



# *The* SIGNALMAN'S JOURNAL

VOLUME 100  
1ST QUARTER 2019





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# The SIGNALMAN'S JOURNAL

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## DAN PICKETT RETIRES

Dan Pickett — A union member, leader, and BRS President, retires from the organization after 26 years of service. Brother Pickett has upheld the fundamental principles and values of the BRS during his tenure, and his dedication and leadership to the union movement will forever be a part of the history of our organization ..... 3



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**COVER:** Replacing wire and upgrading the slide fences in Badrock Canyon on the Hilina subdivision near Coram, Montana. Photo submitted by Chris Heaps, Jr., retired Mobile Construction Signal Inspector and Local 87 member.

# Farewell Brothers & Sisters,

I have enjoyed spending over 50 years of my life as a Signaller, and over a third of my life serving as President of the BRS. Over the last 26 years, I have been blessed with the opportunity to travel across the country to countless local meetings and form unforgettable bonds with generations of Signallers. As I reflect on the accomplishments and progress we have made as a trade union, I am filled with pride and honor in the work we have done.

Over the last half-century, Signallers have gained and maintained a competitive wage and prestigious healthcare, compared to our fellow American workers. We spearheaded the fight and were successful in obtaining the 60 years of age and 30 years of service threshold for full Railroad Retirement benefits. Additionally, we have fought to protect our respect-

ful retirement pension that provides a retirement of dignity which each of us has earned through our years of labor. As Signallers,

we were able to advocate and assist in the development of highway grade crossing regulations which allow us to properly test and maintain railroad crossing systems that protect everyday Americans and ensure safe train passage. The most recent regulatory accomplishment of the BRS was our fight to provide our country with Positive Train Control (PTC). We were able to get the government to take action through legislation and followed that by showing our high-level of skill and work ethic throughout the installation of the equipment to make PTC a reality. These accomplishments have not come without struggle and hardships. Over my years with the BRS, we have been forced to form picket lines and strike the railroads in order to receive the respect and compensation we have earned.

In our most recent round of national bargaining we saw the carriers attempt to attack our work rules in a pro-business political climate. We stood together, along with our brothers and sisters in our fellow railroad unions, and were able to acquire a respectful agreement without our work rules being lost. The power of our unified voice gave us the bargaining power and solidarity necessary to let the carriers know that we are the ones that keep their

railroads and our nation's economy running. On a national scale, we have seen the attacks on Unions through changes in National Labor Relation Board rules, Executive Orders,

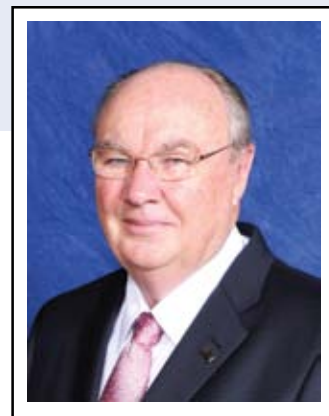
and the Supreme Court decision in Janus v. AFSCME. Despite the Administration's pro-corporate agenda, we have seen a rise in Americans joining Unions, joining the fight to provide better working conditions for themselves and our future generations. History has shown that when workers rise, organize, and unite, it is an unstoppable

***History has shown that when workers rise, organize, and unite, it is an unstoppable force that moves America forward.***

force that moves America forward. The labor movement is the voice for the entire working class and is responsible for the defending worker's rights to safety on the job and fair compensation for

their efforts. The accomplishments of the BRS and all of labor are a result of sacrifice, passion, and solidarity. As union members, we should take honor and pride in our calling to raise our voice against injustice and corporate greed that threaten our safety on the job and our livelihoods at home.

I encourage each of you to stay vigilant on the job with the safety of yourself, as well as your union brothers and sisters. It is imperative and vital that each of you be active in your local lodge; raise your voice on local issues and contribute to solving issues we face together on a national scale. As Signallers, we take pride in our skilled trade and we assume the duties that come with having a voice on the job through our Union. However, the blessing of having a union is not a guarantee and requires a persistent effort from all members to ensure our rights and protections are secured for generations to come. It is the responsibility and duty of each of you to continue excelling in our craft, maintaining the high standard that comes with the title of Signaller. It is your further calling to be active



*continued on page 18*



# DAN PICKETT *Retires*

W. Dan Pickett was first elected President of the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen on August 21, 1992.

Born in Sugar Grove, Virginia, Pickett graduated from Sugar Grove High School in 1964. He later studied electro-mechanical engineering at Virginia Western Community College in Roanoke, Virginia.

Following in his father's footsteps, Pickett began working as a Communication Lineman's Helper for the Norfolk & Western Railway in July 1965. Later that year, he was awarded a Communication Lineman position.

Pickett's railroad career was put on hold while he served almost two years in the U.S. Army working in communications. He spent one year in Vietnam and was honorably discharged as Sergeant in October 1967.

Upon returning to the railroad, Pickett worked as a Relief Telephone Maintainer, and in September of 1968 became a Signal Maintainer holding positions in signal maintenance at Waynesboro, Roanoke, and Narrows, Virginia.

Having a strong belief in the Union, Pickett did not hesitate to become involved in BRS activities and was elected Recording-Financial Secretary of BRS Local 77 in October 1973. He was then elected Local Chairman of Local 77 in July 1978. Pickett was later elected Vice General Chairman of the Norfolk & Western General Committee, and served in that capacity until his appointment as Grand Lodge Representative in October of 1980. He was assigned to the organization's National Legislative Representative position in Washington,

D.C. Pickett held that position until he was elected Vice President of the Southeast Region in 1985.

Brother Pickett held this position until his 1992 election as President. He was re-elected to this position at each quadriennial regular convention from 1994–2014.

President Pickett also served as the Chairman on the Rail Labor Division of the Transportation Trades Department–AFL-CIO, and as Vice Chairman of the Cooperating Railway Labor Organizations. ■



V.M. Speakman, Jr., swears-in W.D. "Dan" Pickett as President (center) on August 21 at Grand Lodge Headquarters.

## CONTINUE THE FIGHT FOR SAFE JOBS WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY . . . . .

More than four decades ago, Congress passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act, promising every worker the right to a safe job. Unions and our allies have fought hard to make that promise a reality — winning protections that have made jobs safer and saved lives.

But our work is not done. Each year, thousands of workers are killed and millions more suffer injury or illness because of their jobs. Workplace fatalities are on the rise again.

After years of struggle, we won new rules to protect workers from deadly silica dust and beryllium, a stronger coal dust standard for miners and stronger anti-retaliation protections for workers who report job injuries.

All of these hard-won gains are now threatened. The Trump administration has launched an all-out assault on regulations. The president has ordered that for every new protection, two existing safeguards must be removed. President Trump and Republicans in Congress have overturned worker safety rules issued by the Obama

administration. Protections against beryllium and coal dust have been targeted for weakening. Agency budgets and enforcement programs are on the chopping block. The safety and health of workers and the public are in danger.

We must fight back. We cannot and will not let them turn back the clock and destroy the progress we have made to make jobs safer and save lives.

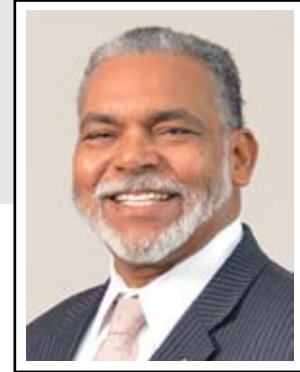
On April 28, the unions of the AFL-CIO observe Workers Memorial Day to remember those who have suffered and died on the job and to renew the fight for safe jobs. This year we will come together to stand united against the attacks on workers' rights and protections. We will demand that elected officials put workers' well-being above corporate interests and demand good jobs that are safe and healthy and pay fair wages. We will defend the right of every worker to a safe job and fight until that promise is fulfilled. ■



## OBSERVE WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY **APRIL 28**



## Leonard Parker, Jr. NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR RETIRES



Brother Parker began his railroad career on February 14, 1972, as a helper in Signal Construction with Norfolk & Western Railroad. In April of 1973, began work as an Assistant Maintainer in Petersburg, Virginia, and subsequently held various Maintainer positions on the Norfolk Division in Virginia. Brother Parker was first elected Second Vice President of Local 77 in the 80's; he was elected Local Chairman Norfolk Division in 1990; and later elected as Local President in 1996. Brother Parker was elected Assistant General Chairman of the Norfolk Southern General Committee in 1993. He was a Signal Maintainer at Bridge 7 in Chesapeake, Virginia, at the time of his appointment as Grand Lodge Representative in July 1999. Several months later he was promoted to Legislative Representative.

Brother Parker's other union activities included the formation of the Hampton Roads Rail Labor Coalition in the Tidewater area, in which he served as President, until his appointment to Grand Lodge. He was elected as the President of the Norfolk Branch of the NAACP and a past President of the Community



Network Association (CNA) – Moderator Trainers. As a resident of Spotsylvania, Virginia, Brother Parker is presently active in his local community, serving as Vice President of the Deacon Board at Mt. Zion Baptist Church and Vice President of the Lake Wilderness Property Owners Association.

In his capacity as National Legislative Director, Brother Parker worked with fellow union lobbyists, congressional representatives, and Executive Branch Administration officials to address issues that affected and continue to affect Signalmen. Most notably, the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 which mandated that Positive Train Control be installed on most railroads by December 31, 2015, but also authorized Hours of Service Regulations mandated by the Federal Railroad Administration. Another piece of notable legislation Mr. Parker dedicated his efforts to was the Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2001; this established the 60/30 provision the Railroad Retirement Trust Fund, and a National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust to manage and invest Fund assets.

Growing up in Roanoke, Virginia, Mr. Parker attended Lucy Addison High School, Old Dominion University, and later continued his education at Virginia Tech and the George Meany Center.

Brother Parker and his wife, Tina, have three children: Donna, Carol, and Leonard, III. ■

## Early Retirement Plan Increases Maximum

The lifetime maximum benefit for each individual covered under The Railroad Employees National Early Retirement Major Medical Benefit Plan (UnitedHealthcare's Policy GA-46000) is adjusted each year based on the medical cost component of the

Consumer Price Index. As of January 1, 2019, this maximum will increase to \$166,400.

An important consideration for individuals thinking about retirement is health coverage after retirement. ■

# BUILDING THE FUTURE OF THE *Brotherhood*



*Separate officer elections were held on January 15, 2019, and February 11, 2019, at the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen Grand Lodge. The General Chairmen and the Grand Executive Council assembled and elected the following officers:*

■ **JERRY C. BOLES**, President

■ **MICHAEL S. BALDWIN**, Secretary-Treasurer

■ **CORY L. CLAYPOOL**, Vice President West

■ **BRANDON E. ELVEY**, Vice President NRAB

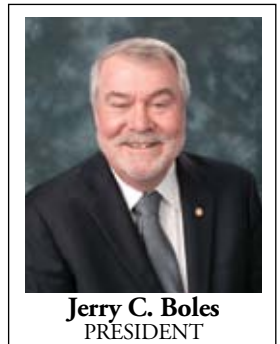
Following the election on January 15, 2019, Brother Boles assumed the Presidency after serving as the organization's Secretary-Treasurer.

After being appointed to serve as a Grand Lodge Representative in 1997, Brother Boles was elected to, and held, the office of Vice President Headquarters from 2001 until his election as Secretary-Treasurer in 2011.

He began his railroad career in January of 1977 as a B&B helper assigned to a Plains Division Bridge Gang. In November of 1977 Brother Boles transferred to the Signal Department where, for two years, he held various gang positions. He also worked a year on a Relief Signal Maintainer position and one year as Signal Maintainer at Shattuck, Oklahoma. He was Signal Maintainer at Littlefield, Texas, at the time of his appointment as a Grand Lodge Representative.

First elected Second Vice President of Local 161 in 1981, Brother Boles served in that capacity until his appointment to Local Recording-Financial Secretary in 1986 and served in that position until 1993. Brother Boles was elected to serve Local 161 as Local Chairman in 1993,

a position that he held until 1996 when he was elected General Secretary-Treasurer of the ATSF/KCS General Committee and Recording-Financial Secretary of Local 161. He held both positions at the time of his appointment to Grand Lodge in 1997 as a Grand Lodge Representative. ■



Michael S. Baldwin was elected to the position of Secretary-Treasurer on January 15, 2019, filling the vacancy created by Brother Boles' election.

Brother Baldwin was serving as the organization's Vice President West prior to his election to the Secretary-Treasurer position. Brother Baldwin was appointed as a Grand Lodge Representative in 2010 and served as Director of Research from 2011 until he was elected to Vice President West in 2015.

Brother Baldwin served as General Chairman of the Richmond Fredericksburg & Potomac (RF&P) General Committee and Local Chairman of Local 138 prior to his appointment as a Grand Lodge Representative. He began his railroad career in March of 1998 as an Assistant Signalman assigned to a Signal Construction Gang. In April of 1998, Brother Baldwin was promoted to the position of Signalman, which he held for two months, at which

time he was promoted to the position of Signal Technician. He also worked as a Signal Technician in ACCA Yard in Richmond, Virginia, for four years. He was a Signal Technician at Fredericksburg, Virginia, at the time of his appointment.

