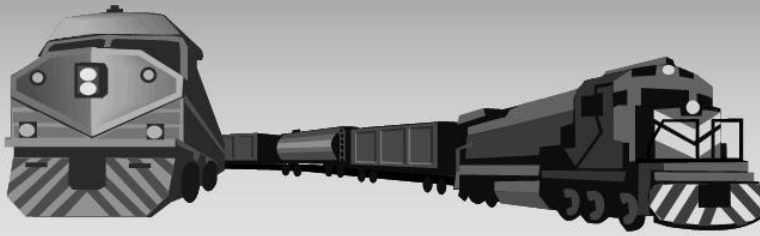


The Texas Mainline

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Texas Legislative Representatives In Washington DC

Washington - The BLET National Legislative Office held a training session from May 25th to May 28th for Division Legislative Representatives. The training was held at the Teamsters headquarters in Washington, DC. Five Legislative Representatives from Texas (pictured) attended the session along with the TSLB Chairman, Terry Briggs.

The training included practical letter writing skills, lobbying techniques and basic legislative and regulatory research. Following the training session, the attendees also had an opportunity to put their newly learned skills into use by actually visiting members of congress for a full day of lobbying. The issues discussed with the members of congress included some needed changes in the hours of service portion of the Rail Safety Improvement Act and changes to the Family Medical Leave Act that will lead to more BLET members qualifying for leave.

The BLET Education and Training Department conducts several division officer training sessions every year for local chairmen, secretary-treasurers and legislative representatives.



Pictured left to right: R.C. Buck Montes - Division 910, Scott Piekarski - Division 187, Ben Strot - Division 206, Jim Grigsby - Division 197 and James Fagan - Division 249

Inside this issue:

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>Teamsters Human Rights Commission</i> | 2 |
| <i>Tolman to Serve on AHSRA Advisory Board</i> | 3 |
| <i>National Convention & SWCM 2010</i> | 4 |
| <i>Mobilization Network News</i> | 5 |
| <i>PAC Update</i> | 5 |
| <i>Texas Legislative Representative Training</i> | 6 |
| <i>Retiree Roundhouse</i> | 7 |

Explaining Health Insurance Reform Extension of Dependent Coverage to Age 26

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care signed into law on March 2010 will have an almost immediate affect on parents who want to keep their young adult children, up to age 26, on their health insurance policy.

The value of employer-provided health coverage for this extension of dependent coverage is excluded from an employee's taxable income.

Beginning January 1, 2011, qualifying young adults will be allowed to remain on their parents health insurance policy even if he or she is no longer living with a parent, is not a dependent on a parent's tax return, or is no longer a student. Both married and unmarried young adults can qualify for the dependent coverage extension, although that coverage does not extend to a young adult's spouse or children. The law also states that young adults can only qualify for dependent coverage through group health insurance plans that were in

(Continued on page 2)

Explaining Health Care Reform

(Continued from page 1)

place prior to March 23, 2010 if they are not eligible for another employer-sponsored insurance plan. In other cases, a young adult can choose to remain insured through a parent's dependent coverage even if the young adult is eligible for other employer-sponsored coverage.

Dependent coverage extensions take effect on September 23, 2010, six months after the health reform law was enacted. At that time, insurance plans start a new plan year, they will have to abide by the new dependent coverage rules.

Highlights:

- Parents must be provided with a written notice of the opportunity for their young adult children to re-enroll in a parent's coverage by the first day of the plan year that starts on or after September 23, 2010.

- Additional coverage options

exist for uninsured young adults who are not able to take advantage of the early enrollment that some insurers are offering for certain young adults. Some options are through COBRA if they aged off a parent's coverage within the last 60 days. Others include buying coverage through non-group market or temporary high-risk pools created by the law if they have pre-existing conditions and have been uninsured for six months or more.

- Young adults who will be gaining dependent coverage under the new law cannot be charged more for coverage than similar individuals who did not lose coverage due to the end of the dependent status. Young adults newly qualifying as dependents must be offered the same benefits package as similar individuals who were already covered as dependents. The value of employer-provided health

coverage for this extension of dependent coverage is excluded from an employee's taxable income.

