

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN *Journal*

VOLUME 114 | No. 2 | SUMMER 2011

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Education & Training

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in our Brotherhood's future **PG 14**

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BLET President's Message

BY DENNIS R. PIERCE, BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

A year of progress

One short year ago, I became National President of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen. When I assumed the Presidency, I made several commitments to the membership, and I would like to share with you our progress towards fulfilling those commitments in this edition of the Journal.

A year ago, I committed that the officers of the National Division would be visible in the field, meeting with members and officers at all levels. In addition to our attendance at regional meetings, I have attended nearly two dozen Local Division meetings all across the country in the past 12 months. My goal in attending these meetings is to hear directly from the membership on the issues that are important to you, and to share with you the progress on issues we are working on at the National Division. The information that I have garnered from these meetings has been invaluable to the National Division in our everyday activities.

I have also been honored to attend five General Committee meetings during the past year: one on BNSF, one on Union Pacific, one on Canadian National (the Wisconsin Central), one on CSX/Conrail Shared Assets and, most recently, the quadrennial meeting of the Canadian Pacific General Committee. Those meetings were also



At a meeting of BLET Division 1 in Detroit: Jim Louis, CSX/Conrail Shared Assets General Chairman; Dennis Pierce, BLET National President; and Greg Powell, Michigan State Legislative Board Chairman.

valuable in that the Local Chairmen present were able to better define the specific struggles that they face daily on each property. While the individual details vary from property to property, it is apparent to me that we face many of the same issues on all railroads across the country. Much like the information that we obtained at Local Division meetings, the information that we have gathered at these GCA meetings better prepares the National Division to assist the General Committees throughout our Brotherhood.

The Legislative Department of our Union is also very important. In the past 12 months, I have had the pleasure of attending State Legislative Board meetings in Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Texas and Wisconsin. The BLET's presence in the state houses

across the country, as well as in Washington, D.C., is more important now than ever, as workers and the organizations that represent them are under attack at every turn. Strong State Legislative Boards are central to that presence, and meeting face-to-face with the officers of the State Boards has helped us to better understand how the National Division can assist in each State's endeavors.

In all of the meetings that I have attended, I have maintained a common theme: that we must motivate our membership to become more involved in their Union. I have been joined in this effort by First Vice President Lee Pruitt, National Secretary Treasurer Bill Walpert and the other officers of the Advisory Board. If attendance at union meetings on the part of National Division officers increases participation, then

we have made steps towards that goal. As time permits, the officers of the National Division will continue to meet directly with BLET members.

One of the other methods that the National Division has focused on in our push for greater membership participation is the increased support and activity of our Mobilization networks. One of the biggest testaments to the power of mobilization came late last year, during our first ever rank and file election of officers. Our Mobilization networks worked hard, leading a non-partisan effort to encourage members to participate and exercise their right to cast a vote. Largely due to those efforts, almost 40% of our membership returned a ballot. This effort was a true grassroots effort where members contacted members, increasing participation in the election process. We continue to expand on our mobilization efforts with Mobilization workshops being conducted at all four Regional Meetings this year. This Brotherhood belongs to the members, and through their participation they make the Union stronger.

One of the other commitments that I made when I took office was to push hard for the changes that were needed to strengthen our rules on internal governance. During our Second National Convention last October, several resolutions that I submitted were adopted into Brotherhood

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OF TEAMSTERS

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»»» ON THE COVER: AMTRAK 538 IN FREMONT, CALIF., TAKING COMMUTERS NORTH TOWARDS OAKLAND AND SACRAMENTO. (photo: ©2010 by Steven M. Welch)



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BLET Advisory Board

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Dennis R. Pierce
NATIONAL PRESIDENT
1370 Ontario St., Mezzanine
Cleveland, OH 44113-1702
E PIERCE@BLE-T.ORG

E. "Lee" Pruitt
FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT
& ALTERNATE PRESIDENT
1370 Ontario St., Mezzanine
Cleveland, OH 44113-1702
E PRUITT@BLE-T.ORG

William C. Walpert
NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER
1370 Ontario St., Mezzanine
Cleveland, OH 44113-1702
E WALPERT@BLE-T.ORG

VICE PRESIDENTS

John P. Tolman
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE
25 Louisiana Ave. N.W., 7th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20001
E TOLMAN@BLE-T.ORG

Marcus J. Ruef
178 Fairway Dr.
Charles Town, WV 25414-5833
E MJRUEF@BLE-T.ORG

Michael D. Twombly
70 High St.
Andover, MA 01810
E MTCOTRAIN@AOL.COM

Willard E. Knight
P.O. Box 430
Wheelersburg, OH 45694
E BLETKNIGHT@GMAIL.COM

Gil L. Gore
4016 Paige Janette Dr.
Harvey, LA 70058
E GORE@BLE-T.ORG

Michael D. Priestester
1005 East Southport
Terre Haute, IN 47802
E PRIESTER@BLE-T.ORG

Cole W. Davis
20 Holman Rd.
Moberly, MO 65270
E DAVIS@BLE-T.ORG

Stephen J. Bruno
3428 Primrose Rd.
Philadelphia, PA 19114
E BRUNO@BLE-T.ORG

John Bentley Jr.

EDITOR
E BENTLEY@BLE-T.ORG

Bill Joyce

ART DIRECTOR, ASSISTANT EDITOR
E JOYCE@BLE-T.ORG

National Division

1370 Ontario St., Mezzanine
Cleveland, OH 44113-1702

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WAR ON WORKERS UPDATE

BLET members rally for workers' rights

BLET members from coast-to-coast have joined the fight to help protect collective bargaining rights for unionized workers following vicious attacks against organized labor in Wisconsin, Ohio, and other states.

Though most of the attacks have been against workers in the public service arena (teachers, fire fighters, police officers, state and county employees, etc...), BLET

members have shown solidarity with their public sector brothers and sisters.

"The attack against public sector unions is just one front in the War on Workers," BLET National President Dennis Pierce said. "We will continue to stand with our fellow workers. Not only to support them, but because it is only a matter of time before private entities like railroads decide the time has come to try to reduce our pay and benefits, too."

Thousands of BLET members who work for Amtrak and various other commuter railroads essentially are public workers because of taxpayer subsidies for passenger rail operations.

Since March, countless BLET members have participated in rallies and other public demonstrations to show support for public employees who have been under attack, and also to head off future attacks against labor. ☘

MINNESOTA:

"SAVE THE AMERICAN DREAM" SOLIDARITY RALLY IN MINNEAPOLIS, MINN., FEB. 26, 2011



Photos: submitted by David K. Brown Chairman, Minnesota State Legislative Board

Stop *the war on* workers

GET DAILY UPDATES: Events in the War on Workers are unfolding rapidly, and the best place to get the latest news is the BLET website. For daily rail industry news and updates in the War on Workers, visit www.ble-t.org/war-on-workers.



TENNESSEE: PRO-UNION RALLY IN NASHVILLE, TENN., MARCH 5, 2011.



Photos: submitted by Rusty Jones, Local Chairman, Division 239 (Knoxville, Tenn.)

MICHIGAN: RALLY TO PROTEST THE WAR ON WORKERS IN LANSING, MICH., MARCH 15, 2011



Photos: submitted by Greg Powell, Chairman, Michigan State Legislative Board

FLORIDA: HUGE LABOR RALLY IN ORLANDO, FLA., JUNE 4, 2011




Photos: submitted by Dave Lavery, Chairman, Florida State Legislative Board

The War Came By Train

The **Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen** was one of several sponsors for a recent exhibit at the B&O Museum in Baltimore, Md. "The War Came By Train" opened in mid-April in recognition of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War.

The American Civil War was the first major conflict where railroads played a prominent role, and the B&O Museum's roundhouse featured the

largest display of Civil War railroad equipment ever assembled. The BLET sponsorship ensured the exhibit detailed the important role that locomotive engineers played during the Civil War.

Representing the BLET National Division at the exhibit's opening ceremony were First Vice President E. "Lee" Pruitt and National Vice President Marcus J. Ruef. 



IN THE LINE OF DUTY

Thus far, 2011 has been one of the most deadly in recent memory for members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

In the first six months of 2011, five BLET members have been killed in the line of duty.

BLET National President Dennis Pierce extends heartfelt condolences and asks all BLET members to keep the victims' friends and families in their thoughts and prayers.

JAMES G. HADDEN

BLET member James Gregory Hadden was one of two crew members killed in Mineral Springs, N.C., on May 24, 2011.

A CSX locomotive engineer, Brother Hadden was just 35

years old. He was a member of BLET Division 498 in Abbeville, S.C. He joined the Brotherhood on March 1, 2003.

CHRISTOPHER L. CARTER

Veteran BLET member Christopher L. Carter, 57, drowned on his way to work on May 1, 2011, when his car was swept away by swiftly rising floodwaters in Mayflower, Ark.

Brother Carter was a member of BLET Division 858 in Pine Bluff, Ark. A Union Pacific engineer, Brother Carter had been a BLET member for more than 36 years, first joining the Brotherhood on February 1, 1975.

THOMAS H. ANDERSON

Brother Thomas H. Anderson, President of BLET Division 642 (Creston, Iowa) was



one of two rail workers killed on April 17, 2011, in a rear-end collision involving two BNSF Railway freight trains in McPherson, Iowa.

Brother Anderson, 48, joined the BLET on January 1, 2000.

THOMAS J. KENNY

Brother Thomas J. Kenny of BLET Division 238 (Tacoma, Wash.)




was one of three people killed when an off duty crew transport vehicle was struck

by a BNSF freight train near Longview, Wash., on March 23, 2011. A fourth crew member was left in critical condition.

Brother Kenny, 58, was a 22-year veteran of BNSF. He first joined the BLET on May 1, 1994.

STANLEY L. WATTS

Stanley L. Watts, Secretary-Treasurer of BLET Division 354 (Kankakee, Ill.), was killed on February 8, 2011, following a switching accident at a Norfolk Southern yard in Kankakee, Ill.

