

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN *Journal*

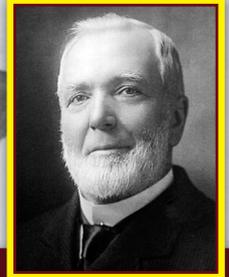
VOLUME 125 | No. 1 | SPRING/SUMMER 2023

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN FUNERAL TRAIN

The locomotive "Nashville" of the Cleveland, Columbus & Cincinnati Railroad with a portrait of Abraham Lincoln mounted on the front. The locomotive was one of several used to carry Lincoln's body from Washington, D.C., to Springfield, Ill.



BLE member **P.M. ARTHUR** of Division 46, a New York Central locomotive engineer, operated the locomotive "Edward H. Jones" in April 1865 as part of the Lincoln funeral train's route from Albany to Utica, N.Y. Arthur would later serve as the BLE's Grand Chief Engineer from 1874-1903.

160 YEARS

BLET MARKS MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY

The senior labor union in the U.S. moving forward into the future





BLET President's Corner

BY EDWARD A. HALL, BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

A fresh start for the BLET



In his office at BLET National Division headquarters in Independence, Ohio, BLET National President Eddie Hall (right) meets with First Vice President Mark Wallace (left) and National Secretary-Treasurer David Estes (center).

On January 1, 2023, a new team of officers took the oath of office and the union embarked on a new era.

Edward A. Hall, the union's new National President, is joined by new First Vice President Mark L. Wallace, and new National Secretary-Treasurer David P. Estes on the BLET's Executive Committee. As recently as December, both Hall and Estes were operating locomotives, Hall at Union Pacific in Arizona and Estes at Amtrak in the Pacific Northwest. The three executive board members, BLET's highest ranking officers, rolled up their shirt sleeves and began working as a team at the union's headquarters in Independence, Ohio.

"We're excited about what we can do together to build a better union," said Hall. "We have new blood, a lot of energy and a deep bench."

In addition to three new Executive Committee members, eight members of the union's Advisory Board, a broad majority, are newly-elected. The board is composed of the 14 highest-ranking elected officers in BLET and serves as the union's chief policy-making body between conventions.

"We don't want to just talk to members or talk at them, we want to listen. The members of this union are in the driver's seat," Hall said. "I'm planning to spend much of this year traveling the country to railyards and union halls to meet with members and hear their thoughts on how this union can better serve them and what we can do to make their jobs better."

Wallace, who served as a National Vice President before becoming First Vice President in the union's 2022 election of officers, said that it will be "pedal

to the metal" on the critical issues affecting engineers and trainmen who work in freight rail. "We have a year before we're back at the table to negotiate a new national freight rail agreement, but we will be pushing for changes in scheduling and other policies this year to improve the quality of life for our members."

The union also will be increasing its focus on passenger and commuter rail. "Amtrak continues to struggle with daily operations across the country and our members there are losing patience," said Estes. "We're also seeing our members at New Jersey Transit going without a new agreement, and the agency's contract offer is below the rate of inflation and beneath industry standards. Additionally, commuter and regional rail systems like SEPTA are having a hard time functioning because of a shortage of engineers due to low wages. This is not acceptable." 

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5TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

Approximately 435 delegates were in session from October 10-13, 2022, as the BLET conducted its Fifth National Convention. While in session, the delegates conducted business for the betterment of the Brotherhood. **See pages 14-24 for details.**



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Obituaries: Former Ohio SLB Chairman Timothy T. Price



Last Runs: Former Division 595 Local Chairman Randy Dumey retires after more than three decades on the railroad.



Journal

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International Brotherhood of Teamsters

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BLET celebrates 160th anniversary in May

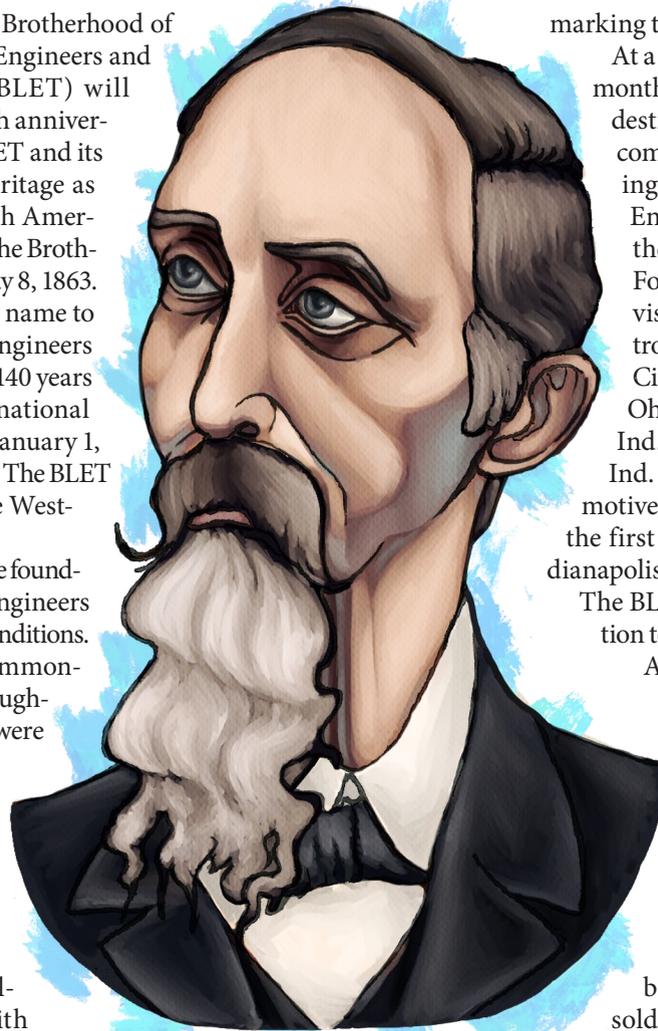
THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE FOOTBOARD WAS FOUNDED IN DETROIT IN 1863

On May 8, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) will mark its 160th anniversary. The BLET and its members are proud of our heritage as the oldest labor union in North America. The union was founded as the Brotherhood of the Footboard on May 8, 1863. In 1864, the union changed its name to Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE), the name it retained for 140 years until merging with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters on January 1, 2004, when it became the BLET. The BLET is the oldest labor union in the Western Hemisphere.

In the three decades before the founding of the BLET, locomotive engineers suffered abominable working conditions. The 24-hour workday was commonplace. Railroad magnates ran roughshod over employees. Strikes were mercilessly crushed.

Several attempts to organize locomotive engineers were made between 1855 and 1860. The BLET was formed in the early 1860s when locomotive engineers on the Michigan Central Railroad became discouraged with pay cuts and the arbitrary dismissal of their firemen. During that time, locomotive engineers at the Michigan Central were paid at the rate of \$60 a month on the condition that they ran at least 2,500 miles, regardless of the time consumed.

In April 1863, William D. Robinson, a Michigan Central locomotive engineer, brought 19 men of the craft together at his home in Marshall, Mich., and inspired them to found the Organization, which survives today. A monument



THE FIRST GRAND CHIEF ENGINEER:

In 1863, **William D. Robinson**, a Michigan Central locomotive engineer, brought 19 men of the craft together at his home in Marshall, Mich., and inspired them to found the Brotherhood of the Footboard.

marking the event still stands in Marshall. At a meeting in Detroit the following month, a dozen men agreed to tie their destinies together. They cemented a common bond on May 8, 1863, electing Robinson as their Grand Chief Engineer (president), and naming the group the Brotherhood of the Footboard. By August 1863, 10 Divisions had been established — Detroit and Marshall, Mich.; Michigan City, Ind.; Adrian, Mich.; Norwalk, Ohio; two in Chicago, Ill.; Lafayette, Ind.; Crestline, Ohio; and La Porte, Ind. The name Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE) was adopted at the first national convention held in Indianapolis in August 1864.

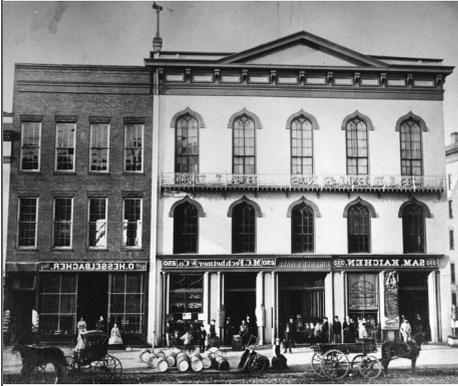
The BLET was the first labor organization to obtain contracts with railroads.

Among the earliest was an agreement with the former New York Central in 1875. Today, the BLET has hundreds of contracts with railroads large and small, and represents locomotive engineers on 98 percent of rail trackage in the United States.

The Brotherhood has always been proud to support America's soldiers and their families. Born in the midst of the Civil War, our union's membership has been comprised of veterans of every major military conflict since, up to and including the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. With

BLET members at the throttle, U.S. railroads carried 90 percent of all military freight and 97 percent of all military passenger movements during World War II.

The Railroad Retirement and Railroad Unemployment Insurance Acts, which became effective in 1937, are railroad



The Brotherhood of the Footboard was organized in the meeting room upstairs in the old Firemen's Hall in Detroit.



Early meetings of the Brotherhood were held in secret at the home of J.C. "Yankee" Thompson in Marshall, Michigan. The building still stands today.

industry's counterparts to the Social Security system and the various state unemployment systems. They represent another instance of social progress in which the BLET played a pivotal part.

Heightened workplace safety and greater safety for the shipping and traveling public have also been important BLET goals. Legislative activities by the BLET and other rail unions have resulted in the Locomotive Inspection Act and statutes requiring the use of air brakes, automatic couplers, electric headlights, power-reverse gears and other technological improvements.

BLET's current National President is Eddie Hall, the 25th principal officer in the BLET's long history. He has held the post since January 1, 2023. The BLET is the founding member of the Teamsters Rail Conference and represents nearly 54,000 active and retired locomotive engineers and trainmen throughout the United States. 🗣️

SEAN SIMON JOINS BLET NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE OFFICE

Brother Sean P. Simon of BLET Division 226 (Newark, N.J.) began serving the BLET as Director of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs on July 25, 2022.

As the Director of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs, Brother Simon will promote legislative and regulatory efforts that are beneficial to BLET members, and collaborate with other organizations to earn the backing of government officials and the public. Most recently, Brother Simon served the BLET as Chairman of the New Jersey State Legislative Board, having won election to that position in 2016 and 2020. Additional duties will include review and analysis of existing and proposed legislation, meeting with local, state, and federal government officials and lobbyists, and updating the BLET's officers on relevant laws and regulations that impact our members.

Brother Simon will work under the direction of National President Pierce and Vice President and National Legislative Representative Vincent G. Verna.

A Norfolk Southern locomotive engineer, Brother Simon hired out with Conrail in March of 1994. He earned promotion to locomotive engineer in August of 1995 and joined the Brotherhood effective October 1, 1997. In 2021, Brother Simon was reelected by acclamation to his fifth term as Local Chairman of Division 226 in Newark, N.J. He also serves Division 226 as the Alternate Legislative Representative.

Brother Simon briefly served as President of Division 601 after joining the Brotherhood. After Norfolk Southern and CSX took over Conrail, he flowed over to NS. Shortly after the split date, Brother Simon joined the reactivated BLET Division 226 and was elected to serve as its Legislative Representative. He has also held the offices of Local Chairman and Alternate Legislative Representative of Division 226. He was elected 2nd Vice Chairman of the New Jersey State Legislative Board in 2010, and 1st Vice Chairman in 2013. He was elevated to the office of Chairman in 2014. He was elected by acclamation to continue



NLR VINCE VERNA (RIGHT) WELCOMES BROTHER SIMON TO THE LEGISLATIVE OFFICE IN WASHINGTON D.C.:

"Brother Simon will be busy with a full agenda of regulatory duties and I am confident that Brother Simon is ready for and up to the task."

serving as Chairman of the New Jersey State Legislative Board in 2016, and then reelected by acclamation in 2020.

"I am proud to welcome Brother Simon to our National Legislative Office and I look forward to working with him," Vice President Verna said. "Brother Simon will be busy with a full agenda of regulatory duties and I am confident that Brother Simon is ready for and up to the task."

Brother Simon thanked the Brotherhood for the opportunity.

