



The
**SIGNALMAN'S
JOURNAL**

VOLUME 107 • 1ST QUARTER 2026



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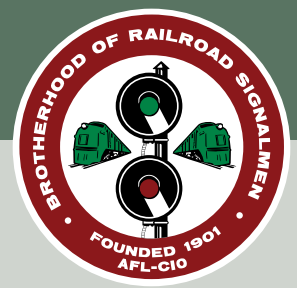
N.A.R.V.R.E.

National Association of Retired and Veteran Railway Employees

The SIGNALMAN'S JOURNAL

Official Publication of the
BROTHERHOOD OF RAILROAD SIGNALMEN
WWW.BRS.ORG

VOLUME 107 • 1ST QUARTER 2026



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ELECTION AND APPOINTMENT AT

Grand Lodge

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DID YOU SERVE in a Branch of the Military?

If so, please send in your photo(s) so you may be included in an upcoming "special edition" of The Signalman's Journal. The issue will feature BRS members who are veterans, reservists, etc. in a special edition of the Journal featuring your photos and honoring your service to our country.....3

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COVER: Brothers from Local 102 hanging signals on the new Portal Bridge in Kearny, New Jersey.

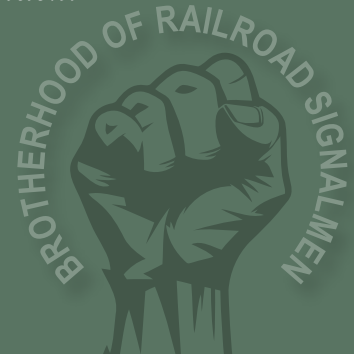
Photo submitted by Chris Cook, Member of Local 102.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

— *Michael S. Baldwin, BRS President*

YOUR VOTE IS POWER



Brothers and Sisters,

Everything we have ever won in this union, every decent contract, every safety rule, every ounce of dignity on the job, came from one simple truth: **Signalmen standing up and exercising their power.** The most basic expression of that power is your vote.

Not just in November.

Not just for the President or Congress.

At every level of our union and our democracy.

Your vote matters in your Local. It matters in your General Committee. It matters at our upcoming convention, and it sure as hell matters in the political fights that decide whether rail workers are respected, safety regulations are enforced, the Railroad Retirement Board is funded, or whether the hard-won provisions secured by those before us are slowly stripped away.

It Starts at the Local

The Local is where union power lives day to day. It is where grievances are handled, safety issues are raised, and where solidarity is practiced. When you vote in local elections, you are deciding who represents you when management pushes too far.

If you do not vote, someone else decides. Trust me, nothing makes management happier than when members sit it out.

The General Committee: Where Direction is Set

The General Committee decides how we fight, what we prioritize, and how we move forward together. These are not abstract decisions. They directly affect scheduling, discipline, and your quality of life.

Voting for leadership that understands the craft, respects the members, and is not afraid to stand toe-to-toe with the Carriers is how we protect the future of our craft.

The Convention: Democracy in Action

The BRS Convention is not a formality. It is where the will of the membership becomes policy. It is where we decide what kind of union we are going to be, passive or powerful, cautious or courageous.

Delegates do not fall from the sky. They are elected. When you vote, you are shaping the direction of the entire Organization, not just for today, but for the next generation of railroaders.

You Have the Final Say

You vote for your Local and General Committee Officers to represent you at the bargaining table. As a union member, you have the final say on that contract. A new Collective Bargaining Agreement only takes effect if the members approve it by vote.

Politics: Because the Bosses are Already There

Some folks say unions should stay out of politics. That is nonsense; the railroads never do.

Every safety regulation, every labor law, every retirement protection we rely on was passed, or blocked, by politicians. The people who write these laws decide whether workers have rights or are simply expected to take orders. These elected leaders determine whether safety regulations are treated as essential protections for workers, the traveling public, and our communities or sacrificed to protect shareholders' bottom lines. They control the Railroad Retirement Board's budget, and that decision determines how long you wait for answers and how long it takes to process your retirement or disability paperwork. Politicians control most aspects of a Signalmen's career.

When you vote, you are deciding whether rail workers have a seat at the table or are left on the menu.

DID YOU SERVE

in a Branch of the Military?



If so, please send in your photo(s) so you may be included in the annual “special edition” of *The Signalman’s Journal*. The issue will highlight BRS members who are veterans, reservists, etc., featuring your photos and honoring your service to our country.

Name: _____

Local: _____

Branch of the military: _____

Please email your photos to tme@brs.org or mail prints to the address below.

Also, we would love to display your military unit patches at Grand Lodge. If you would like your unit to be included in this display, please send your patch to:

The Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen

917 Shenandoah Shores Road
Front Royal, VA 22630

This Is About Respect

Voting is not just a right. It is our responsibility to each other. It is our responsibility to the men and women who came before us, who fought when it was harder and riskier and put their lives on the line for worker protections, and the ones who come after us, who deserve better than what we inherited.

Power is never given. It is taken, by participation, by solidarity, and by showing up.

So show up.

Vote in your Local.

Vote in your General Committee.

Vote at the BRS Convention.

Vote on your contract.

Vote in every election that affects your job, your family, and your future.

Because when rail workers vote, **we move this country**, and we do not do it quietly.

In Solidarity,

Michael S. Baldwin — *BRS President*





FROM THE SECRETARY-TREASURER

James M. Finnegan, BRS Secretary-Treasurer

From Joint & Back Pain to Back on Track



If you or a covered family member experience back or joint pain, your Railroad benefits offer many resources to help address your orthopedic and musculoskeletal needs.



