

# Information Packet for New Auxiliaries



Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen

## Auxiliary

*Since 1887*

*Working to bring about safer working conditions for Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen, educate spouses, support each other, and enhance the lifestyles of railroad employees and their families.*

[www.bletauxiliary.net](http://www.bletauxiliary.net)

# Contents

- Welcome .....4
- Mission .....6
- Purpose .....6
- History .....6
- Getting Started .....7
  - Application for Membership and Collection of Dues.....7
  - Auxiliary Name and Number .....7
- Next Step .....9
  - Organizational Meeting .....9
  - Obligation .....9
  - Nomination and Election of Officers .....9
    - President .....9
    - Vice President .....9
    - Secretary.....10
    - Treasurer .....10
    - Chaplain.....10
    - Legislative Representative .....10
    - Mobilization Coordinator .....10
    - Convention Delegate .....10
    - Alternate Convention Delegate.....10
- Sample Minutes .....12
- Charter Member Form .....13
- Sign-in Sheet Organizational Meeting .....16
- Regular Meeting Sign-in Sheet .....18
- Money Matters .....20
  - Tax Identification Number .....20
  - Bank Account.....20
  - Payment of Dues .....20
  - Local Auxiliary Members’ Dues Structure .....21
  - Auxiliary Interest Income Bank Accounts .....21
  - Employer Identification Number.....22

Letter verifying IRS 501(c)(8).....	25
BLET Auxiliary Bylaws: Article V Officers and Duties of Officers .....	27
Section 2. Duties of Officers.....	27
BLET Auxiliary Bylaws: Article VI Nominations and Elections .....	31
What Next? Committees .....	33
Calling Committee .....	33
Social Committee.....	33
Other Committees .....	33
Local Auxiliary Policies .....	35
Sample Policies for Auxiliaries.....	35
Expression of sympathy .....	35
Policy on Injuries / Accidents or illness .....	35
Ideas for Auxiliary Hosted Events.....	36
Ideas and Suggestions to Keep the Auxiliary Alive and Active.....	38
When Tragedy Strikes.....	40
Recruiting New Members .....	42
BLET Auxiliary National Officers.....	44

## Welcome

Welcome to the BLET Auxiliary. We thank you for your interest, support, and belief in our ability to make a difference in the lives of our loved ones who work on the railroad.

The purpose of this packet is to help you establish a Local Auxiliary. It contains the following information:

- A brief history and purpose of our Organization;
- A list of some of the first things that need to be done when the Auxiliary is first established;
- Documentation that may be needed to set up a bank account;
- Auxiliary dues structure;
- Ideas to keep Auxiliary members interested and active, including possible projects;
- Working with your local area BLET Divisions;
- Recruiting ideas;
- Directory of National Officers including their contact information.

This information packet was designed for brand new “start-up” Auxiliaries; however, it can also be used as a reference guide to reinvigorate existing Auxiliaries looking for fresh ideas and ways to recruit new members.

As always, if you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me or any of our National Officers.

Kathleen Bisbikis  
7367 Stabulis Road  
Valley Springs, California 95252  
(209) 559-2251  
biz4413@gmail.com



## Mission

The mission of this Organization is to support the interests and welfare of the BLET Auxiliary and railroad families, especially the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, and the Organizations of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Rail Conference, our members, and their families throughout the United States.

## Purpose

The overall purpose of this Organization shall be to provide support and promote issues that affect the health, safety, welfare, and quality of life of railroaders and their families; to promote higher education within the families of its full members; to give assistance to widows, widowers, sisters and brothers when needed, especially during times of duress; and to render assistance whenever and wherever needed to further our mission.

## History

The BLET Auxiliary was established in 1887 by a committee of ladies assisting with BLE Convention arrangements who saw the need to establish an organization to bring cohesiveness to the groups of women already meeting in railroad towns all over the country. On October 16, 1887, Auxiliary One was organized in Chicago, Illinois, and the organization continued to grow with auxiliaries throughout the United States and Canada.

Over the past decade, the Auxiliary has undergone many changes. While still maintaining the importance of our social and support roles, we recognize the need to be involved in the issues affecting our spouses, our members, and our families. Membership is open to spouses and family members of BLET members who are interested in what we do. We have also created an Associate Membership for those who would not otherwise qualify for membership but want to be a part of our efforts. Our meetings have become a forum for education and information exchange, and a way to meet and talk with those who share common goals. Our members actively participate in rallies and informational protests, educating the public about the obstacles faced by our rail employees and how that, in turn, affects entire communities across the nation. There is much that we can do that our spouses cannot for fear of retaliation by their employers. We are an organization of proactive members striving to create a safer work environment for rail employees and a positive lifestyle for those employees and their families.

Prior to 2006, we were known as the Grand International Auxiliary to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. At the 2006 National Convention, we changed our name to the BLET Auxiliary in keeping with the changes that had occurred with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers as a result of the 2004 merger with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. As with the BLET, we too split off from our brothers and sisters in Canada and became a national rather than an international organization.

Although we are a nonprofit organization and a completely separate entity from the BLET, we work closely with the BLET officers on a local, regional, and national level. We stand ready to help in any way we can with their issues, concerns, and mobilization actions. The only exception we make in working with the BLET is that we do not interfere in contractual issues unless we are specifically asked.

## Getting Started

The first step to start a local auxiliary is to complete the Petition for Charter and submit it to the Auxiliary National Secretary, Jodi Wallace. The Petition for Charter is included in the back pocket of this packet or can be downloaded from the website at [www.bletauxiliary.net](http://www.bletauxiliary.net).

The petition must be signed by a minimum of seven persons who are eligible to join the auxiliary as full members (spouses, mothers, fathers, and children over the age of 18, of a BLET member in good standing). Three of the signatures can be by associate members. If there are already some members-at-large in your area, be sure to ask them if they would like to join your local auxiliary.