"I would like to thank the entire Executive Committee, and Vice President Verna for this opportunity, as it is a privilege to serve our Brotherhood," Brother Simon said. "The Legislative Office in Washington D.C. is vital toward advancing the interests and concerns of our brothers and sisters on regulatory, legislative and political matters. I am honored to be joining the team." 🗣️

letters to the editor

Lifting our spirits

Dear Editor:

I wanted to take the time to thank you for the honor of featuring the story about my participation in the Hometown Heroes Parade in New York City last summer on the cover of the latest issue of *Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal* (Volume 125, No. 1). The resulting response from current and retired members of my Division has been overwhelmingly positive and I love that it has filled my Brothers and Sisters with a sense of pride, especially after everything we have been through during the pandemic at PATH. As you know, oftentimes the hard work of our jobs must be the reward but this story has helped to lift spirits and reinforce the connection my members have with BLET as a whole. I hope that the story's distribution to all card-carrying BLET members provides them with the same sense that their endurance and sacrifice was not in vain. I may be from Division 497 but I felt that, on that day, I was flying our flag for all the Engineers and Trainmen out there who kept their regions and their railroads moving.

Again, I want to express how much I appreciate this and will continue to do what I can to best represent BLET. A thousand times, thank you.

Sincerely,

Art K. Blakey
General Chairman, Porth Authority Trans Hudson (PATH) GCA
Local Chairman, Division 497
Jersey City, N.J.

A Note Of Thanks

(BLET Editor's Note: Brother Andy Goulet, recently retired member of BLET Division 542 in De-



troit, Michigan, shares this valuable advice and encouragement with active members of the BLET. Brother Goulet's Last Run appears on Page 28 of this issue.)

Dear Editor:

I would like to thank all those who I have worked with who helped me and allowed me to help, aggravate, teach, piss off, make laugh and share great meals with. The memories of all of you — along with times both good and bad that we shared — will remain with me for the rest of my days.

These recent and continuing times in the railroad industry, and with our collective employer, are certainly not the easiest. Nor have they ever been. But as long as industry bean counters are allowed to remain on this course, sadly, things are not destined to change anytime soon.

In the meantime my advice for all of you is this:

- Get job insurance: If you have it already... increase it.
- Donate to the BLET PAC Fund: Electing and lobbying candidates who share our view (no matter what party they are from) is paramount to your survival and future of your jobs, and our way of life. Donate a dollar... anything will help. But the more the better.
- Be active in your union —

“I hope that the story's distribution to all card-carrying BLET members provides them with the same sense that their endurance and sacrifice was not in vain. I may be from Division 497 but I felt that, on that day, I was flying our flag for all the Engineers and Trainmen out there who kept their regions and their railroads moving.”

— Art Blakey, Division 497

Your participation can and will make a difference. I know. I have been very active and I have helped others and I have been helped by my union numerous times. Pissing and moaning will accomplish absolutely nothing.

As I exit this chapter and enter the next chapter of my life, I wish for you all continued safe trips back home, more time spent with your families, and your continued contributions to Railroad Retirement so that I may continue to live the life to which I

have become accustomed (haha).

If you find yourself in Algonac, Michigan, or nearby, get ahold of me and come visit. There will be a grand retirement celebration! Details to be posted when they become known.

Sincerely,

Andy Goulet
Retired Secretary-Treasurer, Michigan State Legislative Board
Member, BLET Division 542
Detroit, Mich.



Brother Goulet enjoying retired life on his boat along the North Channel of Michigan's St. Clair River. This photo was taken just three hours after completion of his Last Run in 2022.

Fresh start begins in Kansas City

New Officers of the BLET National Division attended their first meeting with members on January 11, 2023, fulfilling President Eddie Hall's commitment to engage more with the membership. He was joined by Vice President Rick Gibbons and Vice President Gary Best, a new member of the Advisory Board and recently assigned to the Union Pacific. Eddie presented plaques to Brothers Mike L. Brammer and Mark A. Fisher, long-time members of Division 81.

The event was attended by approximately 50 members and several officers from multiple General Committees of Adjustment of the Union Pacific. The main topic of discussion centered around the 11/4 project that is currently underway between Kansas City and Coffeyville. After the meeting, all the General Chairmen representing members on the Union Pacific met with the Carrier to continue the BLET's efforts to provide scheduled off days across the system.

Eddie stated: "I enjoyed being with the members, shaking hands, and getting feedback. I saw firsthand the eagerness that all the officers had to engage with our members. It was refreshing and I look forward to attending these type of events throughout the year." 🗣️



Mike L. Brammer with President Hall



Mark A. Fisher with president Hall

EDDIE HALL ON HIS FIRST MEETING WITH MEMBERS AS BLET PRESIDENT:

"I enjoyed being with the members, shaking hands, and getting feedback. I saw firsthand the eagerness that all the officers had to engage with our members. It was refreshing and I look forward to attending these type of events throughout the year."

BLET ANNOUNCES OPTION FOR ELECTRONIC DELIVERY OF PUBLICATIONS

THE LAUNCH OF THE PRINT OPT-OUT PROGRAM IS NOW AVAILABLE USING THE BLET WEBSITE.

As part of the National Division's recently enhanced website, and in response to action taken by delegates at the Fourth National Convention, the BLET National Division has launched an electronic delivery option for members who receive the *Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen News* and the *Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen Journal*. Members who prefer to receive the publications in print will continue to do so; those who don't can update their preferences to view the publications in electronic-only format.

At the Fourth National Convention, delegates adopted a change to the Bylaws to allow members to opt-out of receiving

TO OPT-OUT OF BLET PUBLICATIONS IN PRINT, members will need to go to the Members Only area of the BLET website, click on the "Update Personal Information" option, and then select "Publication Delivery Preference."

hard copy publications in the mail and switch to electronic versions of the publications. Per BLET Bylaws, members receive two periodic publications titled *Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen Journal* and *Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen News*. The electronic delivery option applies to these two publications only.

The launch of the print opt-out program is now available using the BLET website. To opt-out of BLET publications in print,

members will need to go to the Members Only area of the BLET website, click on the "Update Personal Information" option, and then select "Publication Delivery Preference." Those who opt-out will be alerted by email whenever new publications are available in electronic format.

First published in January of 1867 as the *Locomotive Engineers' Monthly Journal*, the *Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen Journal* is one of the oldest labor publications in the Western Hemisphere. First published in 1987 as the *Locomotive Engineer Newsletter*, the *Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen News* contains essential news about the Brotherhood and the rail industry. 🗣️

Timothy T. Price, 1969-2022

TIMOTHY T. PRICE, CHAIRMAN EMERITUS OF THE OHIO STATE LEGISLATIVE BOARD, passed away on May 15, 2022, after a battle with cancer. He was 53 years old.

A Norfolk Southern locomotive engineer, Brother Price was a member of BLET Division 607 in Cleveland, Ohio. He hired out as a conductor in November of 1988 and earned promotion to locomotive engineer in November of 1990. He first joined the Brotherhood on December 1, 1993.

Brother Price became an elected union officer in the early 2000s and served his Division for 20 years as Legislative Representative. In 2006, he was elected 2nd Vice Chairman of the Ohio State Legislative Board, moving up to 1st Vice Chairman a short time later. He was twice re-elected by acclamation to the office of 1st Vice Chairman — in 2010 and 2014. In 2015, Brother Price was elevated to the office of Ohio State Legislative Board Chairman, and was elected by acclamation to continue



Brother Tim Price served as Chairman of the BLET's Ohio State Legislative Board from 2015-2021.

serving as Chairman at the Board's 16th quadrennial meeting in Columbus, Ohio, April 22-24, 2018. Brother Price resigned as Chair-

man in March of 2021 due to his ongoing battle with cancer. Incoming Chairman John Esterly and the members of the Ohio State Legislative Board voted unanimously to dedicate their 2022 quadrennial meeting to Brother Price.

Brother Price is survived by his wife Tetianna and daughter Cami. Tetianna is a member of the BLET Auxiliary, and Cami is a multi-year winner of Auxiliary scholarships.

During his tenure as chairman, Brother Price spearheaded Ohio State Legislative Board involvement during National Train Day and Labor Day events. He also testified multiple times at the state capitol in Columbus in favor of rail worker safety legislation and against anti-union legislation. Through these and other important public outreach events, Brother Tim helped to shed a positive light on our Brotherhood. He leaves behind an enduring positive legacy and he will be sorely missed by those who knew him. 🕯️

Barbara McLaughlin, 1934-2022

BARBARA MCLAUGHLIN, THE WIFE OF LATE BLE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT RONALD P. MCLAUGHLIN, passed away on April 16, 2022. She was 87 years old. Ron McLaughlin served the former Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers as International President from 1991-1996, and he passed away at the age of 92 on Nov. 12, 2021. The couple was married for more than 67 years.

Barbara was born to Valda and Ralph Runyon on Sept. 21, 1934 in Kansas City, Missouri. She graduated from East High School in Kansas City in 1952. Barbara and Ron were married on Nov. 11, 1954. Barbara and Ron were business owners (Brinegar's Dairy Creme and B's Fabric Center) from 1971 to 1987.

According to a note from the

McLaughlin's surviving sons: "They had a very full and eventful life



McLaughlin

together and travelled extensively throughout the world. Barbara was an accomplished seamstress, artist, and craftsperson for most of her life. She painted and applied her craft

skills to just about everything."

After serving in the U.S. Marine Corps, (1946-1948), President McLaughlin began his railroad career as a fireman on the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad (The Milwaukee Road) on Oct. 16, 1948. He earned

promotion to locomotive engineer on Oct. 20, 1952. For more than four decades — from 1955 to 1996 — Brother McLaughlin held various elected offices representing the membership. From 1955-1960, he served as his Division Secretary-Treasurer. From 1960-1980, he served his Division as Local Chairman. From 1980-1986, he served as General Chairman of the Milwaukee Road. From 1986-87, he served as BLE International Vice President, and from 1987-1991, he served as First Vice President.

Barbara is preceded in death by her husband Ron and son Brian. She is survived by sons Kevin (Therese), Greg (Rhonda) and Mark (Leslie), and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Greg was a Soo Line locomotive engineer for 25 years. 🕯️

Former General Chairman A.J. Beavers, 1924-2022

ALVA JEFF BEAVERS, FORMER BLE GENERAL CHAIRMAN, passed away on Feb. 27, 2022. He was 97 years old.

He was born on March 16, 1924, to F.J. and Nannie (Willingham) Beavers. He graduated from Mart (Texas) High School and attended North Texas State Teachers College in Denton. After serving in the Naval Construction Battalion (Seabees) during WWII, Brother Beavers returned home and married Mary Wanda Archer of Prairie Hill on June 20, 1946.

After the war, Brother Beavers worked as a locomotive engineer for the Missouri Pacific Railroad and was a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. He joined Division 620 in Fort Worth, Texas, on Nov. 21, 1964, and was a member in good standing until the time of his passing. In the late 1960s, Brother Beavers was elected General Chairman of the BLE's Missouri Pacific-Gulf District General Committee of Adjustment (which today is part of the Union Pacific-Southern Region GCA). His wife Wanda was active in the Grand International Auxiliary (GIA) for more than two decades, having served



Brother Beavers in 2015, holding a photo of himself taken during World War II

as Grand Guide and 2nd Assistant Grand Vice President. Brother Beavers retired effective Dec. 31, 1984.

In 1985, Brother Beavers became an ordained minister and served in the prison ministry. In 2006 he and Wanda became active at First Methodist Church in Mart, Texas, and led a prayer group in their home.

In 2015, Brother Beavers was profiled in a "Voices of Valor" article published by the *Waco Tribune-Herald* newspaper, which is a series of feature stories recognizing Central

Texas military veterans. Brother Beavers was called for active duty on August 13, 1943, and chose to join a Naval Construction Battalion, known as the SeaBees. He was a part of the 132nd Construction Battalion and was stationed in Hawaii before heading to the Marshall Islands and Guam in October 1944. He helped construct several buildings in Guam including a naval hospital for treating injured soldiers from Iwo Jima. Brother Beavers was preparing for deployment to mainland Japan when the atomic bombs were dropped in August of 1945.

Brother Beavers was preceded in death by his parents; brothers, Fred Beavers and Marcus Beavers; and sisters, Magdalene Calvery and Babe Aycock. He is survived by his wife, Wanda; daughter, Janis Reid and husband, Jim; son, James Beavers and wife, Debbie; five grandchildren, Jennifer Reid Wright, Justin Reid, Jeff David Beavers, Jeremy Beavers, and Joshua Beavers; 11 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren. 🕊️

BLET hero drowns while rescuing children from rip tide

A BLET MEMBER IS BEING REMEMBERED AS A HERO after giving his life to help save a group of small children from drowning on May 28, 2022.

