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July 8, 2004
File: IBT/BLET Initiatives

Dear Sirs and Brothers,

This is in reference to the upcoming IBT/BLET initiative introducing BLET and the IBT Rail Conference to all operating employees. As we discussed last week while in session, IBT will be mailing 5 copies of a brochure that they have prepared to each BLET member asking that they share the brochures with their operating co workers. It is our understanding that all LC's, GC's and Legislative Chairmen were sent an advance copy in the last few days.

As we know that many questions will arise, we are sending this advance message via email and hard copy that can be shared with your membership if you desire. The initiative that the membership is about to receive is an attempt to inform all operating employees that they have choices in representation. BLET's alliance with IBT was formed to serve several purposes, the most important being to provide quality representation to all operating employees who choose to belong. It is also no secret that after years of attack by UTU, BLET had little choice but to become part of a larger organization to protect the interests of our membership. To accomplish both of these goals, BLET became part of a 1.4 million member organization whose political strength and bargaining strength is rivaled by none. IBT/BLET is now introducing the recently formed "Rail Conference" to all operating employees, be they BLET or UTU members. There is little doubt that all operating employees would be better served if they are all in a single organization. While we have personally invited all UTU members and Officers to join us in BLET, some have chosen to join us others have not.

While we understand that UTU may not embrace this initiative, please recognize that IBT's efforts to offer membership to all operating employees vary little from what UTU has offered since 1970. UTU has openly solicited engineers who were represented by BLE to join UTU for years, with varying degrees of success. This IBT initiative makes much the same IBT offer to all operating employees, whether they work in BLET represented crafts or UTU represented crafts. IBT/BLET is not actively pursuing "seniority maintenance fees" or "exclusive representation" rights to force members to become members. Rather, IBT/BLET is offering quality representation to all operating employees, recognizing each employee's right to belong to the organization of their choice.

Ironically, the UTU International's first response to this initiative was to organize a "Blue Ribbon" panel to "modernize" UTU. As part of its web site post introducing the panel, UTU International President Thompson is quoted as follows; "Thompson also stressed that the enemy of rail labor unions is not the carriers, but rather truckers whose increased freight market-share has taken too many good union railroad jobs." It is fairly obvious that these

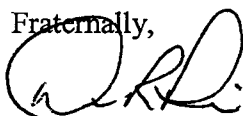
comments are an attempt to discredit our association with the IBT, attempting to make the "trucker" the enemy. This is without regard for the fact that it was the Carriers who ripped up branch line after branch line, pushing short haul freight to trucks. It was the Carrier that ripped up the tracks leading to most of its local intermodal facilities, instead going to central hubs that pushed short haul freight to trucks. In fact, most major Carriers at some time formed their own trucking companies to facilitate THEIR choice to move freight from rails to trucks. Without regard for any of that, or the fact the Carrier is all but "at war" with its employees at many locations, UTU now proclaims that the Carrier is not the enemy, the trucker is.

We had hoped that UTU's new International administration would adopt a new policy in its relationship with BLET, but it does not appear that this has happened yet. We had hoped that UTU would seize the opportunity to join us within the one of the most powerful transportation unions in the country to finally recognize the "power of one" that they have so long talked of. It is not too late for that to happen, but it will obviously take a change of policy by UTU to get there. Anything but that will only continue the "race to the bottom" that has plagued the two competing operating unions since UTU was formed.

Regardless of UTU's reaction to this initiative, we will continue in our efforts to partner with our UTU counterparts to best represent all of our collective members. We have made a concerted effort to work with UTU on property until now without regard for the attacks and insults that have been thrown BLET's way by UTU's International Office. The door is open for our UTU counterparts to work hand in hand with BLET and it is also open for them to join us within BLET if and when they so desire. If UTU closes the door on those efforts due to this initiative, it will be their choice not ours. If that happens, it can only lead us back to the classic "whip saw" that the Carrier has used by working the two unions against each other. No operating employee has benefited from that "race to the bottom" to date and we see no indication that they will in the future either.

We will keep you apprised of any additional developments or initiatives as time progresses,

Fraternally,



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General Chairman

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