Brother Watts, 43, has been a member of the BLET since February 1, 2006. He was a Norfolk Southern locomotive engineer who was set back working as a conductor at the time of the accident. 

letters to the editor

Dear Editor:

This is in response to a letter from Michael W. Gondron that was printed in the Spring 2011 issue of the BLET Journal.

I have often thought the same thing about the media's lack of knowledge as to who really operates the locomotive. Another point that they usually report inaccurately is to give the status of the injured parties (minor, critical, fatal) and then state that the train crew was uninjured. This couldn't be further from the truth. I struck and killed a pedestrian that was trying to beat my train at a grade crossing back in 2002 and I can tell you firsthand that I will never forget that night. Even though I was physically uninjured, there is an emotional wound that will never heal.

Although I can't ever see reporters saying something like "the train crew only suffered emotional wounds," it would be nice to know that there are attempts to enlighten them. If your efforts to educate the media ever succeed,

hopefully they will become a bit more sensitive to all that a train crew experiences in a collision.

Respectfully,
David P. Gard
BLET Division 839
Richmond, Calif.

Dear Editor:

Thank you for this information. Many of us locomotive engineers and conductors are suffering from the effects of malfunctioning or bad order handbrakes on locomotives. These repetitive stress injuries and ailments that we are all suffering from — with 30+ years of locomotive and train operation — are becoming debilitating and very painful.

Thank you,
Fraternally yours,
Patrick A. Bruner
BLET Division 357
Minneapolis, Minn.

(Submitted via email in response to BLET News Flash, "BLET, UTU call for enhancement of locomotive

safety standards," issued on March 21, 2011.)

Brothers:

It is good to know that safety is and remains key to labor leaders. When we identify issues that affect our longevity and quality of life, a challenge to rectify is established and railroad companies, along with the Federal Railroad Administration, are given notice of potential liabilities for failure to act.

So it is important for all TE&Y employees to report all concerns and especially faulty equipment that impacts our safety and health. We all know that every day and on every shift there exists something that is worn out, broken, or inferior and has a negative effect on our bodies.

Brothers and Sisters, you must take the time to report everything! It is your responsibility and it is the right thing to do. United with our common goals of safety, security, and longevity through fair and equitable agreements and commitment, I have to believe

that we will succeed in our efforts.

Fraternally,
Sammy Holden
Local Chairman
BLET Division 918
N. Pleasanton, Texas

(Submitted via email in response to BLET News Flash, "BLET, UTU call for enhancement of locomotive safety standards," issued on March 21, 2011.)

WE WELCOME YOUR LETTERS

The Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal welcomes Letters to the Editor. Please include your name, address, BLET Division number, email address, and/or phone number on any submission. We reserve the right to edit your submission for grammar, punctuation, content and space considerations.

Address letters to:

Editor, Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal,
1370 Ontario St., Mezzanine,
Cleveland, OH 44113-1702.
Or email: Bentley@ble-t.org

PRESIDENT PIERCE MESSAGE

CONTINUED FROM
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law, making our rules more direct and more transparent. My goal is to ensure that all officers and members fully understand the seriousness of knowing and following the rules that have been established, to ensure that every member can be confident that our Union is on the right track and that every dues dollar is spent in an appropriate manner. The new edition of our Bylaws is now being printed, and all of the improvements on internal governance adopted by the Delegates in session will soon be distributed to the

field. Consistency in the way we provide representation and assistance is key to keeping the Brotherhood moving in the right direction, and our revised Bylaws are the cornerstone of that consistency.

Finally, I committed to the membership when I took office that I would support and expand our Education and Training Department. It is clear that to be a strong Union, we must have strong officers and members. That strength is best established when all involved are provided with the tools that they need to be most effective, and the best way to provide those tools is through regular education and training. Since

taking office, I have attended three of our Education and Training classes, one being a Legislative Representative class in Washington, D.C., and the other two being Local Chairmen classes in Silver Spring, Md., and Springfield, Ill. It is important for our officers to know that the National Division supports them as they work to represent our membership, and my attendance at these classes was to reinforce my strong commitment to that end.

Although our efforts to be in the field with the members and to encourage member participation have kept us very busy, it has not come at the expense of the day-

to-day efforts of the Union. We continue to streamline departments and functions in our Cleveland and D.C. offices, and we work diligently to provide necessary assistance to our General Committees, State Boards, and Local Divisions when the need arises. We face challenges on every front from the carriers and from anti-Union politicians. Beating back those challenges requires that we become a leaner, meaner machine, and we will build on the successes of the past year to refine and strengthen our operations at every level, moving our Union progressively into the future. 📣



Guest Columnist

BY SHERROD BROWN
U.S. SENATOR, D-OHIO

Investing in America



About the Author:

U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) is a champion of middle class families and workers rights. A leading proponent of American manufacturing, Brown is working with the Obama Administration on the creation of a national manufacturing policy that would invest in manufacturing innovation, strengthen our component supply chain, connect workers with emerging industries, and align our trade policies to promote our national interests. As a member of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee, Brown is also fighting to ensure federal infrastructure investments strengthen our nation's global competitiveness. Brown is married to Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Connie Schultz. They live in Lorain County, Ohio.

Communities in Ohio and throughout the United States are suffering from shrinking budgets at the local, state, and federal levels. But stretched budgets shouldn't mean stagnant investment in programs that can create jobs, strengthen our economy, and restore our middle class. A desire for fiscal austerity shouldn't mask ideological attempts to undermine economic growth and American workers.

Assaults on the legal right to organize and bargain collectively will not repair our dilapidated bridges. Challenges to hard-earned public safety protections will not create the infrastructure improvements needed to put Americans back to work.

This is not the time to denigrate locomotive engineers or disparage teachers — or any other hard-working American.

This moment demands that Congress take pro-active steps to create jobs and combat long-term joblessness. We must pass legislation that creates new jobs by making meaningful investments in our nation's infrastructure.



Supporting unions: Senator Brown with union workers in Steubenville, Ohio.

That's why I plan to introduce legislation creating a National Infrastructure Bank. The National Infrastructure Bank would provide financing — in the form of loans and guarantees — to support investments in critical infrastructure including: railroad, highways, broadband, and water systems.

For generations, investing in infrastructure has been key to our nation's economic growth. A strong transportation network — from the transcontinental railroad to the interstate highway — is a key reason for our nation's economic vitality. Our nation's railroads opened up an entire continent — where railroads were laid, prosperity

often followed.

Similarly, a failure to tackle our crumbling infrastructure and invest in the public works projects that will grow our economy puts America at a competitive disadvantage. A lack of public investment in roads, rails, and ports will hinder our manufacturers' ability to compete in the global marketplace. And a lack of investment in broadband and information technology will impede the development of a high-speed, knowledge-based economy. Either way, the result is the same: by failing to invest in our infrastructure jobs, capital will flow to other countries, like China, that are willing to invest in their infrastructure.

We must pass legislation that creates new jobs by making meaningful investments in our nation's infrastructure.



Supporting public transportation: Senator Brown at the “Transit Takes Me To Work” rally in Washington, D.C.

By providing financing for large-scale projects, like high-speed rail, and encouraging private sector investment, a National Infrastructure Bank would allow the most essential projects to be built.

An Ohio resident recently wrote to me that “fast, frequent, and dependable trains are key to attracting global businesses and the best talent.” I agree. That’s why we need to support the workers who build and repair railroad tracks so that we can move toward a 21st century transportation infrastructure in Ohio and throughout the United States.

Infrastructure investments create new jobs. According to an Alliance for American Manufacturing report, an estimated 18,000 new jobs would be created for every \$1 billion in new infrastructure investment (www.americanmanufacturing.org/content/

how-infrastructure-investments-support-us-economy-employment-productivity-and-growth).

A sound infrastructure is a solid foundation on which to build a stable economy and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) is critical to moving America forward. BLET’s work is integral to encouraging business growth. Every day, locomotive engineers in Wisconsin, conductors in California, and train service employees in Ohio ensure that American trains deliver goods and people efficiently and safely.

In addition to passing common-sense legislation, we must continue to fight against petty ideological divisions that act as a roadblock to achieving a full economic recovery.

We need to challenge ill-considered legislation that takes away workers’ rights to

collectively bargain not only for fair wages, but also for safety equipment that reduces workplace injuries.

Throughout its history, BLET has played an integral role in ensuring that workers have the resources and safety skills needed to perform their jobs well.

Now is not the time to pit workers against management or government against business. We cannot afford to govern by ideology. Conservative Washington politicians have a responsibility to abandon their ideological agenda and work with their colleagues — regardless of party affiliation — to get down to the serious business of reducing the deficit without destroying jobs or balancing the budget on the backs of middle-class families in Ohio and across America.

We must fight to ensure that the budgets — at local, state, and federal levels — re-

flect the values we hold dear. The budget is not just a financial document; it is a written record of our priorities as a people.

The choice before us is clear: we can choose to focus on divisive tactics that pit worker against worker or we can pursue a common-sense plan that invests in our future and not only creates good-paying middle class jobs but also ensures our nation’s economic competitiveness for years to come.

We must remember that, the story of the BLET is the story of our nation. This history shows that Americans of all backgrounds — have and can again — pull together to build a nation equipped to meet the challenges that we face. Today that focus should be on job creation for a strong and stable middle class, and through infrastructure investments, we can help make this possible. 🗣️



BLET *First Vice President's Message*

BY E. "LEE" PRUITT, BLET FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Organizing for strength

Bringing dignity and respect to short line workers

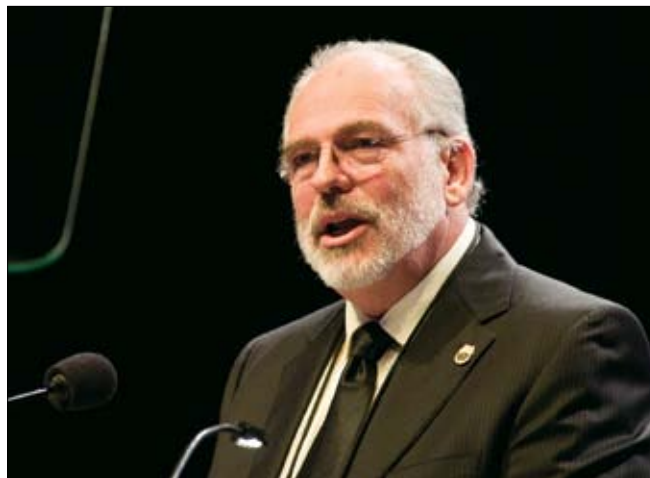
Business has been booming in the short line freight railroad industry so far in 2011. That's good news for the Class I railroads, as the short lines serve as feeder lines to the nation's largest railroads. More importantly, it's also good news for the BLET.