BLET member Zackary T. Stine, age 36, of Division 182 (North Little Rock, Ark.), bravely and selflessly sprang into action after a group of four small children got caught in a rip tide out in the river at Soggy Bottom Trails, an ATV park in Oklahoma. Working with other adults, Brother Stine helped rescue all the children, but, tragically, he got sucked under water and pulled about 150 yards downstream. First responders pulled him from the water and performed CPR, but he was pronounced dead at the scene.

Brother Stine is survived by his wife Brittany ShaVonne Stine; son Zackary Shane Stine; beloved pet Daisy Rae; mother, Trina Stine; sisters Brittney (David) Bell, and Shelly Stine; nieces Stormee Bell, and Oaklee Sales; grandparents Donnie and Pat Grimes; and many other family and friends.

Brother Stine enjoyed hunting, fishing, ATV riding, and being outdoors. He was a Union Pacific locomotive engineer, and had been a BLET member since April 1, 2019.

Memorials can be made to the college fund of Zackary Shane Stine at the Lonoke Banking Center, 1109 North Center Street, Lonoke, Arkansas, 72086. 🕊️



Zackary Stine

Former BLET Vice President Paul Wingo, 1944-2022

PAUL L. WINGO JR., retired International and National Vice President of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, passed away on June 6, 2022. He was 78 years old.

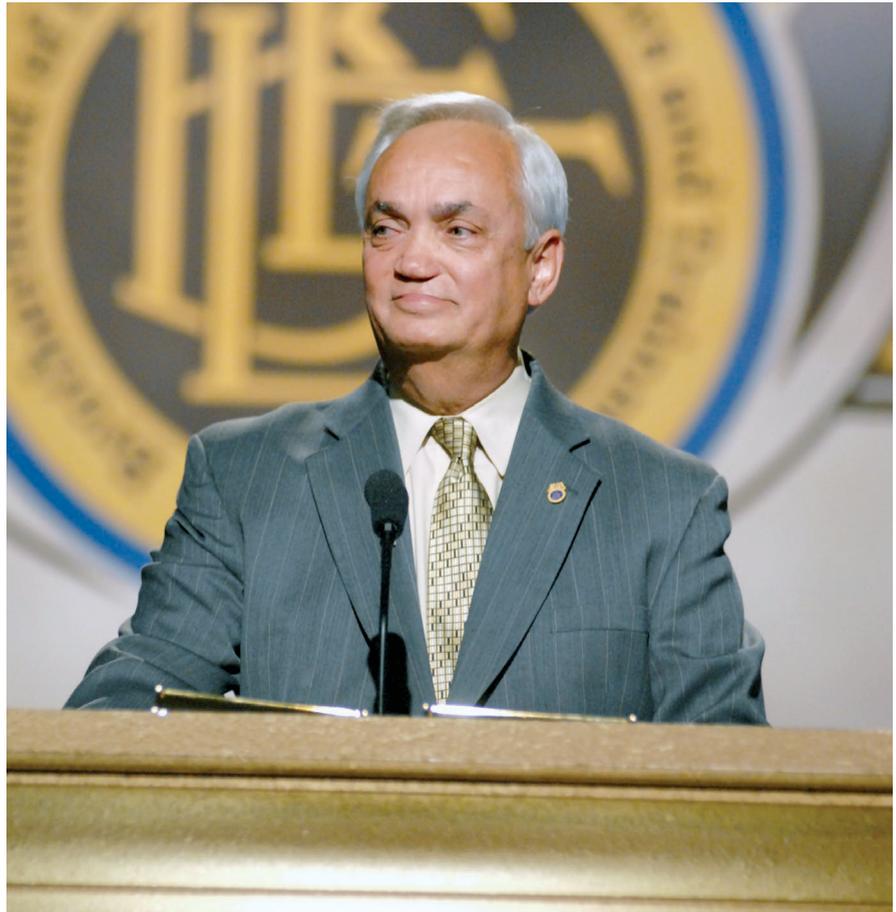
Brother Wingo served as International and then National Vice President from 2002 to 2006. He was elected to the office of First Alternate International Vice President in September of 2001 at the BLE's Seventh Quinquennial International Convention in Miami Beach, Fla., and was elevated to the BLE Advisory Board in November 2002. He announced his retirement and did not seek reelection at the BLE's First National Convention in June of 2006.

Following four years of active duty in the U.S. Marine Corps in the early 1960s, Brother Wingo began his railroad career in 1966 when he hired out as a switchman with the Southern Railroad. He earned promotion to locomotive engineer in 1969 and joined BLE Division 198 (Chattanooga, Tenn.) on September 5, 1969.

Over the next four decades, Brother Wingo would hold numerous elected positions within the Brotherhood. He served Division 198 as Secretary-Treasurer from 1969-1986, Legislative Representative from 1980-2000, and Local Chairman from 1986-2001. He served as Secretary-Treasurer of the Norfolk Southern (Southern Region) General Committee of Adjustment from 1986 to 2002 and as the Secretary-Treasurer of the Tennessee State Legislative Board from 1982 to 2002.

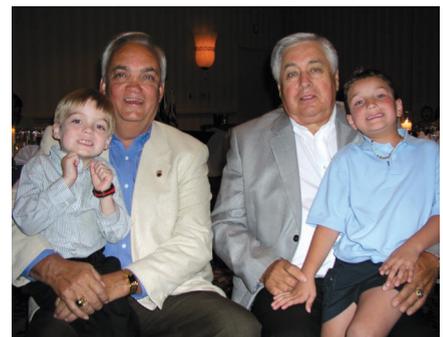
Brother Wingo was a delegate to the 1986, 1991, and 2001 BLE International Conventions, winning election to the First Alternate-Southeast Member of the Board of Appeals in 1986. For nine years, he served as a member of the Board of Appeals from 1987 to 1996.

During his tenure as Vice President, Brother Wingo was assigned to assist



Brother Wingo's acceptance speech after winning election to the office of BLE First Alternate International Vice President in 2001. He would become Vice President in 2002.

the BLET's Norfolk Southern General Committees of Adjustment, where he helped to negotiate the first short-term disability agreement at Norfolk Southern for BLET members. He was also assigned to various short line railroads, including the Meridian Southern, New England Central, Iowa, Chicago & Eastern, and the New York Susquehanna & Western. Brother Wingo assisted with national contract negotiations as part of the National Wage/Rules Team and helped to negotiate a contract agreement with the New England Central, which was ratified in 2006. From 2002-2004, Brother Wingo served on the Finance Committee that helped lay the foundation for the merger between the BLE



At the 2006 SMA with General Chairman Wallace and his grandson.

and International Brotherhood of Teamsters. He also served as the BLET's Security Officer in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, pioneering ways to make the rail industry more secure. A month after the horrific Norfolk

Southern train derailment in Graniteville, S.C., Brother Wingo represented the BLET at a candlelight vigil and prayer service in Graniteville to honor the victims, including the train's locomotive engineer and BLET member Christopher Seeling.

Outside of the BLET, Brother Wingo served on the Board of Directors of the Brotherhood's Relief and Compensation Fund (1996-2002) and served on the Board of Directors of the North American Railway Foundation (1996 to 2002).

Brother Wingo is survived by his loving wife of 56 years, Linda (Wood-dell) Wingo; two sons, Lt. Colonel

USMC/USAF (Ret.) Carl "Todd" Wingo, of El Reno, Oklahoma and Lebron Wingo, of Ooltewah, Tennessee, a Norfolk Southern locomotive engineer and member of BLET Division 198 (Chattanooga, Tenn.); two daughters-in-law, Kelly (McGibony) Wingo and Stacey (Harmon) Wingo; two granddaughters, Hannah and Sage Wingo; grandson, Garrett; nieces Paula English and Karen Thomas; nephew Joe B. Thomas and special sister-in-law, Sharon Miller of Phillipi, West Virginia.

Brother Wingo was laid to rest with military honors at the Chattanooga National Cemetery on June 13, 2022. 🕊️



Brother Wingo and his wife Linda and granddaughter Hannah at the 2014 SMA.

BROTHERHOOD OBITUARIES:

THIS INFORMATION IS BASED UPON REPORTS FILED BY THE SECRETARY-TREASURERS OF THE VARIOUS BLET DIVISIONS

AS OF JULY 31, 2022

48 — Keith W. Bass
190 — Marvin K. Bledsoe
262 — N. C. Lechner
269 — Theodore J. Gagne
287 — Robert L. Haines
517 — Chadd C. Nelson
699 — Kelly T. Nesmith
706 — Michael O. Abell
711 — Kenneth D. Paige
711 — Walter B. Price
717 — Michael L. Gillyard
724 — James R. Ferrie
727 — Michael H. Quintana
846 — Donna M. Domingo

AS OF JUNE 30, 2022

75 — Aaron C. Hiles
114 — Jon D. Cloyd
125 — James L. Winter
165 — R. Knight
182 — Zackary T. Stine
198 — Paul L. Wingo
216 — Tom R. Krutulish
239 — H. E. Grigsby
244 — Joseph R. Jett
269 — Julius F. Downs
481 — Jack C. Luyster
622 — Jim R. Arrants
831 — G. N. Dressler

AS OF MAY 31, 2002

27 — B. J. Lemay
48 — Coy A. Tinker

56 — Michael W. Underwood
95 — Todd D. Gelter
107 — Philip H. Stockstad
130 — Gary D. Stillings
158 — A. P. Scitutto
182 — Freddie B. Dobbs
182 — Roger L. Warhurst
182 — Richard A. Young
224 — Michael B. Dickinson
269 — Matthew J. Classi
269 — Richard A. Saldo
333 — C. Gjestvang
430 — C. E. Spencer
462 — L. W. Finney
607 — Tim T. Price
641 — E. A. Fuller
706 — Jamie J. Warnock
793 — A. B. Taylor

AS OF APRIL 30, 2022

14 — R. E. McDavitt
44 — Joseph W. Zumbrun
57 — Patrick W. Finneral
182 — John C. Peterson
183 — Keith A. Clark
191 — Robert B. Wagenbach
301 — Robert W. Crews
357 — F. W. Bates
497 — J. T. Malinowski
518 — M. D. Evans
672 — Jerry T. Gaia
839 — William T. Walker

AS OF MARCH 31, 2022

17 — Leroy L. Lucas
97 — L. E. Ordway
104 — Paul J. Roberge
127 — A. C. Sheridan
153 — John A. Araque
158 — David L. Lubliner
182 — William M. Kelley
203 — C. L. Grosche
216 — R. Simmons
274 — Samuel L. DeCoursey
312 — Garold B. Cole
442 — J. N. Ancell
442 — D. G. August
448 — F. Dickey
517 — Matthew J. Jenson
567 — D. L. Chitwood
578 — Tom C. Bowman
620 — A. J. Beavers
711 — Charles R. Wright

AS OF FEBRUARY 28, 2022

27 — J. M. Cornelius
57 — K. L. Bukoski
88 — Greg P. Bailey
114 — Christopher Garrett
189 — Brian Z. Bowers
228 — Leonard D. Ward
239 — Travis D. Brady
261 — J. D. Dix
269 — Daniel F. Boyle
269 — Don K. Bruning
301 — James D. Windle

607 — W. R. Nagy
683 — Tyrone L. Miller
781 — George T. Hunt

AS OF JANUARY 31, 2022

13 — Mike A. Stanek
14 — J. C. Cooper
16 — Charles W. Foutz
24 — Tony Guard
28 — Darryl L. Weakley
32 — Andy S. Cramp
100 — J. P. McFall
104 — Pamela K. Baker
125 — George E. Surprenant
228 — S. L. Boyd
261 — R. S. Hamil
269 — J. H. Birkmier
301 — Trevor J. Beyer
301 — B. L. Hodges
312 — Joseph MacKinnon
326 — B. R. Davis
353 — Mark F. Wuller
392 — Eric C. Holmes
400 — T. Knight
442 — R. V. Hamil
446 — Ernest Mariano
497 — J. A. Dondero
561 — James E. English
607 — Frank A. Smirz
632 — J. T. Lyles
676 — D. C. Tomlinson
766 — Darrel J. Dunlap
791 — E. H. Salazar

858 — C. M. Stephens
915 — O. W. Brown

AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2021

5 — W. A. Robinson
16 — J. P. Harchelroad
52 — C. M. Dixon
71 — Joseph M. Solivajs
117 — H. Coleman
126 — Rolla A. Bailey
153 — Gregory R. Barker
171 — T. A. Freeman
173 — Brian D. Checokinski
181 — Rodney D. Sunderland
182 — Joseph N. Miller
182 — Billy G. Richardson
198 — T. L. Hixson
236 — Jim R. Roberts
269 — Douglas W. Denson
269 — James H. Traendly
301 — D. L. Mullins
391 — Michael D. Manka
482 — J. L. Shaffer
491 — Nickolas J. Bruscato
495 — R. A. Dubbert
508 — H. S. Baker
595 — Lyman B. Simmons
595 — William K. Weekley
683 — W. W. Pridemore
695 — L. L. McArthur



Guest Columnist

BY STEVE HALBROOK LOCAL CHAIRMAN,
DIVISION 94, GILLETTE, WYO.