First elected First Local Vice President of Local 138 in 2002, Brother Baldwin served in that capacity until his appointment to Local Chairman of Local 138 and General Chairman of the RF&P General Committee in 2005, and served in those positions until 2010. He held both positions at the time of his appointment to Grand Lodge as a Grand Lodge Representative. ■





President Jerry C. Boles (R), congratulates Brandon E. Elvey, Vice President NRAB, after the election and swearing-in ceremony on February 11.



Mike Owens, Grand Board of Trustee Chairman, swears in Jerry C. Boles as BRS President; Michael S. Baldwin as BRS Secretary-Treasurer; and Cory L. Claypool as Vice President West on January 15 at Grand Lodge Headquarters in Front Royal, Virginia. Kurt Mullins officiated as Chaplain during the ceremony.

Cory L. Claypool was elected Vice President West on January 15, 2019, filling the vacancy created by Brother Baldwin's election to Secretary-Treasurer. Prior to becoming Vice President West, Brother Claypool was appointed to the position of Grand Lodge Representative in 2016.

As a Grand Lodge Representative, Brother Claypool was assigned to handle dispute resolution in the Arbitration Department, Investigator and Party Spokesperson at multiple NTSB rail accident investigations, handled legislative issues affecting our craft, and represented the Organization on multiple councils and committees.

Brother Claypool was also an active member of Local 98, where he served as both Trustee and Chairman. He began his railroad career in 2008 on the Union Pacific as an

Assistant Signalman assigned to a Zone 5 Construction Gang. In 2011, he was awarded a Signalman position on a Lone Leader Gang, and in 2013 he was awarded a Signal Maintainer position headquartered in Eagle Grove, Iowa. Brother Claypool attended North Iowa Area Community College and Cornell University, where he received two Labor Studies Certificates in Contract Language and Interpretation, as well as Contract Negotiations. ■



**Cory L. Claypool**  
VICE PRESIDENT WEST

On February 11, 2019, The Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (BRS) held an election to fill the Vice President NRAB position. This position was recently vacated by Johnathan D. Bragg, who resigned on February 5 to accept the position of Labor Member of the Railroad Retirement Board.

Brandon E. Elvey was unanimously elected to the Vice President NRAB position to fill the unexpired term.

Brother Elvey is a graduate of West Chester University of Pennsylvania, with a Bachelor's of Science degree in education. He began his railroad career in 2012 as a Signal Helper on Amtrak's Mid-Atlantic South Division. In 2015, Brother Elvey was promoted to Signal Maintainer and was working as a Gang Maintainer in Baltimore, Maryland, prior to his appointment to Grand Lodge Representative in 2016.

An active member of Local 48, Brother Elvey served as

Recording Secretary and Local Chairman prior to entering full-time service with the Brotherhood. While serving as a Grand Lodge Representative, Brother Elvey has been assigned to handle all facets of dispute handling in the Arbitration Department, acted as a subject matter expert at NTSB rail accident investigations, developed courseware for a nationwide signal training consortium, and represented the BRS on councils and committees as assigned. As Director of Research, Brother Elvey monitored regulatory and safety issues, assisted the President, and worked alongside the BRS National Legislative Representative on legislative issues affecting the signal craft. ■



**Brandon E. Elvey**  
VICE PRESIDENT NRAB

# Dialoque, ebate, ecision.....



During the 52nd Regular Convention this past August, an issue concerning General Chairmen and Committee power was proposed under *Resolution D*. This Resolution was drafted to provide “weighted voting” on Grand Lodge Officer positions that become vacant between conventions, as well as applying to the General Chairmen elective positions on the Committee on Laws. The premise was that each General Committee of the Brotherhood would be provided a number of votes based on the size of the membership under the committee, based on increments of 500 members or major fraction thereof. The Resolution created a new entity in the form of a General Committee Executive Board, which would be composed of all the General Chairmen, along with the additional representative voters.

Once discussion was opened, the Delegates took center stage to provide critical perspectives and debate on the effects that such resolution would have upon the Brotherhood. The issue was raised concerning

a General Chairman from a small committee having the same single vote as the General Chairman from a large committee and contended that this system on interim elections did not give proper representation. In contrast, the concern was raised that providing a “weighted” vote at each juncture of the voting process would serve to disenfranchise or silence the voice of smaller committees in the elective process. Delegates touched on the House of Representatives providing states with a given number of votes based on the number of constituents, as grounds for the newly proposed weighted voting. In response, the Delegates pointed out that the weighted voting was already provided for at Convention, where each committee is represented and provided delegates in correlation to their membership numbers. The similarity was drawn to the structure of the House of Representatives and the Senate, with one process providing reflective representation by numbers, as in the House, and the other providing equal representation, as in the Senate.



During the debate and dialogue, it was clear that there were differing perspectives, and the issues at the hearts of the Delegates, though differing, were put forth from an honest place and vision for the Brotherhood. The resulting vote provided that the Resolution be denied by a difference of a single vote. The margin of difference in votes, whether one or many, demonstrates that each voice matters, along with the fact that debate and discussion provide the forum for ideas to be vetted or changes decided. After spirited debate and discussion, the Delegates accepted the will of the majority, and acknowledged the decision as they came together through a recognition and display of solidarity.

Another issue raised and debated at the 52nd Regular Convention was *Resolution B*, which dealt with removing the quarter advance dues requirement that are paid by new members or transferring members. Delegates provided insights and valid points, both in favor and against the proposed Resolution. They voiced concerns that requiring a quarter of dues in advance provides a financial burden that may discourage new members and magnify the challenges presented by “Right to Work” legislation. Others voiced the necessity for the function and stability of smaller Local Lodges that the quarterly advanced

dues provide to, for example, properly maintain per capita and cover the initial expense of new members. Delegates discussed different systems and plans that Local Lodges have developed to help new members use a payment plan or alternative method to mitigate the financial burden of the advanced quarter’s dues payment. After debate and discussion, along with an interim caucus between delegates, the Resolution was dropped by the drafters, again showing that the dialogue and discussion on the issues at Convention is critical to the understanding of different perspectives.

The discussion and debate at Convention was another reminder of the importance of the structure and governance of the BRS. The convention floor provides the opportunity for Delegates to voice their concerns and perspective on behalf of their Local Lodge. The dialogue, showing of support and/or voting, are critical in assisting the body to make decisions in the spirit and pursuit of the good of the union. Importantly, it demonstrated that the discussion and dialogue at Convention shapes our Organization, and that once we have debated, discussed or voted, that we come together as Signalmen through our Local Lodges, General Committees, and our Organization as a whole for our common good. ■



# OLI Welcomes New Executive Director



The Board of Directors of Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (OLI) is pleased to welcome Ms. Rachel Maleh as Executive Director of the nonprofit railroad safety education organization. Maleh has served as OLI's Interim Chief Operating Officer since February 2018.

Chair of the OLI Board of Directors Jo Strang says, *"Rachel Maleh is an accomplished senior executive who has helped lead the OLI team in her previous role. Her experience working with our state partners, and financial supporters, is invaluable. I'm confident that her impressive skillset, and dedication to our mission, will lead to even greater success in this new position."*

*"Ms. Maleh's extensive experience in non-profit management and fundraising will be a great asset to our organization,"* says the Board of Director's Vice-Chair and Treasurer Mark Schulze. *"We're very pleased to have her lead OLI and deliver our important safety message."*

Maleh runs a communications consulting firm in the greater D.C. area. Previously, she was the Deputy Executive Director of the Greater Washington Region of the American Heart Association.

*"I'm looking forward to growing our safety effort, and expanding funding, so our valuable safety messages reach even more people,"* says Maleh. *"We have an excellent team in place to do so, working with established state programs across the county. I can't wait to get started."*

Maleh has advanced degrees in International Relations and International Communications from Boston University, as well as a Master of Science in Marketing from Johns Hopkins University. She's been honored to serve as a judge for numerous industry competitions.

Maleh succeeds Interim President Wende Corcoran who has helped lead OLI in various positions for two

decades. Corcoran returns to her previous role of Vice President.

Maleh resides in Montgomery County, Maryland where she is an active volunteer for numerous groups. ■

About Operation Lifesaver — Operation Lifesaver is a nonprofit public safety education and awareness organization dedicated to reducing collisions, fatalities and injuries at highway-rail crossings and preventing trespassing on or near railroad tracks. A national network of trained volunteers gives free presentations on rail safety and a public awareness campaign, "See Tracks? Think Train!" provides the public with tips and statistics to encourage safe behavior near the tracks. OLI leads an international observance of Rail Safety Week each September. Learn more about Rail Safety Week; follow OLI on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest.

## DID YOU KNOW?

### TITLE 49: TRANSPORTATION

#### **\$236.17 PIPE FOR OPERATING CONNECTIONS, REQUIREMENTS**

(a) Steel or wrought-iron pipe one inch or larger, or members of equal strength, shall be used for operating connections for switches, derails, movable-point frogs, facing-point locks, rail-locking devices of movable bridge protected by interlocking, and mechanically operated signals, except up-and-down rod which may be three-fourths inch pipe or solid rod. Pipe shall be fully screwed into coupling and both ends of each pipe shall be riveted to pipe plug with 2 rivets.

(b) Pipeline shall not be out of alignment sufficiently to interfere with proper operation, shall be properly compensated for temperature changes, and supported on carriers spaced not more than 8 feet apart on tangent and curve of less than 2° and not more than 7 feet apart on curve of 2° or more. With lever in any position, couplings in pipe line shall not foul carriers. ■

## PROTECT YOUR EYES FROM UV RAYS

# Tips to Help Keep Your Health on Track!



Unprotected, repeated exposure of UV rays may lead to serious eye problems later in life, including cataracts (a clouding of the lens), pterygium (a growth on the surface) and cancerous tumors on the skin around the eyes. Cataracts are a leading cause of reduced vision in the United States in people age 60 and older, according to the National Eye Institute.

While it may take years before you experience any of the above-mentioned problems, there is risk of damage that can occur in the short term, including photokeratitis and photoconjunctivitis. Both are an inflammation of the eye as a result of extreme UV exposure and can be very painful during the healing process (think peeling/sensitive skin after a sunburn).

### Sources of UV exposure

Although direct sunlight from the sun itself is extremely damaging to eyes, indirect reflected UV rays from the ground can be even more dangerous. Snow is one of the most dangerous indirect sources of UV and may cause snow blindness, which can lead to more serious complications such as chronic eye irritations or tearing. The table below shows the UV radiation reflection levels for several common indirect sources. The higher the percent, the more risk of eye damage.

### Protect your eyes and your children's eyes

While sunglasses are definitely a good idea when it comes to eye protection, not all sunglasses are created equal. It's highly recommended that you choose sunglasses that limit transmission to no more than 1 percent of UV rays. When purchasing sunglasses for you and your children:

- Look for a label on the lenses that indicates 99 percent of the UV rays are blocked.
- Consider wraparound sunglasses or lenses large enough to completely cover the eye and to help prevent as much light as possible from entering through the edges of the glasses.
- Consider darker lenses, particularly if you are more light-sensitive. Gray lenses provide the least color distortion but do not offer any better protection than other colored lenses.

- There are also UV-blocking contact lenses for added protection. Talk to your eye care professional for more information about UV-blocking contact lenses.

More is better when it comes to protecting your eyes from the sun. If you're planning to be out in the sun, protect your eyes with a combination of quality sunglasses, UV-blocking contact lenses (if you wear contacts) and a wide-brimmed hat. Talk to your eye care professional who can help you choose the right eyewear so you can enjoy the great outdoors even more.

For more information about health and wellness for your eyes, visit EyeMed's website. See the EyeMed Railroad member site for more information about your coverage and to find an in-network vision provider in your area.

Be sure to discuss any health-related concerns with your doctor whenever you meet with him/her and also as part of your annual routine physical. The material contained in this article has been selected to provide background and useful information. It is not designed to replace either medical advice or medical treatment. ■

#### UV-A

*Low risk of exposure/eye damage*

Can damage the retina; however, very little actually reaches the retina because most is absorbed by other parts of the eye.

#### UV-B

*High risk of exposure/eye damage*

May cause photokeratitis, photoconjunctivitis, cataracts, pterygium or cancerous tumors on the eyelid skin.

#### UV-C

*Natural form: Produced by sun*

No risk of exposure/eye damage because it's absorbed by the earth's atmosphere and never reaches humans.

*Artificial form: Produced by welders*

High risk of exposure/eye damage for certain people, such as welders.



## From the Office of the Secretary-Treasurer

# Referendums

### *Referendum proposed by Local 129*

In accordance with Article I, Section 130 and 133, we, the members of Local 129, propose amendments by referendum to the Constitution of the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen.