Once the necessary number of signatures has been obtained, the Petition for Charter should be forwarded to the National Secretary, along with a check in the amount of \$25.00 to cover the charter fee. Once that has been done, you are ready for the next step – preparing to organize a local auxiliary.

If possible (although not required), an informal meeting should precede a formal organizational meeting, and someone should take notes. The following are a few of the things that should be done and considered initially.

### Application for Membership and Collection of Dues

All who wish to become members must complete an application for membership and pay the one-time application fee of \$10.00. The completed applications and application fees are forwarded to the National Secretary for processing, unless a National Officer is present to organize the auxiliary. If that is the case, the National Officer will collect the applications and fees and ensure that they are forwarded to the National Secretary.

### Auxiliary Name and Number

Each auxiliary chooses a name and number to identify their organization and that information should be included on the Petition for Charter. The local auxiliary number usually corresponds with the BLET division to which it is connected; however, an auxiliary may choose any number it wishes so long as it is not already in use by another auxiliary. Auxiliary names often reflect a region or local characteristic, a famous locomotive, or a distinguished citizen or railroader. Below are some examples that have been used in the past.

*Susquehanna Auxiliary 11, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania*

*River City Auxiliary 12, Omaha, Nebraska*

*Guadalupe Auxiliary 28, Tucson, Arizona*

*Significant Others Auxiliary 31, Douglas Wyoming*

*NorCal Auxiliary 39, Stockton, California*

*The Hogger Backers Auxiliary 253, Portage, Wisconsin*

*Yellow Rose Auxiliary 300, Amarillo, Texas*

*Enchantment Echoes Auxiliary 446, Belen, New Mexico*

*El Paso Area Auxiliary 591, El Paso, Texas*

Before concluding the initial meeting, those present should decide on a date for the next meeting, which can serve as the formal organizational meeting. An option for the organizational meeting would be to

contact a FELA attorney to possibly sponsor a dinner or other event. This meeting event may include members of the sponsor BLET division if desired.

## Next Step

Included in this section is a sample of the form for recording the minutes that can be used for the organizational meeting. This is just a sample to help you out; it is not required that it be used exactly as written, but the minutes should reflect what transpired at the meeting because you will need to a copy of these minutes at the bank or credit union when you set up an account for your auxiliary. Most importantly, the minutes should include the names of those who will be authorized as signers on the account (the president and treasurer, or secretary-treasurer if these two positions are combined).

### Organizational Meeting

The first order of business is the formal organization by a national officer or by a current auxiliary member designated to preside over the meeting. A volunteer to take minutes must be assigned. Applications and application fees (\$10 for each new member) should be collected, and the obligation set forth below should be recited by all wishing to join.

Whoever is taking minutes should make sure that all who are present sign in on the sign-in sheet (see Page 19) and provide their contact information for the auxiliary records. All charter members should sign the charter member form (see Page 17). These charter members will also sign their names on the official charter.

*Note: A copy of the completed organizational sign-in sheet should be forwarded to the National Secretary, along with the completed application forms and fees, and a copy of the completed charter members form. If a National Officer is present, she will collect these items and forward them to the National Secretary.*

### Obligation

I pledge to stand by any member of this organization in adversity as well as prosperity; to act prudently, justly and kindly to all members, and to do unto others as I would have them do unto me. I will be fair in my judgments of other members and will defend them to the best of my ability. I will visit the sick and distressed of our Auxiliary, rendering any assistance I can. I will abide by the Constitution, Bylaws and Rules governing the Auxiliary, and I will do all in my power to promote its welfare. All of this I solemnly promise in the presence of these witnesses.

### Nomination and Election of Officers

Following the reciting of the obligation, the next order of business should be the nomination and election of Officers. The following is a list of Auxiliary Offices for Local Auxiliaries. A brief description of the main duties for each is provided.

#### President

Sets the meeting agenda; presides over meetings; appoints committees.

#### Vice President

Presides over meetings in the absence of the president.

### Secretary

Takes minutes, receives dues and Auxiliary monies, fills out the Annual Report; reports any changes in contact information or membership to the National Secretary.

### Treasurer

Receives Auxiliary monies from the Secretary and provides Treasurer's report at meetings. May be combined with Secretary position.

### Chaplain

Opens the meeting with a prayer.

### Legislative Representative

Keeps up with legislative issues important to members, including information provided monthly on our website by the National Auxiliary Legislative Representative.

### Mobilization Coordinator

Oversees the Auxiliary's calling / email list and coordinates the calling committee; ensures changes are sent to the National Outreach Coordinator.

### Convention Delegate

Represents the Auxiliary at the Quadrennial Convention.

### Alternate Convention Delegate

Serves in the event the delegate cannot attend the Quadrennial Convention.

***Note:** The Convention Delegate and Alternate Delegate positions must be filled in the year prior to the National Auxiliary Quadrennial Convention. Future conventions will be held in the following years: 2026, 2030, 2034, etc.*

Newly forming Auxiliaries should strive to fill as many of the offices as possible; however, the Auxiliary cannot function without at least a President, Secretary, and Treasurer (or Secretary-Treasurer).

Officers can hold more than one elected office, with the exception of the offices of President and Treasurer; these cannot be the same person.

Nominations should be taken from the floor from members interested in fulfilling the duties as set forth in the Bylaws for Local Auxiliaries (see pages 28-30 of this document). If only one person is seeking an office, that officer may be elected by acclamation. If there is more than one member wishing to fill an office, the vote may be taken by a show of hands or by secret ballot. If done by secret ballot, two members should be chosen as tellers to count the ballots and advise whoever is presiding over the meeting which nominee received the most votes.