A robust rail industry means good, steady jobs for our members — many of whom were furloughed in the harsh economic climate of the not too distant past.

But the booming short line industry also stands as a potential benefit to our organization as a whole. The typical short line railroad worker is a non-union worker, and short lines represent the largest pools of potential new BLET members in the railroad industry today.

As the head of the BLET's Short Line Organizing Department, it's my goal to tap into that pool of non-union workers to grow the Brotherhood over the next several years. As the short line industry grows and prospers, so will our opportunity to organize.

In the first four months of 2011, short lines posted a nine percent gain in traffic levels. That includes an 11.5 percent gain in chemical loadings, which is the short line industry's largest commodity. RailAmerica, the



As the short line industry grows and prospers, so will our opportunity to organize.

biggest owner and operator of short line railroads in the United States, posted a net profit of \$17.9 million in the fourth quarter of 2010.

But short line workers are on the outside looking in as rail corporations and Wall Street investors enjoy unprecedented growth and record-breaking profits. A good BLET-negotiated contract would guarantee that they received fair compensation and guaranteed wage increases, instead of depending on the whims of rail management to decide their raises (if any).

With many short line workers, joining a union also is a matter of dignity and respect. Most short lines do not recognize the seniority system, so junior workers often leapfrog their seniors for bet-

ter work assignments (with those work assignments being made by management).

Likewise, short line managers often fail to recognize craft lines or the professional skills of locomotive engineers and trainmen. An engineer could be called upon to operate a locomotive in the morning, but then assigned to clean the yard office cafeteria in the afternoon. A BLET contract would give short line workers the respect they deserve by prohibiting such outlandish assignments.


To further our goal of organizing America's short line industry, the National Division this spring hired a new Director of Organizing. Brother Kent Confer (BLET Division 623 in McCook, Neb.) will be responsible for

coordinating all organizing efforts for the BLET National Division. He will also coordinate all BLET mobilization efforts west of the Mississippi River and will handle other duties as assigned by the National President.

I echo the sentiments of National President Dennis Pierce in welcoming Brother Confer on board and expressing every confidence that he will continue to do an excellent job for our Organization, as he has done in the past.

BLET members can rest assured that their level of representation will remain just as strong as we begin our campaign to organize new members.

Strengthening the Brotherhood through organizing is just one of the many challenges on our agenda for 2011 and the years ahead. I would be remiss if I did not mention issues of great importance to the vast majority of our membership, such as national negotiations, high-speed rail, and corrections to the Railroad Safety Improvement Act — just to name a few.

Our dynamic Advisory Board members are more than capable of meeting the many challenges that lie ahead in the struggle to enforce our contracts, negotiate wage increases, secure safety improvements, and provide an overall better quality of life. 



BLET National Secretary-Treasurer's Message

BY WILLIAM C. WALPERT, BLET NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER

What have you done for your union lately?

In light of attacks on unions, BLET members will be called on to step up to the plate

In the past few months, conservative politicians have inundated the American public with extremist legislation which has as its ultimate purpose the eradication of collective bargaining rights and the subjugation of the middle class. During these attacks, ordinary Americans and union members who are fed up with such inequities have struck back with protests, marches, and rallies — and making their voices heard at the ballot boxes.

The awakening of a sleeping giant has reminded me of the hard-fought battles carried out in the past by our proud members to achieve what we have today. The wages we earn today as Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen did not come without a price paid by the sweat and blood and toil and lives of our predecessors. Unions did not achieve the eight-hour work day, sick days, vacation, workplace safety regulations and health standards, railroad retirement, the minimum wage, pensions, insurance plans and benefits, child labor laws, retirement at age 60, unemployment insurance, disability pay, overtime pay, laws regarding discrimination and harassment in the workplace (to name a few) without extreme sacrifice and toil.

The stark words of the



“Shoot the strike to pieces”: Railroads hired armed Pinkertons to shoot at workers to break the infamous CB&Q strike of 1888.

booklet published by the BLET, *History of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers* (1998) say it best:

“[In the Baltimore & Ohio strike of 1877] soldiers fired on the strikers, killing and wounding several of them. In Reading, Pa., 10 were killed and 40 wounded. In Pittsburgh, shots were fired into hostile crowds and the result was 21 killed and 29 wounded, among them women and children. And now the slogan was adopted by the railroads: ‘Shoot the strike to pieces;’ and this the troops did effectively.”

“[The 1888 BLE strike of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy] was one of the most bitterly contested disputes

ever to be placed before the American public. The Burlington did everything within its power to break the strike. . . . Pinkerton detectives were armed with repeating rifles, and the courts were called upon to protect the rights of property. Some of the strikers were arrested and hauled before biased judges. Several engineers were set upon by thugs and killed.”

In the next few months, members of the BLET may be called upon to contribute; however, this will not be a monetary contribution. They may be summoned to be a part of the grassroots involvement of the membership known as mobilization. They may be asked to call their

congressmen, to participate in rallies, to hand out flyers, to do whatever is necessary to achieve the goals of the organization to provide a better life for all BLET members and their families.

When I hear words from those who cry, “What is the BLET doing for me besides taking my money for dues,” I think of the words of the philosopher George Santayana who said, “Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.” Complacency and apathy are the bane of union members. Remember the struggles of those who came before us. Remember what they achieved. Don’t let it slip through our grasp. ☘



Guest Columnists

BY JAMES P. HOFFA, TEAMSTERS GENERAL PRESIDENT
& JOHN MURPHY, DIRECTOR, TEAMSTERS RAIL CONFERENCE

War on Workers continues

I want to thank all of our rail conference members, and especially those of the BLET, that were with me in Wisconsin, Indiana, and Ohio to support public employees who are under attack by the right-wing.

We've been preparing for a fight with extremist Republicans since the November elections. Sure enough, newly-elected governors immediately set to work trying to dismantle union strength that protects all working people. Further attacks on workers are expected in more states as the year progresses. The Teamsters are fighting back by galvanizing public support for collective bargaining rights for all workers.

When I joined in the rally inside the state Capitol in Madison, Wisc., I saw tens of thousands of union members and their supporters converged in the main rotunda and transforming it into "the people's house." All of the rallies that you and your Brother and Sister Teamsters have marched in are showing corporate politicians that we will not stand down. The corporate executives on Wall Street, who

continue to receive golden parachutes and perks, are running up against a tidal wave of public criticism.

The Republicans in the U.S. Congress are threatening our victory last year with the National Mediation Board (NMB). The NMB ended years of unfair voting rules that did not properly weigh the votes of employees who cast them. The Board changed the rule for validating elections so a simple majority of those voting wins. It is outrageous that politicians, bankrolled by billionaires and CEOs, want to strip those basic freedoms from rail and airline workers.

Unions like the Teamsters built the middle class. Today, we are leading the way toward improving the lives of hundreds of thousands of workers and their families. We will continue to fight for your rights in the workplace and to defend our country's middle class.

Fraternally,

JAMES P. HOFFA
TEAMSTERS GENERAL
PRESIDENT

About the Authors:



James P. Hoffa grew up on picket lines and in union meetings. He is the only son of James R. Hoffa, former General President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. On his 18th birthday, Hoffa received his own union card and was sworn in by his father. Prior to becoming Administrative Assistant to Michigan Joint Council 43, Hoffa was a labor lawyer in Detroit for 25 years.

Power through unity

Bargaining for the national freight rail contract is underway and your leaders, as well as those of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division (BMWED), the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen, the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, the National Conference of Firemen and Oilers and the Sheet Metal Workers Union are united in their plan to achieve the best contract possible. In 2004 when you voted to merge with the Teamsters and form the Rail Conference, the IBT immediately began formulating ways in which its resources could bolster your bargaining power. You had a lot at stake with 8,000 members covered under your national contract. The last negotiations proved that standing strong with our support and a coalition of six other unions gave you unprecedented clout.

The rail carriers are once again claiming their sad stories of economic woe, but you

know as well as we do that they are making a great deal of money each and every year. In fact, their profits continue to set record highs. A balance sheet doesn't lie so we are pushing ahead with our goal of securing good pay raises and benefits

Our country's infrastructure is desperate for rebuilding. The high speed rail program in Illinois is already underway and it has meant continued employment for our brothers and sisters in the BMWED. Once the line is completed, you will be running high-speed trains from Chicago to St. Louis. Amtrak's Northeast Corridor is another line that needs updating in order to handle a higher speed infrastructure. It is a priority for the IBT's legislative program.

All members of the Teamsters Rail Conference benefit from a robust, high speed rail plan. Please contact your state and federal representatives to ask that the funds keep flowing.

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www.teamster.org

JOHN F. MURPHY
DIRECTOR, TEAMSTERS
RAIL CONFERENCE
AND INTERNATIONAL
VICE PRESIDENT



John Murphy has been an Eastern Region Vice President since 1998. He spearheaded merger negotiations with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees and now serves as Director of the Rail Conference. Murphy has also been the Secretary-Treasurer of Local 122 in Boston since 1980.

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BLET

Education & Training Department

AN INVESTMENT THAT PAYS DIVIDENDS



Secretary-Treasurer Workshop: Vancouver, Wash., March 13-16, 2011.

When delegates attending the Brotherhood's 1991 national convention originally approved language to establish the Education & Training Department, they helped create what would become one of the crown jewels of the organization and the envy of the entire labor movement.

The only flaw in their plan, however, was the failure to establish a dedicated funding source for the new department.

"Many times, we operated on a shoe string budget, cutting corners when we had to," said BLET National Secretary-

Treasurer Bill Walpert, who has served as Director of the Education & Training Department since its inception 20 years ago.

