vice President and National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman; National Vice President Michael D. Twombly; and Special Representative and Director of Education and Training Department Jason Wright.

“I am proud to congratulate Brother Crow and all officers of the Union Pacific-Northern Region GCA,” President Pierce said. “I also thank them for their willingness to serve our Brotherhood and to be involved in the union movement.”

The Union Pacific Northern District General Committee of Adjustment represents approximately 1,200 active locomotive engineers and trainmen, who work for the Union Pacific Railroad and Metra commuter lines.

See page 7 for Dick Crow addresses delegates during the 2018 quadrennial meeting of the Union Pacific-Western Lines GCA.
Teamsters: New NAFTA must be trilateral, address rail staffing concerns

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The following is a joint statement from Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa and Teamsters Canada National Director François Laporte in response to ongoing North American Trade Agreement (NAFTA) reform discussions taking place in Washington, DC now between U.S. and Canadian trade representatives and the need for a trilateral agreement.

The Teamsters are encouraged to see U.S. and Canadian representatives sitting down this week and trying to reach agreement on essential outstanding issues as part of NAFTA 2.0. Canada’s inclusion in any revamped trade deal is necessary if the Teamsters are ultimately going to endorse this pact.

Likewise, North American nations must be included in a freight rail fix the Teamsters and our Mexican rail union brethren are demanding that would protect the jobs of some 143,000 freight rail workers in the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

It builds off an agreement reached by the continent’s railway unions two decades ago, in the spirit of solidarity – that no movement of employees across borders would occur absent explicit agreement with the unions permitting it.

“The U.S. Teamsters-affiliated Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen and the TCRC, Teamsters all, and we expect that their existing collective bargaining agreements will be honored and their jobs will be protected from unilateral cross-border incursion under any new trilateral NAFTA replacement.”

OCTOBER 2018

Teamsters: NAFTA 2.0 must be trilateral, address rail staffing concerns

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