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STATEMENT FROM BLET PRESIDENT PIERCE AND SMART-TD PRESIDENT FERGUSON

BLET, SMART-TD REACH TENTATIVE AGREEMENT WITH RAILROADS

Early on the morning of September 15, 2022, following nearly three years of bargaining, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET), a Division of the Rail Conference of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, and the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation Workers (SMART-TD) reached a tentative National Agreement with the nation's largest freight rail carriers which includes wage increases, bonuses, and no increases to insurance copays and deductibles. For the first time our Unions were able to obtain negotiated contract language exempting time off for certain medical events from carrier at-



Dennis Pierce
BLET President



Jeremy Ferguson
SMART-TD President

BLET & SMART-TD PRESIDENTS ON THE TENTATIVE AGREEMENT:

The solidarity shown by our members, essential workers to this economy who keep America's freight trains moving, made the difference in our Unions obtaining agreement provisions that exceeded the recommendations of the Presidential Emergency Board.

tendance policies. Our Unions will now begin the process of submitting the tentative agreement to the rank and file for a ratification vote by the memberships of both unions.

The tentative agreement calls for an immediate wage increase of 14% once compounded with an additional 4% on July 1, 2023,

and 4.5% on July 1, 2024. In addition, wage increases of 3% effective July 1, 2020, 3.5% effective July 1, 2021, and 7% effective July 1, 2022, will be fully retroactive, for a compounded increase of 24% over the 5-year term of the agreement. The agreement also includes annual lump-sum bonus payments totaling \$5,000.

The parties' Health and Welfare Plan point-of-service costs will remain unchanged; there will be no increases to copays or deductibles and there are no disruptions to the existing health care networks. After over 20 hours of negotiations, we were able to reach an agreement that freezes our members' monthly

health care contributions at the end of the agreement. No additional increases will apply to our monthly contributions while the parties bargain over the next National Agreement.

The solidarity shown by our members, essential workers to this economy who keep America's freight trains moving, made the difference in our Unions obtaining agreement provisions that exceeded the recommendations of the Presidential Emergency Board. We listened when our members told us that a final agreement would require improvements to their quality of life as well as economic gains. As a result, this agreement includes agreement provisions that will create voluntary assigned days off for members working in thru freight service, and all

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TEAMSTERS GENERAL PRESIDENT SEAN O'BRIEN'S STATEMENT ON TENTATIVE NATIONAL AGREEMENT PG3

Election 2022

SEE PAGE 6 FOR LIST OF BLET-ENDORSED CANDIDATES

Open Letter to the BLET membership on the tentative agreement for freight engineers

SEPTEMBER 29, 2022

Dear BLET Brothers and Sisters:

The BLET National General Chairmen's Association (NGCA) includes General Chairmen from Class 1 freight, commuter and passenger, and short line railroads. Put briefly, those officers are the designated BLET representatives for our members on their railroad properties. Each one has an affirmative duty to negotiate and enforce collective bargaining agreements and represent our members in all grievances related to their respective CBAs and disciplinary matters.

In handling negotiations for a new national freight agreement, the General Chairmen on properties where the Carrier is bargaining nationally give their bargaining authority to the National Wage

Committee pursuant to internal BLET law. However, that does not result in the involved General Chairmen being excluded as a party to the bargaining process. Instead, as is the case today, our Bylaws properly provide for three (3) Association members to serve on the National Wage Committee when negotiating national agreements.

Upon reviewing the tentative agreement, as proposed, the National Wage Committee voted unanimously to send it to the membership for ratification in the early morning hours of Thursday, September 15th. Furthermore, given the critical importance and potential impact of the proposed agreement to all General Committees, the NGCA convened to review the tentative agreement, and for the purpose of sharing this letter of advice to the membership. During that meeting,

the participating General Chairmen also voted unanimously to put the proposed agreement out in standard ratification form in order to ascertain the will of the membership as to whether the agreement should or should not be ratified.

Both of those unanimous votes were predicated on the fact that the tentative agreement includes improvements on the PEB recommendations, which in all likelihood would have been imposed absent those improvements gained before the strike deadline on September 15th. Moreover, the fact that nine (9) other rail Unions have already agreed to tentative agreements based solely on the PEB recommendations cannot be overlooked when considering the steps that Congress is clearly prepared and certainly willing to take in order to avert a national railroad

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MARK B. KENNY, CHAIRMAN, NGCA ON WHY THE NGCA VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO PUT THE TENTATIVE AGREEMENT UP FOR RATIFICATION:

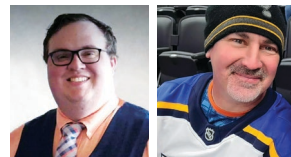
"Moreover, the fact that nine (9) other rail Unions have already agreed to tentative agreements based solely on the PEB recommendations cannot be overlooked when considering the steps that Congress is clearly prepared and certainly willing to take in order to avert a national railroad strike, which would bring immediate economic harm to the entire country."

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Honoring Brothers Ryan M. Jones and Keith W. Bass **pg. 4**





BLET PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY DENNIS R. PIERCE

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON THE TENTATIVE NATIONAL FREIGHT AGREEMENT

My message in the last BLET Newsletter was a joint message with SMART TD President Jeremy Ferguson giving a detailed report on the presentations that the United Rail Unions made before Presidential Emergency Board (PEB) 250. Much has happened since that joint message. On August 17, 2022, PEB 250 issued its recommendations; that detailed report is available on the BLET website, and it started a second 30-day cooling off period.

Once BLET received the PEB's recommendations, we conducted a survey of our affected members to ensure that the interests and opinions of the members drove our next steps. Those survey results were clear; the membership was not going to vote in favor of a tentative agreement based solely on the PEB's recommendations.

That was the exact position BLET's National Wage Committee took with the rail carriers when we met to negotiate following the PEB recommendations. Our Committee made it clear to the carriers that there had to be improvements over and above what was in the PEB recommendations, or no tentative agreement would be sent to the membership for their consideration.