***Note:** Members are sometimes reluctant to take an office in the auxiliary, fearing that the duties of that office will take too much of their time. The office that takes the most time is that of the secretary, or secretary-treasurer, who is responsible for preparing meeting minutes, dues notices, and the annual report. We suggest that members be encouraged to give it a try, and if the duties become too much, they can step down if necessary.*



## Sample Minutes

Minutes of Meeting of BLET Auxiliary # \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Meeting \_\_\_\_\_

The Organizational meeting of the \_\_\_\_\_ Auxiliary Number \_\_\_\_\_ was held on \_\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_ (location) at \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. / p.m., with the following members presenting themselves for membership:

*(List all Members Present)*

\_\_\_\_\_ served as the organizing officer representing the National BLET Auxiliary. The meeting was called to order, and \_\_\_\_\_ was appointed to recording secretary for the meeting (since no current Auxiliary Members were present) or (who is currently a member of Auxiliary \_\_\_\_\_) or (who is currently a Member At Large). An overview of the mission and purpose was given.

Application and fees were collected from those present. The obligation was then recited by the members-elect and they were recognized as new members of the BLET Auxiliary.

There being a quorum present, Officers were nominated and elected as follows:

President	_____
Vice President	_____
Secretary	_____
Treasurer	_____
Legislative Representative	_____
Chaplain	_____
Mobilization Coordinator	_____

The new Auxiliary Officers were then installed by the Organizing Officer, and the newly elected President took her (or his) place presiding over the meeting.

Discussion ensued for establishing a regular meeting date, place and time, and upon motion made by \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by \_\_\_\_\_, it was then determined that regular meetings would be held on the \_\_\_\_\_ of every month at \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. / p.m., at \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

A motion to open a bank account for the Auxiliary was made by \_\_\_\_\_ and seconded by \_\_\_\_\_. President \_\_\_\_\_ and Treasurer (or Secretary-Treasurer) \_\_\_\_\_ will be authorized signers on the account.

It was suggested by the president that the establishment of other policies be discussed at the first regular meeting, scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, upon motion made by \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by \_\_\_\_\_, the meeting was adjourned at \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. / p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary (or Secretary-Treasurer)

Charter Member Form



PETITION FOR CHARTER  
TO THE  
BLET AUXILIARY

*A \$25.00 fee payment must accompany this Petition*

*To the National Secretary:*

*We, the undersigned, spouses, widows, widowers, daughters, sons, mothers, and fathers of members of Division \_\_\_\_ of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, and other interested persons, do hereby petition to the National BLET Auxiliary for a Charter to organize an Auxiliary in the City of \_\_\_\_\_, County of \_\_\_\_\_, State of \_\_\_\_\_, said Auxiliary to be known as \_\_\_\_\_ No.: \_\_\_\_\_. And we do furthermore agree to come under the jurisdiction of the National Auxiliary, and that we will obey and be governed by the Constitution and Bylaws of said Organization:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*The undersigned hereby certifies that applicants for Charter are spouses, widows, widowers, daughters, sons, mothers, fathers, and interested persons of members in good standing of this Division. (If only 10 signatures are presented, no more than three of them may be by applicants for associate membership in the BLET Auxiliary)*

*Certified by: \_\_\_\_\_*

*Secretary/Treasurer, BLET Division No. \_\_\_\_\_*













# Money Matters

## Tax Identification Number

Each Local Auxiliary must obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN). Because Local Auxiliaries fall under the umbrella of the National Auxiliary, the information to request an EIN should be sent to the National Treasurer as soon as possible, either immediately before or immediately after the organizational meeting. The EIN information request form is on page 21 of this document.

## Bank Account

As soon as reasonably possible, a bank account should be established for the Local Auxiliary. Finding one that does not charge any service fees is the best way to go and can often be accomplished through a local credit union.

Your banking institution may require some or all of the following documentation when opening an account. Where noted, these documents follow this section.

- Letter from National Treasurer noting the National Auxiliary's EIN, a Local Auxiliary EIN, Tax exempt status information, and the address of the Auxiliary's headquarters and contact. (See example on page 23 of this document.)
- Internal Revenue Service Letter verifying the National Auxiliary's EIN, our group exemption number, our tax-exempt status, and our new name.
- Copy of your Charter, which can be used as your organizational document.
- Copy of the minutes for the meeting at which officers were elected, including the names of those elected to each position.
- Copy of Article VI of the Local Auxiliary Bylaws, indicating how election are conducted. (See Article VI, Nominations and Elections, on pages 30-31 of this document.)
- Copy of Article V of the Local Auxiliary Bylaws outlining which officers are responsible for fiduciary duties of the organization, i.e., the President and the Treasurer or Secretary-Treasurer. (See Article V, Officers and Duties of Officers, on pages 26-28 of this document.)

If the President or Treasurer resigns or is not re-elected, then it is the duty of the new President or Treasurer to ensure the signature card and information at the bank is kept up to date.

## Payment of Dues

When a Local Auxiliary is first established, only the application fees are forwarded to the National Secretary. Local Auxiliaries pay the portion of their dues that is due to the National Auxiliary in arrears. Just as tax returns cover the previous year, Local Auxiliaries' dues are submitted with the annual report for the prior year (i.e., dues collected for 2023 are collected at the local level during the 2023 calendar year and are payable to the National Auxiliary on or before March 1, 2024.)

## Local Auxiliary Members' Dues Structure

Local Auxiliary dues are set by the members of the Local Auxiliary. Most Local Auxiliaries collect an additional amount, over and above the National dues, that stay with the Local Auxiliary. The amount ranges from \$1.00 to \$10.00 per member in addition to the National Auxiliary dues. The following represents the amounts due each year from each Local Auxiliary member, to the National Auxiliary, based on the status of the member, i.e., retired or active.

<i>Active Auxiliary Member:</i>	<i>\$65.00 per year</i>
<i>Retired (Over 60) / Widows / Widowers:</i>	<i>\$37.00 per year</i>

In tough times, some Auxiliaries have chosen not to collect dues from their members, but instead to raise the money for payment of their members' National dues. We have no issue with Auxiliaries that wish to do so, and if it makes it easier to recruit members, and members are willing to work to raise the money, then this is fine. Whatever works best for the Local Auxiliary in regard to this is fine with the National Auxiliary.

