

# THE SIGNALMAN'S JOURNAL

## *Job Shortages in the Rail Industry*

*President Jerry C. Boles — PAGE 2*



*Inside:* RAIL LABOR MOURNS THE LOSS OF RICHARD L. TRUMKA

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# The SIGNALMAN'S JOURNAL

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## DIRECTORY

**NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS:**  
917 Shenandoah Shores Road  
Front Royal, VA 22630-6418  
(540) 622-6522 • Fax: (540) 622-6532  
signalman@brs.org

**Jerry Boles, President**  
(ext. 525) • jcb@brs.org

**Mike Baldwin, Secretary-Treasurer**  
(ext. 527) • msb@brs.org

**Tim Tarrant, Vice President Headquarters**  
(ext. 528) • tmt@brs.org

**Brandon Elvey, Vice President NRAB**  
(ext. 524) • b.elvey@brs.org

**Kurt Mullins, Director of Research**  
(ext. 572) • kmullins@brs.org

**Quinn Norman, Grand Lodge Representative**  
(ext. 573) • r.norman@brs.org

**Chris Hand, Grand Lodge Representative**  
(ext. 566) • c.hand@brs.org

### WASHINGTON OFFICE:

815 16th Street NW, 4th Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20006

**Mike Efaw, National Legislative Director**  
917 Shenandoah Shores Road, Front Royal, VA 22630  
(ext. 528) • mle@brs.org

### FIELD VICE PRESIDENTS:

**Joe Mattingly, Vice President Midwest**  
400 Contessa Lane, Trenton, KY 42286  
(270) 466-0405 • jlm@brs.org

**Jim Finnegan, Vice President  
Commuter/Passenger**  
917 Shenandoah Shores Road, Front Royal, VA 22630  
(540) 622-6522 (ext. 528) • jimfinnegan@brs.org

**Cory Claypool, Vice President West**  
917 Shenandoah Shores Road, Front Royal, VA 22630  
(540) 622-6522 (ext. 528) • clic@brs.org

**Doug VanderJagt, Vice President East**  
917 Shenandoah Shores Road, Front Royal, VA 22630  
(540) 622-6522 (ext. 528) • drvanderjagt@brs.org

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

**Gus Demott, Chairman**  
P.O. Box 888, Clinton, SC 29325  
(864) 938-0353

**John McArthur, Secretary**  
P.O. Box 960639, El Paso, TX 79996  
(775) 846-1794

**Chris Natale, Member**  
60 Oak Place, Babylon, NY 11702  
(631) 587-0024

### OFFICERS EMERITUS:

**V.M. "Butch" Speakman, Jr., President Emeritus**  
14212 Viola Place, Huntley, IL 60142

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"There is nothing stronger than the American labor movement. United, we cannot and we will not be turned aside. We'll work for it, sisters and brothers. We'll stand for it. Together. Each of us. To bring out the best in America. To bring out the best in ourselves, and each other." — RICHARD L. TRUMKA

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**COVER:** From the Signalman's Journal photo archives: In 2013, signal gang 5087 putting up signal bridge for new refueling yard in Strauss New Mexico, on MP 1279. Photo submitted by Nohe Galindo, Local 182 member.



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

————— *Jerry C. Boles, BRS President*

# JOB SHORTAGES *in the* Rail Industry

In recent months, there has been much said concerning the job shortages around the rail industry. The newspaper and magazine articles have primarily focused on the shortages of conductors and engineers, or workers in port or transfer facilities, and in the supply chain overall. These shortages have caught the attention of Congress and now it is demanding answers.

Meanwhile, there has been little attention given to the shortages in our craft. All Class I Railroads made job cuts, abolishments, and allowed attrition in their signal departments in an effort to improve their operating ratios to appease Wall Street hedge fund managers. This implementation of the so-called Precision Scheduled

Railroading (PSR) model started with the Canadian railroads, Canadian National (CN) and Canadian Pacific (CP), with CSX Transportation (CSXT), Norfolk Southern (NS), and Union Pacific (UP), following more recently. This new Wall Street friendly model has increased the number of jobs that were cut, causing many, if not all, of the unfilled positions.

On CSXT, five different General Committees represent BRS Members: Seaboard Coast Line (SCL), CSX (former Conrail), Baltimore & Ohio (B&O), Chesapeake & Ohio (C&O), and the Louisville & Nashville (L&N). SCL has job openings in many locations in Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia. The CSX (former Conrail) is having manpower shortages in Ohio between Columbus and Cleveland and around the Indianapolis area. The B&O cannot get jobs filled in the Baltimore/DC area or at Queensgate Yard in Cincinnati. In Michigan, the C&O has combined signal territories to reduce the number of Signal Maintainers, causing the remaining Maintainers to have

more test to complete each month, taking time from signal maintenance. The only bright spot is the L&N, who has most of its positions filled, however, several are still furloughed. Many of the job vacancies on the entire CSXT system are going “no bid” for several bid cycles before it can get someone to fill the position, there are some vacancies that have been advertised for over 10 bid cycles.

Norfolk Southern has openings on all three of its regions, especially in the metropolitan areas like

Chicago, end of line locations, and at yard facilities. Its Eastern Region territory has seven vacancies that went “no bid” and are re-advertised because NS does not have the

personnel to fill these signal maintenance jobs. The Eastern Region North (former Conrail) also has the same issue filling temporary and permanent jobs in New York, Pennsylvania, and Indiana. Western Region East and West (N&W and Wabash) have 17 vacancies, with nobody furloughed to take these vacancies. NS simply does not have the manpower to fill these vacancies because of job cuts, abolishments, employee buy outs, and attrition.

The UP, BNSF Railway, and Kansas City Southern all are having the same self-made issues as in the Pacific Northwest, areas in Texas and California, and the Midwestern states. This is not because of furloughs; it is due to attrition and job abolishments. With retirements and resignations, jobs in these areas are going unfilled because the Carriers did not keep up with attrition through hiring. Sadly, they expect the remaining employees to pick up the slack left because of the vacancies.

***Railroaders are no longer treated with respect, recognizing the sacrifices they make for the sake of their employer. Money and benefits are no longer the single driving force...***



Amtrak and the commuters we represent are continuing to hire to keep up with attrition and job openings. The only issue found with Amtrak is a lack of new-hire training. Amtrak has job vacancies because it does not have trained, qualified Signalmen to fill the open jobs.

I know those named above are not the only places with these challenges; I am confident there are many, many more. The Carriers are putting all the burden on the Signal Maintainers to get testing and maintenance done on these vacant territories; another popular tactic Carriers are using is to abolish a territory and divide it up between two or three Signal Maintainers. I recognize the stress this puts on our craft. I know with the added tests that are required, maintenance is taking a back seat.

Allowing the hedge funds to drive the railroads reduction in force and lowering their operating ratios in the PSR way of operating railroads, has caused the Carrier's manpower shortage. Carriers have signal jobs in construction and maintenance, but they have reduced the available Signalmen jobs that provide help or relief for Signal Maintainers. They have also increased the size of Signal Maintainer's territories by mileage or added equipment. Again, we hear at meetings that the Signal Maintainers are overworked and struggle to get assigned FRA required test done and that there is absolutely no time to do any preventive maintenance work. Rest assured, we have expressed these concerns to the FRA, the STB, members of Congress and anyone else that will listen.

What the railroads failed to realize was when they furloughed these previously dedicated employees, many were not going to come back when recalled. The workers today are not like the employees when I started, over 44 years ago. Careers in the rail industry were good paying, had good benefits, and were mostly stable. While some jobs required an occasional move, that was part of the industry and was understood. Before the many mergers, employees were mostly treated with respect for the jobs that they performed, post-merger, employees are treated as expendable and just another hinderance to their bottom-line profits. Railroaders are no longer treated with respect, recognizing the sacrifices they make for the sake of their employer. Money and benefits are no longer the single driving force of keeping a job for

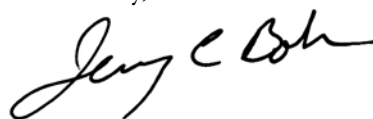
the men and women that work on America's Class I Railroads. Today, BRS members want stability for themselves and their families. The railroads are behind the times, and they underestimated the new priorities in people's lives; simply put, railroad jobs are not as attractive as they were in the past.

What can be done? We need to remain vigilant to ensure that FRA testing is done completely and thoroughly. Notify the Carrier when you are unable to complete all the required tests; be sure to explain whether it was just too much to complete in the 30-day cycle, if it was Maintenance-of-Way support, unplanned work, weather, or any other issue that came up; let the Carrier know you will not be able to get the test done in a timely manner. Document every-

thing in writing to your supervisor, ensuring you have a copy in your personal possession or personal email (not company). Get your Local Union Officers involved and let them know that you are unable to get your test done. The push back we get from the railroads and the FRA is that records show that Signalmen are getting their test done, nothing is late, and everything is completed mostly on time. The Carriers know that once it has been signed as complete by the Signal Maintainer, they are in the clear.