Your Track to Health 24/7 Nurses & Health Specialists

Available at no additional cost to answer questions and connect you to resources, including:

- Assistance with orthopedic questions
- Wellness and weight-loss coaches

1-866-735-5685 | 24/7



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Virtual doctor visits where and when it works for you

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member.teladoc.com/railroad

Medical Expert Second Opinion

Medical expert second opinions at no additional cost

1-866-904-0910 | 8 a.m. – 9 p.m. ET | Mon. – Fri.
member.teladoc.com/railroad



Prescription Drug Benefits

Optum Rx® pharmacy services help make it easier to save on medications and keep track of them, whether you're online or on the go

1-844-368-8736, TTY 711 | 24/7
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Medical Benefits

All medical plans can help you find in-network doctors and understand covered services such as:

- Physical therapy
- Cortisone or steroid injections
- Chiropractic services
- Orthopedic surgery



1-800-842-4044¹
1-888-332-8742²
8 a.m. – 6 p.m. ET
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1-866-267-3320
8 a.m. – 8 p.m. ET
Mon. – Fri.
myhighmark.com



1-800-842-9905¹
1-888-445-4379²
8 a.m. – 8 p.m. ET
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7 a.m. – 11 p.m. ET | Mon. – Fri.
lanternare.com/nationalrailroad



Behavioral, Mental & Substance Use Benefits

Get connected to behavioral health doctors, therapists and counselors who offer confidential support

1-866-850-6212 | 24/7
liveandworkwell.com (access code: Railroad)

¹ The Railroad Employees National Health and Welfare Plan. ² The SMART-TD Health and Welfare Plan.

The 24/7 Nurses and Health Specialists service should not be used for emergency or urgent care needs. In an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. The information provided through this service is for informational purposes only. The nurses cannot diagnose problems or recommend specific treatment and are not a substitute for your doctor's care. Please discuss with your doctor how the information provided may be right for you. The service is not an insurance program and may be discontinued at any time.

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WITH YOU AT EVERY STOP.

For Members Only



PROGRAM	INFORMATION
Accidental Death Insurance	800-393-0864, unionplus.org/accidentinsurance
AT&T Discounts	unionplus.org/att , use discount code 3508840
Auto Buying Service	unionplus.org/autobuying
Auto Insurance	855-666-5797, discount code DJ7 unionplus.org/autoinsurance
Budget Truck Rental	800-561-1157, use discount # 56000127763, unionplus.org/budgettruck
Car Rental Discounts	unionplus.org/carrental
Avis	800-698-5685, use discount # B723700
Budget	800-455-2848, use discount # V816100
Dollar	800-800-4000, use discount # 3042236
Hertz	800-654-2200, use discount # 205666
Payless	800-729-5377, use discount # A071900
Thrifty	800-847-4389, use discount # 3042238
Cash Back Shopping	unionplus.org/cashback
College Program	unionplus.org/college
Credit Cards	800-522-4000 (to apply), theunioncard.com
Credit Counseling	877-833-1745, unionplus.org/creditcounseling
Debt Settlement	800-230-2541, unionplus.org/debtsettlement
Everyday Discounts	unionplus.org/discounts
Flower & Gift Discounts	888-667-7779, unionplus.org/flowers
Health Savings	unionplus.org/healthsavings
Vision	unionplus.org/vision
Hearing	unionplus.org/hearing
Dental	unionplus.org/dental
Prescriptions	unionplus.org/prescriptions
Homeowners Insurance	855-666-5797, discount code DJ7 unionplus.org/homeinsurance
Legal Services	unionplus.org/legal
Life Insurance	800-393-0864, unionplus.org/lifeinsurance
Medical Bill Negotiating Service	unionplus.org/billnegotiator
Mortgage Program	unionplus.org/mortgage
Moving Discounts	unionplus.org/movingvans
North American	888-813-9595
Pet Insurance	unionplus.org/pets
Personal Loans	unionplus.org/loans
Real Estate Rewards	800-284-9756, unionplus.org/realestate
Renters Insurance	855-666-5797, discount code DJ7 unionplus.org/rentersinsurance
Save My Home Hotline	866-490-5361, unionplus.org/savemyhome
Scholarship	unionplus.org/scholarships
Senior Term Life	800-393-0864, unionplus.org/lifeinsurance
Student Debt Navigator	800-393-0864, unionplus.org/studentdebt
Travel Program	unionplus.org/travel
Vacation Tours	833-382-3175, unionplus.org/tours

Program eligibility is contingent upon union participation.

Customer service for Union Plus programs is U.S.-based.

Information accurate as of 1-30-2025

CHRIS HAND

Elected Vice President Headquarters

On December 15, 2025, the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen announced the election of Chris Hand as BRS Vice President Headquarters, in Front Royal, Virginia.

Brother Hand was appointed Grand Lodge Representative on April 1, 2019. In that role, he served in the Arbitration Department handling disputes and grievances. In 2022, he was appointed Director of Research, a position he held until his election as Vice President Headquarters.

A lifelong resident of Littleton, Colorado, Brother Hand began his railroad career with Union Pacific Railroad in 2008 as an Assistant Signalman in the Denver, Colorado, area. He subsequently advanced through the ranks, holding the positions of Signal Maintainer, Signal Maintenance Foreman, and Electronic Technician Inspector.

An active member of Local 24, Brother Hand has served in multiple elected leadership roles, including First Vice President in 2012, Local President in 2014, and

Financial Secretary in 2017, the latter position he held until his appointment to Grand Lodge.

Raised in a union household, Brother Hand developed the values of solidarity and trade unionism at an early age. A graduate of Littleton High School and Union Pacific's Signal Training Program,

he remains steadfast in his commitment to advancing the mission of the Brotherhood and to serve its membership with integrity. ■



JUSTIN PIER

Appointed Director of Research



On December 15, 2025, BRS President Michael S. Baldwin appointed Justin Pier as Director of Research at the Brotherhood's Headquarters in Front Royal, Virginia.

Brother Pier hired on with BNSF Railway in 2013 as an Assistant Signalman and advanced through the ranks as a Signalman, Foreman, and Signal Maintainer.