The Railroad – Today’s Version



About the Author:

Steven V. Halbbrook hired out in Gillette, Wyo., in 1994 and earned promotion to Locomotive Engineer in 1995. He joined BLET Division 94 (Gillette, Wyo.), on May 1, 1997. He has served his Division as President, Vice Local Chairman, and Local Chairman. In June of 2013, he was elected 2nd Alternate Vice General Chairman at the BNSF-MRL General Committee of Adjustment’s triennial meeting, then moving up to 3rd Vice General Chairman in July of 2016. He then returned to Gillette and was re-elected to the Office of Local Chairman.

“I am very proud to be a member of the BLET and am honored to serve my fellow Brothers and Sisters,” he said. “I feel very strongly about the importance of the union not only in the railroad industry but also in the nation as a whole.”

This is his second contribution to the BLET Journal. Brother Halbbrook’s previous column, titled “The romance of the railroad from the eyes of a locomotive engineer,” was published in Spring 2014 (volume 117, number 1).

Recently, there has been much information shared on the railroads’ policies and struggles to meet customer expectations. We have witnessed the cutting of small switching yards to consolidate into large yards creating a single “hub.” At the same time, cutting essential jobs such as carman and mechanical forces with the expectation of more work to be done with fewer people and less tracks.

These measures, along with the constant reduction of manpower due to retirements, resignations and furloughs, took the ability to staff crews of all crafts to a near impossible level. The railroad made record profits during this process. Then the pandemic hit, business demand was reduced. The railroads decided that since demand was down, they must furlough workers without taking into consideration the absences which would occur due to COVID and the required quarantine process. The remaining employees were then categorized as “essential employees.” The employees stepped up in this environment of the pandemic that took hundreds of thousands of lives in America, and maintained the railroads’ ability to run trains. In the employee’s eyes, they were doing what it took to keep America and its economy on track to a recovery. The railroads continued to make record profits.

Instead ramping up efforts to acquire new employees to replace those that were lost, the railroads created more de-

manding attendance policies. This occurred while they were seeing record profits under the old attendance policy. We saw railroads buying back stock with their profits, ignoring the facts that their fleet of locomotives were failing, tracks failing, and railyards becoming more and more congested. Their answer is to make the trains longer and to cut positions off the ground crews, which, by the way, are essential to efficient operations and the safety of not only the crews but also for the public.

The demand of the working environment is becoming more and more public knowledge. Working on call 24/7, being required to report immediately upon receiving your call for duty, never knowing when you will be going to work. The call could come in 30 minutes or 30 hours, but you must be ready to accept that call. You will be required to spend time away from your family, laying over at the end of the road. Once again, never knowing when you will be called, in 6, 10, 18 hours or even 24 plus hours. This creates the problem of going to work after possibly being up 16 to 18 hours, with a full shift ahead of you which, when done, the employee will have been awake for over 30 hours. By the time you get home you will be exhausted.

It must be noted, that when a person does not know when they will go to work, it presents a challenge to even schedule an event such as a doctor’s appointment. To ensure you will

be at the appointment, you may have to lay off 48 hours prior. Thus, missing a paid trip which could be up to 20% of your paycheck and then being reprimanded for laying off, heaven forbid if you are actually sick at the time. Now, the opinion of the railroad is it’s the employees’ fault for not working enough, they are causing the problem. How dare they expect to have time at home, the railroad and its profits are more important.

This has created a problem in recruitment. The railroads are now offering new hire bonuses to prospective employees, believing this is the answer. They continue to ignore the fact where the problem actually lies; the extreme working conditions. Potential employees are now putting a value on their lives and their families’ lives on a higher level than just money. The focus on hiring new individuals is necessary, but just as necessary, if not more, is to focus on how to retain the workforce they have now. If the current workforce cannot meet the demanding expectations of the railroad, how in any rational way can they assume they will be able to retain any newly-hired employees?

The railroad industry’s total focus on immediate record profits has now had an effect on their customers. It has grown extreme enough that the Surface Transportation Board had to schedule hearings to investigate the cause. The cause, if you listen to the railroads, is



no manpower. This is partially true, but it is something that could and should have been prevented. It was self-inflicted with the focus of more immediate profits.

The railroads have intentionally created this workforce shortage, for one reason which is now being put out to the public. They are telling agencies such as the Surface Transportation Board they must go to single-man crews on the trains. Cut the number of employees on the trains and put the conductors (which they will be able to reduce by 50% to 75%) in a ground-based position. In these positions, they project one conductor could protect three or more trains in a shift. A major problem with this, among many others, is now you are having one person in the cab of the locomotive, one set of eyes not only running the trains but also doing administrative work, one set of eyes watching out not only ahead of the train for challenges and dangers, but also watching the train itself for items like sticking brakes, smoke and mechanical failures. Many of these failures require immediate attention. There is no time to wait for 3-4 hours for a ground-based employee to come to your assistance. This would promote congestion on the main lines. In most locations, it is impossible to get to a location unless you are high railing (having vehicles equipped with facilities which enable the vehicle to traverse the rail) and then you will only be able to make it to the rear of the train. Please don't forget the Railroads want to run "mega trains," trains which are close to 3 miles long

Some things change, and some things stay the same. In the early days when homesteaders were run off their land, there was a saying used; They were "getting railroaded." It sure seems like that still applies to "Today's Version of the Railroad."

and weigh over 40,000 tons. Now add sub-zero temperatures and inclement weather you have a recipe for disaster.

Let us not forget what can happen if a train is not secured properly. All we have to remember is the horrific incident at Lac-Megantic, the runaway train that destroyed a town. An incident in which 47 people lost their lives in a small eastern Quebec town. Twenty-seven children lost their parents, over 2,000 people were evacuated and dozens of homes were destroyed, and 40 buildings had to be razed. Lac-Megantic was a horrible, preventable tragedy. The train at Lac-Megantic was hauling crude oil. God forbid, if this would have happened in a highly populated area like Denver, Seattle or Kansas City, while hauling a hazardous product such as chlorine. Please review the similarities of root causes that existed then, and now in today's railroad. Yes, this was the result of a one-man crew, among many other things. For what reason? To attain the ultimate goal, unfettered, ever-increasing profit margins.

Even now, the mantra is the same; fewer people equal more "competitive advantage," which equals more profit. Today's manpower is under extreme policies which is causing major fatigue, both physical and mental. Resignations are becoming commonplace. The manpower who

served once as "essential employees" are now just an expendable tool. Railroads have the mindset that their employees should "live to work" instead of "work to live."

The railroads play a huge part in the nation's economy. Unfortunately, the railroads are failing to meet customer demands. The failure is for one reason: more profit, profit to the point of greed. Profit to the point of ignoring the effects on the nation's economy, ignoring the effects on the customers and ignoring the effects on their own workforce, who perform the duties to make sure the products get to the end user safely and efficiently.

The focus should be on the customer, but who is the customer? They are the working class of America; they are the backbone of the nation. They are the drivers of the economy. So, when it is said that the railroad isn't meeting customer expectations, those customers are ultimately you, the consumer, the worker, the American populace.

This isn't just about the employees of the railroad, or the policies put in place, this is about the total focus on the profits, not long-term profits, but immediate and always increasing profits. This is about the egotistical prostitution of the Stagger Act. This is about the creation of monopolies and duopolies. The workers, the customers be damned, the

railroads will meet their bottom-line goals of never ending, always increasing immediate profits. They hamstring anyone who gets in their way, take their share now, then take the profits and run. Will it destroy some of the basic foundations of our society? Very possibly. But their pockets will be full and everyone else — their lives, the nation's economy — well, they were just an expense, an inconvenience in their venture of more and never ending profits.

Welcome to "Today's Version of the Railroad." The railroads have no one to blame for their woes but themselves and they and only they should be held accountable for their lack of responsibility and actions!

Some things change, and some things stay the same. In the early days when homesteaders were run off their land, there was a saying used; They were "getting railroaded." It sure seems like that still applies to "Today's Version of the Railroad." 📌

(Author's Note: This is my opinion and mine only. This does not in any way speak for any organization. This is an opinion created from 27 years of working on the railroad, in positions in Safety, Local Union Representation, Conductor, Engineer, as well as duties as a Vice General Chairman of the Union. But more importantly, it is justified by my "life" I have lived of being a "Rail.")



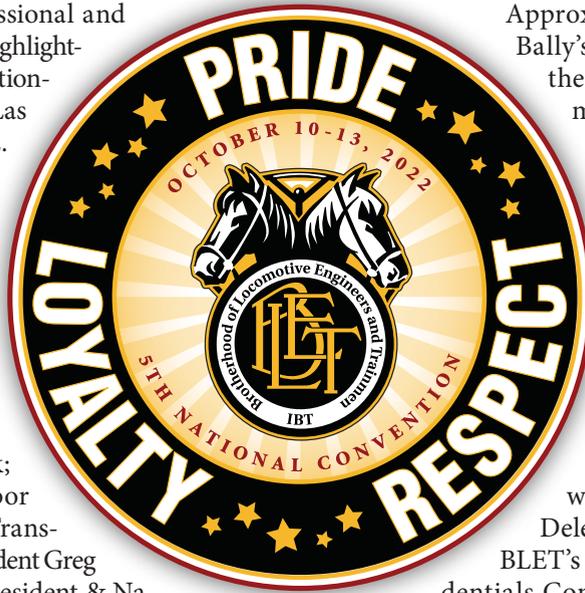


BLET concludes Fifth National Convention

A lineup of top Congressional and national labor leaders highlighted the BLET's Fifth National Convention held in Las Vegas, Nevada, October 10-13, 2022.

In-person guest speakers included: Teamsters General President Sean M. O'Brien; Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi; Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh; U.S. Rep. Dina Titus; U.S. Rep. Ruben Gallego; FRA Administrator Amit Bose; Teamsters Canada Rail Conference President Lyndon Isaak; Railroad Retirement Board Labor Member John Bragg; AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Department President Greg Regan; and retired BLET Vice President & National Legislative Representative John Tolman. Video presentations were submitted by U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders; U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren; U.S. Senator Chris Murphy; National Transportation Safety Board Chair Jennifer Homendy; and SMART TD President Jeremy Ferguson.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce, who has since retired, delivered his State of the Union address on October 10. Also, he announced that five members of the BLET Advisory Board would be retiring at the end of the year: First Vice President E. Lee Pruitt; National Secretary-Treasurer Steve Bruno; Vice President Marcus Ruef; Vice President Mike Twombly; and Vice President Mike Priester. Brother Pruitt and Brother Priester made emotional farewell speeches on October 13, the final day of the convention.



Approximately 435 delegates met at the Bally's Convention Center in Las Vegas the week of October 10, representing more than 57,000 locomotive engineers and trainmen members on national freight and passenger rail systems across the United States.

Delegates devoted much of their time during the quadrennial convention discussing and voting on changes to bylaws, as presented by the Bylaws Committee Chairman Randy Fannon. Voting was conducted electronically, and the language changes were projected on large video screens.

Delegates also heard reports from the BLET's other standing committees — Credentials Committee, chaired by Brother Dan Lucansky, Division 96 (Chicago, Ill.); Salaries Committee, Chaired by Brother Chris Wagner, Division 405 (Milwaukee, Wisc.); Work Committee, Chaired by Brother Don Hill, Division 71 (Philadelphia, Pa.); and the Legislative Committee, Chaired by Brother Shane Hubbard, Division 343 (Princeton, Ind.).

Brother Gary Pedigo, Chairman of the Texas State Legislative Board, served as chaplain for the convention and delivered the invocation to open and close each day's session. Sister Marketa Wells, a member of BLET Division 766 (Las Vegas), served as National Division Guide.

Delegates also conducted the nomination of officers. Most officers were elected by acclamation during the convention.



BLET Fifth National Convention

DAILY
RECAPS

DAY 1

October 10, 2022



» National Division Guide **Marketta Wells**, a member of BLET Division 766 (Las Vegas), began the convention by welcoming the delegates to Las Vegas.