In closing, this problem will not be cured overnight. This problem was not created by the BRS or our members, it was created by railroads that are more worried about lining their pockets through the PSR model of railroading. The Carriers are struggling to find qualified employees that want to live the demanding railroad lifestyle. I know you all take pride in your work and want to take care of your respective territories to ensure your fellow railroaders and the traveling public are safe, I truly appreciate your hard work and dedication to the craft.

In Solidarity,



Jerry C. Boles — BRS President

***Today, BRS members want stability for themselves and their families. The railroads are behind the times, and they underestimated the new priorities in people's lives; simply put, railroad jobs are not as attractive as they were in the past.***



## FROM THE SECRETARY-TREASURER

Mike Baldwin, BRS Secretary-Treasurer

# LOCAL LODGE Funds *and* Transferring Members

### LOCAL LODGE FUNDS

The Financial Secretary shall, at all times, keep a complete and accurate record of funds in his possession or deposited to the account of his Local Lodge. He shall be prepared, whenever called upon, to report on those funds. It is imperative that a Local operate only on unencumbered funds. Article I, Section 39, states that encumbered funds are those used to pay per capita tax to the General Committee and Grand Lodge; the quarter dues in advance should also be considered encumbered funds.

**Sec. 39.** Expenditures of Local Lodges will be only from the unencumbered funds in the possession of the Local Lodge. (Encumbered funds are those collected for the payment of General Committee and/or Grand Lodge per capita tax but not yet transmitted). If any expenditure should be authorized in violation of this Section, the Local Financial Secretary shall decline to make the expenditure.

### TRANSFERRING MEMBERS AND QUARTER DUES IN ADVANCE

*BRS Constitution Article I, Sections 175, 176, and 177 cover the transfer of membership:*

**Sec. 175.** Membership in the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen must be in the Local Lodge having jurisdiction over that territory of the railroad on which employed. Whenever the location of employment of any member is changed, either to different location on the same railroad or from one railroad to another, such member shall transfer his membership to the Local Lodge which has jurisdiction over the territory to which he has been transferred by the first day of the calendar quarter following the quarter in which he transferred. Members assigned to construction positions shall only transfer their membership when permanently transferred to a new location.

**Sec. 176.** Any member, whose place of employment has been permanently changed, as provided in Article I, Section 178, shall apply to the Local Financial Secretary of his Local Lodge for a transfer card. If such member is

not under suspension and there are no charges pending and his dues and assessments are fully paid, the Local Financial Secretary shall issue such transfer card within 30 days of notification. A member failing or refusing to request a transfer card shall be considered as delinquent and not maintaining membership. The transfer card will be in triplicate, one card to the member transferred, one card to the Local Lodge to which transferred, and one card to the Secretary-Treasurer.

Any person working on any line or railroad covered by an agreement with the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen who changes his place of employment and such a person's dues, fees, and assessments are not fully paid, he must pay any such owed dues, fees, and assessments to become a member in good standing. When the Local or General Committee of the new employer serves notice to that person that he must make restitution of all such owed dues, fees, and assessments, and when that person does pay all his owed dues, fees, and assessments, and the member owes an amount of dues

equal to a quarter or less, the portion of dues owed to Grand Lodge will be remitted to Grand Lodge and the dues owed his former Local will be remitted to his former Local. If that person owes an amount of dues greater than one quarter, the amount owed to the Grand Lodge will be remitted to Grand Lodge and the remaining portion of the dues will go to the new Local.

**Sec. 177.** All transfer cards shall expire within ninety calendar days from the date of issue.

*The Following Actions Should Take Place When a Member Needs to be Transferred:*

1. The Member should request a transfer card from his Local Financial Secretary. Remember, the member is responsible for his transfer and payroll deductions should not be stopped or transfer made until the member initiates the process.
2. The Local Financial Secretary (Local member is leaving) shall issue transfer card within 30 days (transfer cards are available from Grand Lodge). When the transfer card is issued to the member, his quarter dues in advance should also be refunded back to him at the same time. A copy of the transfer card also needs to be sent to Local Lodge to which he is transferring to and to Grand Lodge.
3. The Local Financial Secretary (Local member is leaving) pays the per capita tax for entire cur-

rent quarter to Grand Lodge and the General Committee. The Local Financial Secretary also needs to notify Carrier to stop payroll deduction of dues to be effective at the end of the current quarter. Report the date of transfer to *membership@brs.org* and to which Local the member was transferred. Transfer date may only be effective at the beginning of a quarter.

4. The Local Financial Secretary (receiving Local) notifies Carrier to start payroll deduction of dues beginning with first month of quarter, and to collect quarter dues in advance from the member.

It is best for the quarter dues in advance to be refunded back to the member and recollected again because the union dues rates are usually different from Local to Local. The member receives his quarter dues in advance from his Local and in return pays the new Local their quarter dues in advance. If the transfer of membership is handled in a timely matter and quarter dues in advance refunded to the member, there should be no need for the transfer of money between the two Locals and this eliminates the discrepancies in the dollar amounts, and all matters are between the Locals and the member and not between two Locals. **The importance of accurate recordkeeping as to the payment of quarter dues in advance and union dues cannot be over emphasized. ■**

# Agreement



## BOMBARDIER SIGNAL EMPLOYEES



On August 19, 2021, all members of the Bombardier group voted to ratify their first contract. The contract included 26 work rules, a wage increase, and a sign on bonus. ■



# CSXT/BRS ADVANCED ELECTRONICS PROGRAM



*The Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen would like to recognize and congratulate the following members for successfully completing the CSXT/BRS Advanced Electronics Training Program:*

Eric Allen (C&O), Matthew Barancin (CSXTN), Robert Cary (SCL), James Earp (CSXTN), Sean France (CSXTN), Jason Gothard (L&N), Alex Martin (B&O), Stuart Moore (SCL), Ray Napier (L&N), Andrew Scott (C&O), Michael Scott (SCL), and Timothy Singleton (B&O).

The Advanced Electronics Training Program is a difficult endeavor for anyone, especially considering most of the

work and study is performed outside of assigned hours on the member's personal time. We recognize the extensive amount of time and effort this program requires and commend these members on their hard work. The course takes between 18-21 months and requires approximately 500 hours of actual course work, along with periodic classroom sessions held in Atlanta, Georgia. We understand the additional strain and stress this commitment places on the members and their families, and we compliment them on this very significant achievement. ■

*Again, congratulations and keep up the good work.*



## Find us on Facebook





ELIZABETH H. SHULER

# Elected

## AFL-CIO PRESIDENT

The AFL-CIO Executive Council elected Liz Shuler, a visionary leader and longtime trade unionist, to serve as president of the federation of 56 unions and 12.5 million members. Shuler is the first woman to hold the office in the history of the labor federation. The Executive Council also elected United Steelworkers (USW) International Vice President Fred Redmond to succeed Shuler as secretary-treasurer, the first African American to hold the number two office. Tefere Gebre will continue as executive vice president, rounding out the most diverse team of officers ever to lead the AFL-CIO.

The election of Shuler and Redmond comes after the unexpected and untimely passing of Richard Trumka, who served as AFL-CIO president from 2009 until his death on August 5, capping a more than 50-year career of dedication to America's unions and working people.

*"I am humbled, honored and ready to guide this federation forward," Shuler said after her election. "I believe in my bones the labor movement is the single greatest organized force for progress. This is a moment for us to lead societal*

*transformations — to leverage our power to bring women and people of color from the margins to the center — at*

*work, in our unions and in our economy, and to be the center of gravity for incubating new ideas that will unleash unprecedented union growth."*

*"Today's election is a pivotal step forward in the right direction, a landmark moment that I know not only serves as an inspiration for myself, but to countless young women across the country," said Metro Washington Labor Council President Dyana Forester. "Liz is also a DC resident and understands firsthand the importance of DC statehood. We are excited to work together with her on this fight, so that someday the District's 50 thousand union members can have the representation in Congress they deserve." ■*



**ELIZABETH H. SHULER**  
*AFL-CIO President*



## Belonging to a Union

What do my dues pay for?

The Union doesn't do  
anything for me!

What good is the Union?

These are all questions we may have asked ourselves or heard others asking. The truth is, "there is power in a union" and it takes the dues and involvement of all members to maintain that power, strength, and solidarity; a fundamental involvement includes an understanding from all members.

Sign-up at [WWW.BRS.ORG](http://WWW.BRS.ORG) & click on the Union Education Tab for more information.

# *In Memoriam*

**RICHARD L. TRUMKA • 1949–2021**



**RICHARD L. TRUMKA**

## *Labor Mourns the Loss of* **Richard L. Trumka**

Our brother and leader Richard Trumka passed away on August 5, 2021, at the age of 72.

The labor movement, the AFL-CIO, and the nation lost a legend. Rich devoted his life to working people, from his early days as president of the United Mine Workers of America to his unparalleled leadership as the voice of America's labor movement.

He was a relentless champion of workers' rights, workplace safety, worker-centered trade, democracy, and so much more. He was also a devoted husband, father, grandfather, brother, coach, colleague, and friend. Rich was loved and beloved.