Brother Pier was appointed Grand Lodge Representative on November 1, 2021. In that role, he supported the Arbitration Department and

communications efforts. Appointed Communications Chairman in the spring of 2024, Brother Pier launched the BRS Bulletin and BRS Trouble Call, reintroduced the Brotherhood's historic mascot, Signalman Sam®, and helped establish the Communications Coordinator initiative to enhance information flow.

His combined field, arbitration, and communications experience led to his appointment as Director of Research, where he will provide information development and analytical support. ■

Commuter Updates

Local 16 Members at Alstom/SunRail Ratify Five Year Agreement

On December 15, 2025, BRS members working for Alstom/SunRail ratified a five-year Agreement featuring strong annual wage increases, a one-time territory wage “true up,” a \$1,000 signing bonus, pay upgrades for Roadway Worker in Charge classification, a training pay differential, and a cap on healthcare costs. The Agreement also improves bereavement rules, work rules, provides company uniforms and cell phones for certain roles, reimburses Commercial Driver’s License costs, and establishes a “Welder Helper” classification.

BRS congratulates Local 16 members and the negotiating team on this successful Agreement.

Local 243 Members Working for Denver Transit Operators (DTO) Ratify Agreement

On December 17, 2025, BRS members working for DTO ratified a three-year Collective Bargaining Agreement effective January 1, 2026. The Agreement includes significant annual wage increases, enhanced differentials, new protections for dispatch center members, improved overtime and vacation provisions, and a new Commercial Driver’s License differential.

Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen Local 243, which uniquely represents seven crafts—Dispatchers, Operations Control Coordinators, Facilities Maintenance, Traction Power, Track, Signal, and Communications—secured the Agreement under one contract. BRS congratulates Local 243 members and the negotiating team for their achievement.

Metra Rail Coalition Meets

On February 2, 2026, the Coalition of Unions representing most unionized Metra workers in Chicago held their third contract negotiation in over two months. The Coalition includes the BRS, BMWED, SMART-ME, IAM, ARASA, IBEW, and TCU. Negotiations have been largely unproductive, as Metra’s proposals remain unchanged while the Coalition seeks a fair contract reflecting members’ work and the rising cost of living. BRS remains committed to securing a fair agreement.

SEPTA Rail Labor Unions Meet

On February 20, 2026, representatives from nearly all SEPTA rail labor unions met in Philadelphia to discuss common member issues and upcoming contract negotiations. The hybrid meeting included BRS, BMWED, SMART-ME, SMART-MD, IAM, TCU, and BLET, and fostered productive discussions on collaboration. The group plans additional meetings to include all SEPTA unions.

Presidential Emergency Board (PEB) 254 Held in Long Island Rail Road Contract Dispute

On March 1, 2026, the second and final PEB was held to resolve the contract dispute between LIRR and the Long Island Rail Road Bargaining Coalition (LIRRBC), which includes BLET, BRS, IAMAW, IBEW, and TCU, representing most of LIRR’s unionized workforce. The unions have been without a pay raise for over three years. PEB 253 recommended raises with full retroactive pay, rejecting LIRR’s proposed work-rule changes. PEB 254 will select the most reasonable total package, followed by a 60-day cooling-off period. If no agreement is reached, self-help actions, including strikes or lockouts, may occur. The BRS remains committed to securing a fair contract. ■

Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen

— *Our Dedication Extends Beyond the Tracks* —

As Signalmen, we are committed not only to our craft but also to supporting our communities. Share your stories and photos of giving back or making a difference.



*Signalmen are not only leaders on the rails
but also champions in their communities.*

Send photos and stories to info@brs.org

Attention: Justin Pier

Alcohol and Drug Testing

MINIMUM RANDOM TESTING RATES FOR 2026 REMAIN UNCHANGED

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) announced the minimum random testing rates for railroad workers in the year 2026.

Using data from DOT's Management Information System's annual reports, the FRA has determined that because the industry random drug testing positive rate was below 1.0 percent for the last two years, the minimum annual random drug testing rate for the period January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026, 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, 2026, through December 31, 2026.

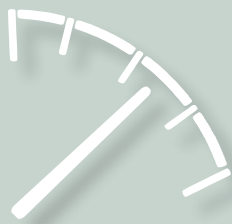
BRS members need to be aware that this notice sets the minimum random testing rates, and the railroads remain free under their own policies to conduct random testing at higher rates. The BRS reminds its members that

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

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. ■

2026 STANDARD MILEAGE RATE

The 2026 standard mileage rate set by the IRS increased to 72.5 cents per mile, effective January 1, 2026.



Please use this rate when calculating mileage reimbursement on expense reports for 2026.

While gasoline is a significant factor in the mileage figure,

other items enter into the calculation of mileage rates, such as depreciation, insurance, 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. ■

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, 2026, this maximum will increase to \$212,800.

An important consideration for individuals thinking about retirement is health coverage after retirement. The information below summarizes the eligibility requirements under the National Early Retirement Major Medical Benefit Plan.

Eligibility Rules

For Age Annuitants:

- You apply for a 60/30 annuity for which you are eligible:
 - on or after the date you reach age 60, or
 - anytime during the three months before your 60th birthday, provided you continue working into, or received vacation pay during, the month before the month in which you turn age 60.

On the day before you apply for your annuity, you must be covered (other than under COBRA) under The Railroad Employees National Health and Welfare Plan.

For Disability Annuitants:

- You have a current connection with the railroad industry.
- You have applied for a disability annuity to which you are entitled.
- You are covered under The Railroad Employees National Health and Welfare Plan (other than by COBRA) on the day before the latest of the following dates:
 - The date you reach age 60,
 - The date you became disabled, or
 - The date your railroad service equals 30 years.

If you retire and are eligible for GA-46000, you can also purchase supplemental coverage under GA-23111, Plan E. Generally, Plan E pays 70% of the expenses not paid under GA-46000 and has a lifetime maximum of \$500,000.