Our negotiations continued until the final day of the cooling-off period, with the eyes of our membership and the nation watching the process. As you all now know, a tentative agreement that improves the PEB recommendations was reached on September 15, 2022, and BLET is preparing for a membership rank and file vote on that tentative agreement. You can rest assured that had there been no improve-

ments on the PEB recommendations, no tentative agreement would have been reached. The members will now decide if those improvements warrant acceptance of the tentative agreement.

My purpose here is not to try to talk anyone into voting one way or the other; Rather, as the process moves forward, the voting members must sort through all that they are hearing about the tentative agreement and their options to cast a vote that is in their best interest. That has become easier said than done. In my conversations with members at the General Committee, Local Division and State Legislative Board levels since the tentative agreement was reached, it has become increasingly clear that there is more misinformation and misrepresentations circulating in social media than there is clear and factual information about the tentative agreement, how it was reached, and what our options are.

Before I address the most outrageous misrepresentations, I must point back to my joint message with President Ferguson where we said, "As has been said time and again, do not listen to the Carrier moles and trolls that attempt to blame this situation on the employees or their Unions. They are only attempting to divide us as we close in on the final months of this round of bargaining. Among our unions, our solidarity is our strength. Please do not allow those attempting to divide us to succeed."

This has never been truer than now. There are groups, many from outside our Union, working overtime pushing outright lies about the tentative agreement, how it was reached, and what the membership should do next.



President Pierce meets with IBT General President Sean O'Brien. IBT provided powerful political influence to help prevent Congress from legislating a settlement in the final days of negotiations leading up to the TA.

One of the biggest lies, started by a Union-hating contributor to an industry rag, was that your votes would not matter because your Union planned to impose the tentative agreement by fiat or through some backroom deal to arbitrate the dispute. As background, there was a time when the BLE Constitution and Bylaws allowed your President to accept binding arbitration of a contract dispute. The last time that happened resulted in the infamous Arbitration Award No. 458 in the mid 1980s. The results of that arbitration have haunted our Union for over 30 years. Those results were so poorly received that BLE's Constitution and Bylaws were promptly modified at its next convention in 1986; the rank and file membership must vote in favor of accepting binding arbitration before that can ever happen. That change was carried over into the BLET's Bylaws when we merged with the IBT in 2004. In the years since 1986, no BLE or BLET President has polled our members on accepting arbitration, and I have committed to all of you since I

became President that I will not do so either. Anyone suggesting that our Union would accept binding arbitration against our membership's wishes is lying to you. I have yet to find a case where the membership benefited from being lied to. Don't fall for it; it's just not true.

Equally untrue is the idea that your Union somehow sold any member out by giving you the opportunity to vote yea or nay on the tentative agreement. There was also a time in our Union's history when members did not have the right to ratify contracts. They had no individual vote on their contract, and their Local Chairman cast a vote in favor or against their contract. That too was changed, this time at the BLE Convention in 1996, the first BLE convention I attended as a delegate. The delegates to that convention, duly elected by the membership, changed the BLE Constitution and Bylaws to require membership rank and file ratification of contracts for the first time. That democratic right and process are now underway; do not diminish your right to de-

cide the contract that you work under. No one's rights to self-help have been taken away. Should the agreement fail ratification, we will find ourselves again facing the end of the cooling-off period.

I hear loud and clear that many members are upset that they "have to vote" on a contract they may not favor. But it is also true that many members would be just as upset had they found out that improvements to the PEB recommendations were on the table, but they had not been given a chance to vote on them before potentially having the straight recommendations imposed on them by Congress.

In the coming days, the National Wage Committee will meet with the carriers to finalize the questions and answers related to the contract language. Ballots will be mailed shortly after that is completed. We are also setting up virtual and in-person town hall meetings to discuss the tentative agreement directly with the membership.

In the end, it is the membership that will decide what happens next. And for one last urban legend, a non-returned ballot is not counted in any way, shape or form. Those members who take the time to vote will determine the outcome of the ratification process. Please participate in the ratification process regardless of how you view the tentative agreement. To ensure you receive your ballot, please ensure that the National Division has your correct current address on file. You can do that by checking with your Local Division Secretary-Treasurer, or by registering for the members on the BLET Website.

DENNIS R. PIERCE
BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

“In my conversations with members at the General Committee, Local Division and State Legislative Board levels since the tentative agreement was reached, it has become increasingly clear that there is more misinformation and misrepresentations circulating in social media than there is clear and factual information about the tentative agreement, how it was reached, and what our options are.”

IMPORTANT CONTRACT INFORMATION

A must-read for all involved members, a copy of President Pierce's September 22 letter regarding the Tentative National Agreement, addressed to all General Chairmen and Local Chairmen participating in National Handling, is currently available on the National Division website as a PDF. The letter describes the challenging political environment surrounding the negotiating process and outlines the wages, work rules, and health & welfare benefits secured in the tentative deal. It also includes a full synopsis of the tentative agreement as well as the side letters. **The entirety of the September 22 letter could not be reproduced here due to size limitations (32 pages), but is available on the BLET National Division website at: https://ble-t.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/GCR_41a_2022_TA.pdf**

A JOINT VIDEO IN WHICH PRESIDENT PIERCE AND SMART-TD PRESIDENT JEREMY FERGUSON OUTLINE THE SAME INFORMATION IS ALSO AVAILABLE AT: [YOUTU.BE/87AYRI-G2BA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87AYRI-G2BA)

BLET NATIONAL DIVISION ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Official communications between BLET members and the National Division require a hard copy of the correspondence, bearing a signature, being received by the National President to be considered an "official communication." This is to provide that the actual question(s) are addressed, and ensures that when official interpretations are made they have

reference to a specific request and can be used in future correspondence.

The volume of e-mails received makes it impossible for the National President to answer all unofficial communications. Therefore, it is the policy of the BLET that e-mails addressed to the National President will be reviewed and forwarded to the appropriate officer or staff for a timely

response; however, an e-mail message is not considered an official communication.

Moreover, anonymous e-mails and e-mails that do not provide sufficient information concerning the sender to enable National Division staff to confirm the sender's membership status will not receive any reply or acknowledgement. This policy is intended to allow the National

President to be aware of the opinions and suggestions of the membership, while at the same time providing a timely response to the member's unofficial communication, if a response is necessary, without needlessly expending limited BLET resources.