## Auxiliary Interest Income Bank Accounts

After the Local Auxiliary bank account is established, if it is an interest-bearing account, you may receive a 1099 Interest statement from your bank. When that form is received, please remember to forward a copy of the 1099-INT to the National Treasurer as soon as possible for inclusion in the Organization's tax return.

## Employer Identification Number

### Information Request Form

In order to comply with the Internal Revenue Service requirements, please complete the following information and forward it as soon as possible to:

Chris Baldwin  
604 Modelaire Drive  
La Grande, OR 97850

Or

Email the completed form to [chris.baldwin2129@gmail.com](mailto:chris.baldwin2129@gmail.com)

Once this information is received, the National Treasurer will obtain an Employee Identification Number (EIN) for your Auxiliary as a subordinate organization to the National Auxiliary. When the new EIN is returned by the IRS, the National Treasurer will forward a letter to your Secretary / Treasurer, with a copy to your President, which can then be presented to your financial institution, if requested, setting forth your new EIN and verifying your affiliation with the National Auxiliary.

-----  
[Return this portion to the address above]

Auxiliary Name and Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Organized: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Name, mailing address, phone number, and email address of treasurer (or Secretary / Treasurer)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

If mailing address is a Post Office Box, please provide street address:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number of Treasurer (or Secretary-Treasurer), for IRS identification verification purposes only: \_\_\_\_\_





Chris Baldwin  
National Treasurer

# Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Auxiliary

**SAMPLE**  
604 Modelaire Drive  
La Grande, Oregon 97850  
(541) 786-6438  
chris.baldwin2129@gmail.com  
www.bletauxiliary.net  
Tax ID #61-0504100

[ Date of Issuance ]

To whom it may concern:

In August of 1941, the Grand International Auxiliary to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers n/k/a the BLET Auxiliary was recognized as exempt from Federal income tax and exempt under Section 501 (c)(8) of the Internal Revenue Code. Auxiliary \_\_\_\_\_ is also exempt under Section 501(c)(8) of the Code.

On \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ Auxiliary No. \_\_\_\_\_, in \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, was organized as a subordinate organization under the National BLET Auxiliary.

The officers elected and installed are as follows:

- President \_\_\_\_\_
- Vice President \_\_\_\_\_
- Secretary (or Secretary/Treasurer) \_\_\_\_\_
- Treasurer (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_
- Legislative Representative \_\_\_\_\_

The National BLET Auxiliary's Employer Identification number is 61-0504100, and its subordinate Auxiliary No. \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_.

The Headquarters of the BLET Auxiliary is located at 7367 Stabulis Road, Valley Springs, California 95252, Attention: Kathleen Bisbikis, National President.

Auxiliary No. \_\_\_\_\_ contact info is: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions regarding this information, please call the number above.

Sincerely,

Chis Baldwin  
National Treasurer

Cc: \_\_\_\_\_, President, Auxiliary \_\_\_\_\_  
Kathleen Bisbikis, National President  
Jodi Wallace, National Secretary

Letter verifying IRS 501(c)(8)

03/06/2007 11:37 9132566452

BRAND

PAGE 03

Internal Revenue Service  
P. O. Box 2508  
Cincinnati, OH 45201

Department of the Treasury

Date: FEB 26 2007

Person to Contact:  
Gregory Renier

Toll Free Telephone Number:  
877-829-5500

Employer Identification Number:  
61-0504100

Group Exemption Number:  
0455

BLET AUXILIARY  
C/O HELEN BRAND  
38768 CRESCENT HILL RD  
OSAWATOMIE KS 66064

Dear Sir or Madam:

This is in response to your letter of January 16, 2007, regarding your name change from GRAND INT'L AUXILIARY TO THE BROTHERHOOD OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGRS to BLET AUXILIARY, as indicated above.

Our records indicate that a determination letter was issued in August 1941 that recognized you as exempt from Federal income tax. Our records further indicate that you are currently exempt under section 501(c)(8) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Based on the information supplied, we recognized the subordinates named on the list you submitted as exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(8) of the Code.

Contributions or gifts by individuals, to domestic fraternal societies, orders, or associations, operating under the lodge system, used exclusively for 501(c)(3) purposes are deductible under section 170(c)(4) of the Code. If solicitations are made for contributions or gifts by individuals for non-501(c)(3) purposes, the solicitation must include a statement indicating that these payments are not deductible as charitable contributions for Federal income tax purposes.

If you have any questions, please call us at the telephone number shown in the heading of this letter.

Sincerely,  


Cindy Westcott  
Manager, Exempt Organizations  
Determinations



## BLET Auxiliary Bylaws: Article V Officers and Duties of Officers

**Section 1. Officers.** The officers of an auxiliary are Past President, President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Chaplain, Legislative Representative, Mobilization Coordinator, and Trustees (3), if necessary.

For an auxiliary with a small membership, the auxiliary may combine the offices of secretary and treasurer. The duties of these two positions will then be combined. Should an officer wish to resign from an office, he/she must present a written resignation to the auxiliary secretary. An auxiliary officer may hold more than one office with the exception of president and treasurer. Under no circumstances may the president and treasurer be the same person.

### **Section 2. Duties of Officers.**

(a) **The Past President shall:**

- (1) Greet visitors;
- (2) Assist in installation of officers;
- (3) Assist in funeral ceremonies; and
- (4) Be a trustee, if necessary.

(b) **The President shall:**

- (1) Preside at all meetings;
- (2) Have supervision over the affairs of the auxiliary;
- (3) Sign with the secretary all requests for payment authorized by the auxiliary;
- (4) Counter-sign with the treasurer all checks;
- (5) Read and sign all important communications;
- (6) Authorize the secretary to call special meetings;
- (7) Appoint all committees;
- (8) See that all eligible members present vote at an election, unless excused;
- (9) Act as the installing officer, unless re-elected, in which case, any member may be appointed to act;
- (10) Appoint any member to temporarily fill in for the secretary in his/her absence;
- (11) Instruct the Auditing Committee at the last meeting in November to prepare a list of members eligible to vote on the day of the election;
- (12) Sign the annual report that is sent to the National Secretary;
- (13) Be a trustee, if necessary; and

- (14) Sign the bank signature card with the Treasurer.