After a long and vigorous debate, a majority of delegates at the Second National Convention in 2010 voted to adopt a resolution providing \$1 per member per month towards the Education & Training Department. It is a smart investment that will pay dividends.

Plans for the future

According to National President Dennis R. Pierce, it will become the

primary funding source for the Education & Training Department. "The plan will be to offer more training than we do today," President Pierce said.

Additionally, a large scale plan is currently in the works is to establish a state-of-the-art Education & Training Center in the Standard Building, home of the BLET National Division headquarters in Cleveland.

"One of our biggest assets, left to us by a previous forward-thinking generation, is the Standard Building," NST Walpert said. "This 22-story building at the corner of Ontario Street and St.



Secretary-Treasurer Workshop: Atlanta, Ga., February 27-March 2, 2011.

Clair Avenue is located in the heart of downtown Cleveland. We are meeting with architects and developers to entirely renovate our second floor, turning it into a state-of-the-art training center for our members.”

Preliminary plans for the proposed training center would feature a large, comfortable classroom for the numerous workshops the Education & Training Department holds each year. There are also plans for a modern computer lab, large conference room, lounge and offices.

Not only will there be a centralized Education & Training Center in Cleve-

land, the Department will also use funding to hold workshops throughout the country. The goal is to take the workshops to the members so it will be easier for them to attend.

NST Walpert stressed that the Education & Training Department will still continue to rely on assistance from the North American Railway Foundation (NARF), which has made significant contributions to the growth of the Education & Training Department over the years. NARF provides a per diem to members who successfully complete the workshops, and contributed approximately \$130,000 in per

diem payments from October 2008 through September 2010.

“Delegates to the 2010 convention deserve our thanks for their foresight in supporting the Education & Training Department,” National President Pierce said. “Their actions will help train and educate current and future generations of BLET officers and members, securing the strength and success of our Brotherhood for decades to come.”

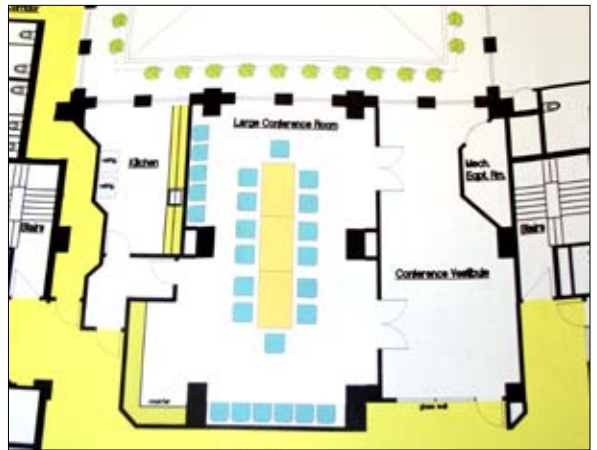
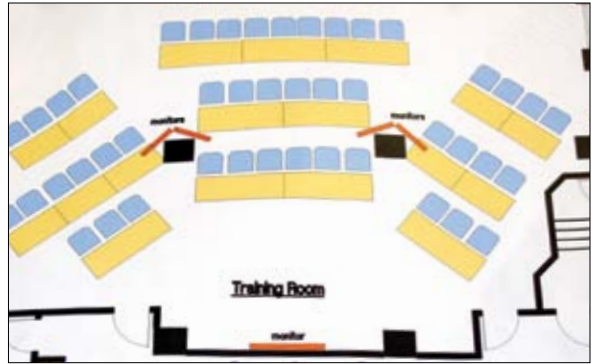
New developments regarding the Education & Training Department will be announced on the BLET website, in the monthly newsletter, and in the BLET Journal.



BLET Bylaws:

The Education & Training Department shall provide training to Officers and Members at all levels of the Brotherhood in order that they may:

“... improve their performance in their interactions within the union; between the union and management, between the union and the public, between the union and the various local governments, and with all other labor movements and activities.”



NST Bill Walpert: (left) Teaching at one of the many BLET workshops. He has served as Director of Education & Training since the department was established in 1991. **Blueprints:** (right) preliminary renderings of the proposed Education & Training Center.

IN SUPPORT OF EDUCATION

During the lengthy debate about the Education Fund during the Second National Convention in Reno (October, 2010), many delegates spoke in favor of the BLET Education & Training Department. Some of their statements are reproduced below:

C.W. CASLER,
Div. 202 (Dilworth, Minn.)
“As a brand-new local chairman, I’d like to thank Brother Walpert and the Education and Training Department. I found the services invaluable in performing my duties.”

MARK BIRCH,
Div. 255 (Steubenville, Ohio)
“My Division has benefited quite a bit from the National Division’s education programs.”

H.C. ROLEN,
Div. 285 (Thayer, Mo.)
“Apathy has been one of the biggest things we’ve talked about in this organization. How do you defeat apathy? With a strong education department. If we want to defeat apathy, we’re going to have to invest in education. On the BNSF, local company officers leave for the company headquarters four times a year. They’re going down for training. They’re going down

for training to defeat our interests and our members’ interests. They’re not on vacation when they go down there. They’re training, and we better be too if we want to keep up.”

STEVE SNYDER,
Div. 104 (Spokane, Wash.)
“If you look around, just in this room, how many people are going to retire before we come to meet again? There are new guys who are going to be

stepping up into these seats, and they have to have education.”

BILL VERDEYEN,
Div. 754 (Elkhart, Ind.)
“I was at the convention in 1991, and it was very obvious that we created a department and we didn’t fund it. Brother Walpert stood up in front of us and asked to do more. We’re offering him the opportunity to educate our membership better than what we’re doing right now.”

D.K. BROWN,
Div. 517 (St. Paul, Minn.)
“Without the education that I received when I became a new Chairman, I wouldn’t have been able to pass a crew van bill in the state of Minnesota that gave us \$1 million uninsured/underinsured insurance. For a buck we can educate and train new members, existing members, and keep the wheels of this great union moving forward. When you



Legislative Representative Workshop: Washington, D.C., February 13-17, 2011.

can show your members that you're on top of it, you're going to gain members; so we'll grow this union."

D.W. CARROLL,
Div. 660 (Los Angeles, Calif.) "The carriers have merged into huge superpowers. If you think for one minute that we could negotiate contracts, fight for our members and win, and compete with these superpowers without Education & Training, you are wrong. Training and education is power. One cannot possibly put a price on education. Don't go back to your members and say you raised the dues."

But, instead, tell them that you and them are helping to make us all stronger and more powerful against the carriers."

W.P. ELLIOTT,
Div. 88 (North Platte, Neb.) "One dollar a month is nothing. And the money that we get back for our members in arbitration cases and time claims outweighs that dollar 50 to 1. Let's give the National Division \$1 of our dues money so we can represent the members the best we can and tell the carrier to kiss our ass."

M.J. CORRIGAN,
Div. 174 (Stevens Point, Wisc.) "A dollar — it


goes for education. It's the only way to advance for the future. We're looking out for our children, for our grandchildren, for everybody in our family. It's all about the future, Brothers and Sisters."

D.M. CLARK,
Div. 892 (Seattle, Wash.) "I was a beneficiary of the training. Our Division couldn't pay to send me there; I took vacation to go. The importance of it was huge. When I got to be Local Chairman, the old Local Chairman gave me a box and said, 'Here's your stuff, kid.' And that was basically it, without training. We're putting guys

out there that want to make things better, but we've got to give them the tools."

R.W. PICKET,
Div. 599 (Shreveport, La.) "I truly believe that my members from Nettleton, Texas; Wylie, Texas; Pittsburg, Kansas, we've all benefited from the Education Department. We just got \$267,000 worth of back pay, and now the carrier still doesn't know how to lick their wounds. And I believe they are back at the table wanting to deal and not be so aggressive."

KEITH STAUBER,
Div. 163 (Proctor, Minn.) "Not one of the mem-

bers that I have represented since I went to the Local Chairmen workshop has complained about the cost of education when I got them \$1 or \$5 or \$10 worth of pay, or 10 days worth of pay. Not one of my dismissed members has complained about the cost of education when I got them their job back. Not one of my members complained about the cost of education when — through the Arbitration Department with the assistance of Brother Marcus Ruef — we put a million dollars in the pockets of my small Division's members." 

Stephen J. Bruno
National Vice President





Stephen J. Bruno

New BLET Vice President stands up for the rights of rail workers

It's not every day that a representative from the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen testifies before the United States Congress.

But newly elected National Vice President Stephen J. Bruno made the most of his opportunity on April 7, 2011 when he testified before the powerful House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee. The Republican-controlled subcommittee called the hearing at the behest of railroad management, and the hearing focused on ways to reduce regulatory "burdens" on railroads in order to increase their profitability.

In very pointed language, Vice President Bruno told the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials to keep their hands off of rail safety regulations.

"The BLET believes although Congress has a place in broadly defining areas of safety that must be addressed as a matter of public policy, regulation is best written in a fashion that allows for those with a stake in the rules to have a hand in their creation and amendment," Bruno said.

Rail safety is something Vice President Bruno knows all about. Prior to winning election by acclamation as a National Vice President in October of 2010, Bruno gained a wealth of experience regarding railroad safety as the BLET's Director of Regulatory Affairs in Washington D.C. and as General Chairman of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) General Committee of Adjustment.

The April 7 hearing was titled, "Railroad and Hazardous Materials Transportation Programs: Reforms and Improvements to Reduce Regulatory Burdens."

"The BLET believes that the best regulations are crafted with the input of stakeholders in the regulatory process and should not unilaterally be changed by Congress at the behest of the railroads," Bruno said.

He also drew the Subcommittee's attention to positive train control and the hypocrisy of the railroads' position on the technology.

"PTC is a safety overlay that will significantly reduce human factor related accidents and prevent loss of life,"


Bruno said. "The railroads' suggestion that they will implement other alternative safety practices and devices which will provide an equivalent level of safety is a disingenuous statement. These technologies have been available for decades and they are now only proposing to install them to avoid the PTC mandate. If the PTC mandate is removed, the railroads' incentive to install these alternatives is likewise removed."

He also cautioned against the privatization of Amtrak and urged the Subcommittee to consider taking up the BLET's technical corrections to the hours of service portion of the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008.