ADOPTED AT CLEVELAND, OHIO ON JULY 22, 2010. ©©

TENTATIVE AGREEMENT REACHED

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

members will receive one additional paid day off. Most importantly, for the first time ever, the agreement provides our members with the ability to take time away from work to attend to routine and preventive medical care, as well as exemptions from attendance policies for hospitalizations and surgical procedures.

This tentative agreement provides for the highest general wage increases over the life of the agreement in over 45 years. SMART-TD was successful in blocking the carriers' attempts to fast track arbitration on crew-consist agreements, protecting two-person crews for the indefinite future. The Carriers' demands for increases in point-of-service health care costs were blocked, along with their demands to charge married employees with children more for monthly health care contributions. Retroactive application of general wage increases and performance bonuses will provide our members with meaningful back pay checks in the coming weeks.

This agreement would not have been

reached without the hard work of President Biden, Labor Secretary Walsh, Deputy Secretary Julie Su and others in the administration. Congressional leaders, including Senators Schumer, Durbin and Sanders, along with Speaker Pelosi listened to your requests and stayed out of our dispute, allowing for an agreement to be reached across the bargaining table, rather than through legislation.

The new leaders of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, General President Sean M. O'Brien and General Secretary-Treasurer Fred Zuckerman, along with SMART Union General President Joseph Sellers, Jr., played a critical role in helping us get this tentative agreement across the finish line.

This contract will not become final until our members have an opportunity to review its terms and approve it through a ratification vote.

Combined, the BLET and SMART-TD represent approximately 125,000 active and retired rail employees, approximately half of our membership is employed at Class I railroads that are party to this agreement. ©©

GENERAL PRESIDENT O'BRIEN'S STATEMENT ON TENTATIVE NATIONAL AGREEMENT



IBT GENERAL PRESIDENT SEAN O'BRIEN:

"THE NEGOTIATING TEAM CAME AWAY WITH MORE THAN THE PRESIDENTIAL EMERGENCY BOARD RECOMMENDED, AND I APPLAUD THE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEES OF BOTH UNIONS FOR ALLOWING THEIR MEMBERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO VOTE ON THEIR CONTRACTS."

THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT BY TEAMSTERS GENERAL PRESIDENT SEAN M. O'BRIEN WAS PUBLISHED ON SEPTEMBER 23, 2022:

"On September 15, the two Divisions of the Teamsters Rail Conference, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) and Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, reached tentative national freight agreements with the nation's rail carriers. I was in contact with the BLET negotiating team, while they faced the threat of Congress imposing a settlement.

"The negotiating team came away with more than the Presidential Emergency Board recommended, and I applaud the negotiating committees of both unions for allowing their members the opportunity to vote on their contracts. As with any proposed agreement, there are members now speaking in favor of the proposals and members speaking against them. Allowing the members to express those opinions through the democratic ratification process is what union democracy is all about.

"The memberships' right to legally strike was not taken away by allowing them to vote. Should the majority of either union vote against the contract, we will be back to the point of self-help in a matter of weeks, and rumors that either union or that the IBT could impose a contract are absurd and utterly false."

BLET Advisory Board Resolution on Tentative National Freight Agreement

PUBLIC RESOLUTION REGARDING THE BLET NATIONAL WAGE COMMITTEE DECISION TO SEND THE TENTATIVE NATIONAL FREIGHT AGREEMENT TO A MEMBERSHIP RATIFICATION VOTE

WHEREAS, the BLET Bylaws provide for the structure of a National Wage Committee, including elected Members of the Advisory Board and elected General Chairmen, to negotiate the national freight agreement; and

WHEREAS, the National Wage Committee, as authorized and required by the BLET Bylaws, unanimously approved sending the Tentative Agreement to the mem-

bership for a democratic vote; and

WHEREAS, the National Wage Committee made that decision knowing that the United States Congress was contemplating preventing the membership from striking at 12:01 AM on September 16, 2022 by extending the cooling-off period or imposing nothing more than the Presidential Emergency Board recommendations; and

WHEREAS, the Tentative Agreement includes contractual provisions that improve the working conditions of the membership beyond what is contained in the Presidential Emergency Board recommendations; and

WHEREAS, allowing the membership to vote on a Tentative Agreement does not take away the right to strike, and that right is still available to the membership at the end of the current cooling-off period if the Tentative Agreement is not ratified; and

WHEREAS, the BLET Bylaws give the membership complete control to accept or reject a proposed contract through a ratification vote, and no union officer or group of officers has the authority to impose a contract that is rejected;

IT IS NOW HEREBY RESOLVED:

1. The Advisory Board unanimously supports the decision made by the Na-

tional Wage Committee to send the Tentative Agreement to the membership for their consideration.

2. The Advisory Board further recognizes that our Bylaws require that the membership be given the right to vote on the contract, and fully respects their right to vote in favor of or against the Tentative Agreement. Should the Tentative Agreement fail ratification, every member of the Advisory Board will be on the picket line with the membership when the cooling-off period ends.

ADOPTED BY THE BLET ADVISORY BOARD on September 26, 2022. ©©

TIMELINE FOR BALLOTING IN TENTATIVE NATIONAL AGREEMENT

BALLOTS TO BE SENT TO MEMBERS AROUND OCTOBER 14

September 22 began a 15-day Question and Answer (Q&A) period as the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) will distribute copies of the Tentative Agreement (TA) to all General Chairmen and Local Chairmen involved in national handling via First-Class mail. Also, all General Chairmen and Local Chairmen with valid email addresses in UnionTrack will be provided with an electronic copy.

BLET General Chairmen will then have 15 days from receipt to reply to the National President's office with questions or clarifications regarding the TA. Those questions will be consolidated into a single document, and the BLET's National Wage Team, alongside SMART-TD, will return to the bargaining table with the Carriers to mutually agree upon the answers to those questions.