BLET Insurance note:

The dependent coverage law has yet to be implemented into the BLET Plan because the regulation has yet to be properly interpreted to determine when this change must be applied (by law) to plans such as ours, which come by way of collective bargaining under the Railway Labor Act.

Due to the fact that our plan is a joint policy, owned half by the carriers and half by the unions, both sides would have to agree when to implement this change unless the law forces implementation before an agreement can be reached. So far, the carriers have not agreed to implement this change.

Teamsters Human Rights Commission Volunteers

In today's world everyone is extremely busy, but it's important for all of us to remember, "Teamsters are people helping people."

The International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) has valuable resources to assist the membership, but many times the needs are not met because there has not been a system in place to field memberships questions or concerns.

The Teamsters' Human Rights Commission can do that for you, and the BLET is reminding each Division to appoint a local representative(s) to the Teamsters Human Rights Commission.

The Human Rights Commission Representative will

network with the leaders and members in your area on Human Rights issues, making sure they know about Teamster programs that provide assistance to the membership.

For example, the Teamsters Disaster Relief Fund, the James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund, IBT Community Service,

and the Helmets to Hardhats programs all fall under the umbrella of the Human Rights Commission.

Margo Storsteen, a Locomotive Engineer and member of BLET Division 57 in Boston, serves as the BLET's National Representative on the Human Rights Commission. Sister Storsteen will network with each local representative appointed by BLET Divisions and will coordinate all BLET programs with those individuals.

Interested members should contact their Division officers.

Anyone with questions should contact Sister Storsteen at (781) 883-3443, or email: Margoblet57@comcast.net.



American High Speed Rail Alliance Names BLET Vice President to Board

Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) Vice President & National Legislative Representative John Tolman has been named to the Advisory Board of the American High Speed Rail Alliance (AHSRA). AHSRA is an organization whose mission is to advocate for the development and implementation of a high speed passenger rail network in the United States.



John Tolman, Vice President and National Legislative Representative

In his capacity as a member of the advisory board, Tolman will provide guidance to the alliance on its mission to advocate for the development and implementation of an improved passenger rail network in the United States. The board will support the alliance's policy agenda, participate in strategic planning sessions, maintain a dialogue with stakeholders in the high speed rail industry and help to establish the permanent governing board of directors for the alliance.

"I'm very proud to have John Tolman representing the BLET on

the AHSRA Board," said Dennis Pierce, BLET National President. "With interest in high speed rail at a peak, I believe that the BLET needs to ensure that the interests of our members are protected. I have every confidence that Brother Tolman will serve as a persuasive advocate for BLET members and all of rail labor."

One of the group's goals is to ensure workforce development initiatives that identify, train and support American workers to design, build operate and maintain America's high speed and regional passenger rail network. The group's mission is similar to that advocated by the BLET in its high speed rail position paper and comments regarding the National Rail Plan.

"I am proud and humbled to accept this appointment," Tolman said. "I look forward to lobbying on behalf of BLET members as well as our fellow brothers and sisters in the Teamsters Rail Conference, making sure that high speed rail creates good, safe jobs for all of rail labor."

Additionally, the alliance will leverage its resources and relationships to:

- Support the proposed \$50 billion authorization for high speed rail in the SAFETEA-LU re-authorization legislation, and work with Congress to identify dedicated source of funding to appropriate towards this authorization;

- Modify existing federal funding and financing programs such as RRIF, TIFIA, and Build America Bonds to ensure eligibility for high speed rail investments;

- Promote innovative tools that incentivize private sector participation in high speed rail financing including public/private partnerships and the development of a national infrastructure investment bank;

- Support enactment of freight rail investment tax credits that benefit the development of high speed rail;

- Advocate for a \$4 billion annual appropriation from the Transportation Appropriations account for high speed rail development;

- Develop a dedicated, and predictable funding source for high speed rail to allow effective long-term planning and develop a sustainable market for high speed rail vendors and service providers;

- Support full funding of Amtrak; and

- Be a partner in industry efforts to sensibly and cost-effectively implement safety regulations, such as Positive Train Control (PTC), while advocating for funding to meet these mandates and transparency in the development of critical technology.