Vice President Bruno joined the BLET in May of 1985 after earning promotion to the position of locomotive engineer at SEPTA. In 1987, he became the Local Chairman of Division 71 (Philadelphia, Pa.) and held that position until 2002. He also held the position of General Chairman from 1989-2002.

During his years of BLET membership, he has also held the positions of Alternate Vice President, Chairman of the Eastern General Chairmen's Association, and was the chairman of the joint caucus at the 2006 National Convention.

He began working for the National Division as Director of Regulatory Affairs in 2008. In that capacity, he represented the interests of all BLET members in all regulatory matters, including those before the Department of Transportation, National Mediation Board, National Transportation Safety Board and the Transportation Security Administration, among others.

He represented the BLET on numerous collaborative endeavors such as the Rail Safety Advisory Committee with the FRA. He prepared the union's comments submitted in response to various agencies' proposals for rulemakings and proposed rules (such as the Federal Railroad Administration, Department of Transportation, Transportation Security Administration and Surface Transportation Board). He also prepared comments submitted in response to petitions for waiver from compliance with FRA regulations. He was headquartered at the BLET's National Legislative Office in Washington, D.C. 

STEPHEN J. BRUNO BIO

Title: National Vice President

Railroad: SEPTA

Member: Division 71 (Philadelphia, Pa.)

Background: Hired out in 1984. Earned promotion to locomotive engineer for SEPTA in 1985.

Union history: Served as President, Local Chairman & Delegate to national convention Division 71; General Chairman (SEPTA); Chairman Eastern General Chairmen's Association; Alternate Vice president; Director of Regulatory Affairs; Elected National Vice President by acclamation in October, 2010.

Personal: Married with two children. Enjoys reading, music, theatre, fishing, bicycling and golf.



Cole W. Davis
National Vice President



Cole W. Davis

BLET members benefit as VP Davis pays it forward

Cole W. Davis believes in paying it forward. In his personal life and on the job as a newly-elected National Vice President of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, Davis believes in helping those in need as a way of giving thanks for the blessings he has received.

He and his wife Denise have been blessed with five children (Cory, Beau, Dani, Jamie and Addie) and five grandchildren (Josh, Ella, Cade, Cole and Cruz). The couple has paid it forward by caring for over 30 foster children during their marriage.

“Denise and I have been so blessed in life with having each other, a wonderful family, great friends and an awesome faith community; it just wouldn’t be right not to look for ways to give back,” Davis said.

Davis said that, after their third child, he and Denise were trying to decide whether or not to have another child or to adopt one. A good friend suggested foster parenting, and over the course of time, they just kept taking in foster children. “It seemed like there was always another child that needed a home,” he said.

Vice President Davis also pays it forward in his work for the BLET, paving the way for current and future engineers and trainmen. He has been a proud member of the BLET for over 35 years.

“There are so many times when you can help out members in need and it is very gratifying,” Davis said. “I enjoy being able to help the members but I don’t enjoy the politics. I find it very troubling when I see union officers using their position for self-serving purposes or abusing the trust the membership has placed in them. We are elected to serve — not be served.

“As union leaders we must not only lead but we must teach the next generation how to lead. If we don’t pass on our knowledge and skills to our younger brothers and sisters we are dooming them to failure. That’s why it was so great to see the delegates support the BLET Education and Training program at the last National Convention.”

As a General Chairman, Vice President Davis has helped negotiate quality contracts that create better jobs

than when he hired out on the Norfolk & Western Railroad in Moberly, Mo., in 1968.

“Folks say things were better in the good old days, but that’s not always the case,” Davis said.

For example, he noted that there was no air conditioning in locomotives when he hired out. Nor were there sound-proof locomotives, and the roar of engines caused a generation of engineers to suffer from hearing impairment. Ribbon rails make the rides smoother and less jarring on an engineer’s body. It was not uncommon to be forced to assignments miles away from your home without any expense allowance.

As a union officer, he has negotiated agreements over the years that have addressed the technological advances in the industry. His agreements have also improved the quality of life for members by giving them scheduled days off, allowing them to set back as trainmen at their home terminals instead of being forced away from home and scheduling assigned trains. “Quality of life is everything, and we need to keep working to get

that for the membership,” he said.

However, he acknowledges there is still room for improvement. “We can’t seem to make headway with the Hours of Service, and engineers are still on call all the time,” he said. “I’d like to see all scheduled service or a 10-hour call or a combination of both, so our members know when they’re going to work.”

In addition to quality of life issues, he helped negotiate contact that have provided his members with greater earning power. The 2008 on-property agreement with Norfolk Southern provided wage increases and additional benefits estimated at over 30 percent over a five-year period. And he negotiated the first trip rates for engineers on the NS property that resulted in increasing the pay for post-1985 engineers. The Wheeling Lake Erie engineers and trainmen received over a 20 percent wage increase in 2008.

“When I hired out everyone said I was working for a dying industry, I don’t hear that now. Everyone said the unions were choking the industry to death, I still hear that. Time has proved both statements false. I’m proud to be a union member and I’m proud to be a railroad engineer.”

COLE W. DAVIS BIO

Title: National Vice President

Railroad: Norfolk Southern (former N&W)

Member: Division 86 (Moberly, Mo.)

Background: Hired out in 1968 for the N&W. Promoted to engine service in 1972. Promoted to engineer in 1976.

Union history: Served as Local Chairman, Division 86; Vice General Chairman and then General Chairman (NS-Northern Lines). Elected National Vice President by acclamation in October, 2010.

Personal: A member of St. Pius X Catholic Church and active in Cursillo (a worldwide movement in the Catholic Church) and a member of the Knights of Columbus. Currently president of Randolph County Sheltered Workshop board of trustees.

Under attack

The War on Workers also targets BLET, Rail Labor

The War on Workers has been widely discussed in BLET publications, on the news and on the internet, but the focus has been mainly on the state level.

Governors and legislators in several states have introduced, supported or passed legislation that would eliminate all or portions of collective bargaining rights for public employees. The legislation also institutes right-to-work and paycheck deception policies and a whole host of other proposals that help corporations at the expense of America's working families.

The common theme of all these issues is a coordinated attack to increase the power of those who already have power while diminishing the power of unions and the middle class. While these issues have received the most attention at the state level, the war has extended to the federal level — something of grave concern to the BLET and its members.

As has been noted in previous issues of the Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal, the railroad industry is regulated at the federal level. So the laws gutting collective bargaining at the state level have only impacted our families, friends and fellow union workers. However, attacks on the federal level directly endanger the Railway Labor Act and every single BLET members in America.

We have seen two such attacks on the rights of railroad employees since the 112th Congress began in January, and are likely to see more in the future.

NMB rule change

For over 80 years, National Mediation Board rules governing representation elections in the railroad and aviation industries counted workers who did not vote as having voted against representation. A union needed 50 percent of eligible voters plus one to win an

THANK YOU!

Please thank your Democratic Member of the U.S. House of Representatives and the following 16 Republicans for voting to protect Rail Workers' democratic rights:

Mario Diaz-Balart (FL), Jo Ann Emerson (MO), Chris Gibson (NY), Michael Grimm (NY), Tim Johnson (IL), Walter Jones (NC), Peter King (NY), Steven LaTourette (OH), Frank LoBiondo (NJ), Todd Platts (PA), Dave Reichert (WA), David Rivera (FL), Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (FL), Jon Runyan (NJ), Christopher Smith (NJ), Don Young (AK)

election and if an eligible voter did not vote in an election, his or her vote was counted as a "no" vote against the union.

These undemocratic rules meant that widespread apathy and/or carrier intimidation made it more difficult to win these organizing efforts. Last year, the NMB finally changed its rules to make representation elections the same as all other elections in America — the majority of those who vote make the decision whether there will be union representation. Current rules state that it is only those voting whose vote counts; a person who does not vote is not counted.

Earlier this year, Republicans in the House tried to overturn the new rules, but labor fought back with the help of our friends on both sides of the aisle. An amendment to the FAA reauthorization legislation (H.R. 658) offered by Representative Steven C. LaTourette (R-OH) would have protected the current NMB election rules.

However, it failed by a vote of 220-206. Every Democrat in the House voted with us along with 16 Republicans (see side bar above). The FAA reauthorization legislation passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 223-196, and will now go to a conference committee to be reconciled with the Senate's companion

legislation. President Obama has vowed to veto the legislation if it comes to him with the anti-union provisions still included in the bill.

"In countless meetings, I told the Members of the House that elections conducted as the legislation proposes are not an exercise in democracy. And, in fact, if any of those Members had to be elected in this fashion, there would be no members of the U.S. House of Representatives," Vice President & National Legislative Representative John Tolman said.

Federal Right to Work legislation

Not content with trying to change the NMB's election rules, some anti-worker members of the U.S. Congress have tried to further limit the rights of unions by introducing right-to-work legislation on the federal level.

Right-to-work laws are currently enforced in 22 U.S. States. The laws prohibit agreements between unions and employers making membership or payment of union dues a condition of employment. Also known as open shop laws, these laws on the state level deeply impact a union's ability to represent members by driving down the wages and benefits of workers.

However, rail and airline unions, because they are covered under the Railway Labor Act and are organized on a national scope, have been immune to these attacks — until now. Senator Jim DeMint (R-SC) introduced a National Right to Work Act on March 8, 2011, and at press time it had 12 co-sponsors.

The legislation is significant because it amends both the National Labor Relations Act — as the state versions do — and the Railway Labor Act. If Senator DeMint succeeds in passing this legislation, it will change rail labor, including the BLET, irrevocably.

Union shop agreements in the rail-



Farewell and thank you: The BLET recently held a farewell reception for outgoing Congressman James Oberstar (D-MN) in Washington, D.C., thanking him for his years of dedication to rail labor. From left: David Brown, Minnesota State Legislative Board Chairman; Herb Harris, District of Columbia Legislative Board Chairman; Congressman Oberstar; Craig Gilchrist, Montana State Legislative Board Chairman; and John Tolman, Vice President & National Legislative Representative.

road and aviation industries became legal as a result of the 1951 amendments to the Railway Labor Act. The BLET negotiated union shop agreements and automatic dues check-off soon after, enabling it to better protect its members, negotiate agreements and improve safety and quality of life.