» Brother **Gary Pedigo**, Chairman of the Texas State Legislative Board, served as chaplain for the convention. Brother Pedigo delivered an invocation to begin each day's proceedings and another in the afternoon to conclude each day. He is a 45-year member of the BLET.

» After presentation of the flags by an **Air Force Honor Guard** and the playing of the National Anthem, delegates saluted the men and women of our armed forces, recognizing those delegates and guests who have family in the military and those who are veterans.



Delegates also observed a moment of silence for those who have suffered losses during the COVID-19 pandemic.



to degrade your working conditions. They want to divide us. We have to identify and fight the true enemy.”



» “**Railroads want one man crews while trains keep getting longer — this is not acceptable.**”
— Rep. Dina Titus

» Guest speaker **Dina Titus**, U.S. Representative from Nevada's 1st District, addressed the delegates. Rep. Titus serves on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and its Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials. Rep. Titus devoted much of her presentation to the importance of two-person train crews for maintaining safe rail operations and pledged to support two-person crew legislation on the national level. “Railroads want one man crews while trains keep getting longer — this is not acceptable,” she said.

» Former BLET National President **Dennis R. Pierce**, who retired at the end of 2022, presided over the day's proceedings and gave his State of the Union address to conclude the morning session. He said: “Brothers and Sisters, I know I'm preaching to the choir here, but I'm going to repeat again what I've said countless times over the past 12 years I have served as your National Presi-



» “**Maximizing success in our struggles requires the active participation of each and every member ... becoming educated on the issues ... and acting in unity.**”
— Dennis Pierce

dent: if we are to succeed, BLET membership cannot be a spectator sport. Maximizing success in our struggles requires the active participation of each and every member ... becoming educated on the issues ... and acting in unity.”

» Guest speaker **Nancy Pelosi**, U.S. Representative from California who at the time was the Speaker of the House, led the afternoon session and voiced strong support for labor in general and rail workers in particular. “The middle class is the backbone of our democracy — and the middle class has



» “**The middle class is the backbone of our democracy — and the middle class has a union label on it.**”
— Rep. Nancy Pelosi



a union label on it," she said. The Speaker condemned the rail industry practice known as Precision Scheduled Railroad-ing and well as the industry's punitive attendance policies. She saluted the union for the strong stand it took in recent contract battles. "For our nation's mighty railroaders: unwavering solidarity is how you stand strong against anti-union forces — and protect your livelihoods," she said. "Indeed, we saw your power in action in securing the historic Tentative Agreement last month. And that unified spirit will be crucial as we confront the challenges that lie ahead."



» Brother **Luke W. Myers**, Division 727 (Sterling, Colo.), introduced and explained the electronic voting devices that each delegate would use in voting on recommendations and changes to the BLET's Bylaws. Brother Myers is the BLET National Division Director of Bylaws Administration and is serving as Liaison to the Bylaws Committee.



» Brother **Dan J. Lucansky**, BLET Division 96 (Chicago, Ill.) and Chairman of the Credentials Committee, gave the report and recommendations of his committee. He also introduced Committee Members **Art K. Blakey III**, BLET Division 497 (Jersey City, N.J.), **Heath A. Brown**, Division 623 (Mc-

Cook, Neb.) and **Josh N. Lamarti**, Division 421 (Buffalo, N.Y.). Brother Lucansky also thanked Sister **Megan C Mead**, BLET National Division Director of the Record and Compliance Department, for her hard work in serving as Liaison to the Credentials Committee. Their report was accepted without debate.



» Brother **Chris J. Wagner**, Division 405 (Milwaukee, Wisc.) and Chairman of the Salaries Committee, gave his committee's report and recommendations. It was accepted without debate. Committee Members **Scott P. Alexander**, Division 523 (Chickasha, Okla.), **Chris R. Hyde**, Division 314 (Rocky Mount, N.C.), and **Paulo Tortorice**, BLET Division 5 (Los Angeles), joined him on stage. Brother Wagner thanked BLET National Division Special Representative **Rich C. Bartela, Jr.**, Division 382 (West Seneca, N.Y.) for serving as Liaison to the Salaries Committee.



» Brother **Randy Fannon**, Division 37 (Norton, Va.) and Chairman of the Bylaws Committee, began the process of giving his Committee's Report and Recommendations on changes to the BLET Bylaws. Their reporting will continue throughout the remainder of the week. Brother Fannon began by introducing the mem-

bers of his committee: **Kevin J. Sexton**, BLET Division 269 (Long Island, N.Y.); **Gary D. Best**, BLET Division 498 (Abbeville, S.C.); and **James Logan**, BLET Division 620 (Fort Worth, Texas). He also recognized Brother **Luke Myers**, the BLET National Division Director of Bylaws Administration, for serving as Liaison to the Bylaws Committee, and thanked **Denise Doody**, the BLET National Division Arbitration Department Manager, for her hard work and assistance to the Committee.



» Brother **Don T. Hill**, Division 71 (Philadelphia, Pa.) and chairman of the Work Committee, gave the report and recommendations of his committee. He also introduced committee members **Cordell J. Boone**, Division 746 (Mandan, N.D.), **Troy L. Bryant**, Division 532 (Richmond, Va.); and **David P. Fitzgerald Jr.**, Division 781 (Erwin, Tenn.). Their report was accepted without debate. Brother Hill also thanked **Matt Kronyak**, Special Representative and Director of Mobilization - Eastern Region, for his work as National Division Staff Liaison.



"The people in this room... you are the workers who move the economy, but workers are the ones who are being targeted by CEOs."
— John Tolman

» Guest speaker **John P. Tolman**, who had served the BLET as Vice President and National Legislative Representative from 2006 until his retirement at the end of 2021, was the final speaker of the day. He condemned Wall Street's influence on corporate America and the negative impact it has had on railroad operations. "The people in this room... you are the workers who move the economy, but workers are the ones who are being targeted by CEOs."

DAY 2

October 11, 2022



"The entire economy depends on the work you do. Clean water, food, power to heat and cool our homes. This nation owes you a debt of gratitude."

— Sec. Marty Walsh

» Guest speaker **Marty Walsh**, U.S. Secretary of Labor, praised railroad workers for continuing to work in the most difficult of circumstances, including the COVID-19 pandemic. The Secretary said that the work of railroaders enabled other essential workers to their jobs to keep the nation moving. "The entire economy depends on the work you do," Secretary Walsh said. "Clean water, food, power to heat and cool our homes. This nation owes you a debt of gratitude."

» Guest speaker **John Bragg**, Labor Member of the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board (RRB), addressed delegates regarding the history and strength of the rail industry's retirement system. "The BLET was at the forefront of Rail La-



“The BLET was at the forefront of Rail Labor’s efforts to not only establish the Railroad Retirement system, but to protect it and improve it for generations to come.”

— John Bragg

bor’s efforts to not only establish the Railroad Retirement system, but to protect it and improve it for generations to come,” Bragg said. “These benefits were not given to us. Our forefathers fought for them. And we as organized labor continue to fight for them today.”



» Guest speaker **Greg Regan**, President of the AFL-CIO’s Transportation Trades Department (TTD), thanked BLET and BMWED leaders and members for reaffiliating with the TTD earlier in 2022. Regan said the TTD’s combined voice of 37 transportation unions gives workers a powerful voice on Capitol Hill. In his remarks to delegates, the TTD president described PSR an “underlying rot” in the freight rail industry and described how it has damaged the country, hurt shippers and consumers, and brought the supply chain to a grinding halt. He said TTD’s goal is to ensure adequate staffing so that the nation’s Class I railroads can meet their common carrier obligations, and to also eliminate harsh rail carrier attendance policies.



» Guest speaker **Jennifer Homendy**, Chair of the National Transportation Safety Board, delivered a video greeting to the delegates, regarding the NTSB’s endeavors to improve safety in the railroad industry.



» Guest speaker **Jeremy Ferguson**, President of the SMART Transportation Division, delivered a video greeting to the delegates detailing how SMART TD and BLET worked closely together throughout the long Class I contract battle.

» Delegates continued to debate the Report and Recommendations of the BLET Bylaws Committee, chaired by Brother **Randy Fannon**.



» The convention proceedings concluded early for the day to allow delegates to participate in an informal **Town Hall meeting** to discuss the tentative national agreement, which was ratified on November 21, 2022.

DAY 3

October 12, 2022



“With renewal of the Rail Safety Advisory Committee, along with existing safety programs such as FAMES, SOFA and C3RS, I’m optimistic about the future of rail safety in America.”

— Amit Bose

» Guest speaker **Amit Bose**, Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration, addressed delegates regarding safety in the railroad industry. “The BLET and the FRA have a shared commitment to make sure rail operations are safe,” he said. With renewal of the Rail Safety Advisory Committee, along with existing safety programs such as FAMES, SOFA and C3RS, “I’m optimistic about the future of rail safety in America,” Bose told delegates. Major safety initiatives driven by the FRA this year include a fatigue risk management program and a two-person crew rulemaking. He said the FRA extended the comment period for the two-person crew rulemaking, and he encouraged BLET members to file their comments if they have not already done so. He thanked BLET members for their dedication and recognized their efforts and sacrifices to make sure freight gets to where it needs to go.

» Guest speaker **Bernie Sanders**, U.S. Senator from Vermont, delivered a fiery message to delegates via a pre-recorded video. In September 2022, Sanders blocked attempts by some senators to impose Presidential Emergency Board recommendations on



“You are the reason for rail profits.”

— Sen. Bernie Sanders

rail workers. In his remarks to delegates, Sanders explained why he took the stand he did. He also thanked BLET members for working through the pandemic. He said the reason railroads are making record profits is not because of Wall Street, but due to the hard work of railroaders. “You are the reason for rail profits,” Senator Sanders said.



» Guest speaker **Elizabeth Warren**, U.S. Senator from Massachusetts, also delivered remarks to the convention delegates via video.

» Guest speaker **Ruben Gallego**, U.S. Representative from Arizona’s 7th District, told del-



“Working class Americans like you kept America going during the pandemic — not Wall Street investors or hedge fund managers.”

— Ruben Gallego

egates that his district includes parts of Phoenix that see high levels of rail traffic. He praised and thanked BLET members for their important work not only in his district but throughout the United States. "Working class Americans like you kept America going during the pandemic — not Wall Street investors or hedge fund managers," he said.

» Guest speaker **Kat Bisbikis**, National President of the BLET Auxiliary, explained how her organization was hosting its Fourth National Convention at the same hotel where the



"Our BLET Auxiliary has found its voice over the last four years, and we have awakened the voice of railroad families across America. And we are loud and we fight for our families. We let the railroads know that we're not here for a fight — we're here for war!"
— Kat Bisbikis

BLET was hosting its Fifth National Convention. She told BLET delegates that the Auxiliary, which celebrated its 135th anniversary in 2022, has become reinvigorated over the past four years in response to attendance policies such as Hi-Viz and other harsh treatments that railroad corporations mete out to their employees. "Our BLET Auxiliary has found its voice over the last four years, and we have awakened the voice of railroad families across America," she said. "And we are loud and we fight for our families." She described how the Auxiliary played a key role in Rail Labor protests at the Berkshire Hathaway annual meeting in Omaha in April

2022. "We let the railroads know that we're not here for a fight — we're here for war!"

» Guest speaker **Lyndon Isaak**, President of Teamsters Canada Rail Conference (TCRC), brought greetings on behalf of 10,000 railroad Brothers and Sisters in Canada.



"We will continue to fight the good fight."
— Lyndon Isaak

Like railroaders in America, President Isaak said work/life balance has become a huge issue for Canadian train crews. It is one of the long term battles TCRC has faced over the past four years, in addition to the fight against one-person train crews and the introduction of in-cab video and audio recordings. The investigation into the tragic CP Rail fatality near Field, B.C., which took the lives of three crew members in February of 2019, has been an area of grave concern for TCRC and its members. President Isaak said the TCRC continues to honor the memory of locomotive engineer Andrew Dockrell, conductor Dylan Paradis, and trainee Daniel Waldenberger-Bulmer. "We will continue to fight the good fight," he said.