The President of a newly formed auxiliary shall forward his/her address to the National President.

(c) **The Vice President shall:**

- (1) Act in the absence of the president at all regular and special meetings; and
- (2) Assist the president in preserving order.

(d) **The Secretary shall:**

- (1) Keep minutes of all meetings;
- (2) Receive all dues and other money belonging to the auxiliary, and issue an annual membership card to each member;
- (3) Keep an account of all financial transactions and pay all money received to the treasurer at the close of each meeting;
- (4) Include a financial report from the treasurer in the minutes;
- (5) Write correspondence for the auxiliary as instructed to do so by the president;
- (6) After January 1, notify all members that dues are payable for the current year; after March 31, annual dues are delinquent;
- (7) Complete the form furnished by the National Auxiliary, "Annual Report to the National Secretary;" read it at the first meeting in January; and send immediately with the national dues to the National Secretary;
- (8) See that each member receives a copy of the latest revision of the Constitution and Bylaws, and a directory of names and phone numbers of all local auxiliary members to each member at least once per year;
- (9) Notify all members of any change in date or time of regular meetings;
- (10) Notify applicant of acceptance for membership;
- (11) Notify the National Secretary as soon as possible when new members join, when a member is deceased, or when an election is held to fill the office of president and/or secretary. When a member is suspended, expelled, transferred, or reinstated, or has a name change, report these changes on Form 41 in the annual report;
- (12) Record in the minutes the date on which the treasurer reads the receipt for the bills paid;
- (13) Record in the minutes the entire transaction of nominations and election of officers;
- (14) Close the books on December 31;
- (15) Have the books audited as soon as possible after January 1, and deliver them to the successor in office, if applicable;
- (16) Make a full written report of the year's work the first meeting in January, before installation of officers; and
- (17) Verify the validity of the sponsor on each membership application.

(e) **The Treasurer shall:**

- (1) Receive all money collected by the secretary;
- (2) Pay out all money authorized by the auxiliary with checks counter-signed by the

president;

- (3) Report all paid bills and revenues received at the first meeting following the date the payment was made or the income received;
- (4) Keep a record of all financial transactions;
- (5) Be a trustee, if necessary;
- (6) Close the books on December 31;
- (7) Present a full written report at the first meeting in January before installation of offices, and at any other time as requested; and
- (8) Have the books audited no later than March 1, and deliver all books and money to the successor, if applicable.

**(f) The Chaplain shall:**

- (1) Open the meeting with a prayer; and
- (2) Perform such other duties as requested.

**(g) The Legislative Representative shall:**

- (1) Work with the national and state legislative representatives to stay informed on current legislative issues;
- (2) Present a report of current legislative activity at each regular meeting;
- (3) Perform such duties as directed by the president, state legislative representative or national legislative representative; and
- (4) Maintain auxiliary legislative files, and deliver same to his/her successor as soon as possible following installation.

**(h) The Mobilization Coordinator shall:**

- (1) Work with the national and regional mobilization coordinators to keep mobilization lists current and to effectuate calling chains;
- (2) Present a report of current activity at regular meetings, as necessary; and
- (3) Perform such duties as directed by the president, regional mobilization coordinator, or national mobilization coordinator.

**(i) The Trustees shall:**

- (1) Have supervision over all property and bonds belonging to the auxiliary;
- (2) Purchase all new property ordered by the auxiliary;
- (3) Make arrangements for a meeting place when authorized by the auxiliary; and
- (4) Keep an inventory of all property and give a report at the close of each year.



## BLET Auxiliary Bylaws: Article VI Nominations and Elections

**Section 1. Election.** Election of officers may be by secret ballot, nominations from the floor, or by a slate presented by a nominating committee, majority vote electing.

Prior to nominations, the president shall ensure that all auxiliary members are provided with a written explanation of the duties and requirements of each office. It is important that each candidate for the office understands the duties and requirements connected to that office.

If election is by a nominating committee slate, said committee of three (3) shall be appointed by the president in October to select a slate of officers for the ensuing year. The president is not a member of this committee.

**Section 2. Frequency.** Elections shall be held once every two (2) years, at the last meeting of the calendar year. If the election does not take place on the day appointed, the president will instruct the secretary to notify all eligible members of the time set for the election, which must be a regular meeting, or a special meeting called for this purpose. In order for a special meeting for elections to be valid, all members must be contacted either by phone, e-mail, or in person, and advised of the time, place, and purpose of the special meeting, at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

**Section 3. Eligibility.** Any member who has attended five (5) meetings during the current year and pays all local and national dues to date of election is eligible to vote and be elected as a delegate. Any member who has paid all local and national dues to date of election can be elected an officer. The secretary's records shall be used to verify that candidates meet the eligibility requirements.

**Section 4. Election Procedure.** The procedure to be followed in the election of officers by written ballot shall be:

By secret ballot:

- (a) Report by the secretary of members eligible to vote;
- (b) The president shall appoint two (2) tellers, one to serve as chair, the other to verify and report to the chair;
- (c) The chair of tellers takes note of the number of votes and records them on the tally sheet as follows:

Number of votes present	_____
Total Number of votes cast	_____
Number of votes needed for election	_____

President may only vote in case of tie.

Note: More or fewer than the number of votes present voids the vote and the vote must be taken over.

- (d) The president calls for nominations from the floor for each office and votes are cast by secret ballot for each office.

(e) An officer is declared elected if he/she receives a majority of all votes cast. If not, a second ballot is taken. After the second ballot, and no one is declared elected, only the two having the highest number of votes are candidates, and a third ballot must be taken. If there is only one candidate for an office, the officer may be elected by acclamation.