Be it therefore resolved that copies of these proposed amendments will be prepared in duplicate, one copy to be deposited with the Grand Board of Trustees and one to be forwarded to the Secretary-Treasurer, on January 2, 2019, with the expectation that they will be published in the next edition of *The Signalman's Journal*.

The proposed amendments endorsed by Local 129 and to be submitted are as follows:

**WHEREAS**, it is the expectation of the members of the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen that the offices of the regional Vice Presidents will be staffed only by those people who can best represent the interests of the members; and

**WHEREAS**, the current policy of the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen limits applicants to the offices of the regional Vice Presidents to only those members who reside in the vicinity of Front Royal, VA; and

**WHEREAS**, forcing all regional Vice Presidents to locate to Front Royal, VA, is not always cost effective and not always in the best interests of the members; and

**WHEREAS**, the General Committees and their members who are under the assignment of a regional Vice President would benefit from having greater access to the Vice President if his headquarters were allowed to be within the geographic boundaries of the area he represents; and

**WHEREAS**, the Constitution of the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen does not grant the members' General Committees the ability to request that their respective regional Vice President's headquarters be located in the geographic area which he represents; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, that a limited authority be given to the affected members being represented by their General Committees to permit their regional Vice President the

option of maintaining a headquarters within the same geographic boundaries as those members; and

**RESOLVED**, that, in the interest of maintaining a cost to the members comparable or less than those currently incurred, any headquarters outside of Front Royal, VA, will be limited to the residence of the regional Vice President and no additional office space or office facility outside of this headquarters will be funded by the members or the Brotherhood; and

**RESOLVED**, that in these instances the determination for the need for clerical help would be most safely determined with the added oversight of the Grand Executive Council; and

**RESOLVED**, that the Constitution of the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen be amended to reflect the desire of the members; to wit:

Article I, Section 8, of the BRS Constitution currently reads:

*Sec. 8. The headquarters of the regional Vice Presidents shall be at locations designated by the Grand Executive Council and, when so established, shall not be changed except upon approval of the Grand Executive Council. Such approval may be overridden by unanimous vote of the Grand Board of Trustees. Each full-time Grand Lodge officer shall reside within a reasonable commuting distance of his headquarters. The headquarters of members of the Grand Board of Trustees shall be at their respective homes. (7/2010)*

Amend Article I, Section 8, of the BRS Constitution to read as follows:

*Sec. 8. The headquarters of the regional Vice Presidents shall be at locations designated by the Grand Executive Council and, when so established, shall not be changed except upon approval of the Grand Executive Council. Such approval may be overridden by unanimous vote of the Grand Board of Trustees. Exception: If a regional Vice President requests a home office as his headquarters and if such request is approved by a majority of the General Chairmen under his/her jurisdiction, a Vice President may utilize a home office within in his/her assigned authority boundaries. Each full-time Grand*

Lodge officer shall reside within a reasonable commuting distance of his headquarters. The headquarters of members of the Grand Board of Trustees shall be at their respective homes.

Article I, Section 85, of the BRS Constitution currently reads:

#### **Clerical Help**

**Sec. 85.** *The President and Secretary-Treasurer shall employ the clerical force necessary at Grand Lodge Headquarters. A clerical employee required by a Vice President away from Headquarters shall be employed by that Vice President, subject to the approval of the President and Secretary-Treasurer. Clerical employees shall be paid salaries which have been approved by the Grand Board of Trustees. All such employees must be members of a labor union affiliated with the AFL-CIO. (7/2010)*

Amend Article I, Section 85, of the BRS Constitution to read as follows:

#### **Clerical Help.**

**Sec. 85.** *The President and Secretary-Treasurer shall employ the clerical force necessary at Grand Lodge Headquarters. If the Grand Executive Council determines a clerical employee is required by a Vice President away from Headquarters, such clerical employee shall be employed by that Vice President. Clerical employees shall be paid salaries which have been approved by the Grand Board of Trustees. All such employees must be members of a labor union affiliated with the AFL-CIO.*

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### **Referendum proposed by Local 129**

Add "Appendix C" to the BRS Constitution after Appendix B, worded as follows:

#### **Appendix C**

##### **I. Definitions**

##### **A. General Committee Executive Board**

*The General Committee Executive Board shall consist of all Full and Part-time General Chairmen of the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen, each of which will have a vote, in addition to the voting representatives as outlined below:*

*In addition, each General Committee shall be entitled to one voting representative for 500 Members; and shall be entitled to one additional voting representative for each additional 500 Members (or major fraction thereof). Representatives to be based upon the number of Members in good standing as of January 1st of each year, that each General Committee represents. Each General Chairman will notify the President of any changes in their representatives on the General Committee Executive Board.*

Amend Article I, Section 32, of the BRS Constitution by striking the words "General Chairmen" from Article I, Section 32, and replace them with the words "General Committee Executive Board" so that the amended Article I, Section 32, reads as follows:

**Sec. 32.** *In the event of a vacancy in the office of President, either by death, resignation, removal, or suspension, or any other cause, the Secretary-Treasurer shall assume charge of the office and immediately convene the Grand Executive Council and the **General Committee Executive Board**, which shall by a majority vote, secret ballot, elect a successor to fill the unexpired term.*

Amend Article I, Section 33, of the BRS Constitution by striking the words "General Chairmen" from Article I, Section 33, and replace them with the words "General Committee Executive Board" so that the amended Article I, Section 33, reads as follows:

**Sec. 33.** *In the event of a vacancy in the office of the Secretary-Treasurer either by death, resignation, removal, or suspension, or any other cause, the President shall immediately convene the Grand Executive Council and the **General Committee Executive Board**, which shall by a majority vote, Secret ballot, elect a successor to fill the unexpired term.*

Amend Article I, Section 35, of the BRS Constitution by striking the words "General Chairmen" from Article I, Section 35, and replace them with the words "General Committee Executive Board" so that the amended Article I, Section 35, reads as follows:

**Sec. 35.** *In the event of a vacancy in the office of a Vice President or a member of the Grand Board of Trustees, the President shall assume charge of the office and immediately*

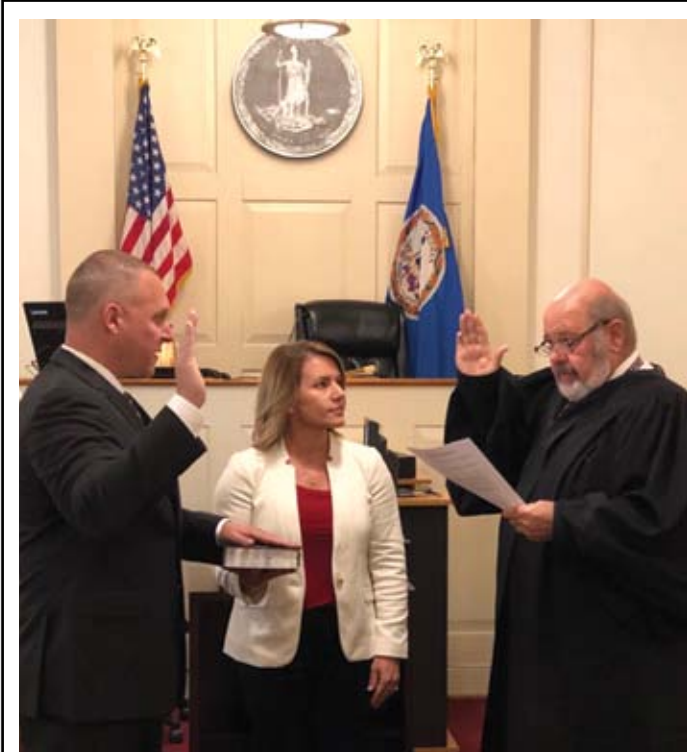
convene the Grand Executive Council and the **General Committee Executive Board**, which shall by g majority vote, secret ballot, elect a successor to fill the unexpired term.

Amend Article I, Section 67, of the BRS Constitution by striking the original text of Article I, Section 67, and replacing it with a new Article I, Section 67 which reads as follows:

**Sec. 67.** *The Committee on Laws shall be composed of six members, two members of which shall be members of the Grand Executive Council, two members of which shall be members of the Board of Trustees, and two members of which shall be elected from among the **General Committee Executive Board** of the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen. (The **General Committee Executive Board** will select their members by majority vote, secret*

*ballot election at the last regularly scheduled meeting preceding the Convention **and whenever vacancies occur.** Alternates will also be elected at this meeting **and whenever vacancies occur.**) The Committee on Laws shall meet within 90 days prior to the Convention to consider all proposed amendments to the Constitution and Ritual which have been submitted in accordance with provisions of Article I, Section 131. The Committee may recommend changes, additions, and alterations in the Constitution and Ritual to the Convention. It shall consider all resolutions and recommended changes in the laws of the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen and report its findings and recommendations to the Convention for approval. The Chairman of the Grand Board of Trustees shall act as Chairman of the Committee on Laws. ■*

## Johnathan Bragg to Key Administration Post



LEFT–RIGHT: John Bragg, his wife Sonja Bragg, and retired U.S. Circuit Court Judge Dennis Hupp during the swearing-in ceremony on February 5, 2019.

Johnathan Bragg of Virginia, was confirmed by the Senate and sworn in as the new Labor Member of the Railroad Retirement Board for the remainder of a five-year term, expiring August 28, 2019, and an additional five-year term, expiring August 28, 2024.

Mr. Bragg served as Vice President NRAB for the BRS. He was elected to that position in 2011 and was reelected by acclamation in 2014 and 2018. Mr. Bragg has held several key positions with the BRS, including Director of Research — a position that works jointly with the Federal Railroad Administration to craft railroad safety regulations. Prior to becoming Vice President NRAB, Mr. Bragg served as Local Chairman of BRS Local 89 from 2005 to 2008.

Mr. Bragg began his railroad career 18 years ago with CSX Transportation as a freight conductor and later a Signalman. As a career railroader, Mr. Bragg has gained an invaluable level of experience, knowledge, and understanding of the needs of rail workers, retirees, and their families. He attended Lord Fairfax Community College and currently resides in Strasburg, Virginia. ■

# Do Buy Union-Made Automobiles



## UAW CARS

- » Buick Lacrosse
- » Cadillac ATS
- » Cadillac CTS Cadillac CT6  
(excluding plug-in hybrid)
- » Chevrolet Bolt (electric)
- » Chevrolet Camaro
- » Chevrolet Corvette
- » Chevrolet Cruze\*
- » Chevrolet Cruze (diesel)
- » Chevrolet Impala
- » Chevrolet Malibu
- » Chevrolet Sonic\*
- » Chevrolet Volt (electric)
- » Ford Focus
- » Ford Focus (electric)
- » Ford Mustang
- » Ford Taurus
- » Lincoln Continental

## UAW TRUCKS

- » Chevrolet Colorado
- » Chevrolet Silverado\*\*
- » Ford F Series
- » GMC Canyon
- » GMC Sierra\*\*
- » Ram 1500\*\*\*

## UAW SUVS/CUVS

- » Buick Enclave
- » Cadillac Escalade ESV
- » Cadillac Escalade Hybrid
- » Cadillac XT4
- » Cadillac XT5
- » Chevrolet Suburban
- » Chevrolet Tahoe
- » Chevrolet Tahoe (police)
- » Chevrolet Tahoe (special service)
- » Chevrolet Traverse
- » Dodge Durango
- » Ford Escape
- » Ford Expedition
- » Ford Explorer
- » GMC Acadia
- » GMC Yucon
- » GMC Yukon Hybrid
- » GMC Yukon XL
- » Jeep Cherokee
- » Jeep Grand Cherokee
- » Jeep Wrangler
- » Lincoln MKC
- » Lincoln Navigator

## UAW VANS

- » Chevrolet Express
- » Ford Transit
- » GMC Savana

## UNIFOR CARS

- » Cadillac XTC
- » Chevrolet Impala
- » Chevrolet Impala (police)
- » Chrysler 300
- » Dodge Challenger
- » Dodge Charger

## UNIFOR SUVS/CUVS

- » Chevrolet Equinox\*
- » Ford Edge
- » Ford Flex
- » Lincoln MKT
- » Lincoln MKX

## UNIFOR TRUCKS

- » Chevrolet Silverado Double Cab
- » GMC Sierra Double Cab

## UNIFOR VANS

- » Chrysler Pacifica
- » Dodge Grand Caravan

These vehicles are made in the United States or Canada by members of the UAW and Canada's Unifor Union, formerly the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW). Because of the integration of United States and Canadian vehicle production all the vehicles listed made in Canada include significant UAW-made content and support the jobs of UAW members.

