

Freddie N. Simpson  
*President*



Perry K. Geller, Sr.  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

## **Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes**

*Affiliated with the AFL-CIO and C.L.C.*

September 28, 2004

Dear BMWWE Member:

I am writing to emphasize the importance of ratifying the merger between the BMWWE and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT). You have a genuine opportunity to strengthen our union and make Rail Labor history by voting to merge with the IBT. The railroads do not want this merger to pass because they do not want to enter the upcoming negotiations facing a united BMWWE and BLET backed by the 1.4 million member strong Teamsters. Also, there are individuals within BMWWE and the United Transportation Union (UTU) who do not want this merger to pass because it affects their own political power and their own narrow self-interests.

During the past several weeks you have undoubtedly heard and read statements or opinions in favor of the merger and opposed to the merger. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity and speak to you member-to-member about how important this merger vote is for our Union.

This merger is all about you, the membership of BMWWE. It is you, the rank and file, that have directed us, the Grand Lodge Officers, to find a merger partner, not the other way around as some may say. We must join with a bigger and stronger union to better protect the interests of maintenance of way workers specifically, and Rail Labor in general. And in my opinion, there is no stronger union for us to join forces with than the Teamsters.

History is indeed repeating itself in this most important ratification referendum. A small minority of BMWWE system officers and their followers, aided and abetted by the UTU and the Railroads, have distributed lies and falsehoods to confuse the vote. These same system officers are in opposition to this merger just as they have been in opposition to all other mergers. This small group of naysayers have found every potential merger partner to be "too big" or "too small" or lacking in some other way. I ask you to view their statements regarding the alleged "faults" of the merger agreement in the context of this history.

The UTU has also jumped on the "just say no" bandwagon and has recently made outrageously false claims about the merger and its effect, including blatant falsehoods claiming that the membership of BMWWE will lose its rights and benefits under Railroad Retirement. I want to tell you directly that these are bald-face lies. The rights of the membership and the solvency of Railroad Retirement are not imperiled in any way and Railroad Retirement will remain a benefit exclusively for railroad employees.

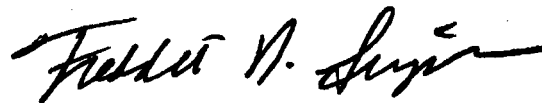
What the naysayers will not or cannot provide you is a positive vision to make this union stronger and provide better contracts to protect you and your family. They continue to offer nothing but negativism, preservation of the ineffective status quo, and a continuation of the same old outdated arguments. Undoubtedly, they will continue their negative "just say no" campaign as we move towards ratification. Do not be deceived by those who want to prevent you from joining together with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the most powerful transportation union in North America.

The BMW/Teamster merger is about hope and a promise of a better future. A merger, like a marriage, is an act of optimism. Good marriages are those between people who understand and value the knowledge and character that their partner will bring to the marriage. As partners, you make a commitment and move forward together, working and striving to make a better future. A marriage also makes you part of a larger family and helps make everyone in the family stronger by increasing the number of people who can pull together in times of trouble. This is also true in a merger.

This merger will unite two proud unions with long histories in the transportation industry working to protect and increase the power of transportation labor. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) already have joined the Teamsters, and with BMW voting to join the Teamsters Rail Conference, over 40 percent of Rail Labor will be united in one union, speaking with one voice for the rank and file. I firmly believe that other rail unions will follow our lead and also seek to join with the BMW and BLET within the Teamsters Rail Conference.

Do not let the tired politics of negativism defeat this chance for genuine Rail Labor unity. Rather, educate yourself about the merger, ask questions, and discuss the merger with your fellow railroad workers. Then, I ask you to join with me and vote yes for hope, yes for unity, and yes for the BMW/IBT merger.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fred N. Lynn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

President