(f) Officers and delegates are elected in the following order:

Delegate and alternate (elected only in the year preceding the General Session of the National Auxiliary, and according to Section 3. Eligibility), president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, legislative representative, mobilization coordinator, and chaplain.

By slate presented by a Nominating Committee shall be:

- (a) Report by the secretary of members eligible to vote;
- (b) Report of nominating committee giving the slate of officers who have consented to have their names placed as candidates for office;
- (c) President calls for nominations from the floor for each office;
- (d) If there are no nominations from the floor, the slate of officers shall be elected by acclamation;
- (e) If there are nominations from the floor, the vote will be by secret ballot as outlined above.

Members-at-large shall elect regional representatives (delegates) to the general session of the National Auxiliary as outlined in Article X.

## What Next? Committees

### Calling Committee

Once the new president takes over, committees can and should be designated. The most important committee to establish first is the calling committee. The mobilization coordinator can be the chair and anyone willing to serve on that committee should be appointed. The calling committee is responsible for calling/e-mailing members and prospective members, reminding them of upcoming meetings. This practice has been proven to increase attendance. The calling committee is also responsible for forwarding information or alerts that need to be acted upon as determined by the legislative representative or other officer. Having more than one person help with this task of implementing your mobilization network makes it less time consuming for all.

### Social Committee

Another committee to consider as the auxiliary establishes itself is the social committee. The social committee is a very important and integral part of the work of the auxiliary.

The members of this committee oversee holiday parties and picnics and can also be utilized to organize informational meetings and seminars. Depending on how active the auxiliary is at planning events, the social committee can turn out to be one of the busier committees within the auxiliary.

### Other Committees

Depending upon your needs, you can form as many committees as your members deem necessary. The two above cover the most basic needs of the organization.



## Local Auxiliary Policies

As your auxiliary progresses, there will probably come a time that a need is recognized to form local policies. Local policies cannot conflict with the National Auxiliary Bylaws but cover such things as when and to whom to send flowers, cards, or prepare a meal for a member's family. If parameters are not set by a local auxiliary, feelings could be hurt, or the need to do any of the above can get out of hand. Some examples of local auxiliary policies that can be adapted to suit the needs of members in your area can be found on the following page.

What your auxiliary does and how active you are in your area is entirely up to you. In the pages to follow, we would like to give you some ideas of what your auxiliary can do to keep members active and, even for those auxiliaries that have been around awhile, possibly present some new ideas or suggestions to get new employees' spouses involved in your organization and revitalize our Auxiliary.

### Sample Policies for Auxiliaries

Auxiliaries cannot set policies that are contradictory to the National Constitution and Bylaws, but there are some matters that should be addressed in order to prevent hurt feelings. As you read the sample policies below, you may understand why that is. If a policy is in place, and an occasion arises where someone feels slighted because the auxiliary does not acknowledge an extended family member that they were close to, then the policy can be stated to let that member know the reasons for the auxiliary response in that situation.

#### Expression of sympathy

When a family member (parent, brother, sister) of an auxiliary member passes away, expressions of sympathy will be sent in accordance with the wishes of the family, either by sending flowers/plants or by making a memorial contribution.

Flowers/plants will be in the approximate amount of \$25 to \$30, or a memorial contribution will be sent to the respective organization in the amount of \$25.00. If an auxiliary member, or an immediate family member of an auxiliary member passes away, the auxiliary, in addition to flowers/plants or memorial contribution, may choose to provide a meal for the family. If an extended family member of an auxiliary member passes away, the auxiliary secretary will send a sympathy card to extend our condolences. Members should notify the auxiliary president or secretary when knowledge of the death is learned.

If a fatal accident occurs involving any BLET member in our area, the auxiliary will send a sympathy card, prepare a meal for the family, and provide any immediate support necessary to protect the spouse of the BLET member from the Carrier, whether an auxiliary member or not. The auxiliary will work with the local BLET Division to provide any additional support that may be necessary for the widow and family of the BLET member.

#### Policy on Injuries / Accidents or illness

When an auxiliary member, or an immediate family member of an auxiliary member, experiences an accident, injury, or illness, the auxiliary secretary will send a get-well card to the family (or will send flowers or a plant to the member or family member expressing good wishes).

## Ideas for Auxiliary Hosted Events

There are many events a local auxiliary can host for various purposes, but one of the most important reasons to do so is the opportunity to facilitate networking between BLET members, their spouses, and families. Below are some examples of the types of events that can be held and some of the reasons for holding them. As always, creativity reigns.

One way to make holding these events easier is to contact a FELA attorney who may be willing to help sponsor an event. These attorneys are often willing to sponsor and attend BLET and BLET Auxiliary events because it gives them exposure to the membership.

1. Hosting holiday parties for BLET division members and their spouses and/or families. The holidays are a great time to get together and put aside any differences that may exist in the workplace. It allows for a festive atmosphere, the opportunity to distribute important information, and the chance to get the word out that the Auxiliary exists. The networking of railroad families can make a difference if an accident or injury occurs because that person is no longer a stranger to others who live the same kind of life. It also affords the opportunity to raise some money for the local auxiliary, collect canned goods for food banks, or toys for needy children.
2. Picnics or barbeques are also a great way for BLET members, spouses, and families to get together and get to know one another. Such events provide fun, food, and again, the opportunity to get important information out to the membership and their families. As with holiday parties, networking at these events helps BLET members and their families get to know one another and promotes camaraderie.
3. Informational seminars are the best way to share important information about the Federal Employers Liability Act, Railroad Retirement & Railroad Retirement Disability Insurance, health and welfare insurance, and other information BLET members and their families need to know, in a forum geared strictly for that purpose. Again, FELA attorneys are often happy to be invited to these types of events, and because meetings usually turn out the best when they accompany a meal, the attorneys are often willing to help with the associated costs. Advertising ahead of time is important... give as much advance notice as possible, and plenty of reminders.



## Ideas and Suggestions to Keep the Auxiliary Alive and Active

In order to keep members engaged, the local auxiliary should try to plan other activities in addition to a monthly meeting. Below are some ideas that you could consider as your local auxiliary matures.