The 56 unions and 12.5 million members of the AFL-CIO mourn the passing of our fearless leader and commit to honoring his legacy with action. Standing on Rich's shoulders, we will pour everything we have into building an economy, society, and democracy that lifts up every working family and community. ■

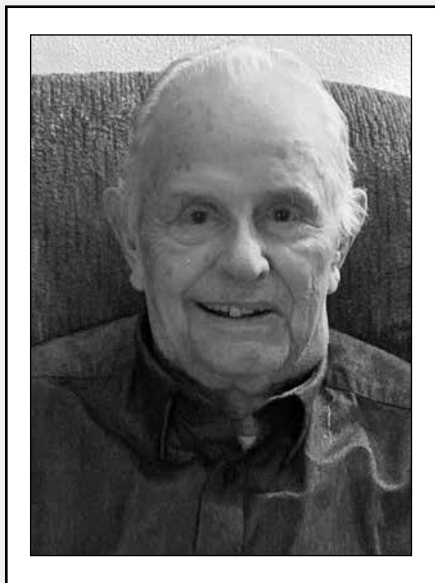


Richard L. Trumka was an outspoken advocate for social and economic justice; Trumka was the nation's clearest voice on the critical need to ensure that all workers have a good job and the power to determine their wages and working conditions. He led the labor movement's efforts to create an economy based on broadly shared prosperity and held elected officials and employers accountable to working families.



# In Memoriam

HENRY S. GERTH • 1927–2021



Henry S. Gerth passed away on August 3, 2021. Brother Gerth began his railroad career on the Chicago & North Western Railway in May 1944. Brother Gerth served Local 39 in the capacity of Local Chairman and Recording-Financial Secretary. He also served as Financial Secretary, Vice General Chairman, and most notably as General Chairman of the Chicago & North Western Railway General Committee. Brother Gerth retired in 1989 after 45 years of devoted service. Brother Gerth is a U.S. Navy Veteran. Following his retirement, he continued to work for Signalmen as a FELA Investigator. ■



## Union Plus® Scholarship Program ●●●●●●●●



**ELIGIBILITY**  
— Current and retired mem-

bers of participating unions, their spouses and their dependent children (as defined by IRS regulations). At least one year of continuous union membership by the applicant, applicant's spouse or parent (if applicant is a dependent). The one-year membership minimum must be satisfied by May 31, of the scholarship year.

**APPLICATION TIMELINE** — Applications are available starting in mid-June, and a complete application must be received on or before 12:00 p.m. (Eastern Time) on January 31, of the scholarship year. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

**SCHOLARSHIP AWARD AMOUNTS** — Amounts range from \$500 to \$4,000. These one-time cash awards are for study beginning in the Fall of 2022. Students may re-apply each year.

**AWARD DATE** — The Scholarship Committee will determine recipients of scholarship awards by May 31 each year. During the first week of June award recipients will be individually notified by mail, and all applicants will be sent an email with notification that the award list is posted. Please note that due to the volume of applications we cannot provide any information on the status of an application before award announcements are made.

### OUTSTANDING SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

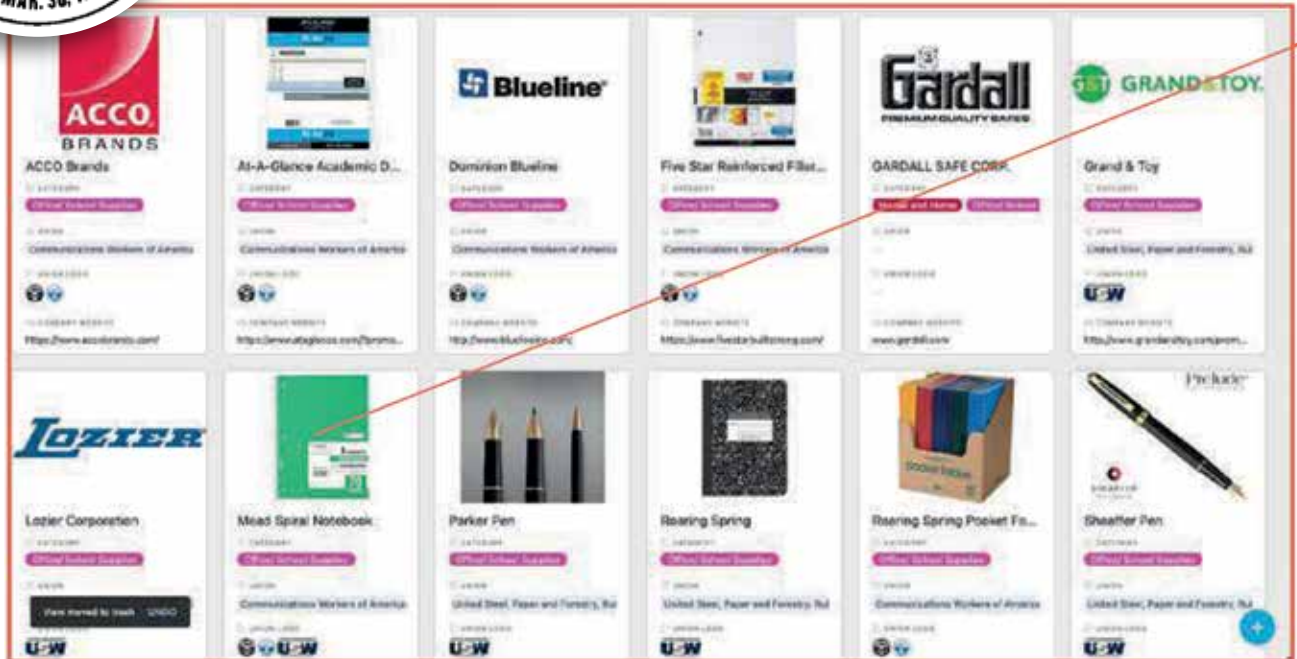
The students selected for university, college, trade or technical school scholarships represent a wide sampling of backgrounds, union affiliations, goals and accomplishments. The selection process is very competitive since we receive thousands of applications each year. ■

**To receive mobile text alerts about education-related deadlines and information, text STUDENT to 22555.**

[www.unionplus.org/benefits/money/union-plus-scholarships](http://www.unionplus.org/benefits/money/union-plus-scholarships)



## UNION LABEL UNVEILS NEW Do Buy Database



In its most comprehensive redesign ever, the Union Label and Service Trades Department, AFL-CIO, has built a new “Do Buy” database of union-made products and services.

*“We set out to clean up and update our database of products currently housed on our website,” explains ULSTD President Rich Kline. “As we worked on the update, it became clear that we had an opportunity to create something more special, more user friendly, and information-packed than we have ever had before.”*

The database not only contains unionmade products and services, it also links to information about each of the national and international unions, houses collective bargaining agreements, and as it continues to evolve, will hold information about each of the local unions that make the union-made products.

The project, which has taken more than a year to put together, was built by the Department’s union communications firm, Kenefick Communications. Kenefick employees are members of the Columbia Typographical Union 101-12.

This new iteration of the Department’s database is a relational database that links information throughout each listing. When a product is linked to a union, the union, or

unions, linked show other products made by that union. As well, it shows the associated collective bargaining agreements negotiated by the union and information on union leadership. As the database becomes more granular, information about the local unions representing the workers will also be added.

### Multi-Informational Relational Database

*“A relational database is a collection of data items with pre-defined relationships between them. We took the information the Department had sourced over the years and began linking records to additional information,” explained Kenefick Communications Principal Tara Landis who primarily worked on the project. “Over the years, the Department has sourced information about union-made products from various places including a multi-year university research project conducted over a decade ago. It was past time the information was updated. As we delved into the data, we found that in some cases the researchers had used local numbers but hadn’t identified the actual union that made the products. That was just one of the issues we had to sort out in this rebuild,” Ms. Landis explained. “We are still working on confirming the unions for certain products.”*

The database is available on the Department’s website at [unionlabel.org](http://unionlabel.org) and union members are encouraged to



add their employers' union-made products and services using the provided form. As well, the Department will be communicating directly with its affiliated unions to set up access for each union to add or edit their associated product listings.

*"The mission of the ULSTD is to promote buying union-made products and services. This database will make it easier to find union-made products and services, learn more about the unions that make them, and, we hope, become a clearing house of information for any-*

*one looking for information about unions," said Kline. "This project doesn't end with the launch of the database; it will be ever-evolving, growing to include more products and information including current and past CBAs that can be used to help union negotiators as they prepare to bargain new contracts."*

If you have a union-made product or service you would like to add, please complete the form on the Union Label website at [unionlabel.org](http://unionlabel.org). ■

The image shows a web interface for the Union Label database. It includes a search for "Mead Spiral Notebook", a list of unions with "Communications Workers of America (CWA)" selected, and a detailed view of the CWA record showing its products (Printcorp, Consolidated Color Press, Fort Orange Press) and leadership (Chris Shelton, Sara Steffens). Red arrows indicate the flow from the product search to the union selection and then to the detailed union record.

## How to Use the New Database



In the example shown, we searched for "school supplies." Our results returned several different union-made school supply options. We then clicked on the "Mead Spiral Notebooks" result. Within that result we

can see that the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and the United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial & Service Workers International Union (USW) represent workers

at the Mead Spiral Notebooks plant. We then clicked on the CWA link

and can see information about CWA, including other products its members make. Within the CWA record, we can see its union leadership. If you click on the various leadership, you can see more information about that individual.