Once the Q&A session is complete, the tentative plan is to distribute ballots to the affected members on or around Friday, October 14, with a tentative count date on or around November 17, 2022.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce explained how the Q&A process benefits the members and the Organization: "While we

know that our members are eager to learn more about the details of the tentative agreement, the additional clarification gained from the Q&A process will provide more information for the membership as to the terms and conditions of the tentative agreement before they cast their vote. The process also provides our General Committees with clearer and stronger Agreement language should later disputes arise over that Agreement language."

He concluded: "In the end, BLET's Bylaws require that our members decide if the improvements we gained over and above the Presidential Emergency Board recommendations warrant a yes vote," President Pierce said. "No BLET officer or group of officers or members can, or should try to take that right away from our membership. Once all of the details of the tentative agreement are known, the membership will cast their votes with a majority of those returning a ballot deciding the issue. A yes vote will settle our dispute knowing what we have obtained, while a no vote would return the dispute to potential self-help actions. As it should be, the membership will control which option we follow." ©©

SYNOPSIS OF 2022 TENTATIVE NATIONAL AGREEMENT

Five year term	7/1/2020: 3.0% GWI: Dec. 1, 2020: \$1,000 bonus
24% compounded general wage increases (GWI) plus \$5,000 in lump sum bonuses	7/1/2021: 3.5% GWI: Dec. 1, 2021: \$1,000 bonus
Largest wage increase in nearly half a century	7/1/2022: 7.0% GWI: Dec. 1, 2022: \$1,000 bonus
	7/1/2023: 4.0% GWI: Dec. 1, 2023: \$1,000 bonus
	7/1/2024: 4.5% GWI: Dec. 1, 2024: \$1,000 bonus
All road service assignments (including extraboards) will have assigned days off	Addition of autism therapies, including Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) treatment
Addition of one paid personal leave day, scheduled according to current personal leave and/or daily vacation day rules, or as an awarded day off on the employee's birthday	Increase hearing benefits from \$600 per year to \$2,000 per year
Employees in unassigned service (including extraboards) will be allowed to attend three annual routine/preventive medical care visits without being assessed any form of disciplinary points, demerits, or disciplinary citations under any Carriers' attendance policies.	No increases to point-of-service/out-of-pocket costs
All absences relating to hospital admissions and surgeries will not result in any form of disciplinary points, demerits or disciplinary citations under any Carriers' attendance-related policies.	Co-pays, deductibles, coinsurance, prescription drugs, and out-of-pocket maximums remain unchanged
All age limitations on speech therapy removed (currently limited to those 3 and younger)	The sole change is a small increase in monthly cost-sharing contributions, which would increase by 2.4% of premiums, from 12.6% to 15% of premiums
	Monthly contributions frozen at 15% and capped at \$398.97 effective January 1, 2025
	Estimated increases effective January 1, 2023, with no retroactivity:
	1/1/2023: Estimated monthly contribution, \$319
	1/1/2024: Estimated monthly contribution, \$340
	1/1/2025: Estimated monthly contribution, \$362

In the Line of Duty

RYAN M. JONES

BROTHER RYAN M. JONES, a member of BLET Division 103 in Cheyenne, Wyoming, passed away while on duty on July 28, 2022. He was 33 years old.

Brother Jones hired out with the Union Pacific Railroad in July of 2014 as a conductor out of Green River, Wyoming, until he had adequate seniority to work at Cheyenne. He was promoted to locomotive engineer in August 2018. Brother Jones had recently joined the BLET and was excited and proud about his new membership.

On the evening of July 28, 2022, Brother Jones had just finished untying a coal train at Hanna, Wyoming, when he suffered a major cardiac event. He is survived by his father, Michael, his sister, Jessica (Jones) Toman, her husband Christopher Toman, and their infant son, Deck-

er, who was the joy of Ryan's life.

Prior to his railroad career, Brother Jones received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Hotel and Resort Management from Metropolitan State University, and worked for Marriott in Denver for several years. In his free time, Brother Jones enjoyed fishing and exploring the mountains of Colorado, especially in his "hometown" of Marble, Colorado. Coworkers will remember Brother Jones for his generosity, his sense of humor, and his frequent smile.

A celebration of life was held on August 12, 2022.

"On behalf of the BLET National Division, and all men and women of our Brotherhood, I extend deepest condolences to the family and friends of Brother Jones," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. @@



KEITH W. BASS

BROTHER KEITH W. BASS, a member of BLET Division 48 in St. Louis, Missouri, died on July 27 from injuries sustained in a crew van accident on July 26. He was 46 years old.

A Union Pacific locomotive engineer, Brother Bass hired out in January of 2006 and earned promotion to locomotive engineer in February of 2008. He joined the BLET in June 2014.

Brother Bass and SMART-TD Members Matt Nichols and Zach Brannon were being transported back to Dupou, Illinois from Washington, Missouri, when the accident happened after 9 p.m. on July 26. Brother Bass passed away at around 7 a.m. the following morning from his injuries. Brothers Nichols and Brannon are recovering.

Brother Bass was a veteran of the United States Navy. He was an active and involved BLET member, and was a participant in the BLET's recent Town Hall meeting in St. Louis on May 11. Brother Bass is survived by his wife Amber and two children — Keeton, a college sophomore, and Delaney, a high school junior. Amber shared that Keith always had a smile on his face, always had a joke ready, and always had a story to share.

The family hosted a Celebration of Life on August 5, 2022, and he was buried with military honors.



BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said: "Brother Keith Bass was a dedicated and professional locomotive engineer who will be missed by all who knew him. On behalf of all men and women of the BLET, I extend our deepest condolences to the family and friends of Brother Bass." @@

BLET members ratify new contract with Illinois & Midland

Members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) on July 21 ratified a new on-property agreement with the Illinois & Midland Railroad.

The BLET secured General Wage increases of 29 percent over the life of the five-year agreement, which runs through 2026. Members also receive a \$5,000 signing bonus. While there are no major work rule changes, the cost of employee health care will increase to about \$300 per month.