1. Working with the BLET division, make a list of BLET division officers' phone numbers and auxiliary officers' phone numbers to distribute to every BLET division member. This list comes in handy in the event of an accident or injury and can be invaluable at a time when it may be hard to think clearly.
2. Create information packets for BLET division members and their spouses containing information every railroad family needs to know in the event of an accident or injury. In an effort to provide you with some of the information that should be included in your packet is an article written by Kathie Bailey, an auxiliary member who lost her husband in a work-related accident. That is the worst-case scenario, but it contains important information as to what to do (and what not to do) in the event a railroader is injured on the job. The article follows this section and is also contained in the Abbreviated Auxiliary Information Packet.
3. Writing letters to area hospitals, including those that might be utilized enroute, setting forth the differences that exist for railroaders hurt on the job as opposed to those persons who are covered by State Workman's Compensation.
4. Working with the BLET division, Auxiliary State Legislative Rep (if your state has one), the National Auxiliary Legislative Rep, or the BLET National Legislative Office, auxiliary members can implement letter-writing campaigns on issues when requested. For instance, if there is pending legislation that is important to railroaders and their families, the auxiliary can help busy BLET members by preparing the letters for their signature, and once signed, make sure they are sent in to the proper elected representative or governmental entity.
5. Providing packets of information to all division members setting forth the documents and information needed in order to be prepared in the event of accident, injury, or other tragedy, whether occurring on the railroad or on the way to the grocery store.
6. During the holidays, some auxiliaries and BLET divisions, either together or separately, adopt an area family in need and provide food and gifts for that family. Also, an auxiliary can organize canned foods drives, Toys for Tots drives, or other charitable activities in which the members take an interest. Providing a box at the yard office so everyone can participate and making sure the donations are taken to the designated organization, gives railroad employees and members a sense that they are helping out those less fortunate during the season of charity.

7. One auxiliary decided they could make a difference by becoming Operation Lifesaver presenters. Since the carrier that the BLET members worked for in that area had ceased its program, they took it upon themselves to become certified and made presentations at schools and to civic groups to educate the public on the inherent dangers of grade crossings and trespassing on railroad property.
8. An Amtrak engineer in the Northeast created and designed a Girl Scout badge on railroading. Her program was approved by the Girl Scouts of America and is geared more towards passenger rail but includes aspects of safety that can translate to freight railroading as well. If anyone desires to learn more about the badge and the requirements, please contact the National President. The kids loved it, and those involved enjoyed themselves as well.
9. Some local auxiliaries, working with the BLET local division(s) in the area, have created their own scholarship programs for the children, spouses, and grandchildren of area BLET members. They award as many scholarships, in denominations of \$250 or \$500, as they have funds available for in any given year. They raise funds through raffles, bake sales, yard sales, etc., to cover the expense of the scholarships. Some also try to raise enough to make a donation to the National Auxiliary Scholarship Fund at least every other year. In this current economic climate, with skyrocketing costs for higher education, every little bit is appreciated by the recipients and the BLET members appreciate the local auxiliary's administration of the scholarship program.

These are just a few suggestions for activities that can keep members interested in the work of the auxiliary in addition to our mission of education and support. Asking members to think about other things that can be done in your area also makes them feel that they are contributing to the Organization.

## When Tragedy Strikes

### **When tragedy strikes, what can you do?**

**By Kathie Bailey, BLET Auxiliary Member-at-Large**

*Kathie Bailey is the widow of G.Y. Bailey, who was killed in a head-on collision in dark territory in Shepherd, Texas, on September 15, 2005.*

It's the middle of the night - you're sound asleep. Your husband is at work, just like every other normal day. The doorbell rings several times. Startled, you roll over, look at the clock - it's 3:21 a.m. You get out of bed and start down the hallway to answer the door. Quickly you check the children's rooms on your way, just to make sure they're in bed asleep and safe. They are, and you breathe a quick sigh of relief. Then you realize, you have a grown child that doesn't live at home. Your heart skips a beat as you ask who's at the door. They answer you, but it's mumbled, and you can't understand. Did they say "sheriff"? You ask again, and you still can't understand clearly. Your heart skips another beat. You take a deep breath, and crack the door. It's not a sheriff; it's your husband's friend from work, his union buddy. You're groggy and confused, thinking, "What is he doing here at this hour?" He stands in the doorway just looking at you while you keep asking him, "What's going on, why are you here?" while he just stands there, not saying anything. He finally tells you, "You need to listen to me. There was an accident, two trains in a head-on collision." All of a sudden you get this surge of adrenaline. Your heart begins to pound like it's going to pop out of your chest. Your hands begin to shake and you feel like you are either going to pass out or be sick. You tell him, "You're scaring me. Where is my husband? How bad is he hurt?" His friend and union brother just keeps shaking his head and telling you that you need to listen to him, as he sits you down, kneels in front of you and holds your hands while hanging his head. The next words that come out of his mouth are words that you NEVER want to hear. "G.Y. didn't make it." Your whole world spins out of control and crashes down around you in a million pieces at that very second. I know they were the hardest words this man has ever had to say to a friend and union brother's wife, and I pray that I NEVER have to hear those words again.