Also shown under the union information, are any collective bargaining agreements we have on file associated with that union. ■



## UNEMPLOYMENT AND SICKNESS Benefits for Railroad Employees

*The Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) administers the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (RUIA), which provides two kinds of benefits for qualified railroaders: unemployment benefits for those who become unemployed but are ready, willing, and able to work; and sickness benefits for those who are unable to work because of sickness or injury. Sickness benefits are also payable to female rail workers for periods of time when they are unable to work because of health conditions related to pregnancy, miscarriage, or childbirth. A new benefit year begins each July 1.*

*The following questions and answers describe these benefits, their eligibility requirements, and how to claim them. At the time this news release was issued, unemployment and sickness benefit flexibilities were in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

*Because these flexibilities are temporary and may change, they are not covered in this publication. Visit [RRB.gov/coronavirus](https://www.rrb.gov/coronavirus) for up-to-date information.*

### What are the eligibility requirements for railroad unemployment and sickness benefits in July 2021?

To qualify for **normal** railroad unemployment or sickness benefits, an employee must have had railroad earnings of at least \$4,137.50 in calendar year 2020, counting no more than \$1,655 for any one month. Those who were first employed in the rail industry in 2020 must also have at least five months of creditable railroad service in 2020.

Under certain conditions, employees who do not qualify on the basis of their 2020 earnings may still be able to receive benefits in the new benefit year. Employees with at least 10 years of service (120 or more months of service) who received normal benefits in the benefit year ending June 30, 2021, may be eligible for **extended** benefits. Employees with at least 10 years of service (120 or more months of service) might qualify for **accelerated** benefits if they have railroad earnings of at least \$4,275 in 2021, not counting earnings of more than \$1,710 in any one month.

In order to qualify for **extended** unemployment benefits, a claimant must not have voluntarily quit work without good cause and not have voluntarily retired. To qualify for extended sickness benefits, a claimant must not have voluntarily retired and must be under age 65.

To be eligible for **accelerated** benefits, a claimant must have 14 or more consecutive days of unemployment

or sickness; not have voluntarily retired or, if claiming unemployment benefits, quit work without good cause; and, when claiming sickness benefits, be under age 65.

### What is the daily benefit rate payable in the new benefit year beginning July 1, 2021?

Almost all employees will qualify for the maximum daily benefit rate of \$82. Benefits are generally payable for the number of days of unemployment or sickness over four in 14-day claim periods, which yields \$820 for each two full weeks of unemployment or sickness. Sickness benefits payable for the first 6 months after the month the employee last worked are subject to tier I railroad retirement payroll taxes, unless benefits are being paid for an on-the-job injury.

Claimants should be aware that as a result of a sequestration order under the Budget Control Act of 2011, the RRB will reduce unemployment and sickness benefits by 5.7 percent through September 30, 2021. Consequently, the total maximum amount payable in a 2-week period covering 10 days of unemployment or sickness will be \$773.26. The maximum amount payable for sickness benefits subject to tier I payroll taxes of 7.65 percent will be \$714.11 over two weeks. Future reductions, should they occur, will be calculated based on applicable law. [The temporary benefits created under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, Continued Assistance to Rail Workers Act of 2020 (CARWA), and American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 are not subject to sequestration. Under



*CARWA, beginning January 3, 2021, all benefits under the RUIA (including normal unemployment and sickness benefits as well as normal extended unemployment and sickness benefits) will be exempt from sequestration until 30 days after the Presidential declaration of a national emergency concerning COVID-19 terminates. The RRB will publish updated information regarding the status of the sequestration of RUIA benefits when the end date of the Presidential declaration of a national emergency is known.]*

### **How long are these benefits payable?**

Normal unemployment or sickness benefits are each payable for up to 130 days (26 weeks) in a benefit year. The total amount of each kind of benefit which may be paid in the new benefit year cannot exceed the employee's railroad earnings in calendar year 2020, counting earnings up to \$2,138 per month.

If normal benefits are exhausted, extended benefits are payable for up to 65 days (during 7 consecutive 14-day claim periods) to employees with at least 10 years of service (120 or more cumulative service months).

### **What is the waiting period requirement for unemployment and sickness benefits?**

There is a 7-day waiting period requirement, prior to any benefits becoming payable under the RUIA. During the first 14-day claim period, benefits are payable for every day claimed in excess of seven days. Subsequent claims are paid for the number of days of unemployment or sickness over four in each 14-day registration period. Initial sickness claims must also begin with four consecutive days of sickness. If an employee has at least five days of unemployment or five days of sickness in a 14-day period, he or she should still file for benefits in order to satisfy the waiting period for the current benefit year. Separate waiting periods are required for unemployment and sickness benefits. However, only one seven-day waiting period is generally required during any period of continuing unemployment or sickness, even if that period continues into a subsequent benefit year.

### **Are there special waiting period requirements if unemployment is due to a strike?**

If a worker is unemployed because of a strike conducted in accordance with the Railway Labor Act, benefits are not payable for days of unemployment during the first 14 days of the strike, but benefits are payable during subsequent 14-day periods.

If a strike is in violation of the Railway Labor Act, unemployment benefits are not payable to employees participating in the strike. However, employees not among those participating in such an illegal strike, but who are unemployed on account of the strike, may receive benefits after the first two weeks of the strike.

While a benefit year waiting period cannot count toward a strike waiting period, the 14-day strike waiting period may count as the benefit year waiting period if a worker subsequently becomes unemployed for reasons other than a strike later in the benefit year.

### **Can employees in train and engine service receive unemployment benefits for days when they are standing by or laying over between scheduled runs?**

No, not if they are standing by or laying over between regularly assigned trips or they missed a turn in pool service.

### **Can extra-board employees receive unemployment benefits between jobs?**

Yes, but only if the miles and/or hours they actually worked were less than the equivalent of normal full-time work in their class of service during the 14-day claim period. Entitlement to benefits would also depend on the employee's earnings.

### **How would an employee's earnings in a claim period affect his or her eligibility for unemployment benefits?**

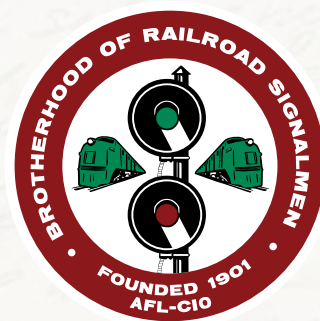
If a claimant's earnings for days worked, and/or days of vacation, paid leave, or other leave in a 14-day registration period are more than a certain indexed amount, no benefits are payable for **any** days of unemployment in that period. That registration period, however, can be used to satisfy the waiting period.

Earnings include pay from railroad and non-railroad work, as well as part-time work and self-employment. Earnings also include pay that an employee would have earned except for failure to mark up or report for duty on time, or because he or she missed a turn in pool service or was otherwise not ready or willing to work. For the benefit year that begins July 2021, earnings of \$1,655 or more in a claim period will disqualify a claim for unemployment benefits, even if there are more

*continued on page 18*

# Agreement

## New York, Susquehanna and Western Railway



On March 30, 2021, a tentative Agreement was reached between New York, Susquehanna and Western Railway and the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen. After roughly fourteen months of negotiations, the Agreement was ratified, convincingly, on-property and went into effect June 1, 2021. Listed below are some of the provisions of the new Agreement.

- 10.8 % wage increase through 2024.
  - 2.0% — 7/1/2020
  - 2.2% — 7/1/2021
  - 2.2% — 7/1/2022
  - 2.2% — 7/1/2023
  - 2.2% — 7/1/2024
- Retroactive back pay from July 1, 2020.
- Addition of two (2) floating holidays.
- Added standby pay of \$100 for employees on-call on holidays.
- Employee tool and clothing allowance increase to \$250 twice a year.
- Increase to per diem and added escalator clause to per diem and “show-up pay”.
- Increase operators pay to \$1.00 per hour.
- Added \$1,000 cost of living stipend for Southern District employees.
- Sick day pay increase from 75% to 100%.
- Moved to 40-hour work week from 45-hour work week by end of the Agreement.
- Clarified Signalman’s classification and incorporated Inspector class into the Agreement.
- Created Signal Apprentice classification and added probationary period for new hires.
- Added a rule to allow email correspondence between the carrier and the Organization.

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*Congratulations to the membership at NYS&W Railway  
and all of those involved in the negotiations; keep up the good work.*

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## FACTS ABOUT ADULT ORAL HEALTH

# Tips to Help Keep Your Health On Track!



**T**he baby boomer generation is the first where the majority of people will keep their natural teeth over their entire lifetime. This is largely because of the benefits of water fluoridation and fluoride toothpaste. However, threats to oral health, including tooth loss, continue throughout life.

The major risks for tooth loss are tooth decay and gum disease that may increase with age because of problems with saliva production; receding gums that expose “softer” root surfaces to decay-causing bacteria; or difficulties flossing and brushing because of poor vision, cognitive problems, chronic disease, and physical limitations.