» Brother **Shane Hubbard**, BLET Division 343 (Princeton, Ind.) and Chairman of the Legislative Committee, gave the report and recommendations of his committee. Brother Hubbard said his Committee's report was dedicated to the memory of **Shahraim Allen** and **Tim Price**, two dedicated BLET State Legislative Board Chairmen who recently and tragically passed away. He also introduced Committee members **D. Wayne Denson**, Division 182 (North Little Rock, Ark.), **B.J.**



Trumble, Division 33 (Battle Creek, Mich.), and **J.T. Sizemore**, Division 423 (Tuscumbia, Ala.). Brother Hubbard also thanked National Division Staff Liaison, **Brendan P. Sullivan**, Director of Political Affairs for the BLET's National Legislative Office. Their report was accepted without debate.



» Delegates conducted nomination of National Division officers and alternate officers. (See related story, Page 24 this issue.)

» Delegates continued to debate the Report and Recommendations of the BLET Bylaws Committee, chaired by Brother **Randy Fannon**.

DAY 4

October 13, 2022

» Guest speaker **Chris Murphy**, U.S. Senator from Connecticut, delivered a video greeting to delegates.



» Delegates recognized retiring Advisory Board officers who were not in attendance: National Secretary-Treasurer **Steve Bruno**; National Vice President **Marcus Ruef**; and National Vice President **Mike Twombly**.



» Delegates heard farewell addresses from two retiring Advisory Board officers: First Vice President **Lee Pruitt** and National Vice President **Mike Priester**.



» Delegates donated several thousand dollars to help the family of Brother **Marvin Lee**, Local Chairman of Division 75 in Kansas City, Mo., who unexpectedly passed away just days before the start of the convention. (See related story, Page 23 this issue.)

» Delegates concluded debate on the Report and Recommendations of the BLET Bylaws Committee, chaired by Brother **Randy Fannon**.

BLET Advisory Board RETIREMENTS

DENNIS PIERCE

After a 45-year railroad career that began in 1977, **DENNIS R. PIERCE** retired as National President of the BLET effective December 31, 2022. He retired as the longest serving President of the BLET since 1950, serving from 2010-2022.

Brother Pierce began his railroad career as a Burlington Northern Maintenance of Way employee in 1977 in Lincoln, Neb. In 1979, he transferred to a clerical position with Burlington Northern. In 1980, he transferred again to the firemen's craft and earned promotion to locomotive engineer in 1981.

Pierce at the Fifth National Convention in 2022 (above) and the First National Convention (2006) below.



Brother Pierce started as a union officer at the grassroots level, working his way up through all of the levels of the Organization. He joined BLET Division 98 in Lincoln, Neb., on April 1, 1981 and became Local Chairman of Division 98 in 1991. In 1992, he was elected as 2nd Alternate Vice General Chairman of the BN Northlines/MRL General Committee of Adjustment. In 1995, he was elected as a full time 3rd Vice General Chairman for the BN Northlines/MRL GCA and he and his family relocated from Nebraska to the GCA Office in St. Paul, Minnesota. Brother Pierce was elected as 1st Vice General Chairman in 1998 and relocated again to Ft. Worth, Texas. In 2001, Brother Pierce began serving as General Chairman of the BN Northlines/MRL GCA, and was reelected to office in 2004 and 2007.

At the BLET's First National Convention in 2006, Brother Pierce was elected First Alternate Vice President. He was elevated to the office of National Vice President in 2008, and elevated to serve as First Vice President in 2009. He became National President following the retirement of Paul T. Sorrow in mid-2010. He was elected by the members to continue serving as National President in late 2010, and was reelected by acclamation at National Conventions in 2014 and 2018. In addition to his BLET offices, Brother Pierce served as President of the Teamsters Rail Conference (2010-2022) and Chairman of the Cooperating Rail Labor Organizations (2021-2022).

LEE PRUITT

BROTHER LEE PRUITT served the BLET as First Vice President for 12 years (2010-2022), and he is a 50-year member of the Organization. Brother Pruitt began his railroad career in 1968 with the Southern Pacific Railroad in Bakersfield, Calif., and earned promotion to locomotive engineer in 1972 — the same year he joined BLET Division 126 (Bakersfield, Calif.).



In 2022, at the Fifth National Convention



In 2007 with his wife and daughter



In 1979, as a Local Chairman

In 1979, he was elected Local Chairman of his Division. In 1990, he was elected General Chairman of the Southern Pacific-Western Lines GCA, and was elected National Vice President in 2001. In 2010, he was elected First Vice President, and was reelected by acclamation in 2014 and 2018.

On October 13, the last day of the BLET's Fifth National Convention in Las Vegas, Brother Priestler gave a farewell address. He thanked all the officers and delegates in attendance for their kind words. He also thanked his wife and daughter for their love and support.

"After over 50 years, I have so many brothers and sisters and others to thank and recognize that it would take me more time than we have today to do so. However, I would be amiss if I didn't recognize my wife, Jamie, and my daughter, who most of you have seen grow up. She's grown into a beautiful young lady. Both of those ladies in my life have given me the encouragement and support to continue to do this job.

"I will now enter into the next stage of my life, which is retirement. My last day on the job will be December 31st of this year. This is really not a goodbye, by any means, but a passing of the baton onto a younger, stronger generation," he said. "I wish them the best. I will always make myself available to whoever needs my help."



STEVE BRUNO

STEVE BRUNO retired December 31, 2022, after eight years of office as National Secretary-Treasurer of the BLET. He was first elected NST at the BLET's Third National Convention in 2014, and reelected by acclamation in 2018. From 2010-2013, he served on the Advisory Board as a National



In 2010, at the Second National Convention



In 2010, with VP Marcus Ruef and SEPTA General Chairman Rich Dixon

Vice President. Brother Bruno began his railroad career with SEPTA in August of 1984, and was promoted to locomotive engineer in May 1985. He joined the Brotherhood on September 1, 1985. NST Bruno is a member of BLET Division 71 in Philadelphia, PA. Brother Bruno led the effort to establish the SEPTA General Committee of Adjustment. He worked full time as a certified Locomotive Engineer while simultaneously serving four terms as General Chairman of the newly created SEPTA General Committee of Adjustment and five terms as Local Chairman of Division 71, handling hundreds of grievance and arbitration cases. He represented them at Public Law Boards, Special Boards of Adjustment, the First Division of the National Railroad Adjustment Board, and the Locomotive Engineer Review Board. As General Chairman, Brother Bruno handled six separate collective bargaining rounds, which included arguments and presentations before three Presidential Emergency Boards. He also served as a delegate to several BLE/BLET National and International Conventions (1990-2009), as President of Division 71 (2002-2008) and as a delegate to the 2006 Teamsters International Convention.

From 2008 to 2010, Brother Bruno served the BLET as the Director of Regulatory Affairs. Headquartered at the BLET's National Legislative Office in Washington, D.C., he represented the interests of 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. From 2014-2022, Brother Bruno served as Chairman of the BLET Safety Task Force.

MARCUS RUEF

MARCUS J. RUEF retired after a 50-year railroad career that saw him serve 16 years on the BLET's Advisory Board. First elected National Vice President in 2006, he was reelected at the 2010, 2014 and 2018 conventions.

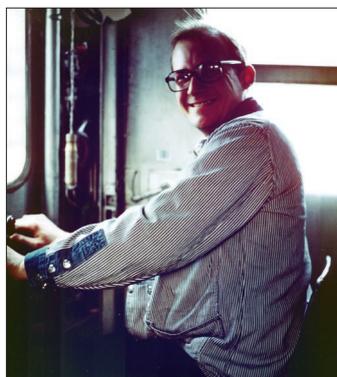
Brother Ruef hired out as a Block Operator for Penn Central in June 1973, transferred to engine service in 1976 and was promoted to locomotive engineer in 1978. He left Metro North in 1985 to work at Norfolk Southern, ultimately establishing himself on the Washington District and joining Division 143 in Manassas, Virginia, where he served as Legislative Representative to and Secretary-Treasurer and First Vice Chairman of the Virginia State Legislative Board.



In 2018, with wife Lajuan at the Fourth National Convention



In 2006, at the First National Convention



Early 1980s, working as a hostler in New Haven, Conn. In 1997, Brother Ruef was appointed Assistant Director of the BLE Arbitration Department and Labor Member of the National Railroad Adjustment Board (NRAB) in Chicago. He served in these roles until his 2006 election to the Advisory Board. In 2009, he was appointed to head the BLET Arbitration Department and reassigned to the NRAB. In 2010, he was elected by the full NRAB to its Executive Board, serving alternate years as Chairman or Vice Chairman of the full NRAB until 2022, serving as the liaison between rail labor and the National Mediation Board for Section Three matters. He also assisted the General Chairmen with jurisdiction over the Illinois Central, Wisconsin Central, CP Rail/Soo Line/DM&E (including Indiana Southern), Indiana Harbor Belt (including Illinois Railway), and Metra.

Brother Marcus credits his wife Lajuan for much of his success... "I'm proud of my accomplishments; however, I'm even prouder of someone who is why I am here today. And that someone is my wife, Lajuan. Few of you know the pivotal role that she plays in my life and how without her inspiration and support, I would not have come as far or accomplished as much for the membership."

MIKE PRIESTER

BROTHER MIKE PRIESTER has over 50 consecutive years of BLET membership. His railroad career began when he hired out as a fireman for the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad on June 6, 1968, out of Terre Haute, Ind. He joined BLET Division 751 on February 1, 1972. In 1979, he



In 2022, at the Fifth National Convention



In 2022, at the Fifth National Convention with wife Debbie and daughter Shannon



In 2013 with wife Debbie

time with his 4-year-old triplet grandchildren.

“We have no promises that you will ever see all the seasons of your life, but for today, say all the things that you wanted your loved ones to hear and remember. God willing, they will appreciate and love you for all the things you have made possible for them and in all the years you have in doing it for them.

“Thank you for being a passenger on my train,” Brother Priester said. “The train of life.”

was elected Local Chairman of his Division, an office he held for 20 years. In 1999, he was elected General Chairman of the CP Rail/U.S. GCA. In 2010, he was elected National Vice President, winning reelection in 2014 and 2018.

Brother Priester gave a farewell address in which he reflected on the many changes he has seen throughout his 54 years of railroading: the elimination of jobs such as fireman, flagman, and head brakeman; and the addition of Trainmen to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. Brother Priester also suffered personal tragedies, including the loss of his son at age 21 to a drunk driver and his first grandson to complications at birth. “Rather than walk around pissed off at the world, mad and upset, I dedicated my life and career to making tomorrow a better day for my family and my Brotherhood,” he said.

He thanked his wife Debbie and daughter Shannon, and said he plans to spend more

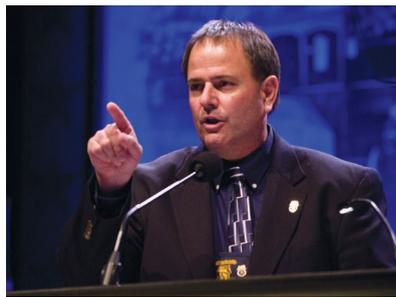
MIKE TWOMBLY

BROTHER MICHAEL D. TWOMBLY served the BLET as National Vice President from May 21, 2008, until his retirement on December 31, 2022. He was elevated to the Advisory Board in 2008, and reelected at National Conventions in 2010, 2014 and 2018.

Brother Twombly began his railroad career at the age of 18 on June 30, 1971, as a fireman for the Boston & Maine. He



In 2017, with wife Roxanne



In 2010, at the Second National Convention



In 2004, with Ken Kroeger, Sereena Hogan, and Pat Lynch

quickly learned the craft and became a qualified locomotive engineer one year later, being set up and set back until eventually being promoted full time locomotive engineer in 1977. He joined the BLET on Nov. 1, 1971, and has held continuous membership since 1973. He belongs to Division 191 in Lunenburg, Mass.

His service to the BLET began in 1987, when he volunteered for the position of Vice Local Chairman. He was son promoted to the Local Chairman's position. Brother Twombly served as Vice General Chairman of the Delaware & Hudson/Springfield Terminal GCA under Charlie Klimek, his long-time friend and mentor, from 1989 thru 1994, and became General Chairman after Brother Klimek left office in 1995.

As Vice President, he was assigned to assist numerous short lines from 2008-2010. From 2010-2018, he was primarily assigned to the Union Pacific GCAs. From 2019-2022, he served as Head of the BLET Short Line Department. During his tenure on all these assignments, Brother Twombly collectively assisted in at least four first-time agreements and 22 renegotiated agreements.