If you're like me, you think that happens to "someone else." Now you become that "someone else." Emotions run raw in a tragic situation; all hell breaks loose in your life and you have to deal with things you never dreamed you'd ever be dealing with. Too many spouses are not involved enough in the railroad worker's work and union

**What to do when a railroad official or claims agent contacts you to inform you of an injury to or death of your spouse:**

- 1) *Make the railroad official contacting you in person identify themselves; make certain they are who they say they are.*
- 2) *Find out exactly where your spouse is located and what his/her condition is.*
- 3) *DO NOT allow any railroad representatives into your home.*
- 4) *Get the pertinent information and DO NOT volunteer any information. Make NO statements - verbal, written, or recorded.*
- 5) *If in public, get the needed information and walk away. Again make NO statements.*
- 6) *If a railroad official calls you on the phone, get the needed information and hang up. Again, make NO statements. From this time forward, monitor all calls if you have Caller ID and an answering machine.*
- 7) *DO NOT sign anything.*
- 8) *DO NOT accept anything from them.*
- 9) *After initial contact, and after you have the needed information, have no further contact with any railroad official or claims agent until after you have contacted Legal Counsel. Make certain that the railroad official is informed that they are not to contact you or any member of your family from this time forward until you want to make contact with them.*
- 10) *At the hospital, DO NOT allow any railroad official or claims agent into the hospital room or treatment area.*
- 11) *Instruct any railroad official or claims agent that they are to have NO contact with the patient, family, or any medical personnel treating your spouse. Inform them that you have notified Legal Counsel. This will back them off very quickly.*
- 12) *DO NOT allow any railroad official or claims agent to make ANY decisions concerning medical treatment or arrangement for your spouse.*
- 13) *Sign ONLY necessary medical forms for the treatment of your spouse that are from the hospital. DO NOT make statements to any medical personnel except in regard to the medical treatment for your spouse.*
- 14) *Make certain that all medical personnel, including doctors, know of these instructions and abide by them. Insist that the Doctor/Patient confidentiality be observed.*
- 15) *When and where you can, especially if your spouse has been medicated, make certain that your spouse gives a consistent history of the accident to each medical provider who may inquire. Consistency of the explanation of the event is very important as these medical providers will be questioned by the railroad officials.*

***REMEMBER...Anything you say to a railroad official and/or claims agent will be used against you and your spouse in order to protect the railroad's interest. Call an experienced FELA attorney as soon as possible and be governed by their advice and instructions.***

— Kathie Bailey

that he belongs to. If you are one of those spouses, you won't have the slightest idea as to what you should and shouldn't do at a time when panic sets in and your brain and body go into "auto pilot" to get through what is happening, and your spouse isn't there to help you through this mess that is now called your life.

Two and a half years before my husband was killed, one of his best friends dropped dead of a massive heart attack in the parking lot at the yard office about 10 minutes after getting off of a train and tying up. It was February of 2003 and his friend was only 56 years old, happy, healthy, and had never had any type of heart or health problems. His friend left behind a 37-year old widow – with whom he was getting ready to celebrate his 3<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary - and two grown children in their early to mid twenties. It was a real wake up call for us. We have four children between us - two of them grown, two in their early teens and one precious grandson. My husband and I both then decided to make out our wills and get our affairs in order "just in case." Now, you are probably thinking, "I'm too young to have a will or have life insurance." Well, we thought that too, but we did it anyway, and thank God we did. If you and your spouse are lucky, you won't have to use wills, life insurance, etc. until you are very old. But in our case, the "just in case" came much sooner than any of us ever imagined.

At the time my husband was killed, he was the Local Chairman of BLET Division 62, a primary member on the BLET National Safety Task Force, the Safety Captain of the Houston Service Unit Safety Committee and, in 2003, he was nominated by Union Pacific as a finalist for the John C. Kenefick Safety Award. He ate, lived, slept, and breathed for his family, the BLET, and the railroad. When his friend died suddenly in 2003, he and I sat down – with the help of our close friend and experienced FELA attorney Bob Tramuto of Jones and Granger - and gathered information that a railroad worker's spouse would need to know if they were ever involved in an accident, whether injured or worse yet, killed.

I can honestly say that if it weren't for me being interested enough in my husband's work and his BLET union, I wouldn't have made it through the last 14 months. His BLET union brothers and sisters were there for me and our family, hundreds of them. They had my back when I needed them the most, and for that alone I will be eternally grateful to our union family. My husband would be so very proud of them for stepping up and taking care of our family. I feel it is imperative to share with you some things a railroad worker's spouse should know, "just in case" something happens to you. God knows, I hope none of you will ever need it, but if you do become that "someone else," I hope some of these things will help your family, just as they helped ours.

Just for the record, my husband's accident happened around midnight and the railroad never called me. A claims agent showed up at 4:38 a.m. and was asked to leave our property immediately. The claims agent was informed that we wanted no contact with the railroad unless it was through our attorney, Bob Tramuto.

As I have said before, you just never know. I hope none of your families will

ever have to go through such chaos and devastation. But if they do, having as much information available at all times will help them know what to do and not do. Please feel free to contact me at any time. I can be contacted via e-mail at [kathiebailey@att.net](mailto:kathiebailey@att.net).

***Stay safe out there on the rails!***

### **Things your spouse should always have on hand in the case of an injury or death:**

- 1) **Names and phone numbers to your local division's union officers: Local Chairman, President, Secretary/Treasurer, Vice President, Chaplain.**
- 2) **Names and phone numbers of the FELA attorneys in your area. It is a good idea to get to know some of them "just in case."**
- 3) **All insurance policies: Health, Disability, Job Insurance, Life Insurance**
- 4) **Your current will. Whether we want to believe it or not, everyone needs to have one.**
- 5) **Any other important paperwork, such as a living will, DNR, power of attorney, or organ donor information.**
- 6) **Names and phone numbers of the BLET National Auxiliary Officers at [www.bletauxiliary.net](http://www.bletauxiliary.net).**

## Recruiting New Members

As with all organizations, members will come and go. Hopefully most will stay, but as new railroaders are hired and as they join the BLET, we need to keep up with new, eligible spouses and invite them to join. Throughout this packet, we have suggested several ways to provide opportunities to meet these new members and families. You can also simply call a prospective member and talk to her (or him) about the auxiliary, especially if she/he has not been a railroad spouse for very long. The spouses of newly hired railroad employees are the ones we need to reach out to, so they can become educated about all the intricacies of railroad life.

Included in the back pocket of this folder is a copy of the Auxiliary's abbreviated information packet that can be copied and used as a recruiting tool. However, there's nothing that works better than communicating face-to-face.



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