

Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen

Washington State Legislative Board

www.wslb-blet.org

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UPDATE of WSLB-BLET GOALS and ISSUES

September 2005

(Electronically Distributed)

The Washington State Legislative Board of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen established the following goals at the May 11, 2004 Triennial Meeting in Tacoma, WA. This report to the board is an update of progress toward achieving the board's goals and a report on other issues important to the board.

1) Continue the RCL battle on the local and federal level.

UPDATE: As you know, Washington State was the only state to regulate RCL, though only as a notification law. The California Utilities Commission has requested that the FRA regulate RCL operation over public crossings. This information and the California proposal has been forwarded to the WUTC for consideration. In April, 2005, the FRA began a rule-making on issues that have arisen around operating rules such as RCL. In May, 2005, the BLET hired Tom Pontillilo to work on this RSAC on behalf of engineers and trainmen from Cleveland, OH, commuting to Washington, DC. Many of the issues we addressed in Washington during the rule-making process are now being addressed at the National level. In September, 2005, the FRA sent a letter to the nation's railroads advising them of the upcoming report to Congress as mandated by the Science and Technology Committee on RCL. The letter suggested the status quo was safe and the letter ***advised negotiable*** conditions for extending RCL operations to the main line. I will publish a copy of the letter or the Congressional report when it becomes available.

2) Continue the present course on fatigue

UPDATE: In May, 2005, the BLET assigned Merle Geiger, VP, BLET, to handle fatigue issues for the BLET Nationally. While I produced a "Reference Manual of Railroad Worker Fatigue" for the BLET as a systemic solution to address fatigue problems, I can not report on the overall direction of the BLET. The FRA continues to move toward validating a computer model of worker fatigue. In Washington State, I am working with interested parties to open a new front on the fatigue issue. I am also asking that railroad workers file safety reports on exact dates or jobs that were worked when the worker believed he was required to suffer an unsafe level of fatigue. On one Class One Railroad, this process is through the "Safety Incident Report Process." On

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other railroads it may be with or through your division Legislative Representative. In all cases, I need a copy of these reports.

3) Address the impacts associated with the possible implementation of PTC in the US

UPDATE: FRA is preparing to publish regulations for PTC development and implementation. The BLET's Regulatory Coordinator is handling this issue for the BLET.

4) Urge carriers and FRA to implement improved and extended training in the area of Computer Based Training (CBT).

UPDATE: On September 14-16, 2005, I attended a Transportation Research Board (TRB) Conference on Training, Retention, and Recruitment in the railroad industry. This conference was attended by FRA, Government researchers, Academics, rail labor, and railroad management. As a member of two (2) TRB subcommittees for rail safety and human factors, I was privileged to provide suggestions to improve the conference and suggest possible speakers. I participated in the "training breakout" workshop. I also reported on an exit interview from an employee that resigned from a Class One on September 11, 2005. This information provided an excellent framework for propelling BLET's arguments on employee training forward.

5) Take action to reduce trespass fatalities in Washington State.

UPDATE: In September, 2005, Operation Lifesaver tentatively approved a proposal for a demonstration project to reduce trespass accidents and fatalities in Washington State. As WSLB-BLET's Chairman, I worked on the committee to formulate the demonstration project. Ideally, if adopted by a Class One Railroad in Washington, Operation Lifesaver will install video surveillance at a high trespass location. The project will employ police enforcement and audible warnings to determine the best method for reducing trespass on railroad tracks.

Finally, on September 17-18, 2005, I attended the semi-annual meeting of Teamsters Joint Council 28 in Wenatchee, Washington. I spoke with the Joint Council President about a possible affiliation of the WSLB-

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BLET with JC-28. I scheduled a meeting for September 29, 2005, to discuss the actual issues involved in affiliating the WSLB-BLET with the Joint Council. Any affiliation will be in accordance with Article XIII of the WSLB-BLET constitution and bylaws.

Thank you for your continued support.

Respectfully and Fraternally Submitted September 19, 2005,

Mark K. Ricci, Ph.D., Chairman

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