Brother Twombly comes from a family with a rich tradition of railroading. His late father, Wilbur M. Twombly, hired out on the Boston & Maine as a fireman on February 15, 1948, and retired in 1990. Also, his great grandfather, Arthur Seavey, and great uncle, Willis Twombly, both were engineers on the B&M, with hire dates in the late 1890s. 🕒



2022 Convention Delegates continue legacy of generosity

DONATIONS FEED THE HOMELESS, HELP FAMILY OF FALLEN BROTHER MARVIN LEE

BLET delegates showed their generosity at the Fifth National Convention on October 13, 2022, when they donated money to help the family of a fallen Brother.

During opening ceremonies on October 10, it was announced that Marvin Lee, Local Chairman of Division 75 in Kansas City, Mo., unexpectedly passed away in his sleep on the morning of October 9. He was just 49 years old. Brother Lee was a highly-respected union officer who leaves behind his wife, two children, and one grandchild.

On October 13, Brother Bill D. Burchett, the delegate representing BLET Division 391 (Fort Madison, Iowa), rose to speak on behalf of Brother Lee's family. The delegates showed their generos-

ity by donating several thousand dollars to help the Lee family during their difficult time. Brother C.C. Fuller II, the delegate representing BLET Division 75 (Kansas City, Mo.), also rose to speak to the integrity of Brother Lee's character and his devotion to his family, noting that he will also be greatly missed by his railroad family. The delegates also observed a moment of silence in memory of Brother Lee.

In an additional act of kindness, the BLET donated more than 250 boxed lunches to the Las Vegas Rescue Mission to help feed the homeless. The mission is a nonprofit Christian organization that provides approximately 30,000 meals each month to those in need. Members of the BLET Arrangements Committee

collected the donated boxed lunches and delivered them to the Las Vegas Rescue Mission on October 13.

BLET delegates have continued an impressive tradition of generosity for more than 25 years. Delegates to the 1996 convention donated \$20,000 to striking newspaper workers in Detroit. In 2010, they established the Gary Perrien Fund to help BLET Brothers and Sisters who suffered serious injuries that may cause financial hardship for themselves and or/their families. In 2014, they made additional donations to the Perrien Fund to help four BLET Brothers and their families. In 2018, the delegates donated more than 300 boxed lunches and fresh fruit to the Las Vegas Rescue Mission, which the BLET also helped in 2022. 



Bill Burchett, Division 391 (far left) rose to request delegates pass the hat to collect donations for the family of the late Marvin Lee, former Local Chairman of Division 75 (Kansas City, Mo.).



Members of the BLET Arrangements Committee collected and donated meals to the homeless in Las Vegas at the conclusion of the Fifth National Convention.

BLET Advisory Board & Alternates sworn in January 1, 2023

As part of their duties during the Fifth National Convention, delegates nominated candidates for National Division office. All officers pictured below were elected by acclamation and results were certified on December 19, 2022.

A total of 26 officers were elected (14 Advisory Board officers and 12 Alternate officers) to four-year terms of office beginning on January 1, 2023. Congratulations to these dedicated Brothers and Sisters, and thank you for your service to our Brotherhood. 🇺🇸

Brief biographical sketches of all Advisory Board officers, as well as a list of Vice President assignments, can be found on the National Division website:

BLE-T.ORG/OFFICERS



Edward A. Hall
NATIONAL PRESIDENT



Mark L. Wallace
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT



David P. Estes
NATIONAL S-T



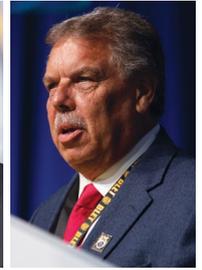
Vince G. Verna
VICE PRESIDENT & NLR



William P. Lyons
VICE PRESIDENT NO. 1



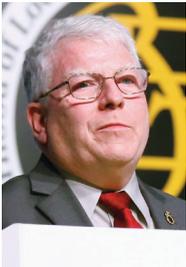
L. Randy Fannon
VICE PRESIDENT NO. 2



Peter M. Semenek
VICE PRESIDENT NO. 3



Rick C. Gibbons
VICE PRESIDENT NO. 4



James P. Louis
VICE PRESIDENT NO. 5



Garrison D. Best
VICE PRESIDENT NO. 6



J. Alan Holdcraft
VICE PRESIDENT NO. 7



Patrick T. Driscoll
TRUSTEE NO. 1



Kyle J. Bagby
TRUSTEE NO. 2



Richard E. Crow
TRUSTEE NO. 3



Megan Mead
ALTERNATE NATIONAL S-T



Shane Hubbard
1ST ALTERNATE VICE PRESIDENT & NLR



Brendan Sullivan
2ND ALTERNATE VICE PRESIDENT & NLR



James Logan
1ST ALTERNATE VICE PRESIDENT



Kevin Sexton
2ND ALTERNATE VICE PRESIDENT



Jeff Thurman
3RD ALTERNATE VICE PRESIDENT



Patrick Driscoll
4TH ALTERNATE VICE PRESIDENT



M. Robby Cunningham
5TH ALTERNATE VICE PRESIDENT



Dewayne Dehart
6TH ALTERNATE VICE PRESIDENT



Brian Carr
7TH ALTERNATE VICE PRESIDENT



Keith Kerley
8TH ALTERNATE VICE PRESIDENT



Jerry Sturdivant
9TH ALTERNATE VICE PRESIDENT

Randy Dumey retires after 24 years as Local Chairman of Division 595

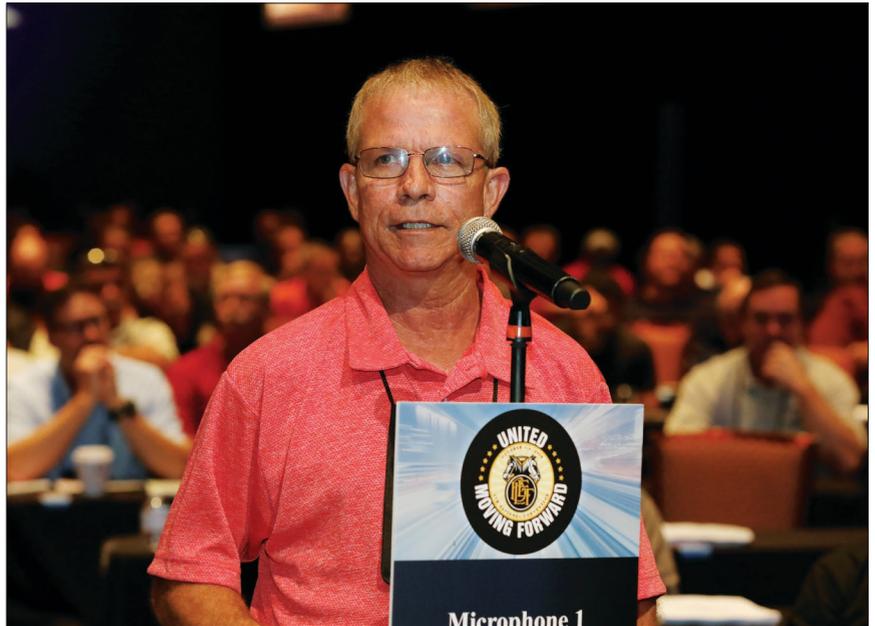
Randy J. Dumey, who spent 24 consecutive years as Local Chairman of Division 595 in Chaffee, Missouri, retired from active union service and the BNSF Railway on December 31, 2021. His railroad career spanned over three decades, and he has been a BLET member in good standing since 1993.

Brother Dumey hired out in July of 1988 as a switchman out of Memphis Tennessee, and entered into train service in Chaffee, Missouri, in December of 1988. He began working as a conductor in July of 1990 and earned promotion to locomotive engineer in December of 1992. He joined the Brotherhood on April 1, 1993.

In 1998, Brother Dumey became Division 595's Local Chairman — a job he held until he retired 24 years later. In May of 2001, Brother Dumey was elected First Vice Chairman of the BNSF (SLSF) General Committee of Adjustment, a position he held for 21 years — 9 years under current General Chairman Jeff Thurman and 12 under former General Chairman and current National Vice President Rick Gibbons. Brother Dumey was reelected by acclamation at least four times as the GCA's First Vice Chairman (2009, 2013, 2017, and 2021).

In a 2021 letter congratulating Brother Dumey on his retirement, former BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce thanked Dumey for his leadership, dedication to our Brotherhood, and for the outstanding job he did as a union officer in protecting locomotive engineers and trainmen.

“Brother Dumey has been described as an indispensable resource, having worked closely with his GCA's Local Chairmen as they dealt with local and regional carrier officers,” President Pierce said. “As a long time Local Chairman and First Vice General Chairman, you have gone above and beyond the call of duty to protect the BLET membership you represent. Your efforts have



Brother Dumey at the Fourth National Convention in 2018



Brother Dumey served on the Work/Ritual Committee at the First National Convention in 2006

made your Division, your GCA, and our National Division stronger.”

Brother Dumey served the Brotherhood and its members in numerous other capacities. In 2006, he served as a member of the Work/Ritual Committee at the First National Convention.

In 2014, he was a member of the Salaries Committee at the BLET's Third National Convention in 2014. Four years later, he served as Chairman of the Salaries Committee at the Fourth National Convention in 2018. As early as 2013, Brother Dumey served as a Primary Investigator on the BLET Safety Task Force. He was dispatched to

multiple accident scenes throughout his career and provided accident analysis that has been crucial to improving workplace safety for all locomotive engineers and trainmen.

Brother Dumey's family and hosted a retirement party for him on January 29, 2022. Many of his railroad friends were in attendance, including members of the BNSF (SLSF) GCA and of Division 595. BNSF (SLSF) General Chairman Jeff Thurman said: “On behalf of our GCA, I thank Brother Dumey for his years of service to our Brotherhood. His veteran leadership and knowledge will be hard to replace. Brother Dumey left a lasting positive impression on our union, and I wish him all the best in retirement.”

Brother Dumey and his wife Jamey have a daughter, Amy, and three grandchildren. During his free time, he enjoys fishing and spending time with his family. The Brotherhood thanks Brother Dumey for his contributions to the Brotherhood over his many years of membership, and extend best wishes for a long, happy, and healthy retirement. 🇺🇸

UP's Great Lakes Service Unit honors BLET member for 50-year railroad career



Brother Knutsen has been a locomotive engineer since 1972.

Brother Dan J. Knutsen, a member of BLET Division 125 (Clinton, Iowa) was honored in a ceremony by the Union Pacific Railroad for his length of service.

Brother Knutsen hired out in 1972. Fifty years of railroading, and 2 million miles later, Brother Knutsen said he still loves his job and has no plans to retire soon.

A locomotive engineer in UP's Great Lakes Service Unit, Brother Knutsen, began driving tractors as soon as his feet could reach the ped-

als. As one of seven children, he began working the family farm at a young age, sparking his fascination with heavy machinery.

Brother Knutsen hired out as a Chicago and North Western Railroad brakeman in 1970, and his interest in trains continued to grow. He earned promotion to locomotive engineer in 1972 and has been running trains out of his hometown of Clinton ever since. Brother Knutsen initiated into BLET Division 125 on June 1, 1977, and has held continuous mem-

bership for the past 44 years.

According to Great Lakes Service Unit team members, "his love for the job shows in his attention to detail. Dan leaves no stone unturned."

On September 29, 2021, Union Pacific hosted a ceremony to honor Brother Knutsen along with fellow railroaders who have reached the 50-year plateau. The ceremony was live streamed on the railroad's Facebook page.

The BLET National Division offers its congratulations to Brother Knutsen on his five decades of service. 🎉

Kertesz fought for rail safety throughout 50-year career



Ken Kertesz with the original charter of Division 263 (Wilkes-Barre, Pa.). The charter, issued in 1884 by Grand Chief Engineer P.M. Arthur.



Ken Kertesz, former chairman of the BLET Pennsylvania State Legislative Board, lobbied for rail safety legislation throughout his 50-year railroad career (1972-2022).

Ken W. Kertesz, who proudly served the Brotherhood as Chairman of the Pennsylvania State Legislative Board for 18 years, retired on February 1, 2022. His railroad career spanned five decades years.

Brother Kertesz hired out as a trainman for the Lehigh Valley Railroad in June of 1972, working out of Perth Amboy, N.J. He went firing later that year and earned promotion to locomotive engineer in 1974. He joined BLET Division 601 on January 1, 1974, and has been a member in good standing for the past 48 years.

In addition to the Lehigh Valley, Brother Kertesz worked for three other railroads throughout his 50-year railroad career: Delaware & Hudson (D&H); Canadian Pacific (1991-2015) and Norfolk Southern (2015-2022).