However, vehicles marked with a single asterisk (\*) are also produced in Mexico. All Cruze hatchbacks and some sedans are manufactured in Mexico. The diesel version is manufactured in the United States by UAW members. The Chevrolet Equinox is manufactured in Canada by Unifor members and also in Mexico. The light-duty and heavy-duty Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra pickup trucks, marked with a double asterisk (\*\*) are manufactured in the United States and other countries. The light-duty Ram 1500, marked with a triple asterisk (\*\*\*), is manufactured in the United States and Mexico, while all heavy-duty Ram models are built in Mexico. When purchasing one of the above vehicles, it is important to check the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN), a VIN beginning with "1" or "4" or "5" identifies a U.S.-made vehicle, a "2" identifies a Canadian-made vehicle, a "3" identifies a vehicle made in Mexico.

Not all vehicles made in the United States or Canada are built by union-represented workers. Vehicles not listed here, even if produced in the United States or Canada, are not union-made. ■



- **Wisconsin Central LTD., et al v. United States Stock Options and Your RRB Annuity**
- **116th Congress Leadership Changes**
- **Presidential Nominations**

## **Wisconsin Central LTD., et al v. United States — Stock Options and Your RRB Annuity**

On June 21, 2018, the then most junior Justice on the Supreme Court, Neil Gorsuch, wrote the majority opinion in *Wisconsin Central Ltd., et al v. United States*. The majority ruled that non-qualified stock options granted to railroad employees are not considered as compensation or “money remuneration” under the Railroad Retirement Tax Act of 1937, and, consequently, not subject to taxation. Much of the decision hinged on the definition of “money remuneration” and the evolution of its meaning from 1937 until present day. As a result of the majority’s interpretation, certain railroad employers and employees who previously paid railroad retirement taxes based on those stock options may be eligible for tax refunds through the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). To read the full opinion of the majority, and the dissenting opinion of the minority, please visit [https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/17pdf/17-530\\_6537.pdf](https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/17pdf/17-530_6537.pdf)

### **The RRB released a statement on the impacts of the Court ruling:**

*“Railroad employees and railroad retirement annuitants considering filing for such a tax refund should know that doing so may reduce the amount of their total creditable railroad compensation. Under the Railroad Retirement Act (RRA), creditable compensation is a factor in the computation of a railroad retirement annuity. A reduction in compensation could cause a reduction in an annuitant’s monthly benefit rate, and may result in an overpayment. For active employees, a change in creditable compensation may impact any estimated annuity amounts they were previously given by the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB).*

*At this time, the RRB is able to provide guidance to only a select group of individuals trying to determine if their total creditable railroad compensation will be reduced*

*and/or if their annuity amounts will change as a result of claiming refunds of taxes paid on non-qualified stock options. That group is comprised of those individuals who have been identified by their railroad employers as employees whose regular earnings met the maximum compensation taxable caps without the inclusion of the stock option payment. In those cases, if the employees file claims for refunds of taxes paid on the stock option payment, payment of the refund will not impact their annuity rate computations. Employees who believe they are members of this group should review their consent letters to confirm whether they have been reported by their employers to be a “Medicare Tax Only” employee. If you are uncertain whether you are a “Medicare Tax Only” employee, please contact your railroad employer. Employees may also call the RRB’s toll-free number if there are any other questions.*

*The RRB is currently unable to provide guidance to individuals not in the above group. The agency’s three-member Board (appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate, and representing rail labor, rail management, and the public interest) has the authority to determine what effect, if any, the court’s decision will have on the RRB’s administration of the RRA. However, the position of Chairman of the Board is currently vacant, and the Management Member of the Board must recuse himself from this issue as he previously worked for a railroad and received non-qualified stock options. The Labor Member of the Board alone lacks statutory authority to make a decision, as a two-member quorum is required by law.*

*It is expected that in the first quarter of 2019, the agency will get a three-member Board in place that will be able to make policy decisions related to this matter. We are currently in discussions with the IRS to determine if it is possible to hold open the period for railroad employees and retirees to file claims for tax refunds until such time*

*as we get a three-member Board in place. We would then be better able to provide information regarding the effect on RRB benefits to those needing assistance.”*

On January 2, 2019, the Senate confirmed the nominations of Johnathan D. Bragg, Vice President NRAB for the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen, as Labor Member to replace the retiring Walt Barrows; Erhard R. Chorle, a Chicago-based attorney who specializes in corporate securities, regulatory and government advice and counsel, as Chairman to replace Michael Schwartz, who retired in August 2015; and Thomas Jayne, senior general attorney for BNSF Railway Company, as Management Member to replace Steven J. Anthony, whose term expired last August. The new RRB members can begin the work on how this ruling will impact annuity payments and how far back to reach.

## **116th Congress Leadership Changes**

### **Senate Leadership:**

Republican Leader: Mitch McConnell (R-KY)  
Assistant Republican Leader: John Thune (R-SD)  
Democratic Leader: Charles Schumer (D-NY)  
Assistant Democratic Leader: Patty Murray (D-WA)

### **Senate Committee on Appropriations**

Richard Shelby (R-AL), Chairman  
Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Vice Chairman

Senate Appropriation Subcommittee Assignments:

### **Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies**

Jerry Moran (R-KS), Chairman  
Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Ranking Member

### **Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies**

Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Chairman  
Tom Udall (D-NM), Ranking Member

### **Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education, and Related Agencies**

Roy Blunt (R-MO), Chairman  
Patty Murray (D-WA), Ranking Member

### **Energy and Water Development**

Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Chairman  
Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Ranking Member

### **Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation**

Roger Wicker (R-MS), Chairman  
Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Ranking Member

### **Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies**

Susan Collins (R-ME), Chairman  
Jack Reed (D-RI), Ranking Member

### **House of Representatives Leadership:**

Speaker of the House: Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)  
Majority Leader: Steny Hoyer (D-MD)  
Majority Whip: James Clyburn (D-SC)  
Minority Leader: Kevin McCarthy (R-CA)  
Minority Whip: Steve Scalise (R-LA)

### **Appropriations Committee**

Nita Lowey (D-NY), Chairman  
Kay Granger (R-TX), Ranking Member

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## **IRS Announces 2019 Standard Mileage Rates**

Effective January 1, 2019, the standard mileage rate set by the Internal Revenue Service will be 58 cents per mile. The new rate compares to a rate of 54.5 cents per mile in 2018.

While gasoline is a significant factor in the mileage figure, other items enter into the calculation of mileage rates, such as depreciation and insur-

ance and other fixed and variable costs.

The mileage rate is used to compute the deductible costs of operating an automobile for business use in lieu of tracking actual costs. This rate is also used as a benchmark by the federal government and many businesses to reimburse their employees for mileage. ■

## WASHINGTON REPORT

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### Education & Labor Committee

Bobby Scott (D-VA), Chairman

### Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Chairwoman

### Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

David Price (D-NC), Chairman

### Transportation & Infrastructure Committee

Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Chairman

Sam Graves (R-MO), Ranking Member

### **Presidential Nominations**

On January 16, 2019, President Trump sent a list of Nominations for administration posts to the Senate. These nominations were submitted to the previous

Congress but according to Senate Rules, if not acted upon in the previous two-year session, they must be resubmitted. Among them were:

- Rick A. Dearborn, Amtrak Board of Directors for a five-year term
- Joseph Ryan Gruters, Amtrak Board of Directors for a five-year term
- Leon A. Westmoreland to the Amtrak Board of Directors for a five-year term
- Michelle A. Schultz, Member of the Surface Transportation Board for a five-year term
- Thelma Drake, Federal Transit Administrator

Nominees Patrick J. Fuchs, a Republican, and Martin J. Oberman, a Democrat, were confirmed by the Senate in December to fill two Surface Transportation Board vacancies. ■

## Farewell Brothers & Sisters — Dan Pickett

*continued from page 2*

and connected with your Local, always being your brothers' keeper, both on and off the job. It is our responsibility to continue forward, sharing our craft knowledge and union pride with the new brothers and sisters joining our Union.

In closing, it has been my honor and privilege to serve as President of the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen. When I look back on my years of leading this organization, I am encouraged to see how far we have come. It has been my passion and blessing to lead the BRS through both the good and the bad that we have faced as an organization over the years. The hard work of each of you contributed to my ability to lead; it is your hard work that

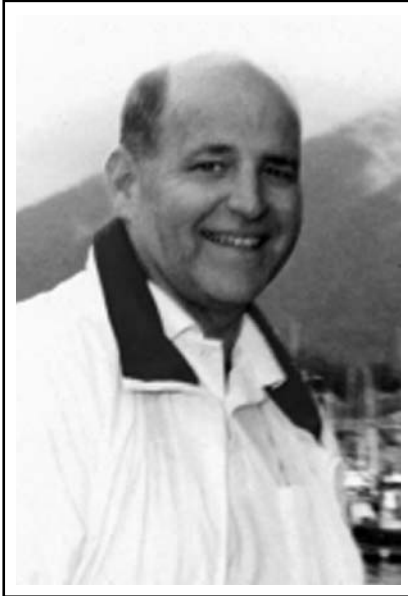
provides the prestige and respect associated with the BRS. To members present and past, thank you for the comradery and fellowship you provided me throughout my career — you have truly been family. As I move on from this season of life, I will remain an active and passionate Signalman, always fighting to ensure American workers are provided a fair shake and dignity on the job. Carry on my Brothers and Sisters. ■

In Solidarity,

*W. Dan Pickett*

# *In Memoriam*

WILLIAM R. EVANS • 1942–2018



William R. Evans passed away on October 1, 2018. Brother Evans began his career as a Signal Helper with Union Pacific Railroad in February of 1961. Brother Evans served Local 155 in the capacities of Trustee, Recording-Financial Secretary, Local Chairman, and Local President. Brother Evans also served as General Chairman of the Union Pacific General Committee. Brother Evans retired in 2003, after 42 years of service with Union Pacific Railroad. Brother Evans was a Zone 2 Signal Foreman at the time of his retirement. ■



*We thank Brother Evans for his many years  
of dedicated service to our Organization.*

## DID YOU KNOW?

### **TITLE 49: TRANSPORTATION §234.273 RESULTS OF INSPECTIONS AND TESTS**

(a) Results of inspections and tests made in compliance with this part shall be recorded on forms provided by the railroad, or by electronic means, subject to approval by the Associate Administrator for Safety. Each record shall show the name of the railroad, AAR/DOT inventory number, place and date, equipment tested, results of tests, repairs, replacements, adjustments made, and condition in which the apparatus was left.

(b) Each record shall be signed or electronically coded by the employee making the test and shall be filed in

the office of a supervisory official having jurisdiction. Records required to be kept shall be made available to FRA as provided by 49 U.S.C. 20107 (formerly §208 of the Federal Railroad Safety Act of 1970 (45 U.S.C. 437)).

(c) Each record shall be retained until the next record for that test is filed but in no case for less than one year from the date of the test. ■



## Buyouts and Railroad Retirement Benefits

*Railroad employees frequently ask the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) how the acceptance of a buyout from a railroad employer affects their future eligibility for benefits under the Railroad Retirement and Railroad Unemployment Insurance Acts. The following questions and answers provide information on this subject.*

### **Would leaving railroad work and accepting a buyout mean that an employee forfeits any future entitlement to an annuity under the Railroad Retirement Act?**

As long as an employee has acquired at least 10 years (120 months) of creditable rail service, or 5 years (60 months) of creditable service if such service was performed after 1995, he or she would still be eligible for a regular railroad retirement annuity upon reaching retirement age, or, if totally disabled, for an annuity before retirement age, regardless of whether or not a buyout was ever accepted.

However, if a person permanently leaves railroad employment before attaining retirement age, the employee may not be able to meet the requirements for certain other benefits, particularly the current connection requirement for annuities based on occupational, rather than total, disability and for supplemental annuities paid by the RRB to career employees.

In addition, if an employee does not have a current connection, the Social Security Administration, rather than the RRB, would have jurisdiction of any survivor benefits that become payable on the basis of the employee's combined railroad retirement and social security covered earnings. The survivor benefits payable by the RRB are generally greater than those paid by the Social Security Administration.

### **How are buyout payments treated under the Railroad Retirement and Railroad Unemployment Insurance Acts?**

Buyout payments that result from the abolishment of an employee's job are creditable as compensation under the Railroad Retirement and Railroad Unemployment Insurance Acts. While the actual names of these employer payments may vary, the treatment given them by the RRB will depend upon whether the employee relinquished or retained his or her job rights. If the employee relinquishes job rights to obtain the compensation, the RRB considers the payment a separation allowance. This compensation is credited to either the month last worked or, if later, the month in which the employee relinquishes his or her employment relationship. While all compensation subject to tier I payroll taxes is considered in the computation of a railroad retirement annuity, no additional service months can be credited after the month in which rights are relinquished.

The RRB considers the buyout payment a dismissal allowance, even though the employer might designate the payment a separation allowance, if the employee retains job rights and receives monthly payments credited to the months for which they are allocated under the dismissal allowance agreement. This is true even if the employee relinquishes job rights after the end of

the period for which a monthly dismissal allowance was paid. However, supplemental unemployment or sickness benefits paid under an RRB-approved nongovernmental plan by a railroad or third party are not considered compensation for railroad retirement purposes.