The Illinois & Midland membership is represented by the BLET's CN-IC General Committee of Adjustment. The negotiating team consisted of CN-IC General Chairman Billy Evans and assigned Vice President Alan Holdcraft. "I would like to thank Division 315 Local Chair-

man Mike Lohman for his help in getting this contract ratified," General Chairman Evans said.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said: "As with the recent DM&E contract, the general wage increases in the Illinois & Midland deal reflect the fact that our members are essential to the railroad's success. I thank our Illinois & Midland members for their solidarity and patience during the negotiating process. I also thank Brother Evans and Brother Holdcraft for bringing these negotiations to a successful conclusion."

The Illinois & Midland is a 154-mile Genesee & Wyoming property that operates primarily in Peoria, Springfield and Taylorville, Illinois. It interchanges with the BNSF Railway, Canadian National Railway, Kansas City Southern, Norfolk Southern, Tazewell & Peoria Railroad, and the Union Pacific. @@

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD ON FRA'S PROPOSED TWO-PERSON CREW RULE

On July 27, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) published a crew size proposed rulemaking and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) will be publishing comments that support regulations requiring two-person crews. We believe that having at least two crew members on a train is critical to the safety of employees and the public.

FRA needs to hear from you; we encourage members to post comments from your perspective as a locomotive engineer or conductor. Comments can be made at the link below, and the deadline to submit is December 2, 2022.

When posting comments:

1. Be concise.

2. Stay focused on your areas of agreement and disagreement.

3. Use your experience as your guide. You know rail operations best!

4. Be professional and courteous.

Crew Size Proposed Rule is here:

<https://www.regulations.gov/docket/FRA-2021-0032/document>

Click below to comment by the September 26 deadline:

<https://www.regulations.gov/commenton/FRA-2021-0032-0001>

or <https://blet-t.org/take-action>

As of late September 2022, the FRA had received nearly 10,500 comments. @@

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OPEN LETTER TO BLET MEMBERSHIP

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strike, which would bring immediate economic harm to the entire country.

The NGCA stands by the decision made by the National Wage Committee for sound reason as every General Chairman knows well the intricacies and extreme difficulty in negotiating agreements with adversarial carriers whose sole interest is protecting their railroad and minimizing economic impact of new agreements. We also fully understand how the collective bargaining process works in practical terms, which are typically standard. So, when further improvements to PEB recommendations are achieved, which is not usually the case, and the National Wage Committee is satisfied that everything within the Union's reach at

the bargaining table has been addressed, and all negotiating efforts have been exhausted, the next step is automatically triggered pursuant to our governing Bylaws. At that point, the National Division has a duty to place the fate of the issue in the hands of the membership. That form of democratic ratification process has served the Brotherhood well and has long stood as the cornerstone of our Union.

To be perfectly clear, this letter is not at all intended to tell members how to vote during ratification. Alternatively, our purpose here is simple. Our guidance herein is solely intended to better inform the membership as to how a national wage movement works by identifying those who play a role in the process and the procedural steps that must be taken in accordance with our Bylaws, in order for

our members to make fully informed decisions when casting their ballot. And we genuinely hope this information is received accordingly.

Lastly, as the balloting process approaches, we strongly urge every member to take advantage of their right to vote in favor or against the tentative agreement. Furthermore, if members have any uncertainty about the terms and conditions found therein, they should apply to their local or general committee for more specific guidance. On behalf of the BLET National General Chairmen's Association, in solidarity we remain

Fraternally yours,

Mark B. Kenny
Chairman, NGCA

MARK B. KENNY, CHAIRMAN, NGCA ON WHY THEY STAND BY THE DECISION BY THE NATIONAL WAGE COMMITTEE:

The NGCA stands by the decision made by the National Wage Committee for sound reason as every General Chairman knows well the intricacies and extreme difficulty in negotiating agreements with adversarial carriers whose sole interest is protecting their railroad and minimizing economic impact of new agreements.

Concurring NGCA Members:

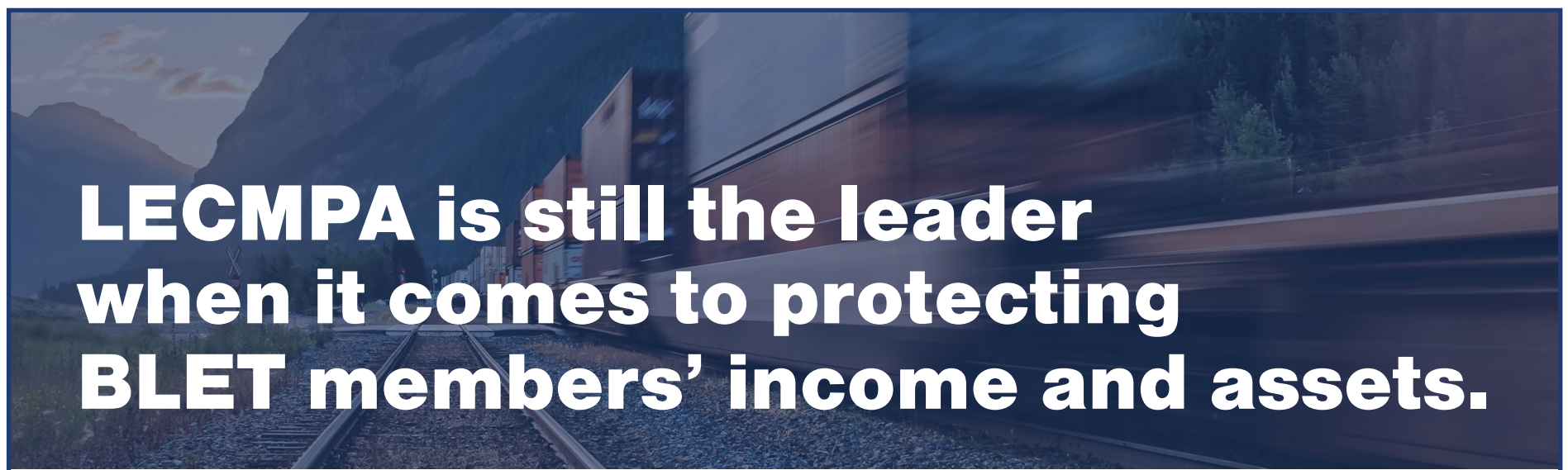
- M. B. KENNY,**
Chairman, NGCA,
GCA 30, Amtrak
- M. R. CUNNINGHAM,**
WESTERN VICE CHAIRMAN,
NGCA, GCA 40:
BNSF (AT&SF)
- J. L. THURMAN,**
S-T, NGCA, GCA 180: BNSF
(STL&SF)
- J. G. STURDIVANT,**
SOUTHEASTERN VICE
CHAIRMAN, NGCA,
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- BILLY EVANS,**
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(C&S/CRI&P/FWD)
- RON MILLS,**
GCA 830: TACOMA
MUNICIPAL BELT LINE
- KEVIN MOORE,**
GCA 120: D&H/PANAM-ST/
SL&A/NYS&W/
CSOR/NERC