Although more adults are keeping their teeth, many continue to need treatment for dental problems. This need is even greater for members of some racial and ethnic groups — about 3 in 4 Hispanics and non-Hispanic black adults have an unmet need for dental treatment, as do people who are poor. These individuals are also more likely to report having poor oral health.

In addition, some adults may have difficulty accessing dental treatment. For every adult aged 19 years or older without medical insurance, there are three who don't have dental insurance.

### *Oral health problems in adults include the following:*

- **Untreated tooth decay.** More than 1 in 4 (26%) adults in the United States have untreated tooth decay.
- **Gum disease.** Nearly half (46%) of all adults aged 30 years or older show signs of gum disease; severe gum disease affects about 9% of adults.
- **Tooth loss.** Complete tooth loss among adults aged 65-74 years has steadily declined over time, but disparities exist among some population groups. If left untreated, cavities (tooth

decay) and periodontal (gum) disease lead to tooth loss.

- **Oral cancer.** Oral cancers are most common in older adults, particularly in people older than 55 years who smoke and are heavy drinkers.
  - People treated for cancer who have chemotherapy may suffer from oral problems such as painful mouth ulcers, impaired taste, and dry mouth.
- **Chronic diseases.** Having a chronic disease, such as arthritis, heart disease or stroke, diabetes, emphysema, hepatitis C, a liver condition, or being obese may increase an individual's risk of having missing teeth and poor oral health.
  - Patients with weakened immune systems, such as those infected with HIV and other medical conditions (organ transplants) and who use some medications (e.g., steroids) are at higher risk for some oral problems.
  - Chronic disabling diseases such as jaw joint diseases (TMD), autoimmune conditions such as Sjögren's Syndrome, and osteoporosis affect millions of Americans and compromise oral health and functioning, more often among women. ■



# WASHINGTON REPORT



## INFRASTRUCTURE



**MIKE EFAW**  
*National  
Legislative Director*

**T**here is no doubt that America's Infrastructure is crumbling. After President Biden released his FY2022 Budget and American Jobs plan, which included \$80 billion for passenger and freight rail programs, the 117th Congress took out their pencils and began drafting legislation accordingly. The House of Representatives Transportation & Infrastructure (T&I) Committee introduced the INVEST in America Act on June 4, 2021. On June 10, the House T&I Committee passed a \$548 billion bill that included over \$80 billion for rail programs, and it moved to the House floor. There it was passed, mostly along party lines, with two Republicans voting in support of the bill on July 1, 2021. The INVEST in America Act is a \$715 billion surface transportation reauthorization and water infrastructure bill. In it are many of the legislative priorities that we have been working on for years. After its passage in the House, it was sent to the Senate.

The Senate also began working on its pieces of an infrastructure package after the President released his budget. The Senate bill, due to its bipartisan drafting, looks a lot different than the INVEST Act. The Senate bill leaves out many of the policy goals of rail labor that are included in the House-passed INVEST Act, which is why we favor it over the Senate legislation. While the Senate Environment & Public Works Committee and the Senate Commerce Committee were both working on, and passing, their infrastructure pieces out of Committee, President Biden announced that he struck a deal on the framework of an infrastructure bill with a gang of bipartisan Senators on June 24, 2021. On August 1, the Senate introduced its \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill, and on August 10, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act was passed out of the Senate by a vote of 69 to 30. The bipartisan infrastructure bill, as passed out of the Senate, provides topline numbers of \$102.1 billion for passenger and freight rail, an increase of \$86 billion from current levels; \$106.9 billion for public transit, an increase of \$41.1 billion; and contains a number of rail priorities, including positive and pro-labor changes to Amtrak's mission statement and pro-labor clarification on contracting out at Amtrak; annual reporting on PTC equipment failures—a process to better involve unions in FRA investigations; and increased transparency for FRA waivers. The additional

spending is quite favorable on the Amtrak side, including \$6 billion for Northeast Corridor grants, \$16 billion for the national network, and \$36 billion for Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail, with \$24 billion set aside for the Northeast Corridor. The next step in the process is the bill goes to the House of Representatives. We are hopeful that a meaningful conference will take place and our priorities will make it into the overall bill before it goes to the White House and becomes law, but all indications are the Senate, and the White House are not preparing for a conference process between this bill and the INVEST Act.

### Reconciliation:

On August 11, 2021, the Senate Budget Committee passed a budget resolution that will provide a blueprint for the \$3.5 trillion budget reconciliation bill being worked on now by the Senate. Budget reconciliation is separate from the infrastructure bill, and it is not subject to the filibuster. Democrats agreed not to fund anything in reconciliation that was funded in the infrastructure bill to appease Republican demands. One piece of legislation that seems to comply with the reconciliation rules is the REEF Act. This would end the sequester on our unemployment and sickness benefits paid out through the Railroad Retirement Board. The bill is currently being worked on in the Senate, and there is no text available at this time. It is likely that this bill will not be voted on until the fall.

### Agency Notes:

The Senate confirmed Jennifer Homendy's nomination for Chair of the National Transportation Safety Board for a three-year term; Karen Hedlund was nominated to be a member of the Surface Transportation Board; Jennifer Ann Abruzzo was confirmed to be General Council of the NLRB; and Gwynne A. Wilcox and David Prouty were both confirmed by the Senate to be members of the NLRB.

We will continue to track legislation that is important to Signalmen, and the interest of our members is at the forefront of our lobbying efforts. Remember to visit our website, [www.brs.org](http://www.brs.org), and follow us on Facebook. We will be putting legislative updates out on those forums. ■



# RESOURCES FOR THOSE IMPACTED BY CURRENT DISASTERS & EMERGENCIES

*The following health and wellness resources are available to those impacted by current, declared disasters and emergencies (such as hurricanes, wildfires, and floods). All emergency and major disaster declarations are made by the President of the United States and are communicated through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).*

## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

**United Behavioral Health/Optum:** 1-866-342-6892 (toll free) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

**Online:** Emotional-support resources and information are also available at [www.liveandworkwell.com](http://www.liveandworkwell.com) (access code “Railroad”)

- **Disaster Planning & Recovery Center:** Type the word “disaster” into the search bar, select the Disaster Planning & Recovery Center. Here you’ll find information on preparing for and recovering from natural disasters and links to national organizations too.
- **Coping Center:** Type the word “coping” into the search bar, select Coping. Here you’ll find articles, guides, self-help tools and videos on coping with stress.

**Sanvello:** Is an app that offers clinical techniques to help dial down the symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression — anytime. The Sanvello app is available to you at no extra cost as part of your behavioral health benefits. Download and open the app from the App Store® or Google Play™

## PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

**Accredo and Express Scripts:** 1-800-842-0070 (toll free) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, [express-scripts.com](http://express-scripts.com)

If you are affected by a current disaster or emergency and need your medicine, we can help. If you need an emergency fill, login to [express-scripts.com](http://express-scripts.com) and go to Find a Pharmacy to locate a nearby network pharmacy. Then, call the pharmacy to check if it is open. If your ID card is unavailable, call the number above for assistance, and to locate a nearby network pharmacy.

## VISION

**EyeMed:** 1-866-652-0018 (toll free)  
M–F 7:30 a.m.–11 p.m. ET; Sat. 8 a.m.–11 p.m. ET;  
Sun. 11 a.m.–8 p.m. ET

If you’ve lost, broken or damaged your eyewear, emergency (temporary) replacement glasses can be sent to you, at no cost, with overnight shipping (must call by 2:30 p.m. ET for same-day processing). Or, if you prefer to order permanent replacement glasses or contacts, expedited shipping is available. Information is available online: <https://eyemed.com/en-us>.

## MEDICAL CARE AND MORE

**Teladoc:** 1-855-225-5032 (toll free) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or for more information visit: <https://www.teladoc.com/disaster-hotline/>

Teladoc connects you with 24/7 access to care, free of charge, for many non-emergency illnesses, especially when you can’t get an appointment with your primary care doctor due to home displacement or medical offices being temporarily closed due to a disaster or emergency.

**Your Track to Health — 24/7 Nurses & Health Specialists:** 1-866-735-5685 (toll free)  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Free telephone access to registered nurses is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week regardless of health plan membership.

**Aetna:** 1-833-327-2386 (toll free)  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

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## RAILROAD RETIREMENT QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

*continued from page 13*

than 4 days of unemployment claimed. This amount corresponds to the base year monthly compensation amount used in determining eligibility for benefits in each year. Also, even if an earnings test applies on the first claim in a benefit year, this will not prevent the first claim from satisfying the waiting period in a benefit year.

Earnings of \$15 or less per day from work which is substantially less than full-time and not inconsistent with the holding of normal full-time employment may be considered subsidiary remuneration and may not prevent payment of any days in a claim. However, a claimant must report all full and part-time work on each claim, regardless of the amount of earnings, so the RRB can determine if the work affects benefits.

### How does a person apply for and claim unemployment benefits?

Employees can apply for and claim unemployment benefits online or by mail. Individuals who have established an account through **myRRB** at **RRB.gov** can log in and file their applications and their biweekly claims online. Employees who need to create an account should visit **RRB.gov/myRRB** and click on the button labeled **Sign in with login.gov**. Employees are encouraged to establish their accounts while still working to expedite the filing process for future unemployment benefits, and for access to other online services.