The BLET is a division of the Teamsters Rail Conference and represents more than 35,000 men and women locomotive engineers and trainmen on our nation's railroads. Founded in 1903, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters represents more than 1.4 million hardworking men and women in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico.

Second National Convention Scheduled for October 4-7, 2010

More than 500 delegates will convene in Reno, Nevada, for the BLET's Second Quadrennial National Convention from October 4-7, 2010.

The delegates will represent nearly 38,000 active locomotive engineers and trainmen throughout the United States. They will be charged with nominating candidates for National Division office, analyzing and voting on changes to the Brotherhood's bylaws, and various other important duties. The National Convention is held every four years, and this will be the second such convention since the Organization's merger with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters effective 1/1/2004.

In previous years, delegates in session at national conventions have elected the top Brotherhood officers. Beginning with the 2010 convention, however, BLET leaders will be elected using a "one member, one vote" system where individual members vote directly for the various candidates.

The new elections website at <http://ble-t.org/2010election> provides interested parties with all election-related documents in one convenient location.

Section 49 of the National Division Rules of the BLET Bylaws governs the election of National Division Officers. Additionally, the BLET Advisory

Board adopted Rules for the National Division Officers Election on May 29, 2009.

The documents being made available on the new website include the Election Rules, interpretations to the Election Rules (also known as Election Rules Advisories), nomination forms, forms for members to declare their candidacy for office, and various other financial reporting forms that are required by the Election Rules.

Pursuant to Section 20, Paragraph (g) of the BLET Bylaws, the list of delegates to the upcoming National Convention are published in the April/May 2010 issue of the Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen News.

2010 Southwest Convention Meeting

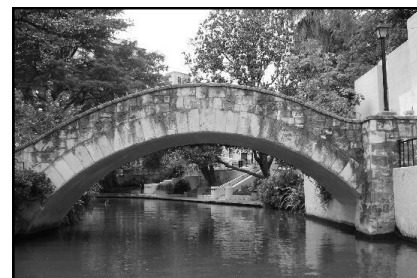
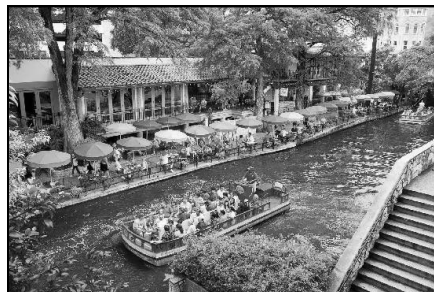
The 2010 SWCM will be held in San Antonio, Texas, September 12-16, 2010 at the Hyatt Regency on the River Walk



at Paseo del Alamo. Host Chairman for the event is BLET Southern Region Vice General Chairman Russell Elley.

The tentative agenda is as follows: Sunday, September 12 - Registration and Texas Hold'em Poker Tournament; Monday,

September 13 - Registration, Golf Tournament, Mission Shopping Tour, BLET Mobilization Workshop, DLC Class on Effective Formal Investigation Techniques to prevent turning defense into prosecution, evening reception; Tuesday, September 14 - BLET and BLET Auxiliary open and closed meetings, DLC Luncheon, Dinner at the Buckhorn Saloon and Museum; Wednesday, September 15 - BLET Local



Chairman, Secretary Treasurer, Legislative Representative Workshops, FRA Meeting, Evening Banquet; Thursday, September 16 - SWCM Business Meeting

Registration forms & hotel information can be found on the SWCM website at <http://bletswcm.org/> For more information, contact Russell Elley at 830-303-2744 or rrelley@att.net.

BLET Mobilization Network News

Mobilization network activated for National Division officer election initiative

CLEVELAND, July 9 — The BLET National Division is activating its mobilization network to launch a “get out the vote” campaign regarding the National Division officer election initiative.

The BLET Bylaws are unique in that they include a democratically driven process titled “Initiative.” The Initiative process allows members, through their BLET Divisions, to suggest changes to the BLET’s Bylaws between conventions. All members and their Divisions have the right to utilize this democratic process by first circulating a petition to all BLET Divisions. In the event that Divisions representing 25% of the membership support that petition, the National Division is required to submit the suggested Bylaws changes to the entire membership.