- KENT PSOTA,**
GCA 150: BNSF (MRL)
- RONNIE RHODES,**
GCA 490: UNION PACIFIC-
CENTRAL REGION
- PETE SEMENEK,**
GCA 290: CANADIAN
PACIFIC RAILWAY-US
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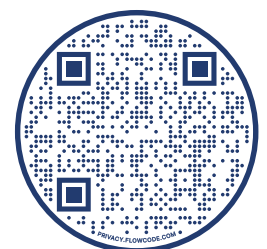
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BLET concludes Baltimore regional meeting

More than 200 members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and their families convened in Baltimore, Maryland, on the morning of August 2 for the opening ceremonies of the BLET's second regional meeting of 2022.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce called the meeting to order. Boy Scouts from Troop 414 out of Pasadena, Maryland, presented the colors. After the presentation of the flags, Brother Don T. Hill delivered the invocation. Brother Hill is General Chairman of the BLET's SEPTA General Committee of Adjustment and is a member of Division 71 in Philadelphia, Pa.

President Pierce then welcomed all members, families, and guests to Baltimore. He introduced members of the BLET Advisory Board who were in attendance. He thanked National Vice President Jim Louis, Special Representative Matt Kroyak, and Special Representative Jason Wright for their work in managing and organizing the regional meeting. President Pierce also recognized and thanked the regional meeting arrangements committee members who provided local support: Brother Duane Geddie, Local Chairman of Division 52 (Baltimore, Md.); Sister Kelly Hamrick, Secretary-Treasurer of Division 482 (Washington, D.C.); Brother Lonnie Swigert, Local Chairman of BLET Division 292 (Beach City, Ohio); Brother Mark Crouch, Local Chairman of BLET Division 97 (Baltimore, Md.); and Brother Greg Lund, a retired member of Division 421 (Buffalo, New York).

Guest speakers included: Jimmy Donovan, Director of the Department of Po-



BLET officers, members and guests by a billboard truck that traveled throughout downtown Baltimore during the 2022 regional meeting. The truck's message highlighted the BLET's recent efforts to bring attention to the struggles that railroad workers face.

litical and Legislative Affairs, International Brotherhood of Teamsters; Amit Bose, Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration; John Bragg, Labor Member, Railroad Retirement Board; and Kat Bisbikis, National President, BLET Auxiliary.

President Pierce gave a brief presentation regarding recent and upcoming events involving the BLET. He provided an update on national negotiations, including a recap of how the Brotherhood went from serving our Section 6 notices at the beginning of November 2019 to a Presidential Emergency Board at the end of July 2022.

"I hope this provides you with an understanding of this long and incredibly frustrating round of national bargaining," President Pierce said. "Our members have earned a fair contract, and we stand together in our effort to continue to fight for a fair contract."

President Pierce also touched upon numerous other issues, including: the FRA's recent proposed rulemaking regarding two-person train crews; CSX's acquisition of the Pan Am Railways; the Canadian National-Kansas City Southern merger; BNSF Railway's terminated lease of the Montana Rail Link; and the BLET's Fifth National Convention coming up in October. President Pierce also announced that the 2023 BLET regional meetings are scheduled for Milwaukee (the week of June 26) and Myrtle Beach (the week of August 14).

President Pierce announced the pending retirement of two members of the BLET Advisory Board who were in attendance — Brother Lee Pruitt and Brother Steve Bruno. Brother Pruitt has served the BLET National Division as First Vice President for the past 12 and has 50 years of BLET membership, while Brother Bruno has

served as National Secretary-Treasurer for the past eight years and has 37 years of membership. President Pierce presented First Vice President Pruitt with a 50-year membership pin. Brother Pruitt and Brother Bruno each gave short presentations to the audience.

As part of the morning session, President Pierce led members in a moment of silence for Brother Keith Bass, a member of BLET Division 48 (St. Louis), who passed away on July 27, 2022, at the age of 46 following a crew van accident. Members in attendance also observed a moment of silence in honor of all BLET members killed in the line of duty since 1989, whose names were shown in a solemn video presentation.

The morning session concluded with a video presentation highlighting the union's recent efforts to bring attention to the struggles that railroad workers face. In essence, railroad workers have been without a contract pay raise since 2019, yet carriers continually brag about record profits. Through several outreach campaigns, the BLET is letting the public know about this inequity. A mobile billboard truck was on-site at the BLET regional meeting in Baltimore, where the group en masse adjourned for a brief rally to send a message to rail carriers that they are off track, and that it's time to settle the national contract by investing in crews and safety.

Members took advantage of educational opportunities throughout the remainder of the week, including specialized training for BLET Legislative Representatives, Secretary-Treasurers, and Local Chairmen. The 2022 Baltimore regional meeting concluded with a banquet on the evening of August 4. @@





Locomotive Engineers And Trainmen News
Brotherhood Of Locomotive Engineers And Trainmen

7061 East Pleasant Valley Road
Independence, Ohio 44131-5543

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Photo of the Month: August-September 2022

WHEELING TIGERS: A trio of Wheeling & Lake Erie "tiger" locomotives lead train 223 west to Hartland at Clarksfield, Ohio, on June 4, 2017. Photo by Brother Cory Rusch, a member of BLET Division 659 in Buffalo, N.Y. Brother Rusch is a conductor with Norfolk Southern.