To apply by mail, claimants must obtain an *Application for Unemployment Benefits* (Form UI-1) from **RRB.gov**, their labor organization or railroad employer. The completed application should be mailed to the local RRB office as soon as possible and must be filed within 30 days from the date the claimant became unemployed, or the first day for which he or she wishes to claim benefits. Benefits may be lost if the application is filed late. Claimants filing a late unemployment application or claim should include a signed statement explaining why they are unable to meet the required time frame.

Persons can find the address of the RRB office serving his or her area by visiting **RRB.gov** and clicking on **Field Office Locator**, or by calling the agency toll-free at 1-877-772-5772 and selecting the appropriate option from the automated menu.

The local RRB field office reviews the completed application, whether it was submitted online or by mail, and notifies the claimant's current railroad employer, and base-year employer, if different. The employer has the right to provide information about the benefit application.

After processing the application, biweekly claim forms are provided to the claimant for as long as he or she remains unemployed and eligible for benefits. If a claimant filed an online application, his or her claim forms are *only* made available online. If a claimant filed a paper application, his or her *first* claim form is both available online and mailed to him or her. If the claimant returns the paper claim, future claims will be mailed to him or her. If the claimant files the claim online, all subsequent claim forms will *only* be made available online, and will no longer be mailed. Claimants **must not** file both an online and a paper claim form for the same period(s). Claim forms should be signed and sent (online or by mail) on or after the last day of the claim. The completed claim must be received by the RRB within 15 days of the end of the claim period, or within 15 days of the date the claim form was made available online or mailed to the claimant, whichever is later.

Only one application needs to be filed during a benefit year, even if a claimant becomes unemployed more than once. However, in the case of multiple claim periods, a claimant must request a claim form from the RRB within 30 days of the first day for which he or she wants to resume claiming benefits. These claim forms may then be filed online or by mail.

### How does a person apply for and claim sickness benefits?

An *Application for Sickness Benefits* (Form SI-1a) can be obtained from **RRB.gov**, a railroad labor organization, or a railroad employer. Applications for sickness benefits **must** be submitted to the agency by mail. However, subsequent claims may be mailed, or completed online by employees who have established a **myRRB** account at **RRB.gov**.

An application including a doctor's *Statement of Sickness* (Form SI-1b) is required at the beginning of **each** period

of continuing sickness for which benefits are claimed. Claimants should make a special effort to have the doctor's statement of sickness completed promptly since claims cannot be paid without it.

The RRB suggests that employees keep an application for sickness benefits on hand, and that family members know where the form is kept and how to use it. If an employee becomes unable to work because of sickness or injury, the employee should complete the application and have his or her doctor complete the attached statement of sickness. If a claimant receives sickness benefits for an injury or illness for which he or she is paid damages, it is important to be aware that the RRB is entitled to reimbursement of either the amount of the benefits paid for the injury or illness or the net amount of the settlement, after deducting the claimant's gross medical, hospital, and legal expenses, whichever is less.

If the employee is too sick to complete the application, someone else may complete it for him or her. In such cases, a family member should also complete a *Statement of Authority to Act for Employee* (Form SI-10), which accompanies the statement of sickness.

After completion, the forms should be mailed to the RRB's headquarters in Chicago within 10 days from when the employee became sick or injured. However, applications received after 10 days but within 30 days of the first day for which an employee wishes to claim benefits are generally considered timely filed if there is a good reason for the delay. (Employees cannot currently file their sickness applications online.) Upon receipt, the RRB will process the application and determine if the employee is eligible for sickness benefits.

After processing the application and statement of sickness, the RRB makes the *first* biweekly claim form available online (for employees with myRRB accounts) **and** mails a paper form to the employee as long as he or she is eligible for benefits and remains unable to work due to illness or injury. Those choosing to file the paper claim received by mail should return the completed form to RRB headquarters for processing. If the claimant returns the paper claim, future claims will be mailed to him or her. If the claimant files the claim online, all subsequent claim forms will *only* be made available online, and will no longer be mailed. Claimants must **not** file both online and paper claim forms for the same claim period(s). Employees who need to create a **myRRB** account should visit [RRB.gov/myRRB](http://RRB.gov/myRRB) and

click on the button labeled Sign in with **login.gov**.

Completed claim forms must be received at the RRB within 30 days of the last day of the claim period, or within 30 days of the date the claim form was made available online or mailed to the claimant, whichever is later. Benefits may be lost if an application or claim form is filed late. Claimants filing a late sickness application or claim form should include a signed statement explaining why they were unable to meet the required time frame.

Claimants are reminded that while claim forms for sickness benefits can be submitted online, applications for sickness benefits must be mailed to the RRB. Statements of sickness may be mailed with the sickness application or faxed directly from the doctor's office to the RRB at 312-751-7185. Faxes must include a cover sheet from the doctor's office. Also, in order to prevent a delay in processing applications or claims, employees are advised against sending any sickness benefit forms to the RRB in Chicago via certified mail.

### **Is a claimant's employer notified each time a biweekly claim for unemployment or sickness benefits is filed?**

The RUIA requires the RRB to notify the claimant's base-year employer each time a claim for benefits is filed. That employer has the right to submit information relevant to the claim before the RRB makes an initial determination on the claim. Benefits may not be paid at this time but the employee will receive a notice and have the right to appeal. In addition, if a claimant's base-year employer is not his or her current employer, the claimant's current employer is also notified. The RRB must also notify the claimant's base-year employer each time benefits are paid to a claimant. The base-year employer may protest the decision to pay benefits. Such a protest does not prevent the timely payment of benefits. However, a claimant may be required to repay benefits if the employer's protest is ultimately successful. The employer also has the right to appeal an unfavorable decision to the RRB's Bureau of Hearings and Appeals.

The RRB also conducts checks with other Federal agencies and all 50 States, as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, to detect fraudulent benefit claims, and it checks with physicians to verify the accuracy of medical statements supporting sickness benefit claims.



### How long does it take to receive payment?

Under the RRB's Customer Service Plan, if a claimant files an application for unemployment or sickness benefits, the RRB will release a claim form or a denial letter within 10 days of receiving his or her application. If a claim for subsequent biweekly unemployment or sickness benefits is filed, the RRB will certify a payment or release a denial letter within 10 days of the date the RRB receives the claim form. If the claimant is entitled to benefits, his or her benefits will generally be paid within one week of that decision.

If a claimant does not receive a decision notice or payment within the specified time period, he or she may expect an explanation for the delay and an estimate of the time required to make a decision.

However, some claims for benefits may take longer to handle than others, especially if they are more complex, or if an RRB office has to get information from other people or organizations, or under special circumstances such as the current pandemic.

Claimants who think an RRB office made the wrong decision about their benefits have the right to ask for review and to appeal. They will be notified of these rights each time an unfavorable decision is made on their claims.

### How are payments made?

Railroad unemployment and sickness insurance benefits are paid by direct deposit to an employee's bank, savings and loan, credit union or other financial institution. New applicants for unemployment and sickness benefits will be asked to provide information needed for direct deposit enrollment.

### How can claimants get more information on their railroad unemployment or sickness claims?

Claimants with **myRRB** accounts can view their individual railroad unemployment and sickness insurance account statement by using the View RUIA Account service. This statement displays the type and amount of the claimant's last five benefit payments, the claim period for which the payments were made, and the dates that the payments were approved. Individuals can also confirm the RRB's receipt of applications and claims.

In addition, claimants can call the agency toll-free at 1-877-772-5772 to access information about the status

of unemployment and sickness claims or payments 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Individuals with questions about unemployment or sickness benefits, or who need information about their specific claims and benefit payments, can send a secure e-mail to their local office by accessing **Field Office Locator** at RRB.gov and clicking on the link at the bottom of their local office's page. If a customer needs to talk to an RRB employee, they can call the agency's toll-free number (1-877-772-5772). However, customers are asked to be patient because of the increase in call volume due to the closure to the public of RRB offices during the COVID-19 pandemic. ■

# DID YOU KNOW?

The Brotherhood of  
Railroad Signalmen  
offers free email  
accounts to all  
members and retirees.

Get your free BRS email account today,  
by signing up at [www.BRS.org](http://www.BRS.org).



Already registered?  
Then go to the "Member  
Resources" page on our  
website to register for a  
free email address.