Brother Kertesz selflessly served the Brotherhood with honor and distinction, holding various elected union offices each year from 1974 through 2018. He served Division 601 as Secretary-Treasurer (1974-1976); he served Division 263 as Local Chairman from 1980-1992; he served the D&H General Committee of Adjustment (GCA) as a

Vice General Chairman from 1987-2004; and served as Chairman of the Pennsylvania State Legislative Board from 2000-2018. He also served as an officer of the BLET's National Association of State Legislative Board Chairmen (NASLBC), including many years as Secretary-Treasurer. In 2002, he was the host Chairman of the 64th annual Eastern Union Meeting Association (EUMA) in Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

While serving as Vice General Chairman of the D&G GCA, Brother Kertesz helped to negotiate seven different contract agreements as a member of the negotiating team. As Pennsylvania State Legislative Board Chairman, Brother Kertesz frequently lobbied in the state capitol of Harrisburg and in Washington, D.C., lobbying in support of numerous safety laws to improve the lives of locomotive engineers. He lobbied for laws to implement a national rail security following the 9/11 attacks; he lobbied to boost counseling and paid leave for train crews following traumatic on-the-job incidents; he lobbied to protect engineers from having to show police their personal driver's license in the event of on-the-job grade accident; and he lobbied

to block locomotives from operating in the long hood forward position.

Not only was Brother Kertesz an exemplary union officer in the protective and legislative arenas, he was also an accomplished and professional locomotive engineer. In 1993, he received an Outstanding Service safety citation from the Canadian Pacific for averting a major derailment by stopping his train over a broken rail.

Brother Kertesz safely completed his Last Run for the Norfolk Southern on January 31, 2022, operating a locomotive between Taylor, Pa., and Binghamton, N.Y. His retirement became effective the next day.

Brother Kertesz and his wife Debbie have been married since 1977. The couple has three children (Matthew, Jonathan and Mark) and five grandchildren. Brother Kertesz is an officer with the Knights of Columbus and is a Lector at St. Therese's Church. Also, he is Secretary and Board of Directors Member of the Lackawanna & Wyoming Valley Railway Historical Society.

"I enjoyed my career and miss the comradery with the membership," Brother Kertesz said. 🕒

From tug boat engineer to locomotive engineer, Andy Goulet was always a union advocate

Brother A.J. “Andy” Goulet of BLET Division 542 (Detroit, Michigan) safely completed his Last Run for CSX on May 19, 2022, concluding his railroad career that began in 1977.

Notably, Brother Goulet was a founding member of the BLET’s Michigan State Legislative Board in 2002, and had the distinction of serving as its Secretary-Treasurer from 2006 until his retirement in 2022.

Brother Goulet’s railroad career began in Frankfort, Michigan. Between December of 1977 and July of 1979, he worked off-and-on for the Ann Arbor Railroad as a car ferry deckhand on the S.S. City of Milwaukee. He was a member of the Seafarers Union. From 1979-1989, he worked on various Great Lakes bulk cargo carriers, initially as a Deckhand and AB Wheelsman. From August of 1989 to June of 1992, he served as an agent at the Great Lakes Headquarters of the Seafarers Union.

Later, as a CSX employee and member of the National Maritime Union (NMU), Brother Goulet worked in cross river tug/barge/ferry service between Port Huron, Michigan, and Sarnia, Ontario. He worked as an AB Deckhand, Tug Engine Room Engineer, and Captain of Tug C&O 452 at Barge Pere Marquette 10.

In the mid 1990s, tug barge service ended upon completion of tunnel projects under both the St. Clair and Detroit Rivers, and CSX abolished all the water-based jobs. Brother Goulet says the jobs were phased out over a three and a half year period — and after a lot of fighting from the NMU.

At the time, CSX offered either a \$5,000 buyout or a job in traditional railroad service. Brother Goulet opted for the latter, hiring out as a conductor for CSX on January 12, 1998 out of Sag-



Brother Goulet on the day of his Last Run. He was a founding member of the BLET’s Michigan State Legislative Board and served as its Secretary-Treasurer from 2006-2022.

inaw, Michigan. He earned promotion to locomotive engineer on January 18, 1999. Brother Goulet joined BLET Division 542 effective February 1, 2001.

Brother Goulet’s railroad career began on the water, so it is fitting that he returned to the water to celebrate its end. About two hours after his Last Run for CSX, Brother Goulet was enjoying retired life on his boat along the North Channel of Michigan’s St. Clair River near his home in Algonac.

While he has no children of his own, Brother Goulet has been blessed with

five foreign exchange students since 2016: Gonzalo, from Spain (2016-17); Paula, from Germany (2018-19); Carolina, from Italy (2018-19); Gaia, from Italy (2021-22); and Karoline, from Denmark (2021-22).

“I was thankful that Gaia, Karoline, and my wife Cindy were able to be in attendance for the Michigan State Legislative Board’s Fifth Quadrennial Meeting to witness (and be there for me) for my retirement,” Brother Goulet said. “The girls got to see labor unionism first hand and were awed by

it. The next day they toured the Michigan Capitol building in Lansing.”

Outside of the railroad and union service, Brother Goulet was a Trustee of the Algonac Community Schools Board of Education between 1992-2022. He is a member of the Algonac Lions Club and performs community volunteer work. He enjoys golf, boating on the St. Clair River and Lake St. Clair, and ship watching from his front porch. He also enjoys reading and spending time with family and friends. Brother Goulet plans to continue pursuit of those interests as well as his community volunteer work during retirement. He also plans to travel to Europe at some point for a reunion with his five “kids.”

Regarding his BLET career, Brother Goulet said: “I have had too many wonderful things happen within the BLET to begin to mention. The support of this union in my good times and not-so-good times has been tremendous and I am so grateful for all this fine Brotherhood has done with and for me. I appreciate the Local Chairmen, General Chairmen, National Officers, Directors, and staffs for their efforts on our behalf. Special thanks go to my Brothers and Board Chairmen Greg Powell (for shanghaiing me into the S-T job in 2006) and B.J. Trumble (for always accepting my answers of ‘NO!’... and sometimes ‘yes’). I am retiring but not going away. I will always serve this Brotherhood in any way it ever needs me to.”

BLET Michigan State Legislative Board Chairman B.J. Trumble said: “Andy Goulet has been a great asset to our Board for the past two decades. Andy has attended all five quadrennial meetings, four of which he has been our Secretary-Treasurer. I wish Andy a long and healthy retirement and thank you for your service to our Brotherhood. He has made us a better union and he will be missed.”

Ricciardi retires after 37 years with SEPTA, Amtrak

Brother Vincent R. Ricciardi, a long-time member of BLET Division 483 in Philadelphia, has retired after a 37-year career working for SEPTA and Amtrak.

Brother Ricciardi hired out with the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) in 1985, and joined BLET Division 71 on May 1, 1986. A few years later, Brother Ricciardi began working as a locomotive engineer for Amtrak and joined BLET Division 483.

Brother Ricciardi’s career at Amtrak spanned 32 years, from November 6, 1990 until his retirement on March 5,

2022. His Last Run came on March 4, 2022, when he worked as the locomotive engineer of Amtrak’s Pennsylvania between New York and Harrisburg, Pa. He is the owner of a 30-year BLET membership pin.

Brother Ricciardi and his wife Sandra have two children, Kathryn and Anna. His family member John Ricciardi is a railroader, currently working as a conductor for SEPTA and Amtrak. John’s rail career also began in 1985.

The BLET National Division extends best wishes to Brother Ricciardi for a long, happy and healthy retirement.



Brother Ricciardi at Trenton, N.J., where he operated this locomotive (Amtrak Train #43) for the last time on the day of his Last Run.

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, 7061 East Pleasant Valley Road, Independence, Ohio 44131

Introducing our new team for 2023, thanking our outgoing leaders



BY KATHLEEN BISBIKIS
NATIONAL PRESIDENT,
BLET AUXILIARY

The year 2022 was a struggle fighting for railroad workers and their families. The Auxiliary is proud that we stood with our union Brothers and Sisters and shared in that fight. As family members, we also feel the wrath of the carrier's demands and unwillingness to negotiate.

In October 2022, we held our Fourth Quadrennial Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada. In conjunction with our Convention, we also celebrated our 135th anniversary as an Organization — a milestone we were so excited to share with our delegates, members and guests at the Convention. In the vendor area hallway, we shared historic memorabilia and photos from our 135-year history for everyone to view. It offered a unique glimpse of where we came from to where we are now.

In a whirl of emotion, it is with great gratitude to our convention delegates that I was reelected to serve as your National President for another four years. This is a position that I take very seriously, and I will continue in my quest to do everything I possibly can to improve on and build what we started in the past four years.

I am excited to work with the team of newly-elected officers to serve the membership over the next four years. In addition to myself, they are:

- **Rachel Pharris**, National 1st Vice President/National Outreach Coordinator;
- **Jodi Wallace**, National Secretary;



The outgoing team, from left: Terri Fleming, Rachel Pharris, Kat Bisbikis, Lawana Poss, Velma Williams, and Becky Schneider.

- **Chris Baldwin**, National Treasurer;
- **Natalie Miller**, National 2nd Vice President/National Legislative Representative;
- **Victoria Delahay**, National 3rd Vice President/Social Media;
- **Jessica Keene**, National Chaplain;
- **Debbie Massengale**, Alternate National Secretary; and
- **Katryna Hughes**, Alternate National Treasurer.

Please take a moment to review the photo of your new leadership team (see page 31). They are all very excited to get to work to positively impact our organization with fresh new ideas to further our vision.

It is with great sadness, however, that we say goodbye to some dedicated officers who served this organization for a combined total of years that would easily exceed 100. Terri Fleming, Lawana Poss, Becky Schneider, Jessica Cole, Rose Surchik, and Velma Williams, your service to the membership

and the National Auxiliary is unparalleled. Some of you have chosen retirement, and it's well deserved; we all hope the next chapter in your lives is everything you desire. If I were to describe this team in one word, it would be LOYALTY. They were forever loyal to the betterment of the organization and everything it stands for, devoted to each other, and never afraid to try something new if it meant helping the Auxiliary, or telling me when a bad idea was a bad idea. We have made some fantastic memories, had some great laughs, and made leaps and bounds for the membership, all while staying faithful to each other and our members. It has been nothing short of an honor working with all of you. Sisters, I am forever grateful.

As we begin 2023, the National BLET Auxiliary officers wish each of you a bright and hopeful New Year, and remind you to find joy where you can, count your blessings, and stay grateful in all you do. 🍀

“In a whirl of emotion, it is with great gratitude to our convention delegates that I was reelected to serve as your National President for another four years. This is a position that I take very seriously, and I will continue in my quest to do everything I possibly can to improve on and build what we started in the past four years.”



The newly-elected team of officers, from left: Katryna Hughes, Alternate National Treasurer; Jessica Keene, National Chaplain; Rachel Pharris, National 1st Vice President/National Outreach Coordinator; Kathleen Bisbikis, National President; Jodi Wallace, National Secretary; Natalie Miller, National 2nd Vice President/National Legislative Representative; Victoria Delahay, National 3rd Vice President/Social Media; and Chris Baldwin, National Treasurer. (Present but not pictured: Debbie Massengale, Alternate National Secretary.)



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.



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SAVE THE DATE

2023 BLET REGIONAL MEETINGS

The BLET National Division is pleased to announce the dates and locations of this year's regional meetings: June 26-30 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and August 14-18 in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

This year's meetings will be held at the Hilton Milwaukee City Center (509 W. Wisconsin, Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53203) and the Hilton Myrtle Beach Resort (10000 Beach Club Drive Myrtle Beach, SC 29572).

As with previous regional meetings, the 2023 meetings will be held Monday through Friday. Travel to the meeting, registration and a welcome reception for each meeting will be on Monday. Meetings, training classes and other events will be scheduled throughout the remainder of the week and will include a closing dinner on Thursday night. Travel home is on Friday for each meeting.

Per the BLET Bylaws, regional meetings are held "for the purposes of membership training, education and discussion of matters of importance to the membership." Additionally, the meetings are structured to include options for fellowship with other members and their families.

More specific details are available online. Registration information will be available online at the BLET National Division's regional meeting website (bletregionals.org). All members are encouraged to attend one or both of this year's regional meetings. 

WESTERN: MILWAUKEE, WI

JUNE 26-30, 2023 | HILTON MILWAUKEE CITY CENTER



Photo: JMIKE Photography

EASTERN: MYRTLE BEACH, SC

AUGUST 14-18, 2023 | HILTON MYRTLE BEACH RESORT



Photo: Visit Myrtle Beach

For more information visit us online at:

BLETREGIONALS.ORG