“The BLET has spent decades fighting for our members,” National President Dennis Pierce said. “Our members have historically had higher wages and better benefits than their non-union counterparts in the industry and in the general workforce. This is, simply put, an attempt to erode those gains by breaking the union.”

Previous, failed attempts to establish National Right to Work have omitted the Railway Labor Act. This time, however, the RLA was specifically included, perhaps in light of the fact that the rail and airline industries are among the most densely unionized sectors.

The BLET, along with rail labor, is actively engaged on this legislation. The composition of the Senate — with pro-labor Senators still holding a slim

majority — will enable Rail Labor to halt this attack.

Where do we go from here?

These attacks against Rail Labor, along with the attacks against public employees in the states, are fundamentally attacks against the rights of all Americans. The right to organize and bargain collectively is enshrined in the U.S. Constitution as the right of free association and has been codified in several legislative acts throughout U.S. history. While some see these as attacks only on the labor movement, they are really attacks on the freedom of all Americans. The collective voice of labor, working in solidarity, has enabled working men and women to have an impact on politics — and that is why labor is under attack. Corporate America wants to silence the voice of workers.

“All these attacks are consequences of the 2010 election cycle and while the BLET has made a conscious effort over the years to make friends on both sides of the aisle, the war on the middle class continues on all levels,” Vice President

Tolman said. “We are now seeing the impact of the voters’ choice of politicians who are not only anti-organized labor but anti-worker. They are blaming workers for the ills of this nation, seeking to take away the economic security of the middle class, while not asking corporations for their fair share.”

The labor movement has been fighting back. Labor’s message is this: When our elected officials are voting for or against a bill, they should be consulting their conscience and their constituents, not their campaign contributors because freedom is the right to a fair wage, a decent life, and hope for the future; it is time America worked again for people who work for a living; and it is time we started expanding opportunity and stopped shrinking the middle class.

BLET members need to spread this message and make sure their elected officials — on all levels — hear it. The 2012 elections will be key to turning the tide in this nation. Election Day is less than 18 months away, and the movement that started in Wisconsin needs to keep its momentum.

“All BLET members must make sure that they are in the game,” Vice President Tolman said. “I know may sound like a broken record but each and every member of this organization who is concerned about his or her job, his or her family’s well-being, his or her future, must get involved in politics and give to the BLET-PAC.

“One of my favorite quotes is from Plato: ‘Those who are too smart to engage in politics are punished by being governed by those who are dumber.’”

President Pierce is encouraging all members and middle class Americans to get involved in the political process.

“BLET members must vote, contact their public officials when called upon, and give to the BLET-PAC,” President Pierce said. “These are the ways that we can ensure that the war on workers in this country — at the state, local and federal level — is won by the workers.” ●



National Association of State Legislative Board Chairman KANSAS CITY, MO., MAY 23-24, 2011





BLET remains actively engaged on key regulatory issues

On the regulatory front, the BLET is still actively monitoring developments in several rulemakings that impact our members.

Risk Reduction Plans

The BLET, along with six other unions, recently filed comments regarding the Federal Railroad Administration's Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking regarding risk reduction programs (RRP). Risk reduction programs were mandated under Section 103 of the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008.

The union stressed that Congress intended for labor organizations to be included in the process of designing the RRP. However, the FRA's notice allows railroads to unilaterally submit their own plans without the input of labor, against the intent of Congress.

The unions also pointed out that railroads have been permitted to police their own safety for far too long, which has not produced the best outcome for rail workers. Therefore, Risk Reduction Programs must remain true to the Congressional mandate and require labor-management consensus, which is a critical part of reforming the rail industry's failed safety culture.

Additionally, according to the organizations, the RRP's should be scientifically based and data driven, and should provide root-cause analysis and rely upon non-punitive remediation.

The unions also called for improved training for rail workers, as rapid changes in technology across all crafts make the need for more training imperative.

One issue of particular importance to BLET members mentioned in the comments was the addition of a 10 hour call in any fatigue management plan contained in an RRP. This issue is also contained in the BLET's technical cor-

rections to the Rail Safety Improvement Act (RSIA).

Locomotive Safety Standards

In March the BLET and the United Transportation Union submitted comments regarding the FRA's proposed rule on locomotive safety standards. The standards would update, consolidate and clarify the existing regulations in 49 C.F.R. Part 229. Among the issues the BLET focused on were cab security, climate control regulations and enforceable remote control safety regulations.

The unions cited evidence that extreme heat has a negative effect on crew member job performance because it causes fatigue and lethargy, slows reaction time and therefore diminishes safety. Railroads should not be allowed to subject their employees and the public to the health and safety issues associated with prolonged exposure to extreme cold and heat. The unions argued that the rule should require that any newly purchased or reconstructed locomotive, after the effective date of the rule, should be capable of maintaining a climate between 60 degrees and 80 degrees Fahrenheit. This standard should also be upheld for any locomotive that is equipped with an air conditioner.

The BLET and UTU also noted that climate control was linked to the issue of cab security, citing the June 20, 2010, incident in New Orleans when a conductor was shot to death and the locomotive engineer was injured during an armed invasion and robbery in their locomotive cab. The lack of a secured operating cab enabled that individual to commit that heinous crime. If doors and windows are not closed because of temperature or able to be locked, the cab of a locomotive cannot be secured. This issue has taken on added importance in the wake of the discovery of materials regarding a threat to railroads in Osama bin Laden's hide-

out. The unions also argued that current glazing standards provide an insufficient level of protection.


The comments also covered the regulation and safety of remote control locomotives. The FRA has still not issued enforceable regulations governing the operation of remote control locomotives, and the unions used this opportunity to urge the FRA to do so. The BLET also urged FRA to prohibit the operation of remotes on mainline tracks. In spite of the fact that the FRA has not issued regulations regarding the use of remote control, it sought to regulate the devices themselves in the proposed rules.

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

The BLET's National Legislative Office has received numerous phone calls and correspondence regarding the status of the CISD regulations mandated by the RSIA. The issue is currently in the Rail Safety Advisory Committee process and has been fast tracked. The various stakeholders are working to develop a program that would assist employees involved in critical incidents based on consensus.

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing has been one of the issues the BLET has been involved with for many years. In 2000, the BLE performed a comprehensive study of best practices in the railroad industry. Many of these programs have changed in the ensuing decade, however, the core principles have remained the same.

The BLET is hoping to ensure that the core principles that were identified in the 2000 report are in any plan. One key principle is that the parties involved should be confidentially relieved from duty as soon as practicable following a critical incident, if necessary.

Members will be updated as the regulations move through the process. 

John Koonce, right, receives recognition from Vice President Mike Priester at the 2010 SWCM in San Antonio.



Former IC General Chairman John Koonce retires

Illinois Central General Chairman John R. Koonce officially retired on February 10, 2011, concluding a railroad career that spanned 45 years.

Brother Koonce hired out as a clerk on the Illinois Central in June of 1966. He went firing on July 28, 1967, and earned promotion to locomotive engineer in May of 1973.

He initially joined the Brotherhood in 1968, but was furloughed for a few years. He has held continuous BLET membership for nearly 40 years, since joining Division 512 (Belleville, Ill.) on October 31, 1971.

Brother Koonce said that the first 30 years of his railroad career was working as a clerk, fireman and locomotive engineer. In June of 1996, however, former IC General Chairman Jim McCoy won election to the BLET Advisory Board as a Vice President, and Brother Koonce stepped up to the plate to fill McCoy's vacancy as GC.

Immediately prior to becoming General Chairman, Brother Koonce served as Local Chairman of Division



BLET National President Dennis Pierce congratulates Brother Koonce

512 from 1985 through July 1, 1996.

"The problem was that the job wasn't only the Illinois Central," Koonce said. "The IC GGA is unusual in that there are so many different railroads to represent, which means different contracts. The IC GGA represents Class One railroads, short line

railroads and commuter service. Wow! Did I get a surprise. I don't think there is anything that the General Chairman doesn't do, and maybe this is why so many Vice Presidents come from it."

He held the General Chairman's position from July 1, 2006 through December 31, 2010.

"I can tell you this — I enjoyed (almost) every moment. I guess I have always been up to a challenge."

Brother Jim McCoy eventually won election to First Vice President, the second highest office in the Brotherhood.

"I know I owe a lot to Jim McCoy, who was my General Chairman and Vice President assigned to my GCA through my first couple of years. Without Jim's guidance I don't know what I would have done," Koonce said.

He also recognized his replacement, current IC General Chairman Mark Whitchurth.

"Mark is an outstanding person who will represent the Brothers and Sisters to the best of his ability."

Brother Koonce said it's sometimes

hard to recognize how much work a General Chairman accomplishes while in office. It finally dawned on him as he prepared for his retirement.

“As I started cleaning out my desk I found with great amazement the number of cases that I took to arbitration,” he said. “I believe if anyone ever checked, my percentage of sustaining awards would far out weigh any losses.”

He thanked Vice President Marcus Ruef and retired Vice President Rick Radek for their guidance over the years. Vice President Ruef is Director of the BLET’s Arbitration Department, taking over for Brother Radek upon his retirement.

“Both men taught me a lot, which in turn benefitted the Brothers and Sisters in my General Committee with better representation,” Koonce said.

Brother Koonce comes from a long line of railroaders who all worked for the Illinois Central. His grandfather was a fireman, and his great uncle an engineer and superintendent. His father, Donald Shadley Koonce, was an engineer and Local Chairman of Division 512 from 1964-1978.

Brother Koonce and his wife, Ruth Ann, were married on February 18, 1968. The couple has two sons, Johnny Lee and Jashon Shadley, and five grandchildren.

The family tradition of railroading lives on as both sons are IC engineers — Johnny L. earned promotion to engineer in 2001 and Jason S. in 2008. Both are proud members of BLET Division 762 (Memphis, Tenn.).

During retirement, Brother Koonce plans to become more involved in The Shriners while spending time with his wife, children and grandchildren. He also plans to spend more time fishing and at the beach.