Four BLET Divisions sponsored the current initiative and their petitions did receive the support of Divisions representing more than 25% of the membership.

Accordingly, this matter is in the hands of the membership and BLET’s democratic principles allow the membership to determine the course that the Union takes in this matter.

Since there has been relatively low membership participation on

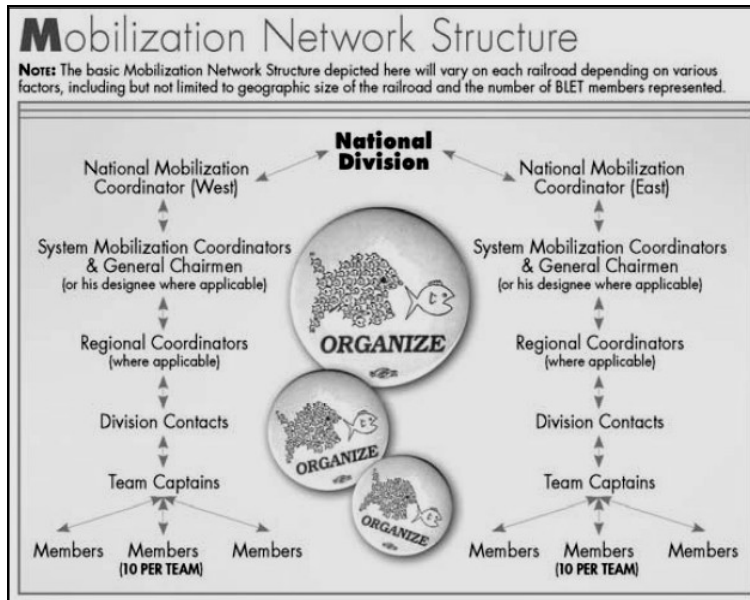
National Mobilization Team encourage active members to exercise their right to vote and also instruct them on proper voting procedures to ensure that no returned ballots are voided for non-compliance with voting instructions.

The goal is to see that 100 percent of BLET members return their ballots. This is your union and your right to vote is important.

Ballots were circulated on July 1, 2010, and must be returned by August 31, 2010.

For most of its 147-year history, officers of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen were chosen by member-elected delegates in convention (most recently in 2006). An initiative to change the BLET Bylaws and elect officers by a majority

vote of all active members was passed in 2006, but did not take effect until after the BLET’s First Quadrennial National Convention. The current initiative would revise the BLET Bylaws so that the process of electing National Division officers would return to a delegate vote in convention.



referendum votes such as this in the past, the National Division is activating the National Mobilization Team as a means of encouraging as many members as possible to return ballots and participate in the voting process.

Rather than suggesting which way to vote, members of the



Political Action Committee, or PAC for short, is an important tool for our legislative department. Without voluntary PAC contributions from our members the union would have no way to help our friends get elected to public office.

Here in Texas the Division Legislative Representatives have been working hard to sign up new PAC members. This effort is vitally important because PAC contributors retire and we must continually recruit new members. So if your Division LR or another PAC member asks you to join the PAC, please join and proudly wear one of the PAC pins pictured to the left of this article.

Here is a brief rundown of how the BLET PAC is doing in Texas:

- From January to June of this year we have seen the BLET membership decrease by 100. Yet we have seen the net number of PAC contributors increase by 23.
- During the same period the total PAC contribution has increased by about \$200 per month.
- The top Division, at 100% participation, is 918. Mike Davis is the LR.
- Division 592, Jeromie Jones, LR, signed up 33 new PAC members and reached 100% in May.
- Division 197, Jim Grigsby, LR, has 132 PAC contributors out of a total membership of 275.

Legislative Representative Training Session

Seventeen Texas Legislative Representatives attended a training session April 6 - 9 in Fort Worth. The training was conducted by the TSLB. An article about the session is featured prominently in the July edition of the BLET National Newsletter. Here are some pictures from the training session.