# AFL-CIO NATIONAL BOYCOTTS



## HOSPITALITY, TRANSPORTATION & TRAVEL

### SUBMITTED BY UNITE HERE!

Please support the workers in these hotels by continuing to boycott the following properties:

- **CALIFORNIA:** Hyatt Regency Santa Clara, Hyatt Regency Sacramento, Hyatt Fisherman's Wharf San Francisco, Hilton Long Beach, Le Meridien San Diego, Hilton LAX—*This includes the Crowne Plaza Hotel LAX, Yokoso Sushi Bar, the Landing Restaurant, Century Taproom, and the Boulevard Market Cafe.*
- **SEATTLE:** Grand Hyatt Seattle and Hyatt at Olive 8 Seattle

## OTHER

**SUBMITTED BY** Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC)

- Reynolds American, Inc., Vuse e-cigarettes

## FOOD

**SUBMITTED BY** Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM)

- Mondelez International Snack Foods (those made in Mexico)

## LEGAL

**SUBMITTED BY** American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees

- Gleason, Dunn, Walsh & O'Shea
- McDonald, Lamond, Canzoneri and Hickernell

When some labor disputes with businesses cannot be resolved, the AFL-CIO supports its affiliates by endorsing their boycotts. A boycott is an act of solidarity by voluntarily abstaining from the purchase or use of a product or service.

## POLICY GUIDELINE FOR ENDORSEMENT OF AFFILIATES' BOYCOTTS

The AFL-CIO Executive Council has developed policy guidelines that regulate how the federation endorses boycotts undertaken by its affiliates. To get AFL-CIO sanction, boycotts should be directed at primary employers.

### THE GUIDELINES INCLUDE THESE PROVISIONS:

- All requests to the national AFL-CIO for endorsement must be made by a national or international union.
- Any affiliated union with a contract in force with the same primary employer will be contacted by the AFL-CIO to determine whether there is an objection to the federation's endorsement.
- Affiliates will be asked to provide the AFL-CIO with background information on the dispute in a confidential information survey. Prior to endorsement of the boycott, the executive officers, or their designees, will meet with the national union's officers, or their designees, to discuss the union's strategic plan and timetable for the boycott, or other appropriate tactics, and to discuss the federation's role.
- The national or international union initiating the boycott is primarily responsible for all boycott activities; the AFL-CIO will provide supplemental support.
- Boycotts will be carried on the AFL-CIO national boycott list for a period of one year, and the endorsement will expire automatically at the end of that time. National and international unions may request one-year extensions of the listings for actions where an organizing or bargaining campaign is actively in place. ■

*(These guidelines were adopted by the AFL-CIO Executive Council in April 2011.)*

# BRS DESIGNATED COUNSEL

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

*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 (FELA) 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.*

### 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  
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*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

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Whether you want to better understand your plan and coverage, access a form, add a dependent, or research retirement benefits, it's easy to find the information you need on this site.

(NOTE: Information on this site only applies to employees under National Handling.)

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#### National Health & Welfare Plan — GA-23000

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

#### United Healthcare

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

#### Retiree Claims — GA-46000

UnitedHealthcare

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UnitedHealthcare

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

ACCESS CODE: Railroad

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#### The Hartford

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<https://abilityadvantage.thehartford.com>

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

### DENTAL BENEFITS

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# 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

Louis Dalessandro, Jr. \_\_\_\_ 53  
Patrick Danaher \_\_\_\_ 225

## 40 YEARS OF SERVICE

Jack Maness \_\_\_\_ 16  
Len Baker \_\_\_\_ 141  
Mark Morris \_\_\_\_ 172  
William Jeffords, Jr. \_\_\_\_ 16

## 35 YEARS OF SERVICE

Don Ehler \_\_\_\_ 19  
George Naef \_\_\_\_ 84  
Timothy Adkins \_\_\_\_ 77

## 30 YEARS OF SERVICE

Floyd Tibbs \_\_\_\_ 77  
Jim Moore \_\_\_\_ 77  
John Varney \_\_\_\_ 77  
Peter Gross \_\_\_\_ 183  
Rob Mohrbacher \_\_\_\_ 183  
Roy Tackett \_\_\_\_ 77

## 25 YEARS OF SERVICE

Blake Coleman \_\_\_\_ 188  
Bryan Rhodes \_\_\_\_ 161  
D. Whitely \_\_\_\_ 161  
David Coggins \_\_\_\_ 110  
Don Bulla \_\_\_\_ 110  
Frank McCabe \_\_\_\_ 16

## 25 YEARS OF SERVICE

Greg Seiler \_\_\_\_ 97  
Hermilo Camacho \_\_\_\_ 19  
John Vorderbrueggen \_ 188  
Mark Scott \_\_\_\_ 19  
Matthew Cook \_\_\_\_ 228  
Patrick Padgett \_\_\_\_ 188  
Paul Clark \_\_\_\_ 20  
Paul Eby \_\_\_\_ 19  
R. Blunt \_\_\_\_ 16  
Roger Chinadle \_\_\_\_ 188  
Roger Williams \_\_\_\_ 33  
Sebastian Tharpe \_\_\_\_ 49  
Tim Tarrant \_\_\_\_ 183

## DID YOU KNOW?

### TITLE 49: TRANSPORTATION

#### §236.55 DEAD SECTION; MAXIMUM LENGTH

Where dead section exceeds 35 feet, a special circuit shall be installed. Where shortest outer wheelbase of a locomotive operating over such dead section is less than 35 feet, the maximum length of the dead section shall not exceed the length of the outer wheelbase of such locomotive unless special circuit is used. ■

# BRS 53rd Regular Convention

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA — JUNE 20–24, 2022

## ACCOMMODATIONS

The BRS 53rd Regular Convention will be held at the San Diego Mission Bay Resort in San Diego, California.

Modern, open, and airy rooms welcome you with sunlight and gentle breezes, featuring all-new sophisticated, beach-chic rooms and suites.

San Diego Mission Bay Resort features the best of the Southern California lifestyle — sun, sand, and so much more. After a long day, you can enjoy waterfront dining, outdoor activities, spa treatments, poolside relaxation, and three waterfront dining options.

## DINING

There are many dining options around Mission Bay and San Diego, below are a few on-site options:

**Covewood** — Brunch and All Day Dining

**Plaza Del Sol** — All Day Dining

**Solrisa** — All Day Dining

**Mission Joe** — Daily 7 a.m.–1 p.m.

## THINGS TO DO

The activities at Mission Bay Resort are endless, featuring a waterfront pool, a shallow wading pool for the kiddies, and beach access where you can enjoy badminton, volleyball, bean bag toss, sandcastle building, and bonfires with full beachside service.



There are also action sports rentals available, such as jet skis, paddle boards, waterskis, aqua cycles, pontoons, and more. If you prefer to stay dry, the Sandbox rents bikes, surreys, beach cruisers, kids bikes, and trailers for city exploring.

The on-site fitness center offers a full service of amenities, with wellness activities for people of all ages.

*Off property, you can explore:*

- Sea World
- USS Midway
- San Diego Zoo
- Coronado Island

Booking information will be available January 2022 and will be posted on the website at [www.brs.org](http://www.brs.org) and published in the 2022 Q1 *Signalman's Journal*.

## DID YOU KNOW?

### TITLE 49: TRANSPORTATION §236.2 GROUNDS

Each circuit, the functioning of which affects the safety of train operations, shall be kept free of any ground or combination of grounds which will permit a flow of current equal to or in excess of 75

percent of the release value of any relay or other electromagnetic device in the circuit, except circuits which include any track rail and except the common return wires of single-wire, single-break, signal control circuits using a grounded common, and alternating current power distribution circuits which are grounded in the interest of safety. ■



# OBITUARIES

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**WALTER F. ADAMS, III**—retired member of **LOCAL 119**.

Brother Adams retired in 2013 after 34 years of service with the Burlington Northern Railroad and the BNSF Railway Company. Brother Adams was a Junior Circuit Designer at Lenexa, Kansas, at the time of his retirement.

---

**PERCY O. CHILCOAT**—retired member of **LOCAL 172**.

Brother Chilcoat retired in 1993 after 42 years of service with the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway. Brother Chilcoat was a Signal Maintainer at Kingman, Arizona, at the time of his retirement. Brother Chilcoat is a U.S. Army Veteran.

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**JAMES F. CRAWFORD, SR.**—retired member of **LOCAL 105**.

Brother Crawford retired in 2002 after 33 years of service with the Erie Lackawanna and Norfolk Southern Railways. Brother Crawford was a Signal Maintainer at Binghamton, New York, at the time of his retirement.

---

**WILLIAM E. DeMOSS**—retired member of **LOCAL 31**. Brother DeMoss retired in 1994 after 43 years of service with the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and CSX Transportation. Brother DeMoss was a Signal Inspector at Martinsburg, West Virginia, at the time of his retirement.

---

**JAMES K. DeVAUL**—retired member of **LOCAL 10**. Brother DeVaul retired in 2004 after 11 years of service with Conrail and CSX Transportation. Brother DeVaul was a Signal Maintainer at Construction West, at the time of his retirement. Brother DeVaul served as Local Trustee.

---

**SAMUEL “SAM” S. FRANKEL**—retired member of **LOCAL 102**. Brother Frankel retired in 2013 after 47 years of service with the Pennsylvania Railroad and Amtrak. Brother Frankel was a Signal Maintainer at Portal Bridge, New Jersey, at the time of his retirement.

---

**STEVE R. KELLY**—retired member of **LOCAL 18**. Brother Kelly retired in 2018 after 30 years of service with Amtrak. Brother Kelly was a C&S Foreman at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, at the time of his retirement. Brother Kelly served as Recording-Financial Secretary.