After nearly 45 years in the railroad industry, Brother Koonce has just one wish for the future of the Brotherhood.

“It has been a pleasure working for the membership and it has given me great satisfaction in representing everyone to the best of my ability,” he said. “I just wish more would get involved and support their elected representatives.”

Dusenbery retires after 40-year career with NS, N&W



Happy Trails: Brother Mike Dusenbery safely completed his Last Run on December 3, 2010

Michael R. Dusenbery of BLET Division 120 (Kansas City, Mo.) brought his 40-year railroad career to a close when he completed his Last Run for Norfolk Southern on December 3, 2010.

His last run was on NS switch local 5088, between North Kansas City the Ford Plant in Claycomo, Mo.

Brother Dusenbery’s railroad career began as a roundhouse laborer for the Norfolk & Western Railroad in Kansas City in 1971. He went firing for the N&W in March of 1972 and earned promotion to Locomotive Engineer in 1973.

He initiated into Division 86 (Moberly, Mo.) on Dec. 1, 1974, transferring to Division 120 in 1993.

He and his wife, Phyllis, were married on June 1, 1990. Brother Dusenbery has four children (Laura, Michael, Tony and Michelle) and eight grandchildren.

He has several family members who work in the railroad industry, includ-

ing: brother Ben Dusenbery, a retired carman with 40 years of service at NS; brother Oren Dusenbery, also a retired NS carman; Danny Dusenbery, his nephew who is a NS locomotive engineer and member of Division 120; nephews Brian and Robbie Dusenbery, who are carmen for NS; and stepson Tony Mattivi, also a carman for NS.

His hobbies include camping, whitewater rafting, swimming and hiking. He is a Sunday School teacher at a boys youth detention center.

During retirement, Brother Dusenbery plans to travel more and spend more time with his grandchildren. He plans to continue volunteering at the youth center and becoming more involved with his church. He also plans to help run a 16 gauge train at a local park near his home in Kansas City, Mo.

“The railroad has seen many changes over the years,” he said. “The railroad has become a lot more safety conscious.”

NJ Transit's Jim Chappelle was active in BLET

James Chappelle started his union career in 1985 as Division 53 Secretary-Treasurer and Legislative Representative and served as New Jersey State Legislative Board Chairman from 1993-2004 and 2007-2010. In addition to these positions, he also was a founding and charter member of the New Jersey Transit General Committee of Adjustment as its Secretary-Treasurer from 1987 until 2011.

He also served as Chairman of the Bylaws Committee at the 2001 National Convention in Miami, where the Committee was able to obtain sweeping Bylaw changes that were instrumental in helping to preserve the State Legislative Boards nationwide.

Jim also jumped into local politics and was elected to the Lake Como, NJ



City Council in 1994 and served 3 terms.

He hired on the Penn Central in 1974 as a Locomotive Fireman, promoted to Engineer on Conrail in 1976 and worked for all the predecessor

railroads until the formation of New Jersey Transit in 1983, the railroad he retired from in May of 2011.

Prior to hiring on the railroad Jim served in the US Navy as an Electrician's Mate aboard the USS Tringa ASR 16 from 1969 to 1973. He was stationed in Key West Fla. and made two Mediterranean deployments in 1971 and 1972.

In his spare time Jim is a self taught computer geek who loves to share his knowledge of computers and technology with his fellow Brothers and Sisters of the BLET to assist in the betterment of the Brotherhood.

Since his retirement he resides in Matawan, NJ with his wife of 27 years and his youngest son who also is a railroader. 📞

McManus retires after stellar 40-year career

The members of BLET Division 6 (Boone, Iowa) and Division 778 (Des Moines, Iowa) celebrated the retirement of Brother Ed McManus at a joint educational seminar in August of 2010.

A Union Pacific locomotive

engineer, Brother McManus first joined the BLET on June 1, 1971. Over his 40-year career as a dedicated BLET member, he served as Division 778 Local Chairman and President. His retirement became effective July 1, 2010. 📞



From left: Jeff Lukehart, Local Chairman of Division 778; Brother McManus; Chuck Hintz, past Local Chairman of Division 778; and Jeff Kurtz, Chairman of the Iowa State Legislative Board (Division 391, Fort Madison, Iowa).

Rickerl achieves Honor Roll status

Brother Will J. Rickerl of BLET Division 125 (Clinton, Iowa), will mark 42 consecutive years of BLET membership later this year.

Brother Rickerl hired out for the Chicago and North Western as a fireman in 1969. He immediately joined the Brotherhood on August 1, 1969, and has held continuous membership ever since.

He earned promotion to locomotive engineer on December 14, 1970. The

C&NW was taken over by the Union Pacific Railroad in the mid-1990s, and Brother Rickerl retired as a Union Pacific engineer. His 37-year railroad career came to an end on November 15, 2006. He safely completed his Last Run as an engineer of UP train TOFC between Clinton, Iowa, and Missouri Valley, Iowa.

During his career, Brother Rickerl served one term as President of Division 125 from 1975-76.

Prior to his work in the railroad industry, Rickerl served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1966-68. He was stationed in California and Virginia.

He and his wife, Barbara, were married on January 8, 1971. They have two adult children, Joe and Christopher, and one grandchild.

During his retirement years, Brother Rickerl has enjoyed fishing and billiards. He is also Commander of AM-VET's Post 28 in Clinton, Iowa. 📞

The BLET publishes **Last Runs for members who have retired**, and recognizes members with 40 years or more of membership in Honor Roll articles. If you are planning to retire soon, please let us know! For details, contact: John Bentley, Editor, Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal, Email: Bentley@ble-t.org, 1370 Ontario St., Mezzanine, Cleveland, OH 44113-1702

BLET Auxiliary on the front lines in Wisconsin



BY JESSICA COLE
BLET AUXILIARY MEMBER-AT-LARGE
BARABOO, WISC.

My husband, Anthony Diamond, is the BLET Wisconsin State Legislative Board Chairman. As his wife, I am called on to help him with his job occasionally, and I enjoy this side of our married life very much. It's always wonderful to feel like one has helped to make a positive difference, and when I can help him with things that impact the safety of rail workers, I feel that I have done something that matters.

But recent events in Wisconsin have caused different feelings for me — anger and outrage. Governor Scott Walker's infamous Budget Repair Bill not only seeks to cut the pay and benefits for state employees, it also seeks to take away their collective bargaining rights for most categories of employees. It is, plainly, a union busting measure, although proponents of the bill would argue that this measure is necessary to save money.

As if the bill isn't bad enough, the manner in which it was introduced, and the outrageous methods used to push it through the legislature have created a social storm in the state, the likes of which have not been seen since the Vietnam War protests of the 1960s. Walker introduced the bill only three days before it was to be voted on, leaving virtually no time for debate or committee review. What's worse is that the Assembly then called a vote scheduled for 5:00 p.m. several minutes early, leaving the



opposition unprepared to vote. Conveniently, the Democratic opposition's microphones were turned off, so that they could not be heard or recognized!

These events created a virtual storm of passion within the working class. What started as a budget bill became a union busting bill. The challenge to the working class was raised. That their right to collectively bargain was threatened was bad enough, but when their right to speak and to be heard was stomped on, the masses responded to the call magnificently.

I have been to Madison twice with Tony to help with the protests and with serving free food to demonstrators. What stands out in my mind is the common decency with which all of the thousands of protesters I encountered conducted themselves. They were polite, mannerly, clean, orderly, and friendly. Many an urban legend has circulated on the Internet about how filthy the Capitol in Madison became, and about how lawmakers and Capitol staff had to wear bullet-proof vests for fear of their own safety amidst the angry masses. Having seen it with my own eyes and

having stood in the midst of it, I can tell you nothing could be further from the truth. Everyone I encountered was peaceful, orderly, and downright polite.

I have to apologize to all of my fellow citizens for being too oblivious for too long to the evil that has descended upon our beautiful State of Wisconsin. I knew I didn't agree with Walker when I didn't vote for him last fall.

I knew Walker would do scary things with the state budget, but I never expected such an assault on collective bargaining rights, and I certainly never expected the ensuing circus of shutting off opposition's microphones and calling votes early! I am suddenly so mad at the injustice against free speech and American values that I can hardly imagine what these people can be thinking! And I believe many of the protestors in Madison feel the same way. The bill is bad enough, but the assault on the basic American values of free speech and democracy is totally unacceptable. Let all voices be heard!

I close with a quote from the 1995 movie *The American President* that captures my feelings precisely. "America isn't easy. America is advanced citizenship. You've got to want it bad, because it's gonna put up a fight. It's gonna say, 'You want free speech? Let's see you acknowledge a man whose words make your blood boil who is standing center stage and advocating at the top of his lungs that which you would spend a lifetime opposing at the top of yours.'" 🗣️

ABOUT THE AUXILIARY:

The BLET Auxiliary exists to support the interest and welfare of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) Auxiliary and railroad families, especially the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, and the organizations of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Rail Conference, our members and their families throughout the United States. Learn more about joining the Auxiliary at: www.bletauxiliary.net

PURPOSE:

The overall purpose of the Auxiliary shall be to provide support and promote issues that effect the health, safety, welfare and quality of life of railroaders and their families, to promote higher education with the families of its full members, to give assistance to widows, widowers, sisters and brothers, when needed, especially during times of duress, and to render assistance whenever and wherever needed to further our mission.