Clockwise from top left: Dennis Pierce, National President with Linda Chavez - Thompson, Candidate for Lieutenant Governor, John Tolman, Vice President - NLR and Lee Pruitt, First Vice President; Ken Kroeger, Coordinator Education and Training; Chavez - Thompson greeting Tolman; Terry Briggs presenting a PAC check to Chavez - Thompson; LR attendees; Briggs and State Representative Lon Burnam; LRs at work in the classroom; Tolman, Pierce and Briggs; LRs at work in the classroom.



The Retiree Roundhouse



Credit for military service under the Railroad Retirement Act

CHICAGO — Many railroad employees have at some time served in the Armed Forces of the United States. Under certain conditions, their military service may be credited as rail service under the Railroad Retirement Act.

The following questions and answers provide information on how military service may be credited towards railroad retirement benefits.

Under what conditions can military service be credited as railroad service?

The intent behind the crediting of military service under the Railroad Retirement Act is to prevent career railroad employees from losing retirement credits while performing active duty military service during a war or national emergency period. Therefore, to be creditable as railroad service under the Railroad Retirement Act, active duty service in the U.S. Armed Forces must be preceded by railroad service in the same or preceding calendar year. The employee must also have entered military service when the United States was at war or in a state of national emergency or have served in the Armed Forces involuntarily.

Military service is involuntary when an employee is required by law, such as Selective Service System conscription or troop call-

up from a reserve unit, to leave railroad service to perform active duty military service.

Only active duty military service is creditable under the Railroad Retirement Act. A person is considered to have been on active duty while commissioned or enrolled in the active service of the Armed Forces of the United States (including the U.S. Coast Guard), or while ordered to Federal active duty from any reserve component of the uniformed Armed Forces.

What are the dates of the war or national emergency periods?

The creditable periods that affect current retirements are:

September 8, 1939, through June 14, 1948.

December 16, 1950, through September 14, 1978.

August 2, 1990, to date as yet undetermined.

If military service began during a war or national emergency period, any active duty service the employee was required to continue in beyond the end of the war or national emergency is creditable, except that voluntary service extending beyond September 14, 1978, is not creditable.

Railroad workers who voluntarily served in the Armed Forces

between June 15, 1948, and December 15, 1950, when there was no declared national state of emergency, can be given railroad retirement credit for their military service if they:

performed railroad service in the year they entered or the year before they entered military service, and;

returned to rail service in the year their military service ended or in the following year, and;

had no intervening non-railroad employment.

Can proof of military service be filed in advance of retirement?

Railroad employees are encouraged to file proofs of their military service well in advance of retirement. This will expedite the annuity application process and avoid any delays resulting from inadequate proofs.

If employees do not have an official record of their military service, their local RRB office will explain how to get acceptable evidence. All evidence brought or mailed to an RRB office will be handled carefully and returned promptly.

More information is available by visiting the agency's web site, www.rrb.gov, or by calling a Railroad Retirement Board office toll-free at 1-877-772-5772.

Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen
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The Texas Mainline is published by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, Texas State Legislative Board. This publication is made available to members as a means to create legislative awareness, enhance knowledge, spark enthusiasm, generate participation and foster an environment of solidarity.

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WE'RE ON THE WEB !

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DO YOU CONTRIBUTE TO THE TEXAS PAC FUND?

Legislative decisions impact our livelihoods, job security, wages and working conditions, (contracts, random drug testing, certification, Amtrak, Staggers Deregulation Act, FRA fines and rules enforcement, assault on FELA, The Railroad Retirement Improvement Act, Railway Labor Act, Etc...). Each of these items is the direct result of legislation – NOT negotiations with these entities. The purpose of the TX-PAC is to raise funds on a voluntary basis to assist candidates for office who are favorable to the BLET, railroad labor in general, and the industry. Dues money cannot be used for this purpose because of federal law restrictions. Many members contributing through their dues payment are not aware of this regulation. The important point to remember is **only voluntary contributions** may be used for PAC purposes. The PAC fund needs your support to insure the interests of our members are being protected to the fullest extent possible. PAC membership can be any amount you choose, as little as \$5 per month for instance, a very small sum for such a priceless investment. In light of these facts, all members are urged to consider membership in the TX-PAC Fund. Visit our website at www.tslb.org for more information or call your local division legislative representative or secretary/treasurer.