### **Would the acceptance of a buyout have any effect on determining whether an employee could maintain a current connection under the exception provision?**

In cases where an employee has no option to remain in the service of his or her employer, the termination of the employment is considered involuntary, regardless of whether the employee does or does not receive a separation or dismissal allowance.

However, an employee who chooses a separation allowance instead of keeping his or her seniority rights to railroad employment would, for railroad retirement purposes, generally be considered to have voluntarily terminated railroad service, and, consequently, would not maintain a current connection under the exception provision.

### **How would acquiring 25 years of railroad service assist an employee in maintaining a current connection?**

The current connection requirement is normally met if the employee has railroad service in at least 12 of the last 30 consecutive months before retirement or death. If an employee does not qualify on this basis but has 12 months of service in an earlier 30-month period, he or she may still meet the requirement if the employee does not work outside the railroad industry in the interval following the 30-month period and the employee's retirement, or death if that occurs earlier. Nonrailroad employment in that interval will likely break the employee's current connection.

However, a current connection can be maintained for purposes of supplemental and survivor annuities, but not occupational disability annuities, if the employee completed 25 years of railroad service, was involuntarily terminated without fault from his or her last job in the railroad industry, and did not thereafter decline an offer of employment in the same class or craft in the railroad industry, regardless of the distance to the

new position. If all of these requirements are met, an employee's current connection may not be broken, even if the employee works in regular nonrailroad employment after the 30-month period and before retirement or death. This exception to the normal current connection requirements became effective October 1, 1981, but only for employees still living on that date who left the rail industry on or after October 1, 1975, or who were on leave of absence, on furlough, or absent due to injury on October 1, 1975.

### **Suppose an employee is given a choice between**

- 1. accepting a separation allowance, relinquishing job rights and having the payment he or she receives credited to one month or**
- 2. accepting a dismissal allowance, retaining job rights and having the payment credited to the months for which it is allocated. What are some of the railroad retirement considerations the employee should keep in mind?**

Individual factors such as an employee's age and service should be considered.

For example, if an employee is already eligible to begin receiving a railroad retirement annuity, he or she may find it advantageous to relinquish job rights, accept a separation allowance, and have the annuity begin on the earliest date allowed by law. Any periodic payments made after that date would not preclude payment of the annuity because the employee has relinquished job rights.

On the other hand, some younger employees may find it more advantageous to retain job rights and accept monthly compensation payments under a dismissal allowance if these payments would allow them to acquire 120 months of creditable rail service (or 60 months of creditable rail service if such service was performed after 1995) and establish future eligibility for a railroad retirement annuity. Also, additional service months might allow a long-service employee to acquire 30 years of service, which is required for early retirement at age 60, or 25 years of rail service, which is required for supplemental annuities paid by the RRB. Establishing 25 years of service could also aid an employee in maintaining a current connection under the Railroad Retirement Act.

**An employee with 25 years of service is offered a buyout with the option of either taking payment in a single lump sum, or receiving monthly payments until retirement age. Could the method of payment affect the employee's current connection under the exception provision?**

If the employee had the choice to remain in employer service and voluntarily relinquished job rights prior to accepting the payments, his or her current connection would not be maintained under the exception provision, regardless of which payment option is chosen. Therefore, nonrailroad work after the 30-month period and before retirement, or the employee's death if earlier, could break the employee's current connection. Such an employee could only meet the current connection requirement under the normal procedures.

**Would an employee be able to receive unemployment or sickness benefits paid by the RRB after accepting a separation allowance?**

An employee who accepts a separation allowance cannot receive unemployment or sickness benefits for roughly the period of time it would have taken to earn the amount of the allowance at his or her straight-time rate of pay. This is true regardless of whether the allowance is paid in a lump sum or installments. For example, if an employee's salary was \$3,000 a month without overtime pay and the allowance was \$12,000, he or she would be disqualified from receiving benefits for approximately four months.

**Are separation and dismissal allowances subject to railroad retirement payroll taxes?**

Under the Railroad Retirement Tax Act, which is administered by the Internal Revenue Service, payments of compensation, including most buyouts, are subject to tier I, tier II, and Medicare taxes on earnings up to the annual maximum earnings bases in effect when the compensation is paid. This is true whether payment is made in a lump sum or on a periodic basis.

To the extent that a separation allowance does not yield additional tier II railroad retirement service credits, a lump sum, approximating part or all of the

railroad retirement tier II payroll taxes deducted from the separation allowance, will be paid upon retirement to employees meeting minimum service requirements or their survivors. This lump sum applies to separation allowances made after 1984.

If an employee receives a dismissal allowance, he or she receives service credits for the tier II taxes deducted from the dismissal allowance payments. Consequently, such a lump sum would not be payable.

If an employee has an option about how a buyout is to be distributed, he or she should consider the impact of both payroll taxes and income tax on the payments. Employees with questions in this regard should contact the payroll department of their railroad employer and/or the Internal Revenue Service.

**Can an employee receive unemployment benefits after his or her separation allowance disqualification period has ended?**

An employee who has not obtained new employment by the end of the disqualification period and is still actively seeking work may be eligible for unemployment benefits at that time. The employee must meet all the usual eligibility requirements, including the availability for work requirement. An employee can establish his or her availability for work by demonstrating a willingness to work and making significant efforts to obtain work. In judging the employee's willingness to work, the RRB considers, among other factors, the reason the employee accepted the separation allowance and the extent of his or her work-seeking efforts during the disqualification period.

**How would the acceptance of a dismissal allowance affect an employee's eligibility for unemployment and sickness benefits?**

Payments made under a dismissal allowance would be considered remuneration under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act and the employee would not be eligible for unemployment or sickness benefits during the period the dismissal allowance is being paid. The employee may, of course, be eligible for benefits after the end of this period if he or she is still actively seeking work or is unable to work because of illness or injury. ■

# TTD Welcomes New RRB Members, Commends Walt Barrows' Service



*Larry I. Willis, president of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), issues the following statement:*

*"On behalf of our member unions, I want to congratulate the newest members of the Railroad Retirement Board confirmed by the Senate – Chairman Erhard R. Chorle, Management Member Thomas Jayne, and Labor Member John Bragg. We look forward to working with all three Members to ensure the stability of our railroad workers' retirement system and protect the hard-earned benefits that railroad employees have earned and deserve.*

*I am particularly pleased that John Bragg will bring his invaluable experience as a front-line rail worker and union official to his new duties as the Labor Member on the Board. Previously a Vice President of the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (BRS), John comes from a long line of railroaders and began his own career 18 years ago as a freight conductor and then a signalman. He has climbed*

*the leadership ranks within his union and most recently was assigned to represent BRS as a permanent Board Member of the National Railroad Adjustment Board. John's long and accomplished career has prepared him well for this new role.*

*Finally I want to take this opportunity to salute the tremendous service offered by retiring Labor Member Walt Barrows during his eight years on the Board. Walt has brought professionalism and expertise to his role as a voice and advocate for rail workers, retirees and their families and has fought every day to improve and protect the railroad retirement system that is critical to so many Americans. Walt leaves a profound legacy that he should be proud of and we wish him the best as he pursues his own, well-deserved retirement." ■*

## DID YOU KNOW?

### **TITLE 49: TRANSPORTATION §236.308 MECHANICAL OR ELECTRIC LOCKING OR ELECTRIC CIRCUITS; REQUISITES**

Mechanical or electric locking or electric circuits shall be installed to prevent signals from displaying aspects which permit conflicting movements except that opposing signals may display an aspect indicating proceed at restricted speed at the same time on a track used for switching movements only, by one train at a time. Manual interlocking in service as of the date of this part at which opposing signals on the same track are permitted simultaneously to display aspects authorizing conflicting movements when interlocking is unattended, may be continued, provided that simultaneous train movements

in opposite directions on the same track between stations on either side of the interlocking are not permitted.

Note: Relief from the requirement of this section will be granted upon an adequate showing by an individual carrier to allow opposing signals on the same track simultaneously to display aspects to proceed through an interlocking which is unattended, provided that train movements in opposite directions on the same track between stations on either side of the interlocking are not permitted at the same time. ■

# BRS DESIGNATED COUNSEL

ON-THE-JOB INJURY | FELA | RAIL LABOR | INFO | LAW  
RAILROAD SIGNALMEN | CLAIM  
EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

## ALABAMA

**W.C. Tucker, Jr.**  
Maples, Tucker & Jacobs, LLC  
2001 Park Place North  
Suite 1325  
Birmingham, AL 35203  
Tel. (205) 322-2333  
[www.mtandj.com](http://www.mtandj.com)

## ARIZONA

**Lloyd L. Rabb, III**  
Rabb & Rabb, PLLC  
7442 N. LA Cholla Blvd.  
Tucson, AZ 85728  
Tel. (520) 888-6740  
(800) 354-3352  
[www.1stinjurylaw.com](http://www.1stinjurylaw.com)

## ARKANSAS

**Chris Christy**  
Law Office of H. Chris Christy  
201 W. Broadway Street  
Suite G12  
North Little Rock, AR 72114  
Tel. (501) 454-3949

## CALIFORNIA

**Jay A. Kaplan**  
Kaplan Law Corporation  
400 Occangate  
Suite 1125  
Long Beach, CA 90802  
Tel. (562) 372-0506  
(800) 552-7526  
[www.kaplanlawcorp.com](http://www.kaplanlawcorp.com)

**Anthony S. Petru**  
Hildebrand, McLeod & Nelson  
Westlake Building  
350 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza  
4th Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612  
Tel. (510) 451-6732  
(800) 689-7066  
[www.hmnlaw.com](http://www.hmnlaw.com)

## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**Larry Mann**  
Alper & Mann, PC  
9205 Redwood Avenue  
Bethesda, MD 20817  
Tel. (202) 298-9191  
(800) 747-6266

## FLORIDA

**Howard A. Spier**  
Rossman Baumberger Reboso & Spier, PA  
9155 S. Dadeland Boulevard  
Suite 1200  
Miami, FL 33156  
Tel. (305) 373-0708  
(800) 775-6511  
[www.rbrlaw.com](http://www.rbrlaw.com)

## ILLINOIS

**Daniel Petro**  
The Petro Law Firm  
One North LaSalle Street  
Suite 3150  
Chicago, IL 60602  
Tel. (312) 332-9596  
(800) 472-5729  
[www.petrofelalaw.com](http://www.petrofelalaw.com)

**Daniel J. Downes**  
Ridge & Downes  
101 N. Wacker Drive  
Suite 200  
Chicago, IL 60606  
Tel. (800) 572-1136  
(800) 624-2121  
[www.ridgedownes.com](http://www.ridgedownes.com)

## MARYLAND

**P. Matthew Darby**  
Berman, Sobin, Gross,  
Feldman & Darby LLP  
Heaver Plaza  
1301 York Road  
Suite 600  
Lutherville, MD 21093  
Tel. (410) 769-5400  
(800) 248-3352  
[www.bsgfillaw.com](http://www.bsgfillaw.com)

## MASSACHUSETTS

**Robert T. Naumes**  
Naumes Law Group, LLC  
2 Granite Avenue  
Suite 425  
Milton, MA 02186  
Tel. (617) 227-8444  
(844) 826-8445  
[www.naumeslaw.com](http://www.naumeslaw.com)

## MICHIGAN

**Arvin J. Pearlman**  
Sommers Swartz, PC  
1 Towne Square  
Suite 1700  
Southfield, MI 48076  
Tel. (248) 356-5000  
(800) 272-5400  
[www.sommerspc.com](http://www.sommerspc.com)

## MINNESOTA

**Randal W. LeNeave**  
Hunegs, LeNeave  
& Kvas  
1000 Twelve Oaks  
Center Drive  
Suite 101  
Wayzata, MN 55391  
Tel. (612) 339-4511  
(800) 328-4340  
[www.hklklaw.com](http://www.hklklaw.com)  
  
6035 Binney Street  
Omaha, NE 68104  
Tel. (402) 341-2020

## MISSOURI

**Gene C. Napier**  
Hunegs, LeNeave & Kvas  
1712 Main Street  
Suite 266  
Kansas City, MO 64108  
Tel. (913) 484-3884

**Drew C. Baebler**  
The Baebler Firm, LLC  
60 Crestwood Executive Ctr.  
St. Louis, MO 63126  
Tel. (314) 270-9900  
[www.raillaw.com](http://www.raillaw.com)

## NEBRASKA

See Minnesota

## NEW YORK

**Marc Wietzke**  
Flynn & Wietzke, PC  
1205 Franklin Avenue  
Garden City, NY 11530  
Tel. (516) 877-1234  
(866) 877-3352  
[www.felaattorney.com](http://www.felaattorney.com)

## OHIO

**Andrew J. Thompson, Esq.**  
Shapero | Roloff Co., LPA  
1350 Euclid Avenue  
Suite 1550  
Cleveland, OH 44115  
Tel. (216) 781-1700  
(800) 321-9199  
[www.shaperoroloff.com](http://www.shaperoroloff.com)