Enrollment Is Necessary

When you retire, your railroad will not report you to UnitedHealthcare as a retiree eligible for GA-46000. You must enroll yourself and your family with UnitedHealthcare. You can do this in two ways:

- You can purchase GA-23111, Plan E supplemental coverage. Your eligibility for GA-46000 will be verified when your enrollment for that coverage is processed. ID cards for both GA-46000 and GA-23111 will be sent to you. A booklet explaining the Plan E benefits and an enrollment form can be obtained by calling UnitedHealthcare.
- You can complete and return the "Retiree and Dependent Information" form found in the center of the GA-46000 employee booklet. Your eligibility will be verified and a GA-46000 ID card will be sent to you. You can obtain a GA-46000 booklet from your employer or union representative. ■

If you have any questions
about your eligibility for
GA-46000
or the benefits provided
under the Plan,
Call UnitedHealthcare at
1-800-842-5252

AUDITOR'S REPORT

ON FINANCES

As provided for in Article 1, Section 68, of the Constitution, the Chairman of the Grand Board of Trustees caused the examination and audit of Grand Lodge financial records for the fiscal year July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025, by certified public accountants. The firm J. Schaefer & Company, LLC was selected for the task.

GENERAL FUND

Summary Statement of Income, Expenses, and Capital

INCOME:

Per capita tax, initiation fees, dues, donations, refunds	\$ 7,185,678	
Sales of supplies, services, books, advertising, subscriptions	48,973	
Interest, investment gain (loss)	<u>548,516</u>	
		\$ 7,783,167

EXPENSES:

Salaries, payroll taxes, insurance	\$ 4,650,920	
Travel expenses	716,297	
Office expenses	404,486	
Association per capita, dues, subscriptions	144,497	
Attorney fees, professional services	218,034	
Depreciation	94,949	
Building expenses	73,896	
Convention, meeting expenses	204,776	
Signalman's Journal	126,726	
Allocation to Contingent Fund	<u>71,066</u>	
		<u>6,705,647</u>

NET INCOME (LOSS)

CAPITAL — June 30, 2024	1,077,520
CAPITAL — June 30, 2025	<u>10,586,569</u>
	<u>\$ 11,664,089</u>

CONTINGENT FUND

Summary Statement of Income, Expenses, and Capital

INCOME:

General Fund Allocation, investment gain (loss)	\$ 644,095	
		\$ 644,095

EXPENSES:

Convention credit	\$ —	
Bank charges	<u>16,956</u>	
		<u>16,956</u>

NET INCOME (LOSS)

CAPITAL — June 30, 2024	627,139
CAPITAL — June 30, 2025	<u>7,123,666</u>
	<u>\$ 7,750,805</u>

AUDITOR'S REPORT ON FINANCES

The audit was completed and submitted to the Grand Board of Trustees on or before November 17, 2025. In a written report, the auditors stated:

“In our opinion, the financial statements referred to below present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Brotherhood as of June 30, 2025 and 2024, and its activities and expenses for the years then ended in accordance with the modified cash basis of accounting described in Note 2.”

Balance Sheet

June 30, 2025

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS	Combined	General Fund	Contingent Fund
Cash	\$ 2,582,082	\$ 2,535,793	\$ 46,289
Investments – fair value	14,995,636	7,291,120	7,704,516
Inventory	111,816	111,816	–
Accounts Receivable	–	–	–
Prepaid Expenses	150,370	150,370	–
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>17,839,904</u>	<u>10,089,099</u>	<u>7,750,805</u>
FIXED ASSETS			
Land, Front Royal, VA	81,663	81,663	–
Building, Front Royal, VA	1,482,770	1,482,770	–
Land Improvements	5,350	5,350	–
Office furniture & equipment	5,207	5,207	–
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS	<u>1,574,990</u>	<u>1,574,990</u>	<u>–</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ <u>19,414,894</u>	\$ <u>11,664,089</u>	\$ <u>7,750,805</u>

LIABILITIES

CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Accounts Payable	\$ –	\$ –	\$ –
Accrued payroll taxes	–	–	–
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>–</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>–</u>
CAPITAL			
General Fund	\$ 11,664,089	\$ 11,664,089	\$ –
Contingent Fund	7,750,805	–	7,750,805
TOTAL CAPITAL	\$ <u>19,414,894</u>	\$ <u>11,664,089</u>	\$ <u>7,750,805</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL	\$ <u>19,414,894</u>	\$ <u>11,664,089</u>	\$ <u>7,750,805</u>

OBITUARIES

SHAWN P. ANDERSON—active member of **LOCAL 225**. Brother Anderson had 19 years of service with CSX Transportation. Brother Anderson was a Signal Maintainer at Buffalo Terminal, at the time of his passing.

ROBERT “BROTHER BOB” BANKOWSKI—retired member of **LOCAL 10**. Brother Bankowski retired in 2012 after 44 years of service with the Penn Central Transportation Company and Norfolk Southern Railway. Brother Bankowski was a Signal Maintainer at Ann Arbor, Michigan, at the time of his retirement.

WILLIAM “BILL” J. BENSON—active member of **LOCAL 56**. Brother Benson had 20 years of service with the Long Island Rail Road. Brother Benson was a Signal Maintainer at Valley Headquarters, at the time of his passing.

DAVID H. CHARLES—retired member of **LOCAL 77**. Brother Charles retired in 2018 after 32 years of service with the Norfolk Southern Railway. Brother Charles was a Signal Maintainer at the time of his retirement. Brother Charles is a U.S. Army Veteran.

ROBERT “BOB” L. DOBSON—retired member of **LOCAL 55**. Brother Dobson retired in 2000 after 34 years of service with the Norfolk & Western and Norfolk Southern Railways. Brother Dobson was a Signal Maintainer at New Berlin, Illinois, at the time of his retirement. Brother Dobson is a U.S. Navy Veteran.