BLET FELA Directory



AS OF JUNE 28, 2011

Our union has designated attorneys who are qualified to serve as counsel for BLET members in accordance with the Federal Employers Liability Act (FELA)

governing workplace accidents. In the event of an injury or death and before reaching any settlement with a railroad, members or surviving families should contact an attorney listed to get competent advice concerning their legal rights under the FELA. In addition,

if you or any members of your family have questions concerning medical malpractice, product liability or other types of injury cases, please don't hesitate to contact one of these law firms for a consultation concerning your rights and remedies. ☎

ALABAMA

Harp & Callier, L.L.P.
P.O. Box 875; 1604 Broad St., Suite F
Phenix City, AL 36867-0875
(334) 291-7741 or (800) 422-3352
www.harpcallier.com
Email: harpraillaw@aol.com
J. Anderson Andy Harp

Matthews, Steel & Moss
The Massey Building
2025 3rd Avenue North
Suite 400
Birmingham, AL 35203-3372
(205) 533-9000
Fax: (205) 324-1255
www.msm-lawfirm.com
Email: JSteel@msm-lawfirm.com
John D. Steel

ARKANSAS

Kujawski & Associates, P.C.
201 W. Broadway, Suite E
N. Little Rock, AR 72114
(501) 372-8047 or (800) 624-4571
Fax: (501) 372-4379
www.kujawskiassociates.com
John P. Kujawski

CALIFORNIA

Crow Law Offices, Inc.
700 E Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-1230

(916) 441-2980 or (877) 673-2769
Fax: (916) 441-3846
Lawyers@crowlawoffices.com
Joseph J. Weninger

Hildebrand, McLeod & Nelson, LLP
2000 Riverside Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90039
(323) 662-6400 or (800) 344-3352
Fax: (323) 669-8549
www.hmnlaw.com
Email: Pfiester@hmnlaw.com
R. Edward Pfiester Jr.

Hildebrand, McLeod & Nelson, LLP
350 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza
Fourth Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-2006
(510) 451-6732 or (800) 447-7500
Fax: (510) 465-7023
www.hmnlaw.com
Email: Pfiester@hmnlaw.com
R. Edward Pfiester Jr.

COLORADO

Rossi, Cox, Vucinovich, Flaskamp P.C.
3801 East Florida Ave., Suite 905
Denver, CO 80210-2500
(303) 759-3500 or (800) 325-4014
Fax: (303) 759-3180

www.rcvpc.com
Email: jcox@rcvpc.com
James L. Cox Jr.

FLORIDA

The Moody Law Firm
1400 Baymeadows Way, Suite 105
Jacksonville, FL 32256
(904) 256-0018
or (800) 813-8608
Fax: (904) 256-0019
www.moodyrllaw.com
Willard J. Moody Jr.

Sams & Hollon, P.A.
Baywood Center
9424 Baymeadows Road, Suite 160
Jacksonville, FL 32256
(904) 737-1995 or (800) 327-4552
Fax: (904) 737-3838
Alva Hollon Jr.

GEORGIA

Matthews, Steel & Moss
15 Piedmont Center, Suite 160
3575 Piedmont Rd. NE
Atlanta, GA 30305
(404) 264-1292 or (800) 776-0098
Fax: (404) 264-0161
www.msm-lawfirm.com
Email: JSteel@msm-lawfirm.com
John D. Steel

Harp & Callier, L.L.P.

P.O. Box 2645,
The Corporate Center
Suite 900, 233 12th St.
Columbus, GA 31902-2645
(706) 323-7711 or (800) 422-3352
Fax: (706) 323-7544
Email: HarpRailLaw@aol.com
Email: aharp@harpcallier.com
www.harpcallier.com
J. Anderson Andy Harp

ILLINOIS

Blunt & Associates, Ltd.
60 Edwardsville
Professional Park,
P.O. Box 373
Edwardsville, IL 62025
(618) 656-7744
or (800) 323-5538
Fax: (618) 656-7849
Email: michaelb@bluntlaw.com
David L. Blunt

Daniel J. Downes, P.C.

60 W. Randolph
Chicago, IL 60601
(312) 781-1852
or (800) 624-2121
Fax: (312) 781-1854
Email: dan@dandownes.com
www.feladownes.com
Daniel J. Downes

Kujawski & Associates, P.C.
1331 Park Plaza Drive, Suite 2
O Fallon, IL 62269-1764
(618) 622-3600 or (800) 624-4571
Fax: (618) 622-3700
www.kujawskiassociates.com
John P. Kujawski

Sands & Associates
33 North Dearborn St., Suite 1630
Chicago, IL 60602
(312) 236-4980 or (800) 832-1999
Fax: (312) 236-1711
Email: scsands@ameritech.net
www.sandsandassociates.com
Scott C. Sands

Schlichter, Bogard & Denton
120 West Main St., Suite 208
Belleville, IL 62220
(800) 873-5297
Fax: (314) 621-7151
Email: jschlichter@uselaws.com
Jerome J. Schlichter

Hoey & Farina
542 South Dearborn, Suite 200
Chicago, IL 60605
(312) 939-1212 or (888) 425-1212
Email: Info@hoeyfarina.com
www.hoeyfarina.com
James L. Farina

LOUISIANA
Davis•Saunders Law Firm
400 Mariners Plaza Drive
Suite 401
Mandeville, LA 70448
(985) 612-3070 or (800) 321-7815
Fax: (985) 612-3072
www.DavisSaunders.com
Email: Benbsaunders@aol.com
Ben B. Saunders

MASSACHUSETTS
Thornton & Naumes LLP
100 Summert St., 30th Floor
Boston, MA 02110
(617) 720-1333 or (800) 431-4600
Fax: (617) 720-2445
www.tenlaw.com
Email: rnaumes@tenlaw.com
Robert T. Naumes

MICHIGAN
E.J. Leizerman & Associates
24750 Lasher Road
Southfield, MI 48034
(313) 962-3666 or (800) 628-4500
Fax: (419) 243-8200
www.thefela.com
Email: ej@leizerman.com
E.J. Leizerman

MINNESOTA
Hunegs, LeNeave & Kvas, P.A.
900 Second Ave. South,
Suite 1650
Minneapolis, MN 55402
(612) 339-4511 or (800) 328-4340
Fax: (612) 339-5150
www.hklaw.com
Email: rleneave@hklaw.com
Randal W. LeNeave



INGEBRITSON AND ASSOCIATES, P.A.
Medical Arts Building, Suite 1025
825 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, MN 55402
(612) 340-8290 or (800) 282-6393
Fax: (612) 342-2990
www.ingebritson.com
Russell A. Ingebritson

MISSOURI
Hubbell, Peak, O Neal, Napier & Leach
30 West Pershing Road, Suite 350
Kansas City, MO 64108-2463
(816) 221-5666 or (800) 821-5257
Fax: (816) 221-5259
Gene Napier

Bauer & Baebler, P.C.
1716 S. Broadway
St. Louis, MO 63104
(314) 241-7700 or (800) 682-4529
Fax: (314) 241-0003
www.RailLaw.com
Joseph L. Bauer, Esq.

Schlichter, Bogard & Denton
100 S. 4th St., Suite 900
St. Louis, MO 63102
(314) 621-6115 or (800) 873-5297
Fax: (314) 621-7151
Email: jschlichter@uselaws.com
Jerome J. Schlichter

NEW YORK
Collins & Collins
267 North St.
Buffalo, NY 14201
(716) 885-9700 or (800) 933-8195
Fax: (716) 885-9770
John F. Collins

NORTH CAROLINA
Shapiro, Cooper, Lewis & Appleton, P.C.
101 E. Elizabeth St.
Elizabeth City, NC 27909
(800) 752-0042
www.hsinjurylaw.com
Email: RShapiro@hsinjurylaw.com
Richard N. Shapiro

OHIO
E.J. Leizerman & Associates, LLC
717 Madison Ave.
Toledo, OH 43624
(419) 243-1010 or (800) 843-3352
Fax: (419) 243-8200
Website: www.thefela.com
Email: ej@leizerman.com
E.J. Leizerman

OREGON
Rose, Sanders & Bovarnick, LLP
1205 N.W. 25th Ave.
Portland, OR 97210
(503) 227-2486
or (800) 998-9776
Fax: (503) 226-3131
Paul S. Bovarnick

PENNSYLVANIA
Coffey, Kaye, Myers & Olley
Suite 718, Two Bala Plaza
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004
(610) 668-9800 or (800) 334-2500
Fax: (610) 667-3352
www.FELAattys.com
Email: mikeolley@comcast.net
Michael J. Olley

Keller & Goggin, P.C.
1528 Walnut Street, Suite 900
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 735-8780
or (800) 666-FELA
Fax: (215) 735-5126
www.keller-goggin.com
Robert S. Goggin III

TEXAS
Jones & Granger
10000 Memorial Drive, Suite 888
Houston, TX 77024
(713) 668-0230 or (800) 231-3359
Fax: (713) 956-7139
Email: btra@jonesgranger.com
Robert M. Tramont

Tavormina & Young, LLP
1300 Post Oak Blvd., Suite 1750
Houston, TX 77056
(713) 333-3070 or (888) 565-7245
Fax: (713) 333-3075
www.TavorminaYoung.com
Email: syoung@tavorminayoung.com
Steve Young

UTAH
Hatch, James & Dodge
10 West Broadway, Suite 400
Salt Lake City, UT 84101
(801) 363-6363
or (800) 574-6310
Fax: (801) 363-6666
Email: bhatch@hjdllaw.com
Brent O. Hatch

VIRGINIA
The Moody Law Firm
500 Crawford St., Suite 300
P.O. Box 1138
Portsmouth, VA 23705
(757) 393-4093
or (800) 368-1033
Fax: (757) 397-7257
www.moodyrllaw.com
Willard J. Moody Jr.

Shapiro, Cooper, Lewis & Appleton, P.C.
1294 Diamond Springs Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23455
(757) 460-7776
or (800) 752-0042
Fax: (757) 460-3428
www.hsinjurylaw.com
Email: Rshapiro@hsinjurylaw.com
Richard N. Shapiro

WASHINGTON
Rossi, Cox, Vucinovich, Flaskamp P.C.
10900 N.E. 8th St., Suite 1122
Bellevue, WA 98004
(425) 646-8003 or (866) 357-7245
Fax: (425) 646-8004
www.rcvpc.com
Email: jcox@rcvpc.com
James L. Cox Jr.

Email Address Changes To:
John Bentley, Editor:
Bentley@ble-t.org

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Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen
1370 Ontario St., Mezzanine, Cleveland, OH 44113-1702



BLET HEADQUARTERS: The 22-floor Standard Building (cream colored building in the center) in downtown Cleveland is wholly owned and operated by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen. In addition to serving as BLET National Division headquarters, plans are under way to develop a brand new, state-of-the-art training center for the BLET Education and Training Department on the building's second floor. **See Pages 14-17 for details.**