Are you a photographer? The National Division's Public Relations Department, which produces the Newsletter each month, has received numerous inquiries lately from BLET members volunteering to contribute their

images to the "Photo of the Month" section of the Newsletter. If you'd like to submit a photo for consideration, you may call Editor John Bentley at (216) 241-2630, ext. 248, or you can email: Bentley@ble-t.org.

Please note only high resolution images can be used. Members are also encouraged to review their employer's policies regarding the use of cameras and other electronic devices while on duty.

Advisory Board January/February/March 2022 Activity

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

NATIONAL PRESIDENT DENNIS R. PIERCE: National Division Office, Independence, Ohio; General supervision of BLET activities; General office duties; Correspondence and telephone communications; Supervision of Office Administration; General Supervision of Special Representatives; President, Teamsters Rail Conference; Policy Committee, Teamsters Rail Conference; Chairman, CRLO; BLET ST Class, virtual; GEB mtg./ teleconference; National Bargaining mtg., San Diego, Calif.; CRLO mtgs., Hollywood, Fla.; BLET Advisory Board mtgs.; UP-Southern GCA training, Hurst, Texas; IBT mtg., Washington, D.C.; National Division Local Chairmen's training via Zoom; Division 28 mtg., Tucson, Ariz.; Michigan SLB mtg., Lansing Mich; Congressional testimony, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous materials, Zoom; Teamsters Rail Conference mtg., Chicago; BLET Local Chairmen's class, Zoom; BLET Oklahoma State Legislative Board mtg., Tulsa, Okla.; BLET National Association of State Legislative Board Chairmen mtg., Santa Fe, N.M.; National Bargaining mtg., Zoom.

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT E.L. (LEE) PRUITT: National Duties include but not limited to: Trainmen's Dept.; National Publications Committee; National Legislative Board; Teamsters Rail Conference Policy Committee; and PRAC; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; BLET Advisory Board mtgs.; Rail Conference mtgs., Hollywood, Fla.; Rail Conference mtgs., Chicago.

NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER STEPHEN J. BRUNO: General supervision of Accounting Dept., Record Dept., Online Services Dept., Tax Compliance Dept.; Safety Task Force; PAC and FEC reports and filings; Implementation and training for BLET membership database/Union Track; Pension, STD, 457 plan Trustee; Mtgs. with vendors and financial institutions; Union Track issues, development, testing, status updates; Merrill Lynch, BLET finance committee. BLET Advisory Board mtgs.

VICE PRESIDENT & NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE VINCENT G. VERNA: Assigned to BLET Washington, DC office; General office duties, telephone and correspondence communications, Washington, D.C.; Teamsters weekly Zoom call; Zoom call with D.C. office staff; Weekly PAC zoom call w/ IBT; Monthly SLB/Washington DC office mtg.; 2022 RLD mtg. via Zoom; TRB-A070 conference call mtg.; USHSRC government mtg. via Zoom; Emergency Systems TAG mtg.; State Chairmen/DC office monthly mtg. via Zoom; BLET Advisory Board mtgs.; Conference calls; Michigan SLB mtg., Lansing, Mich; Mtgs. w/ FRA Administrator Amit Bose and SMART-TD; NTSB Chair Homendy briefing for Union reps.; Rail Conference convention, Chicago; Oklahoma State Legislative Board mtg., Tulsa; NASLBC annual mtg., Santa Fe, N.M.; Various receptions and fund raising events with members of Congress and the leadership of both the GOP and Democratic parties; Overseeing regulatory, legislative, and political activity of the D.C. office staff; Office hours Washington DC office and home in accordance with COVID protocols.

VICE PRESIDENT MARCUS J. RUEF: Chairman, National Railroad Adjustment Board (NRAB); National Mediation Board (NMB) Advisory Forum-Labor Member; Department Head, BLET Arbitration Department; Assigned to CN-Wisconsin Central, CN-Illinois Central, Indiana Harbor Belt, Metra (Chicago), CP Rail System/US (Soo); Assist GC Semenek w/ various issues, discipline appeal, interchange issue, etc., CP; Assist GC Hau w/ various issues, discipline appeal, etc., WC; PLB 7667 awards; NMB arbitrator training project; Assist GC Fannon w/ NRAB/PLB venue establishment issue; Assist GC Wells w/ various issues, Section 6 notice, etc., IHB; BLET Advisory Board mtgs.; Vacation; PLB 7666, adopt awards; Draft Circular 1-99; PLB 7236; DL 534 Referee Bass; Assist BRS w/ awards research; Assist GC Evans w/ various issues, etc., IC; Assist GC Balonek w/ various issues, discipline appeal, etc., Metra; Holiday; PLB 7236; CP Section 6 discussions, assist GC Semenek; NRAB staff mtg.; Mtg. w/ GCs Evans, Semenek and Balonek and President Pierce, re: vaccine issues; ROAR committee mtg.; IBT Rail Conference Convention, Chicago; IR (IHB) Section 6 negotiations, assist GC Wells.

VICE PRESIDENT MIKE TWOMBLY: NVP assigned to: CN-Grand Trunk Western; Springfield Terminal; Delaware & Hudson; St. Lawrence & Atlantic; New York Susquehanna & Western; Connecticut Southern; New England Central; Louisville & Indiana; Huron & Eastern; Wheeling & Lake Erie; Tacoma Municipal Belt Line Railroad; Department Head and designated representative of the BLET National Short Line Division (NSLD) and Organizing Department with responsibility for hearings, conferences, appeals,

First Division Appeals and all other daily business involving the NSLD assigned railroads in conjunction with Carrier Officers and advancements of BLET organizing strategies and opportunities; National Short Line Division (Local Division 16) short line railroads, Union Railroad, Belt Railway of Chicago, South Buffalo Railway, Western New York & Pennsylvania and Gary Railway; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; On duty at home office, NVB and NSLB Department Head combined daily responsibilities; BLET Advisory Board mtgs.; Joint BLET/BMWED Rail Conference Organizing Committee mtg.; UP, NS direct dealing dispute conference call; IBT Rail Conference convention, Chicago.