FREDERICK “FRITZ” R. FERRES—retired member of **LOCAL 41**. Brother Ferres retired in 2010 after 35 years of service with the Penn Central Transportation Company, Conrail, and CSX Transportation. Brother Ferres was a Signal Maintainer at Terre Haute, Indiana, at the time of his retirement. Brother Ferres served as Local Trustee and Second Vice President. Brother Ferres is a U.S. Air Force Veteran.

TERENCE “TERRY” S. FLEET—retired member of **LOCAL 16**. Brother Fleet retired in 2016 after 40 years of service with CSX Transportation. Brother Fleet was a Signal Maintainer at Orangeburg, South Carolina, at the time of his retirement.

WILLIAM E. HARRISON—retired member of **LOCAL 51**. Brother Harrison retired in 1992 after 21 years of service with the Illinois Central Railroad. Brother Harrison was a Signalman at Carbondale, Illinois, at the time of his retirement. Brother Harrison is a U.S. Air Force Veteran.

JACOB “JAKE” C. JACOBSON—retired member of **LOCAL 39**. Brother Jacobson retired in 1996 after 43 years of service with the Chicago & North Western Railway. Brother Jacobson was a Signal Crew Foreman at St. Paul, Minnesota, at the time of his retirement. Brother Jacobson served as Local President. Brother Jacobson is a U.S. Army Veteran.

EDWARD C. KOCHANNEK, JR.—retired member of **LOCAL 84**. Brother Kochanek retired in 2021 after 42 years of service with Conrail and New Jersey Transit. Brother Kochanek was a Signal Inspector at Red Bank, New Jersey, at the time of his retirement.

LARRY R. LEISTER—retired member of **LOCAL 31**. Brother Leister retired in 2011 after 42 years of service with the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, Chessie System, and CSX Transportation. Brother Leister was a Signal Inspector at Connellsville, Pennsylvania, at the time of his retirement. Brother Leister is a U.S. Army Veteran.

GEORGE G. OTT—retired member of **LOCAL 58**. Brother Ott retired in 2000 after 38 years of service with the Pennsylvania Railroad, Penn Central Transportation Company, and Conrail. Brother Ott was a Communication Inspector at Haddon Heights, New Jersey, at the time of his retirement. Brother Ott served as Recording-Financial Secretary. Brother Ott is a U.S. Marine Veteran.

MICHAEL E. QUICK—retired member of **LOCAL 77**. Brother Quick retired in 2006 after 34 years of service with Norfolk & Western and Norfolk Southern Railways. Brother Quick was a Signal Maintainer at the time of his retirement.

STEVEN “STEVE” A. SMITH—active member of **LOCAL 31**. Brother Smith had 27 years of service with the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and CSX Transportation. Brother Smith was a Signal Maintainer at Berkeley Springs, West Virginia, at the time of his passing. Brother Smith is a U.S. Navy Veteran.

RAY “RANDY” R. THOMAS—retired member of **LOCAL 136**. Brother Thomas retired in 2011 after 32 years of service with the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway and CSX Transportation. Brother Thomas was a Signal Maintainer at St. Albans, West Virginia, at the time of his retirement.

ELDRIDGE L. TUCKER—retired member of **LOCAL 110**. Brother Tucker retired in 1994 after 41 years of service with the Southern Railroad and Norfolk Southern Railway. Brother Tucker was a Signal Maintainer at Bulls Gap, Tennessee, at the time of his retirement. Brother Tucker served as Local Chairman.

GREGORY “GREG” D. WHEATON—retired member of **LOCAL 136**. Brother Wheaton retired in 2008 after 35 years of service with the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway, Chessie System, and CSX Transportation. Brother Wheaton was a Signal Foreman at Charleston, West Virginia, at the time of his retirement. Brother Wheaton served as Local President, Local Trustee, and Recording-Financial Secretary. Brother Wheaton is a U.S. Navy Veteran.