## PENNSYLVANIA

**Michael J. Olley**  
Coffey, Kaye, Myers & Olley  
Two Bala Plaza  
Suite 718  
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004  
Tel. (610) 668-9800  
(800) 334-2500  
[www.ckmo.com](http://www.ckmo.com)

## TEXAS

**Weldon Granger**  
Jones, Granger,  
Tramuto, & Halstead  
[www.jonesgranger.com](http://www.jonesgranger.com)

**Robert M. Tramuto**

10000 Memorial Drive  
Suite 888  
Houston, TX 77210  
Tel. (713) 668-0230  
(800) 231-3359

## UTAH

**Brent O. Hatch**  
Hatch, James & Dodge, PC  
10 West Broadway  
Suite 400  
Salt Lake City, UT 84101  
Tel. (801) 363-6363  
[www.bjdlaw.com](http://www.bjdlaw.com)

## VIRGINIA

**Willard J. Moody, Sr.**  
The Moody Law Firm, Inc.  
500 Crawford Street  
Suite 200  
Portsmouth, VA 23704  
Tel. (757) 393-4093  
(800) 368-1033  
[www.moodyrrlaw.com](http://www.moodyrrlaw.com)

**C. Richard Cranwell**  
Cranwell, Moore & Emick, PLC  
111 W. Virginia Avenue  
Vinton, VA 24179  
Tel. (540) 904-1621  
(888) 635-6304  
[www.cranwellmoorelaw.com](http://www.cranwellmoorelaw.com)

## WASHINGTON

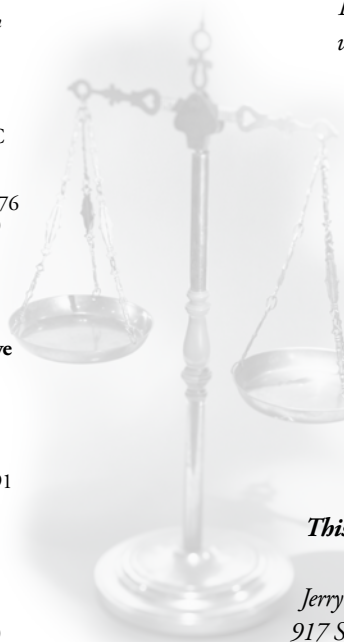
**James K. Vucinovich**  
Rossi Vucinovich PC  
1000 Second Avenue  
Suite 1780  
Seattle, WA 98104  
(866) 357-RAIL (7245)  
[www.railroad-injuries.com](http://www.railroad-injuries.com)

*When Signalmen suffer a work-related injury or illness, BRS members or their families are encouraged to determine their rights and benefits under the Federal Employers' Liability Act before agreeing to any settlement with the railroad employer. The Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen has designated the attorneys listed in this directory to serve as qualified counsel for BRS members in employee injury cases covered by FELA.*

*Attorneys are listed by state and are designated to serve BRS members living or working in the general region of their offices. Designation of FELA counsel is by authority of the BRS Executive Council only.*

*BRS members are encouraged to provide information regarding FELA cases, including criticism or commendations regarding the service of designated counsel, and information on injuries and settlements.*

*This information, which will be used in the continuing evaluation of this program, should be sent to:*  
*Jerry C. Boles, President, Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen*  
*917 Shenandoah Shores Road, Front Royal, VA 22630-6418*



# BENEFITS DIRECTORY

INSURANCE | CLAIMS | GROUP POLICIES | INFO  
HEALTH | RAILROAD RETIREMENT | PLANS  
PHARMACY BENEFIT

## UnitedHealthcare

### **National Plan** — GA-23000

Managed Medical Care Programs (MMCP) &  
Comprehensive Health Care Benefit (CHCB)

**1-800-842-9905**

[www.myuhc.com](http://www.myuhc.com)

### **Retiree Claims** — GA-46000

UnitedHealthcare

P.O. Box 30985

Salt Lake City, UT 84130-0985

**1-800-842-5252**

### **Retiree Supplemental** — GA-23111

UnitedHealthcare

P.O. Box 30304

Salt Lake City, UT 84130-0404

**1-800-842-5252**

## Aetna Healthcare

Aetna

3541 Winchester Road

Allentown, PA 18195

**1-800-842-4044**

[www.aetna.com](http://www.aetna.com)

## Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield

Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield

Railroad Dedicated Unit

P.O. Box 890381

Camp Hill, PA 17089-0381

**1-866-267-3320**

[www.bcbs.com](http://www.bcbs.com)

## Life Insurance

MetLife

P.O. Box 6122

Utica, NY 13504-6122

**1-800-310-7770**

[www.metlife.com](http://www.metlife.com)

## Vision Service Plan

EyeMed

Member Support

**1-855-212-6003**

[www.eyemedvisioncare.com/railroad](http://www.eyemedvisioncare.com/railroad)

## Union Plus

Union Plus Mortgage Company • AT&T Discount

Credit Card • Scholarships • Free College

Insurance Discounts, and more. [www.unionplus.org](http://www.unionplus.org)

## Mental Health and Substance Abuse Benefits

For treatment, claims or inquiries call:

United Behavioral Health

**1-866-850-6212**

[www.liveandworkwell.com](http://www.liveandworkwell.com)

Access code: Railroad

## Supplemental Sickness Benefits Under Group Policy No. R-5000

Aetna

P.O. Box 189145

Plantation, FL 33318-9145

**1-800-205-7651** • Fax: 954-452-4124

You may file online at: [www.wkabsystem.com](http://www.wkabsystem.com)

Company identifier: RR

## Dental Benefits under Group Policy No. GP-12000

Aetna

P.O. Box 14094

Lexington, KY 40512-4094

**1-877-277-3368**

[www.aetna.com](http://www.aetna.com)

## Managed Pharmacy Benefit Express Scripts

Retail pharmacy network provides medication  
for acute, short-term care.

Mail-order prescription service provides  
medication for chronic, long-term care.

UnitedHealthcare Plans GA-23000 and  
GA-46000

**1-800-842-0070**

[www.express-scripts.com](http://www.express-scripts.com)

## Railroad Retirement Board

**1-877-772-5772** — Automated Help Line

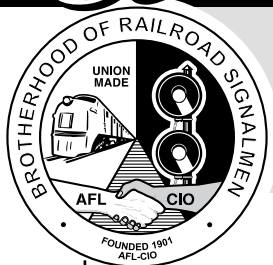
[www.rrb.gov](http://www.rrb.gov)

## Railroad Info — Your Track to Health

[www.yourtracktohealth.com](http://www.yourtracktohealth.com)

(Note: Information on this site does not  
apply to Amtrak employees)

# Continuous Membership



The Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen, in recognition of BRS members' contributions to the Signalman's craft and their dedication to the principle of trade unionism, has established a Continuous Service program to honor longtime BRS members. Continuous Service lapel pins are presented to members every five years, beginning with their 25th year of membership.

*The following is a list of the active members who recently received Continuous Service pins in recognition of their years as BRS Members:*

45 YEARS OF SERVICE		30 YEARS OF SERVICE		25 YEARS OF SERVICE		25 YEARS OF SERVICE	
CW Huebel	99	DE Gallagher	18	TA Walker	16	NL Norby	154
40 YEARS OF SERVICE		MR Chambers	31	RA Manning	49	SJ O'Connor	154
RG Behrens	8	LD Summers	67	JA Maxwell	55	JT Wadeson	154
PJ Belkot	16	AL Hamilton, Jr.	77	RE Vorm	68	A Kiss	156
MC Horta	24	WE Hoops	77	TL Combs	77	O Ducksworth	183
JM Segreto	57	DP Lopez	77	AR Griffith	77	TM O'Connell	194
JD Beamer	77	MW Moran	89	J Miller	77	I Garza	206
LL Day	84	J Ortega, Jr.	92	MJ Brown	87	DE Haywood	208
CH Roberts	119	RW Brown	94	KC Gustafson	87	SD Rowe	234
CB Meadors	158	S Priester	102	JR Wise, Jr.	92	WE Renforth	237
RA Flick	188	AA Walker	102	BL Marshall	154		
35 YEARS OF SERVICE		FJ Gargano	106				
JM O'Connor	8	CA Gery	106				
RP Cooper	10	EP Henderson, Jr.	106				
GR Cooper	84	SE Heiser	119				
JA Merriman	114	W Adams, II	130				
D Tomko	126	DA Braun	154				
PJ McCoy	136	JL Baker	178				
ND Henson	161	KW Parks	178				
TL Kidd	228	GV Timmons	178				
BR Timmons	243	DL Brim	183				
		RC Charles	183				
30 YEARS OF SERVICE		25 YEARS OF SERVICE					
JF Heaphy, III	5	JR Ramos	10				
SV Sloan	8	TT Tassos	14				
RJ Bentley	16	JW Hallman, III	16				

## DID YOU KNOW?

### TITLE 49: TRANSPORTATION

#### §234.257 WARNING SYSTEM OPERATION

(a) Each highway-rail crossing warning system shall be tested to determine that it functions as intended when it is placed in service. Thereafter, it shall be tested at least once each month and whenever modified or disarranged.

(b) Warning bells or other stationary audible warning devices shall be tested when installed to determine that they function as intended. Thereafter, they shall be tested at least once each month and whenever modified or disarranged. ■

# Alcohol and Drug Testing

## MINIMUM RANDOM TESTING RATES FOR 2019 REMAIN UNCHANGED

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) announced the minimum random testing rates for railroad workers in 2019.

Using data from Management Information System annual reports, the FRA has determined that because the industry random drug testing positive rate remained below 1.0 percent for the last two years, it has determined that the minimum annual random drug testing rate for the period January 1, 2019, through December 31, 2019, will remain at 25 percent of covered railroad employees. In addition, because the industry-wide random alcohol testing violation rate has remained below 0.5 percent for the last two years, the Administrator has determined that the minimum random alcohol testing rate will remain at 10 percent of covered railroad employees for the period January 1, 2019, through December 31, 2019.

On June 12, 2017, Maintenance-of-Way (MOW) employees became subject to FRA random drug and alcohol testing. The FRA has set the initial minimum annual random drug testing rates for MOW employees at 50 percent and the minimum annual random alcohol testing rates for MOW employees at 25 percent.

BRS members need to be aware that this notice sets the minimum random testing rates, and the railroads remain free under their own policies to conduct random testing at higher rates. The BRS reminds its members that many railroads have a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to reporting to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol. In many cases, a positive test result will result in being placed out of service. ■

DOT AGENCY	RANDOM DRUG TESTING RATE	RANDOM ALCOHOL TESTING RATE
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)	25%	10%
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)	25%	10%
Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)	25% Covered Service	10% Covered Service
	50% Maintenance of Way*	25% Maintenance of Way*
Federal Transit Administration (FTA)	50%	10%
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA)	50%	N/A
United States Coast Guard (USCG)	50%	N/A

### \* Random testing for MOW employees began on 6-12-2017

**NOTE:** Employers (and C/TPAs) subject to more than one DOT Agency drug and alcohol testing rule may continue to combine covered employees into a single random selection pool.

Please note that USCG covered employees may be combined with DOT covered employees in drug testing pools even though the USCG is part of the Department of Homeland Security.

## DID YOU KNOW?

### TITLE 49: TRANSPORTATION

#### §236.52 RELAYED CUT-SECTION

Where relayed cut-section is used in territory where noncoded direct-current track circuits are in use the energy circuit to the adjoining track shall be open

and the track circuit shunted when the track relay at such cut-section is in deenergized position. ■

# OBITUARIES

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**DANNY L. ALLENDER**—retired member of **LOCAL 109**. Brother Allender retired in 2003 after 38 years of service with the Pennsylvania and Penn Central Railroads, Norfolk Southern Railway, and Conrail. Brother Allender was a Signalman at the time of his retirement. Brother Allender is a U.S. Navy Veteran who served from 1960 to 1965 during the Vietnam War.

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**JERRY R. BLANKENSHIP**—retired member of **LOCAL 110**. Brother Blankenship retired in 1999 after 36 years of service with the Southern Railroad and Norfolk Southern Railway. Brother Blankenship was a Signal Maintainer at Lynchburg, Virginia, at the time of his retirement.

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**KENNETH “KC” C. BURDUE**—retired member of **LOCAL 10**. Brother Burdue retired in 1994 after 41 years of service with the Nickel Plate Railroad, Norfolk Southern Railway, New York Central Railroad, and Conrail. Brother Burdue was a Signalman at Sandusky, Ohio, at the time of his retirement. Brother Burdue is a U.S. Army Veteran.

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**CHARLES H. CRAFT**—retired member of **LOCAL 8**. Brother Craft retired in 1998 after 26 years of service with the Union Pacific Railroad. Brother Craft was a Signalman at the time of his retirement.