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**HENRY J. LIVERNOCHÉ**—retired member of **LOCAL 5**. Brother Livernoche retired in 1994 after 43 years of service with the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad and Amtrak. Brother Livernoche was a Signalman at New London, Connecticut, at the time of his retirement.

---

**KIMMIE MAPES, SR.**—retired member of **LOCAL 14**. Brother Mapes retired in 2002 after 34 years of service with the Detroit & Toledo Short Line and the Grand Trunk Western Railroads. Brother Mapes was a Signal Maintainer at Flat Rock, Michigan, at the time of his retirement. Brother Mapes served as Recording-Financial Secretary and Local Chairman. Brother Mapes is a U.S. Army Veteran.

---

**JAMES S. MOLENDÁ**—retired member of **LOCAL 87**. Brother Molenda retired in 2012 after 42 years of service with the Northern Pacific Railroad and the BNSF Railway Company. Brother Molenda was an Electronic Technician at Cut Bank, Montana, at the time of his retirement.

---

**IRVIN D. MOSER**—retired member of **LOCAL 8**. Brother Moser retired in 1994 after 42 years of service with the Union Pacific Railroad. Brother Moser was a Signal Foreman at Topeka, Kansas, at the time of his retirement. Brother Moser served as Local Trustee.

---

**GORDON A. PRITCHETT**—retired member of **LOCAL 110**. Brother Pritchett retired in 2001 after 41 years of service with the Southern Railroad and Norfolk Southern Railway. Brother Pritchett was a Signal Maintainer at Buford, Georgia, at the time of his retirement.

---

**JACK N. PROCKNOW**—retired member of **LOCAL 226**.

Brother Procknow retired in 2010 after 42 years of service with the Soo Line Railroad and Canadian Pacific Railway. Brother Procknow was a Signal Foreman at Portage, Wisconsin, at the time of his retirement. Brother Procknow served as Local Trustee.

---

**E.K. ROBINSON**—retired member of **LOCAL 49**. Brother Robinson retired in 1993 after 41 years of service with the Southern Railroad and Norfolk Southern Railway. Brother Robinson was a Signal Maintainer at Jasper, Alabama, at the time of his retirement. Brother Robinson served as Local President and Local Chairman.

---

**RONALD D. SLAGLE**—retired member of **LOCAL 129**.

Brother Slagle retired in 2010 after 30 years of service with the St. Louis–San Francisco Railway and the BNSF Railway Company. Brother Slagle was a Signal Maintainer at Jasper, Alabama, at the time of his retirement. Brother Slagle served as Local Chairman.

---

**VINCENT SMITH**—retired member of **LOCAL 72**. Brother Smith retired in 1994 after 41 years of service with the Union Pacific Railroad. Brother Smith was a Signal Gang Foreman at North Little Rock, Arkansas, at the time of his retirement. Brother Smith is a U.S. Army Veteran.

---

**GAILEN N. STOCKWELL**—retired member of **LOCAL 103**.

Brother Stockwell retired in 1996 after 44 years of service with the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad, and the BNSF Railway Company. Brother Stockwell was a Signal Inspector at Chillicothe, Missouri, at the time of his retirement.

---

**JAMES “JIM” S. VORDERBRUEGGEN**—retired member of **LOCAL 188**. Brother Vorderbrueggen retired in 2002 after 38 years of service with the Great Northern Railroad and the BNSF Railway Company. Brother Vorderbrueggen was a CTC Signal Maintainer at Wenatchee, Washington, at the time of his retirement.

---

**J.D. WILHITE**—retired member of **LOCAL 178**. Brother Wilhite retired in 1988 after 45 years of service with the Louisville & Nashville and the Seaboard System Railroads, and CSX Transportation. Brother Wilhite was a Signal Maintainer at Decatur, Alabama, at the time of his retirement. Brother Wilhite served as Local President and Local Chairman.

---

**ALBERT J. WRIGHT**—retired member of **LOCAL 119**. Brother Wright retired in 2002 after 38 years of service with the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy and the Burlington Northern Railroads, and BNSF Railway Company. Brother Wright was a CTC Maintainer at Oxford, Nebraska, at the time of his retirement.

---

**H.L. WYATT**—retired member of **LOCAL 178**. Brother Wyatt retired in 1992 after 42 years of service with CSX Transportation. Brother Wyatt was a Signal Maintainer at Helena, Alabama, at the time of his retirement.

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**CHARLES F. WYNN**—retired member of **LOCAL 178**. Brother Wynn retired in 1994 after 42 years of service with the Louisville & Nashville Railroad and CSX Transportation. Brother Wynn was a District Signal Inspector at Birmingham, Alabama, at the time of his retirement. Brother Wynn served as Vice General Chairman, Local Chairman, and Recording-Financial Secretary.

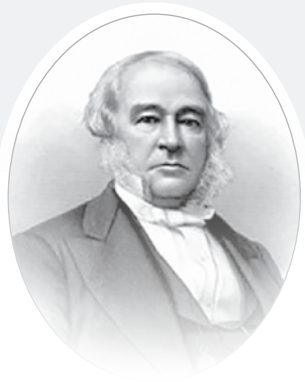
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**EDITOR’S NOTE:**

Please notify Grand Lodge of the passing of BRS members.

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

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## The Thomson Foundation

*Financial Assistance for Daughters of Deceased Railroad Employees*

John Edgar Thomson was the third president of the Pennsylvania Railroad and led the company from 1852 to 1874. Although John

Thomson never had children of his own, he often pondered on the difficulties of orphaned girls. In that era, a fatherless boy could usually get a trade school education or find employment; a girl had little opportunity for either.

In his will, Mr. Thomson dedicated a portion of his estate in the form of a trust fund for the education and maintenance of female orphans of railway employees whose fathers may have died while in the discharge of their duties. After his death in 1874, the trust fund was established for the daughters of men killed in railroad service. Subsequently, The John Edgar Thomson Foundation was founded when Mrs. Thomson opened a girl's boarding school in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in December of 1882.

Today, the Foundation continues its objective by providing aid to a substantial number of girls throughout the United States in the form of financial assistance and healthcare benefits. To be eligible, the employee must have

been actively employed by any United States railroad at the time of his or her death; the cause does not need to be work related. Eligibility is also dependent on the daughter and the surviving parent remaining unmarried. Family income and expenses are also considered when determining eligibility.

The monthly allowance made under the grant may cover the period from infancy to high school graduation, and in some circumstances to age 24, to assist the grantees that are pursuing a higher education. The Foundation also offers special healthcare benefits.

Funding for the work of the Foundation is completely independent of any railroad. It neither solicits nor receives funds from the public. ■

**Further information and applications may be obtained by writing to:**

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201 S. 18th Street, Suite 318

Philadelphia, PA 19103

Telephone: (215) 545-6083

Fax: (215) 545-5102 • Toll free: (800) 888-1278

Email: [sjethomson@aol.com](mailto:sjethomson@aol.com)

Website: [www.jethomsonfoundation.com](http://www.jethomsonfoundation.com)

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## DISASTERS & EMERGENCIES

*continued from page 17*

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FLAG



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WRIST WATCH



MANTLE CLOCK

# MEETING PHOTOS



## Local 243 Meeting

Denver, Colorado



## Local 153 Meeting

San Francisco, California





# TRAINING PHOTOS



## Local Chairmen's Training • • • • •

June 2021 — Grand Lodge, Front Royal, Virginia





# PHOTOS



## Financial Secretary Training • • • • •

August 2021 — Grand Lodge, Front Royal, Virginia



## Local 16 Meeting • • • • •

Athens, Georgia



# PHOTO CONTEST

## WINNERS FOR 3RD QUARTER 2021



*BRS CSX Signal Maintainers work on removing a signal mast at CP SE (QG 13.7) on the Selkirk Subdivision, in Selkirk, New York, on June 7, 2021, during a signal cutover.*

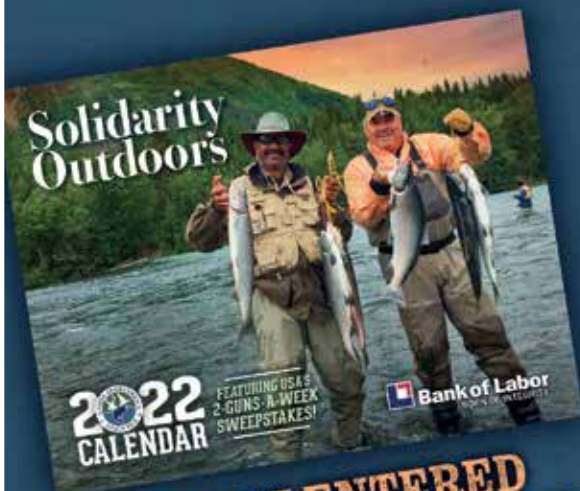
*Photo Submitted by Local 80 member and President, Bill Dardanelli.*



*In a 2013 photo, an Alton and Southern Signal Gang install new cantilevers at the Illinois Route 111 crossing in Fairmont City, Illinois, Alton and Southern Gateway Subdivision.*

*Photo submitted by Local 132 member and Recording Financial Secretary Tony Holdener.*





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