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

Joey Gonzales _____ 16

40 YEARS OF SERVICE

Jim Panos _____ 143

Ronald Smith _____ 77

35 YEARS OF SERVICE

Benjamin Lucas _____ 141

Don Crawford _____ 229

Henry Krempe _____ 102

Jeffrey Fazekas _____ 102

Laddie Peknik _____ 183

Mike Osborn _____ 20

Thomas Lankford _____ 77

30 YEARS OF SERVICE

Brandon Otterstrom _____ 20

Brian Jones _____ 48

Chad Neeld _____ 13

Chris Uhlig _____ 179

Clarence Morgan, II _____ 237

Curtis O'Brien _____ 33

David Bonewell _____ 72

David Burrows _____ 20

David Shafransky _____ 106

Gabe Chavez _____ 173

Gary Copeland _____ 21

Jerry Tate, Jr. _____ 237

30 YEARS OF SERVICE

Joe Gerrior _____ 229

John Raya _____ 173

John Tibbetts, Jr. _____ 111

Jose Pontes _____ 5

Joseph Bossle, Jr. _____ 65

Lam Starkey _____ 229

Larry Scholes _____ 129

Mark Eldridge _____ 25

Michael Trotter _____ 99

Mike Barnett _____ 188

Mitchell Flynn _____ 119

Norman Sellers _____ 56

Robert Garrett, Jr. _____ 178

Terry Leach _____ 94

Thomas Ashworth _____ 129

Thomas LaCroix _____ 5

Wayne Thompson _____ 137

Yolanda McEwen _____ 16

25 YEARS OF SERVICE

Adiel Carrera _____ 20

Brent Schulte _____ 87

Brian Arne _____ 56

Brian Kaeding _____ 81

Brian Siltman _____ 174

Brian Twitchel _____ 20

Bruce Smith _____ 121

Chris Pruitt _____ 172

Chris Smith _____ 130

Danny Leisy _____ 119

25 YEARS OF SERVICE

Delvin Mercado _____ 56

Don Holman _____ 72

Don Witty _____ 174

Francis Ojeda _____ 56

George Lindsey _____ 99

Glen Ramos _____ 110

Heath Tompkins _____ 157

Hemraj Singh _____ 56

James Newell _____ 56

James Paul _____ 158

Jason Hall _____ 99

Jason Ironside _____ 172

Jason Overholt _____ 121

Jason Salinas _____ 20

Jesse Kennedy _____ 172

Joe Foster _____ 72

Larry Mason _____ 141

Louis Rouse, Jr. _____ 20

Mark Lanberg _____ 56

Matt Hafer _____ 157

Matt Schmidt _____ 20

Mike Porchia, Jr. _____ 56

Mike Stewart _____ 56

Oscar Montezuma _____ 19

Richard Franks _____ 72

Ronnie Rowan, Jr. _____ 141

Ronnie Smith, Jr. _____ 121

Ryan Peck _____ 20

Scott Kellogg _____ 20

Shawn Walker _____ 1

Tony Elizée _____ 126



MIKE EFAW
*National
Legislative Director*

CONGRESSIONAL OUTLOOK — *First Quarter*

Legislative Landscape

Congress has returned to Washington facing a crowded agenda shaped by foreign policy challenges, health care uncertainty, appropriations deadlines, and major authorization timelines later in the year. With several fiscal and policy cliffs approaching in 2026, lawmakers are balancing near-term funding decisions with longer-term reauthorization and reform efforts.

Key areas of focus include government funding, health care affordability, surface transportation reauthorization, budget reconciliation, and early discussions around agriculture and farm labor policy.

Appropriations and Government Funding

Congress approved a spending package that funds most federal agencies through September, ending the second government shutdown in the past four months. President Trump has signed the legislation, officially reopening the government.

One major issue remains unresolved: funding for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The bill passed by the House only funds DHS through next week. Long-term funding for the department—which includes agencies such as TSA, FEMA, ICE, and Border Patrol—has proven difficult due to sharp partisan disagreements over immigration enforcement policy.

Democrats are refusing to support additional DHS funding unless Republicans agree to new limits on immigration enforcement, following the fatal shootings in January of two U.S. citizens in Minnesota involving federal agents. Republicans argue DHS should receive full funding without additional policy restrictions.

Foreign Policy and National Security

Foreign policy, particularly developments in Venezuela,

remains a central issue on Capitol Hill. Congressional leaders and senior members of the House and Senate Intelligence, Armed Services, Foreign Affairs, and Foreign Relations Committees are receiving briefings from senior administration officials.

Although there is general bipartisan support for the President's actions, some Republicans have privately raised concerns about inconsistent messaging regarding Venezuela's leadership structure and long-term strategy. These tensions are likely to persist as Congress continues its oversight of administration actions abroad.

Key Congressional Dates in 2026

- **January–March 2026:** Anticipated start of Farm Bill reauthorization debate.
- **June 2026:** IRA and property tax credits expire.
- **September 30:** End of FY2026.
- **September 30:** Surface Transportation and other authorizations expire.
- **November 4:** Midterm elections.
- **December 31:** Medicare physician payment increases expire.

Major Policy Areas to Watch in 2026

Budget Reconciliation

Status: Republicans are considering a second budget reconciliation package to revisit tax policy, defense spending, and expiring health care provisions, including Affordable Care Act (ACA) premium subsidies.

Outlook:

- Use of reconciliation as a vehicle for addressing the ACA subsidy cliff, Medicaid policy changes, or consumer-directed health reforms.
- Inclusion of bipartisan tax items such as expired extenders, digital asset tax treatment, retirement

incentives, and the U.S.–Taiwan tax agreement.

- Tension between reconciliation strategy and deficit messaging in a midterm election year.

Surface Transportation Reauthorization

Status: Congress is responsible for reauthorizing and funding highways, public transit, rail networks, and safety programs through multi-year legislation that sets national policy and oversees implementation.

Congress must reauthorize federal funding and policies for highways, bridges, public transit, rail, safety programs, and other transportation infrastructure every five years. The current authorization is provided under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and expires on September 30, 2026.

Legislative work on the next surface transportation reauthorization bill is in the early to middle stages, with committees gathering stakeholder input and drafting legislative language. The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and relevant Senate authorizing committees have held hearings and collected feedback to help shape priorities and policy direction.

The reauthorization bill is expected to advance this year, though timing and final content will depend on bipartisan negotiations and broader budget considerations. Key policy debates include overall funding levels, electric vehicle infrastructure, safety enhancements, and program continuity.

Several Members of Congress are actively pressing for rail safety provisions to be included in the surface transportation reauthorization bill or for broader action to strengthen rail safety laws. These members include Representative Chris Deluzio of Pennsylvania, sponsor of the Railway Safety Act of 2025 and a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee’s Rail Subcommittee. He and bipartisan colleagues have publicly advocated for incorporating rail safety reforms into the surface transportation bill.

Representative Dina Titus of Nevada, the Ranking Member of the House Rail Subcommittee, has stated she will not support a surface transportation reauthorization bill unless it includes a strong rail safety title.

Representatives Mike Rulli of Ohio and John Garamendi of California, Republican and Democratic cosponsors of the Railway Safety Act, have jointly urged Congress to advance rail safety legislation.



On January 21, 2026, BRS United General Committee General Chairman, Jason Harkleroad, joined by John Esterly of Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET), Clyde Whitaker of SMART Transportation Division (SMART-TD), and Jason Cox and James Ramey of Transportation Communications Union (TCU), met with staff from the offices of U.S. Senators Bernie Moreno and Jon Husted.

The meeting centered on strengthening rail safety standards and advancing federal legislation to better protect railroad workers and the public from future train derailment disasters.

Outlook:

- House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee targeting early 2026 markups and spring floor action, though delays remain likely.
- Senate Committees working toward finalizing text by midyear.
- Open questions around administration engagement, mass transit funding, and the long-term solvency of the Highway Trust Fund.

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WASHINGTON REPORT

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Rail Safety Press Conference

On February 3, 2026, lawmakers, mayors, and union leaders gathered to mark the third anniversary of the East Palestine, Ohio derailment with a press conference calling for congressional action on rail safety legislation introduced one year earlier. BRS President Michael Baldwin kicked off the press conference speaking on behalf of BRS and all rail labor as Chairman of the AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Department's Rail Labor Division.