VICE PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. PRIESTER: Assigned to all BNSF (former ATSF, former C&S, CRI&P, FWD, former STL-SF, BNSF/MRL), Panhandle Northern, Great Western Railway of Colorado; Missouri & North Arkansas, Montana Rail Link, Otter Tail; General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; Conference call w/ BNSF/MRL GC Psota and BNSF management, re: Montana Rail Link; Conference calls w/ BNSF GCAs (GCA 160, GCA 40, GCA 150, GCA 180); PLB 7991, assist GC Psota, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.; Conference call w/ GC Cunningham and Local Chairmen; BLET Advisory Board mtgs.; PLBs 7298 and 7994, assisting GC Psota, Fort Collins, Colo.; PLB 7991, assist GC Psota, Denver, Colo.; PLB 7940, assist GC Cunningham, Washington, D.C.; Mtg. w/ GC Psota and President Pierce, Cleveland; Zoom mtg. w/ President Pierce, BNSF GCs and LCs; PLB 7927, assist GC Psota, Jamaica, N.Y.; IBT Rail Conference convention, Chicago; PLB 7936, assist GC Psota.

VICE PRESIDENT R.C. (RICK) GIBBONS: Assigned to: All Norfolk Southern General Committees (Northern, Eastern and Southern Lines); Chicago, Ft. Wayne & Eastern; Indiana & Ohio (G&W); General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications; Vice President duties; On duty at home office; Vacation; BLET Advisory Board mtgs.; BLET NS GC Zoom mtg., assist GCs Dehart, Fannon and Sturdivant; NS dispute issues and federal court case; IBT Rail Conference convention, Chicago.

VICE PRESIDENT JAMES P. LOUIS: National Division Department Head, BLET Education & Training Dept.; Department Head of the BLET Internal Organizing, Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; Department Head, BLET Passenger Dept.; Assigned Amtrak; Keolis Commuter Services; Keolis Rail Services of Virginia, LLC; TransitAmerica Services, Inc.; Long Island Rail Road; New York & Atlantic; Metro-North; New Jersey Transit; PATH; National Division technology group mtgs.; E&T issues; Regional meeting and convention hotel planning and related issues; ST training class; ND technology mtg.; GCA issues, assist GC Kenny, Amtrak; Assist GC Sexton, LIRR, NY&A; Assist GC Hill, SEPTA; Advisory Board mtg.; Amtrak and VRE contract talks, assist GC Kenny; BLET Advisory Board mtgs.; Virtual Local Chairmen's training class; IBT Rail Conference convention, Chicago; Assist NJT GC Brown w/ various issues.

VICE PRESIDENT MARK L. WALLACE: Assigned to all Union Pacific GCAs (Eastern District, Northern Region (former C&NW), Western Lines (Pacific Harbor Lines), Western Region (Portland & Western RR), Central Region, and Southern Region); Utah RR; Longview Portland & Northern and Longview Switching, and Portland Terminal; General office duties, telephone, emails, correspondence, communications, etc.; On duty at home office; Assist UP GC's with various on-property issues; NMB mediation, UP-Western Lines, GC Carr; UP-General Chairmen mtg. w/ President Pierce; UP COVID 19 conference call; Assist GC Carr w/ claims conference; BLET Advisory Board mtgs.; Finalize PLB 7721; Teamsters Rail Conference convention, Chicago; Assist Utah RR GC Hamilton; Mtg. w/ UP and BLET GCs, Las Vegas.

VICE PRESIDENT J. ALAN HOLDCRAFT: Assigned to all CSX Transportation GCAs (Eastern Lines, Western Lines, Northern Lines (Bombardier Transportation Services), Conrail Shared Assets/CSX Northern District); KCS-Kansas City Southern/Louisiana & Ark. RR; KCS-Texas Mexican Railway; KCS-Mid South Rail, South Rail, Gateway Western RR, Illinois Midland (G&W); General office duties, telephone, email, correspondence communications, etc.; Virtual mtg/ w. KCS and CP General Chairman to discuss pending KCS-CP merger and related implementing agreements; Virtual mtg/ w/ CSX General Chairman to discuss ongoing negotiations; Attend mtg. w/ BLET General Chairmen and CP/ KCS management, re: implementing conditions and agreements; National Bargaining session, San Diego, Calif.; BLET Advisory Board mtgs.; Virtual mtg. w/ CSXT GCs, re: Dispute Resolution issues and on-property negotiations; On-property bargaining w/ CSXT GCs and CSXT management; IBT Rail Conference convention, Chicago.

BLET members ratify BNSF-MRL implementing agreements

On September 30, an overwhelming majority of participating BLET members ratified an implementing agreement and Oregon Short Line Protective Agreement with BNSF regarding its resumption of service on the Montana Rail Link.

In January, MRL announced it would terminate its lease with BNSF, with BNSF resuming operations on the line. The implementing agreement, negotiated by the BNSF/MRL General Committee of

Adjustment with assistance from the National Division, governs BNSF's hiring of the BLET-represented MRL employees, their seniority, work rules, pay, benefits, and integration into the BNSF system. The agreements govern about 500 members currently working for MRL.

Among other items, the newly-ratified agreement includes the following provisions:

- Current MRL TY&E employees will be offered employment with BNSF;
- Maintain original MRL

hire date for prior right seniority (PRME) on the MRL Subdivision;

- Maintain original MRL hire date for the accrual of vacation and personal leave days;
- Employees will not be forced assigned off of the MRL subdivision;
- Maintain current pool runs;
- Maintain the reverse lodging option for pool crew employees;
- Maintain the 12-24-36 rest option for pool employees;
- Maintain 2-hour call times;

- The engineer extra board will have a rest cycle;
- The MRL will offer a \$5,000 bonus for hiring out with the BNSF;
- Health and Welfare coverage on Day 1 with BNSF including Dental and Vision; and
- Maintains a 401K program for employees on Day 1 of their employment with BNSF.

BLET National President Dennis Pierce thanked the membership for their high level of participation and involvement throughout the ratification process. @