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**ARTHUR D. DAFFRON**—retired member of **LOCAL 71**. Brother Daffron retired in 2012 after 34 years of service with the Louisville & Nashville Railroad and CSX Transportation. Brother Daffron was a System Signal Foreman at the time of his retirement.

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**HENRY “HANK” J. DePAEPE**—retired member of **LOCAL 130**. Brother DePaepe retired in 1992 after 44 years of service with the Chicago & North Western Railway. Brother DePaepe was a Crew Foreman at Barrington, Illinois, at the time of his retirement. Brother DePaepe served as Local Chairman and Recording-Financial Secretary.

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**ALLAN GLASGOW**—retired member of **LOCAL 188**. Brother Glasgow retired in 1987 after 38 years of service with the Burlington Northern Railroad. Brother Glasgow was a Signal Maintainer at Espanola, Washington, at the time of his retirement. Brother Glasgow was a U.S. Army Air Corps Veteran who served during World War II.

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**JAMES R. HELMICK**—retired member of **LOCAL 48**. Brother Helmick retired in 1989 after 39 years of service with the Pennsylvania and Penn Central Railroads, and Conrail. Brother Helmick was a Signal Inspector at Anderson, Indiana, at the time of his retirement. Brother Helmick served as a Recording-Financial Secretary. Brother Helmick is a U.S. Navy Veteran.

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**JACKIE M. HOWARD**—retired member of **LOCAL 129**. Brother Howard retired in 2005 after 40 years of service with the BNSF Railway Company. Brother Howard was a Signal Maintainer at Burstow, California, at the time of his retirement.

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**WILLIAM “BILL” T. HUNT**—active member of **LOCAL 8**. Brother Hunt had 38 years of service with the Chicago & North Western Railway and Union Pacific Railroad. Brother Hunt was an Electronic Technician at Council Bluffs, Iowa, at the time of his passing.

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**VERNON B. JAMES**—retired member of **LOCAL 68**. Brother James retired in 1991 after 40 years of service with the New York Central and Penn Central Railroads and Conrail. Brother James was a C&S Maintainer at Kankakee, Illinois, at the time of his retirement.

---

**ROBERT A. KEITH**—retired member of **LOCAL 126**. Brother Keith retired in 2005 after 35 years of service with the Penn Central and Union Pacific Railroads. Brother Keith was a Signalman at Phoenix, Arizona, at the time of his retirement. Brother Keith is a U.S. Military Veteran.

---

**THOMAS LAMPASONA**—active member of **LOCAL 56**. Brother Lampasona had 5 years of service with the Long Island Rail Road. Brother Lampasona was a Vacation Relief Signal Inspector at Divide Headquarters, at the time of his passing.

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**DONALD F. MARKS**—retired member of **LOCAL 21**. Brother Marks retired in 1993 after 32 years of service with the Kansas City Terminal Railroad. Brother Marks was a Signal Testman at Kansas City, Missouri, at the time of his retirement.

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**ROBERT H. MARSHALL**—retired member of **LOCAL 49**. Brother Marshall retired in 1995 after 43 years of service with the Norfolk Southern Railway. Brother Marshall was a Signal Maintainer at Huntingburg, Indiana, at the time of his retirement. Brother Marshall is a U.S. Army Veteran who served during the Korean War.

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# OBITUARIES

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**MARION NORTH**—retired member of **LOCAL 119**. Brother North retired in 2010 after 41 years of service with the Chicago Burlington and Quincy Railroad and BNSF Railway Company. Brother North was a CTC Signal Maintainer at McCook, Nebraska, at the time of his retirement.

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**E. PAUL PEIFFER**—retired member of **LOCAL 98**. Brother Peiffer retired in 1983 after 35 years of service with the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific and Union Pacific Railroads. Brother Peiffer was a Signal Maintainer at the time of his retirement. Brother Peiffer is a U.S. Army Veteran who served during World War II.

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**SIMON QUINTEROS, JR.**—retired member of **LOCAL 121**. Brother Quinteros retired in 2016 after 40 years of service with the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe and BNSF Railways. Brother Quinteros was a Signal Maintainer at Somerville, Texas, at the time of his retirement.

---

**JAMES T. SANDILLA**—retired member of **LOCAL 68**. Brother Sandilla retired in 2002 after 45 years of service with the Pennsylvania and Penn Central Railroads, Norfolk Southern Railway, and Conrail. Brother Sandilla was a Signal Maintainer at Scherrville, Indiana, at the time of his retirement. Brother Sandilla served as Local President.

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**LONNIE D. SMITH**—retired member of **LOCAL 162**. Brother Smith retired in 1990 after 38 years of service with the Illinois Central Railroad. Brother Smith was a Signal Maintainer at Halls, Tennessee, at the time of his retirement.

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**EUGENE C. SPENCE**—retired member of **LOCAL 92**. Brother Spence retired in 1993 after 33 years of service with the Southern Pacific Railroad. Brother Spence was a Signal Maintainer at Martinez, California, at the time of his retirement.

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**WILLIAM T. STOCKSTILL**—retired member of **LOCAL 141**. Brother Stockstill retired in 1992 after 45 years of service with the Texas and Pacific Railway and the Missouri Pacific Railroad. Brother Stockstill was a Signal Maintainer at Weatherford, Texas, at the time of his retirement.

---

**CHESTER M. STRAND, JR.**—retired member of **LOCAL 226**. Brother Strand retired in 2008 after 42 years of service with the Soo Line Railroad and Canadian Pacific Railway. Brother Strand was a Signal Inspector at Minneapolis, Minnesota, at the time of his retirement.

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**RAYMOND C. STRONG**—retired member of **LOCAL 28**. Brother Strong retired in 1994 after 37 years of service with the New York Central Railroad and Conrail. Brother Strong was a Signal Maintainer at Battle Creek, Michigan, at the time of his retirement. Brother Strong served as Recording-Financial Secretary.

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**HAROLD E. SWISHER**—retired member of **LOCAL 154**. Brother Swisher retired in 2005 after 25 years of service with the Burlington Northern Railroad and BNSF Railway Company. Brother Swisher was a Signal Maintainer at Dilworth, Minnesota, at the time of his retirement.

---

**EDWIN J. TALLY**—retired member of **LOCAL 49**. Brother Tally retired in 2007 after 37 years of service with the Southern and Norfolk Southern Railways. Brother Tally was a Signal Maintainer at Sugar Valley, Georgia, at the time of his retirement. Brother Tally served as Local Chairman.

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**DONALD J. TAYLOR**—retired member of **LOCAL 28**. Brother Taylor retired in 1998 after 41 years of service with the New York Central and Penn Central Railroads, and Conrail. Brother Taylor was a Signal Maintainer at Jackson, Michigan, at the time of his retirement. Brother Taylor served as Local President.

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**GEORGE W. TAYLOR**—active member of **LOCAL 102**. Brother Taylor had 43 years of service with the Penn Central Railroad and Amtrak. Brother Taylor was a Signal Foreman at Newark, New Jersey, at the time of his passing.

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**CHARLES W. TERWILLEGER**—retired member of **LOCAL 141**. Brother Terwilleger retired in 2010 after 40 years of service with the Missouri, Kansas & Texas and Union Pacific Railroads. Brother Terwilleger was a Signal Maintainer at Parsons, Kansas, at the time of his retirement.

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**JACK T. THACKER**—retired member of **LOCAL 16**. Brother Thacker retired in 2010 after 30 years of service with CSX Transportation. Brother Thacker was a Signal Maintainer at Cayce, South Carolina, at the time of his retirement.

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**FREDERICK B. THOMAN**—retired member of **LOCAL 60**. Brother Thoman retired in 1991 after 23 years of service with the Port Authority Trans-Hudson Corporation. Brother Thoman was an Assistant Signal Repairman at New York, New York, at the time of his retirement. Brother Thoman served as Local Trustee.

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# OBITUARIES

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**KENNETH E. TOMBLIN**—retired member of **LOCAL 134**. Brother Tomblin retired in 1984 after 34 years of service with the Erie Railroad and Conrail. Brother Tomblin was a Signal Maintainer at Olean, New York, at the time of his retirement.

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**J.D. TRAVIS**—retired member of **LOCAL 55**. Brother Travis retired in 1989 after 41 years of service with the Norfolk & Western Railway. Brother Travis was a Signalman at Decatur, Illinois, at the time of his retirement.

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**JOHN T. TURSKI, JR.**—retired member of **LOCAL 106**. Brother Turski retired in 1993 after 43 years of service with the Pennsylvania and Penn Central Railroads, Conrail, and Amtrak. Brother Turski was a C&S Inspector at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, at the time of his retirement. Brother Turski served as Local Chairman.

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**D.L. TYLER**—retired member of **LOCAL 16**. Brother Tyler retired in 1990 after 42 years of service with the Seaboard Air Line Railroad and CSX Transportation. Brother Tyler was a Signal Foreman at Savannah, Georgia, at the time of his retirement.

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**CECIL E. WARRELL**—retired member of **LOCAL 45**. Brother Warrell retired in 1986 after 39 years of service with the New York Central and Penn Central Railroads and Conrail. Brother Warrell was a Signal Maintainer at Union City, Indiana, at the time of his retirement.

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**WENDELL A. WHITE**—retired member of **LOCAL 55**. Brother White retired in 2002 after 34 years of service with the Norfolk & Western and Norfolk Southern Railways. Brother White was a Signal Maintainer at Mexico, Missouri, at the time of his retirement. Brother White served as Local Chairman.

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**RICHARD H. WOLFF**—retired member of **LOCAL 9**. Brother Wolff retired in 1986 after 36 years of service with the Chicago & North Western Railway. Brother Wolff was a Signal Maintainer at Butler, Wisconsin, at the time of his retirement.

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**RICHARD E. ZIELSDORF**—retired member of **LOCAL 33**. Brother Zielsdorf retired in 1989 after 42 years of service with the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway. Brother Zielsdorf was a Retarder Yard Specialist at Kansas City, Kansas, at the time of his retirement. Brother Zielsdorf served as Local Chairman.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE:

Please notify Grand Lodge of the passing of BRS members.

*email: [membership@brs.org](mailto:membership@brs.org)*

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## DID YOU KNOW?

### TITLE 49: TRANSPORTATION

#### §234.103 TIMELY RESPONSE TO REPORT OF MALFUNCTION

(a) Upon receipt of a credible report of a warning system malfunction, a railroad having maintenance responsibility for the warning system shall promptly investigate the report and determine the nature of the malfunction. The railroad shall take appropriate action as required by §234.207.

(b) Until repair or correction of the warning system is completed, the railroad shall provide alternative means of warning highway traffic and railroad employees in accordance with §§234.105,

234.106 or 234.107 of this part.

(c) Nothing in this subpart requires repair of a warning system, if, acting in accordance with applicable State law, the railroad proceeds to discontinue or dismantle the warning system. However, until repair, correction, discontinuance, or dismantling of the warning system is completed, the railroad shall comply with this subpart to ensure the safety of the traveling public and railroad employees. ■

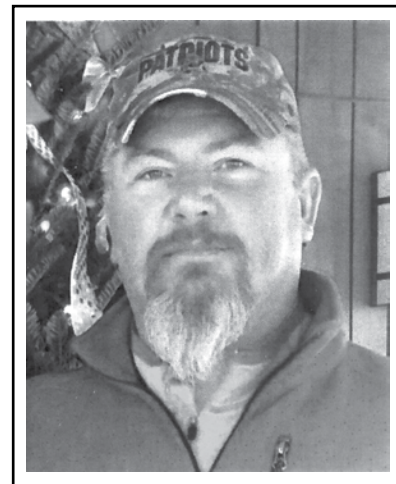
# Remembering

## Brother Vincent J. Spooner, Jr.



Brother Vincent J. Spooner, Jr., 53, of Lincoln, Rhode Island, died on Monday, December 17, 2018, from injuries he sustained after his work vehicle was involved in a head-on collision. He was a 23-year employee of the Providence and Worcester Railroad and a member of BRS Local 62. Brother Spooner is a U.S. Marine Corps Veteran, husband, father, and son.

The news of his passing is taken with deep sadness and we extend our heartfelt condolences to his wife, Traci, his son, Ryan, and the entire Spooner family. ■



### DID YOU KNOW?

#### TITLE 49: TRANSPORTATION

##### **§236.311 SIGNAL CONTROL CIRCUITS, SELECTION THROUGH TRACK RELAYS OR DEVICES FUNCTIONING AS TRACK RELAYS AND THROUGH SIGNAL MECHANISM CONTACTS AND TIME RELEASES AT AUTOMATIC INTERLOCKING**

(a) The control circuits for aspects with indications more favorable than “proceed at restricted speed” shall be selected through track relays, or through devices that function as track relays, for all track circuits in the route governed.