Representatives Chris Deluzio, Mike Rulli, and John Garamendi participated in the event, which urged Congress to move rail safety legislation out of committee or incorporate key provisions into the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization bill.

Additional participants included Representative Dina Titus of Nevada, Representative Mike Lawler of New York, Mayor Matt Pacifico of Altoona, Pennsylvania, and Mayor Michael Lombardo of Pittston, Pennsylvania. Labor leaders in attendance included Greg Regan, President of the AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Department, and Edward Kelly, General President of the International Association of Firefighters.

Senate Committee Hearing on Railroad Retirement

On February 5, 2026, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee held a full committee hearing entitled *"On Track for Secure Retirement: Examining the Success of the Railroad Retirement Board."*

Testimony was provided by Erhard Chorle, Chairman of the Railroad Retirement Board, and Jeff Joines, Director of Government Affairs for the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division of the International

Brotherhood of Teamsters.

The hearing focused on the overall effectiveness of the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB), highlighting areas of success, identifying ongoing challenges, and examining how the RRB's structure and administration could serve as a model for improving other federal social insurance programs.

Why This Matters

The RRB is a cornerstone of retirement and disability security for railroad workers and their families. Congressional recognition of the RRB's effectiveness strengthens the case for protecting the system from cuts, ensuring adequate funding, and preserving the unique retirement structure rail workers have earned. Continued oversight and engagement also create opportunities to improve customer service, modernize systems, reduce backlogs, and ensure benefits are delivered accurately and on time, making the RRB work better for the railroaders who depend on it. ■



On January 6, 2026, BRS General Chairmen Richie Clark (PATH) and Frank Davidson (New Jersey Transit) met with New Jersey Governor-elect Mikie Sherrill to discuss rail safety, the potential fiscal cliff facing the state, and the role BRS can play in addressing these challenges on behalf of our members.

Rail Labor Wins in FY2026 THUD Bill

— Mike Efaw, National Legislative Director

The FY2026 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) bill delivers several meaningful wins for rail labor, rail safety, and the institutions that protect railroad workers:

- **Protects Amtrak Funding:** Maintains \$2.4 billion for Amtrak, including \$850 million for the Northeast Corridor and \$1.6 billion for the National Network, rejecting House proposals to divert state-of-good-repair funding provided under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.
- **Strengthens Rail Safety Investments:** Restores funding for ongoing projects improving railways, stations, bridges, and tunnels nationwide, reinforcing the safety and reliability of intercity passenger rail.
- **Supports Grade Crossing Safety:** Provides \$64.3 billion for Federal Highway Administration programs, including Section 130 funding, which is vital to improving highway-rail grade crossing safety.
- **Increases Funding for Rail Labor Institutions:**
 - **Railroad Retirement Board (RRB):** Increased from \$126 million to \$127 million, strengthening the agency's ability to administer railroad retirement and unemployment benefits.
 - **National Mediation Board (NMB):** Increased from \$14.3 million to \$15.113 million, enhancing the Board's capacity to resolve rail labor disputes and protect collective bargaining rights.

- **Preserves Rail and Transit Jobs:** Protects tens of thousands of rail, transit, construction, and transportation safety jobs.
- **Blocks Harmful Funding Shifts:** Prevents efforts to weaken rail safety and maintenance by redirecting Bipartisan Infrastructure Law resources away from their intended purpose.

Why This Matters to Rail Workers

These investments protect our jobs, strengthen retirement and labor-relations systems, and ensure rail safety infrastructure and oversight remain properly funded.

Support the Signalmen's Political League

These wins are the result of sustained, hands-on advocacy by the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (BRS) on Capitol Hill. To keep delivering results, we encourage BRS members to support the Signalmen's Political League (SPL). We have seen firsthand how critical it is for the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen to remain present, engaged, and at the table when decisions that impact our members and our industry are being made. Your contributions help to provide the resources we need to continue lobbying, defend rail safety, protect our jobs and retirement security, and build on these successes in future legislation.

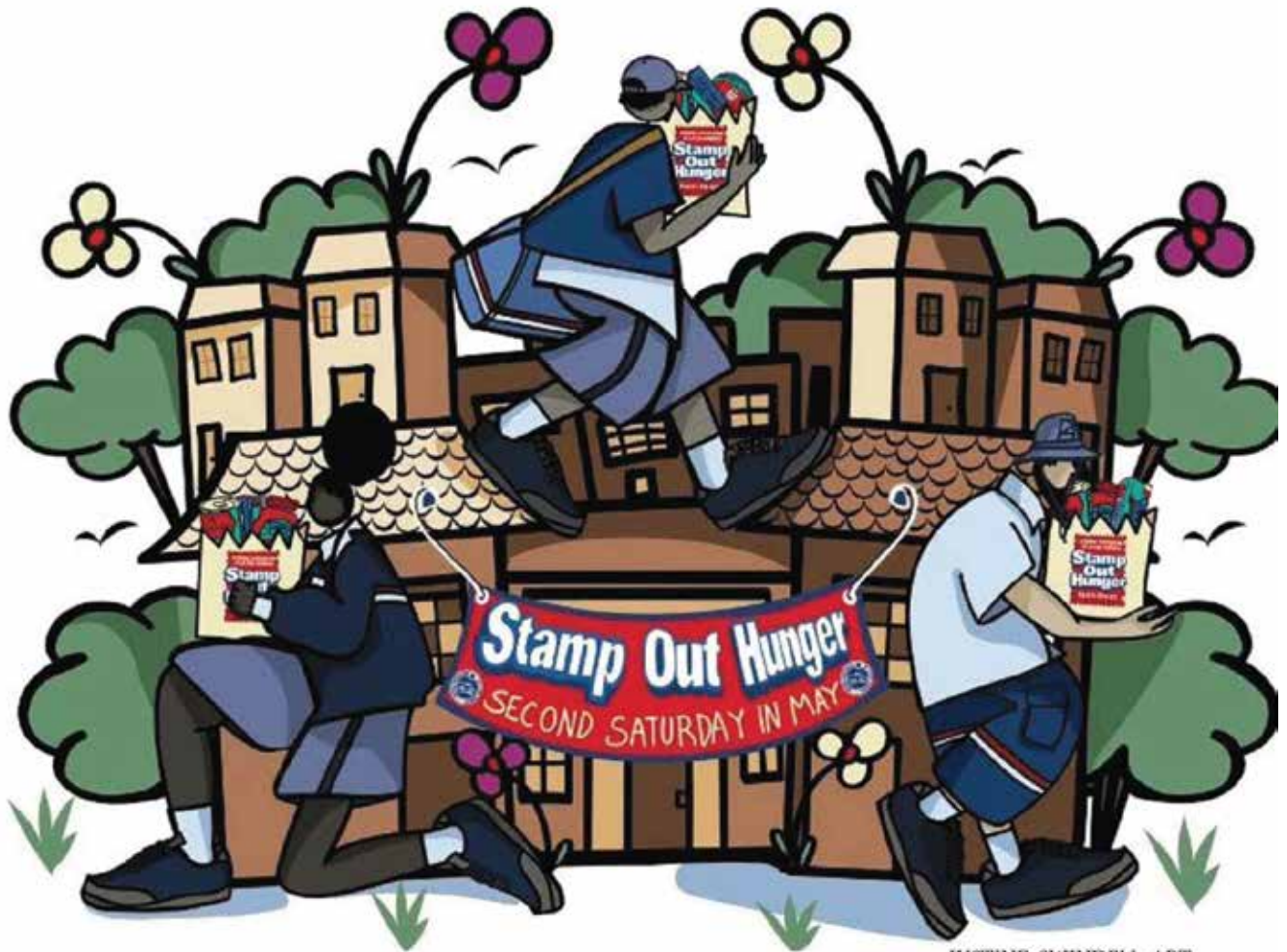
Your support strengthens our voice in Washington and ensures BRS can keep delivering real results for our members. ■

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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
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www.mtandj.com

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Drew C. Baebler

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The Moody Law Firm
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Nicholas D. Thompson
Casey Jones Law Firm
3520 Cherryvale Avenue
Suite 83
Appleton, WI 54913
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www.caseyjones.law

BRS members are encouraged to provide information regarding FELA cases, including criticism or recommendations 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:

*Michael S. Baldwin, President
Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen
917 Shenandoah Shores Road
Front Royal, VA 22630-6418*

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.

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

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UnitedHealthcare

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Coffee Mug		8.00	
Pocket Watch		94.50	
Wrist Watch		120.00	
Mantle/Desk Clock		136.00	
Magnet		6.00	
Keychain/Bottle Opener		4.00	

HATS	QUANTITY	PRICE	TOTAL
Cap (camo/orange)		20.75	
Cap (black dye sub)		18.00	

APPAREL	S	M	L	XL	2X	3X	4X	PRICE	TOTAL
NEW—Union Proud T-Shirt								\$20.00	
NEW—Golf Shirt (black w/logo)								50.00	
NEW—Golf Shirt (blue w/logo)								50.00	
NEW—Golf Shirt (sage w/logo)								50.00	
NEW—Golf Shirt (rust w/logo)								50.00	
NEW—Golf Shirt (olive w/logo)								50.00	
NEW—Half Quarter Zip								55.00	
Navy Windshirt								57.50	
Black Wool & Leather Coat								201.00	
Black Canvas Coat								90.00	
Brown Canvas Coat								90.00	
Grey Sweatshirt								31.50	
Navy Softshell Jacket								96.50	

CLEARANCE	S	M	L	XL	2X	3X	4X	PRICE	TOTAL
Service T-Shirt (burgundy)								18.00	
Service T-Shirt (grey)								15.00	
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	
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STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____ CERTIFICATE # _____

ORDER ONLINE AT WWW.BRS.ORG

SIGNALMAN'S STORE



UNION PROUD T-SHIRT



DESIGN ON BACK OF SWEATSHIRT



GREY SWEATSHIRT



QUARTER ZIP



GOLF SHIRT (BLACK)



GOLF SHIRT (BLUE)



GOLF SHIRT (SAGE)



GOLF SHIRT (RUST)



GOLF SHIRT (OLIVE)



BROWN CANVAS COAT



BLACK WOOL & LEATHER COAT



NAVY SOFT SHELL JACKET



BLACK CANVAS COAT



CAPS



POCKET WATCH



WRIST WATCH



MANTLE CLOCK

MEETING PHOTOS



Local 71 Meeting

Madisonville, Kentucky



BRS President Mike Baldwin swearing-in Local 71 members Tristen Martin and Bailey Cook, and welcoming them into the Brotherhood.

Workers Memorial Day • April 28

SAFE JOBS

EVERY WORKER'S RIGHT

AFL-CIO

PHOTO CONTEST

WINNER FOR 1ST QUARTER 2026



Northern lights illuminate the North Algoma DTMF switch on the Manistique Subdivision in Escanaba, Michigan.

Photo submitted by Brian Wotchko, Member of Local 239.

Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen

Our Dedication Extends Beyond the Tracks

As Signalmen, we are not just committed to excellence in our craft; we are equally passionate about enriching and supporting the communities we call home.

We would like to showcase the strength and compassion of our Brotherhood. Share your stories and photos of giving back — through community service or the moments where you have made a difference.

Signalmen are not only leaders on the rails, but also champions in their communities.

Send photos and stories to info@brs.org

Attention: Justin Pier

PROTECT WHAT YOU WORK FOR.

United to preserve our outdoor
heritage for future generations.



Join the Union Sportsmen's Alliance

UnionSportsmen.org