(b) At automatic interlocking, signal control circuits shall be selected (1) through track relays, or devices that function as track relays, for all track circuits in the route governed and in all conflict-

ing routes within the interlocking; (2) through signal mechanism contacts or relay contacts closed when signals for such conflicting routes display “stop” aspects; and (3) through normal contacts of time releases, time element relays, or timing devices for such conflicting routes, or contacts of relays repeating the normal position or normal state of such time releases, time element relays, or timing devices. ■

# Signalman Tracks Down BIG SAVINGS



Kelly Haley has worked far and wide during his 40 years as a member of the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (BRS). In 1977, he started out on a railroad signal gang that worked across Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Kansas.



In 2001, Haley went to work for the union outside Chicago, and today he works as the Vice President Headquarters at the BRS's Grand Lodge in Front Royal, Va.

While Haley loves working for the union, it's taken him far from home in Texas, where his mother still lives. Haley's mom is well, but she's a widow and

has to make ends meet on a fixed income. Recently, she learned her Medicare prescription drug costs were going to balloon to \$900 a year — that's \$75 every month. *"For her, that's two weeks of groceries,"* says Haley. *"We knew we had to do something."*

Fortunately, Haley knew about Union Plus retiree health benefits available to union members and their family members who are Medicare eligible. *"I'm the Signalmen's liaison to Union Plus and I had just attended a meeting about the eHealth service for retirees,"* Haley says.

The Union Plus Retiree Health Insurance Program lets union members, retirees — and even Medicare eligible family members who aren't in a union like Haley's mom — navigate Medicare plan options and choose the plan that's right for them. While Haley was visiting his mom, they went to the Union Plus website and accessed information about retiree health insurance.

*"In just 20 minutes, we saw all her options online and*

*realized just how much she could save,"* says Haley. Using Union Plus, they found a Medicare prescription drug plan that cut her costs from \$75 a month to \$16.70 a month — a \$700 annual savings.

*"When you're living on a fixed-income, that's huge,"* says Haley. *"I'd strongly recommend the Union Plus Retiree Health Insurance Program to any union member who's nearing Medicare age or with family members nearing or in retirement. I was really impressed at how easy it was to get the answers, and the savings, my mother needed."*

Here's how the Union Plus Retiree Health Insurance Program works: You enter information about your budget and health needs into the online recommendation tool. Then it compares plans in your area based on

monthly premiums, annual deductibles, as well as copayments and coinsurance for various services. There's no obligation to enroll in a plan and no additional cost for using

the Union Plus service if you do.

For members who prefer a live person to a computer, the Union Plus Retiree Health Insurance Program also has licensed insurance advisors you can call to get the information you need over the phone.

*"Taking those 20 minutes to check out the Union Plus retiree health care program has made a big difference for my mom,"* says Haley. *"She's getting the same medicines she was before, but at a price she can afford."*

*"This is just one of the great Union Plus benefits available to our members,"* says Haley. *"Even though I'm the liaison for the Union Plus program, I'm still learning about some of them."* Altogether, Union Plus offers more than 25 benefit and discount programs to union members and their families.

To learn more about the Union Plus Retiree Health Insurance Program, visit [unionplus.org/medicare](http://unionplus.org/medicare). ■

# STAMP OUT HUNGER FOOD DRIVE

## LARGEST ONE DAY FOOD DRIVE



On Saturday, May 11, 2019, the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) will work to "Stamp Out Hunger" during its annual national food drive. It's easy for you to make a difference. Simply place non-perishable, non-

breakable food items near your mail box for your letter carrier to pick up on May 11.

Over the last 27 years, the NALC has conducted an annual nationwide food drive using the unparalleled postal networks, letter carriers collect non-perishable food donations as they deliver mail along their postal routes. This drive has successfully helped feed the hungry in over 10,000 cities and towns in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam. Food banks literally circle the second Saturday in May on their calendars because they know NALC workers will be filling their shelves with much needed donations. All donations stay within the local area where they are donated; and, with the need for food assistance at all-time high, union workers and their families are encouraged to support NALC in this effort to help others.

The Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive began with, and has continued to work toward, a singular goal over the years, to help those in need in our own communities. This mammoth food drive takes more than a full year to plan and organize, it's one of the toughest

days of the year, but it's also one of the most gratifying. Remember, the people who need help are not unlike your own family, immediate or extended. They are working families, the elderly and children. They are the families of those actively serving in the military. They are single parents, grandparents raising grandchildren, parents dealing with a child's serious health condition and families in which a parent has lost a job. These are folks doing everything 'right', often working more than one job, but still unable to make ends meet. ■



# STAMP OUT HUNGER FOOD DRIVE MAY 11

# SIGNALMAN'S STORE

**BRS WATCHES** — Gold BRS logo on the face.

**CAPS** — Adjustable headband. Many different styles and colors available.

**NAVY WINDSHIRT** — 100% polyester microfiber with 100% nylon taffeta lining. Includes side seam pockets.

**OXFORD SHIRTS** — Long-sleeve dress shirts contain a double yoke, button-down banded collar, and dress placket with pearl-tone buttons. Constructed from a blend of 60% cotton and 40% polyester material.

**GOLF SHIRTS** — are constructed from wrinkle resistant, snag-proof, fade resistant material.

**CANVAS COAT** — Made of 100% cotton canvas with BRS colorlight logo embroidered in red and green. Available in black or brown.

**WOOL/LEATHER BRS JACKETS** — Heavyweight wool shell, nylon lining, with leather sleeves and collar. Embroidered four-color BRS emblem. Available in black only.

**SAFETY KNIT BEANIE** — Made of 100% acrylic with 3M Reflective Thread Band, approximately 8½" long. Lime green/reflective, one size fits all.

**Make check or money order payable to:**  
Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen

**MAIL PAYMENT AND ORDER TO:**  
Signalman's Store Fulfillment  
4801 Viewpoint Place  
Cheverly, MD 20781

ITEM DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	PRICE	TOTAL
BRS Flag (3' x 5')		85.00	
BRS Flag (2'x3')		53.50	
Golf Balls (pack of 3)		9.75	
Coffee Mug		8.00	
Pocket Watch		94.50	
Wrist Watch		115.50	
Mantle/Desk Clock		132.00	

HATS	QUANTITY	PRICE	TOTAL
Cap (pink)		16.00	
Cap (black w/colorlight on brim)		18.00	
Cap (black w/BRS on brim)		14.00	
Cap (black)		11.00	
Cap (blue)		11.00	
Cap (gray)		11.00	
Safety Beanie (lime green)		17.00	
Cap (black dye sub)		18.00	
Cap (brown diamond plate)		18.00	

APPAREL	S	M	L	XL	2X	3X	4X	PRICE	TOTAL
Signal Graphic T-Shirt								14.00	
Union Strong T-Shirt (navy)								16.00	
Union Strong T-Shirt (charcoal)								16.00	
Golf Shirt (black w/logo)								37.50	
Golf Shirt (burgundy w/logo)								37.50	
Golf Shirt (navy w/logo)								37.50	
Golf Shirt (steel blue w/logo)								37.50	
Golf Shirt (women's burgundy w/logo)								37.50	
Oxford Dress Shirt (blue)								48.00	
Oxford Dress Shirt (gray)								48.00	
Oxford Dress Shirt (white)								48.00	
Navy Windshirt								60.75	
Black Wool & Leather Coat								195.00	
Black Canvas Coat								85.00	
Brown Canvas Coat								85.00	

CLEARANCE ITEMS	S	M	L	XL	2X	3X	4X	PRICE	TOTAL
Black Sweatshirt (quarter zip)								35.00	
Blue Jacket								53.00	
Available sizes in un-shaded boxes								<b>TOTAL</b>	

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

STREET \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_ CERTIFICATE # \_\_\_\_\_

ORDER ONLINE AT [WWW.BRS.ORG](http://WWW.BRS.ORG)

# SIGNALMAN'S STORE



CHARCOAL



NAVY

## UNION STRONG T-SHIRT

Graphic Shown Imprinted on Back of Shirt



BLUE



WHITE



GRAY

## OXFORD SHIRTS



## GRAPHIC T-SHIRT



## WRIST WATCH



## BROWN CANVAS COAT



## BLACK WOOL & LEATHER COAT



## BLACK CANVAS COAT



## POCKET WATCH



## WINDSHIRT



BURGUNDY\*



BLACK



NAVY



STEEL BLUE

## GOLF SHIRTS (\*Women's sizes available in Burgundy only)



## SAFETY KNIT BEANIE



**\$35**

## CLEARANCE ITEMS

Black Sweatshirt ..... ~~\$42.00~~ \$35.00

Blue Jacket ..... ~~\$63.00~~ \$53.00



**\$53**



## FLAG



## ASSORTED CAPS

**LARGE  
SELECTION**



## MANTLE CLOCK

# MEETING PHOTOS



## Local 111 Meeting

Pocatello, Idaho



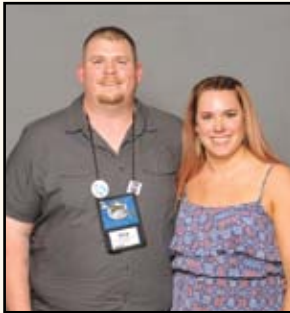
# MEETING PHOTOS



## Norfolk Southern Railroad Meeting Eastern Region North, Perrysburg, Ohio



# CONVENTION PHOTOS



# MEMBER PHOTOS



LOCAL 111 — LOCAL CHAIRMAN

## Steve Buck's Retirement Party



# CONVENTION PHOTOS



## BNSF General Committee

52nd Regular BRS Convention — Boston, Massachusetts



## Union Pacific General Committee

52nd Regular BRS Convention — Boston, Massachusetts



# PHOTO CONTEST

## WINNERS FOR 1st Quarter 2019

*Local 16 President, Rex Grant, replacing a light bulb on a crossing cantilever in Clinton, South Carolina. Photo submitted by: Gus Demott, Grand Lodge Trustee and Member of Local 16.*

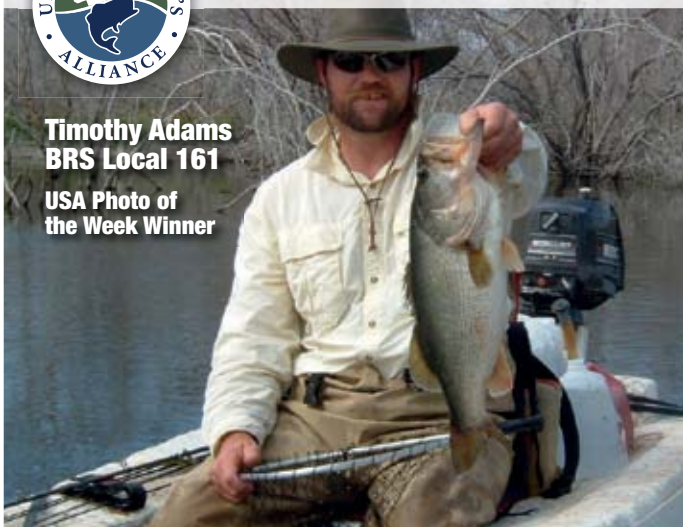


*Signal work was completed by Southern Lines East district Signal Gang 690. Pictured are Mr. Lynn "Sonny" Alderman, Local 110 Member and Senior Project Engineer, Local 110 members: Gang Foreman Darryl Holloway, Lead Signalman Dwight Hardin, and Signalman Brian Wjnschenk. They have been working installing new switches, signals and signal bungalows for the new Union Station/AMTRAK project. The pictures here are of upgrades to plant at CP Hunt in Raleigh, North Carolina. Photo submitted by: Bryan Shoffner, Local 110 Member and Signal Maintainer at Greensboro, North Carolina.*



**Timothy Adams**  
**BRS Local 161**

**USA Photo of  
the Week Winner**



## WHERE *UNIONS* MEET THE *OUTDOORS!*

The Union Sportsmen's Alliance (USA) unites union members who share a love of the great outdoors and a commitment to help preserve North America's outdoor heritage. USA members **WORK** hard and **PLAY** hard, and the USA serves their passion with clay shoots, dinners, a union-dedicated TV series, community-based conservation projects and many great benefits.

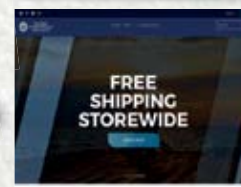
### USA MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

- 3 digital issues of the *Union Sportsmen's Journal*
- Free shipping at UnionSportsmenStore.com (launching in Feb.)
- 10% discount on Worldwide Trophy Adventures TAGS program
- USA member discounts on hunting and fishing trips
- Money-saving discounts on outdoor gear and services
- Chances to win prizes and trips all year
- Opportunity to participate in USA conservation projects and events
- Chance to apply to be a guest on the USA's outdoor TV series

### *Additional Benefits with Upgraded Membership*



**10% USA E-STORE  
OFF PURCHASES**



**YOU DESERVE AN OUTDOOR ORGANIZATION TO CALL YOUR OWN**  
**LEARN MORE AT [UNIONSPOUTSMEN.ORG/JOIN](http://UNIONSPOUTSMEN.ORG/JOIN)**