BMWED to Conduct Research on Occupational Risk Reduction

BMWED President Freddie N. Simpson, with the full support of the National Division Officers, has approved a Brotherhood-wide research study to address the long-standing absence of high quality data reflecting the nature, frequency, severity and socio-economic consequences of occupational risk and its impact on BMWED members. This project is unprecedented in scope and has the full institutional support of BMWED’s leadership.

President Simpson said, “This research is intended to remedy the current lack of comprehensive and accurate documentation of occupational risks encountered by hard-working BMWED members throughout their careers. BMWED’s multi-faceted effort to make the workplace safer requires a full understanding of past and present workplace conditions in order to reduce risk and create a safer and healthier work environment for current and future BMWED members.”

The project will be coordinated by the BMWED Department of Safety and conducted by a select team of highly credentialed academic and medical researchers. The research team will focus their studies on areas of concern identified by active and retired BMWED members, beginning with a forthcoming comprehensive membership survey.

The study is intended to assess occupational risk both quantitatively and qualitatively in order to identify and define problems, point to solutions, and help BMWED address risk reduction in a data-driven and comprehensive manner. The information gathered in this study will be used to enhance the health, safety, and welfare of current and future members by providing scientifically and economically validated data for use by BMWED in the legislative, regulatory, and labor/management arenas. Ultimately, this research will aid the Brotherhood in quantifying occupational risk so that identified risks can be mitigated through the Risk Reduction provisions of the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008.

Protecting the privacy and confidentiality of BMWED members participating in the survey is of paramount importance and will be built into the research protocols.

BMWED encourages each and every member to participate in the upcoming survey and support this important occupational risk reduction research project. Additional information regarding member participation will be provided via mail, the BMWED Journal, and other appropriate means as we move this important research project forward.

BMWED organizes MOW workers on Indiana Railroad Company

Twenty-four maintenance of way employees with The Indiana Railroad Company are the newest members of the BMWED, voting in a super-majority Sept. 2 to join our Union. The results of the vote were certified by the National Mediation Board Sept. 3.

The new members are now a part of the BMWED’s Allied Federation. They currently do not have a collective bargaining agreement setting wages and rules, instead working under a unilaterally imposed set of company policies. The first course of action for the BMWED will be negotiation of a labor agreement with The Indiana Railroad Company.

ASF LODGE 2434 ELECTS BROTHER BRENT HALL AS FIRST PRESIDENT

ASF Local Lodge 2434 will now be able to send their own delegate to Convention and fall under BMWED National Handling during negotiations. Forming the lodge affords the members who work at Wheelersburg to discuss the issues and ideas that directly affect their work at the terminal.

“I am encouraged to have a new lodge represented in the BMWED and proud of the new officers for stepping up and taking action,” BMWED President Freddie Simpson said. “Congratulations to our Brothers in Wheelersburg.”

As mentioned, one of the first orders of business for the new lodge was to elect local officers. They include: President Brent Hall, Vice President Randy Williams, and Secretary-Treasurer Todd Holland.

Congratulations to new ASF Lodge 2434 on your new charter.
Change of Address Request

Please remember to notify your System Office or the National Division of any change of address or telephone number. It is vital that this information be kept current. Railroad employers do not always provide this information to the BMWED. Phone numbers can be found at BMWE.org.

QR Codes

A QR code (Quick Response Code) is a two-dimensional code that can be scanned with a mobile phone to gain access to specific information via the mobile web.
BMWED Brothers meet, compete at obstacle race in Boise

By Brother Roy L. Morrison
With a membership so vastly dispersed all over the nation, BMWED members are finding interesting ways to connect with their brothers and family. The nation's fastest growing sport of obstacle racing is bringing BMWED members, both past and present, together in the gyms and on the course. On June 13, 2015, four members and two former members met for the first Reebok Spartan Race in Boise, Idaho.

This is the fourth Spartan race I have participated in the past year, and I was fortunate enough to have my BMWED Brothers alongside me for two of them. My wife also raced in one. In the coming months, I plan to participate in four more with my BMWED Brothers.

In Boise, the terrain presented racers with one of the most challenging Sprint courses on the Reebok Spartan Tour. The 4-mile, 25-obstacle course took full advantage of the hills adjacent to Thomas Pence Ranch in Payette, ID. The racers left the start line and were immediately greeted with three large moats that ensured racers emerged wet and muddy. Afterwards, the climbing began. Over the course the hills would be climbed five times, each ascent climbing to an obstacle or two, followed by quick descents into the ravines.

There was very little established trail on the course. Racers made their own routes up the hills and bushwhacked their way down. The highlight of the course was the gauntlet of obstacles in the festival area. This consisted of a rapid succession of the Multi-bar, the Z-wall, the Hercules Hoist and the Rope Climb. Many racers without developed grip strength were left doing 120 burpees in this section. And for good measure, making a return were the traditional Tractor-Pull and the Monkey Bars.

One thing fairly unique to the Spartan races is that although each racer is on an individual mission, teamwork is allowed and encouraged. With the help of their teammates, all our members finished – and although they may have had a few bumps, bruises, and some rope burn, very few burpees where required. The weather was perfect, the terrain was challenging and the athletes gave it their all to complete the course and earn their finisher’s medals. Congratulations to all, and I hope to see more of you on the course in the future!

Maybe it is future Spartan Races, maybe it’s golf courses, maybe it’s something else – I encourage all of you to find common, preferably healthy, ways to connect with your BMWED Family.

Brother Morrison is an West Region Internal Organizer for the BMWED CAT Team and an 18-year member of Unified System Division Lodge 325.
anomalies were uncovered outside of the LIRR. Unique to the LIRR and that no significant boondoggle, the 2008 investigation found that the Occupational Disability program as a fraudulent scheme. The latest attack on RRB Occupational Disability has its genesis on the Long Island Railroad (LIRR), when the New York Times first reported what appeared to be cases of fraudulent disability claims arising on the Long Island Railroad (LIRR) in 2008.

At that time, Congress took up an investigation into the apparent fraud perpetuated by a small group of LIRR retirees and their medical advisors to determine if the alleged fraud in Occupational Disability was a widespread problem or a localized issue confined to the LIRR. Try as they might to broadly paint our problem or a localized issue confined to the LIRR, the 2008 investigation found that the alleged fraud was limited to circumstances unique to the LIRR and that no significant anomalies were uncovered outside of the LIRR.

To understand the potential impact of this assault, you need to understand how unique and valuable the RRB Occupational Disability program is for BMWED members. The Occupational Disability program permits railroad workers who can no longer perform their railroad jobs to get on with the rest of their lives without fear of complete financial ruin, although they must provide their own medical insurance. This program, funded solely through payroll taxes paid by railroad workers and their employers, provides an annuity to long service and older railroad workers who cannot perform their current railroad job due to injury, illness or simple old age wear and tear. Few if any private sector workers have such a benefit. Consequently, we as railroad workers are often seen by certain politicians and ideologues as getting “special” treatment that they believe is “above our station” in life. Put simply, they think that we as working people have it too good.

The outline of this assault on our Occupation Disability program became known on May 1, 2015, when the House Government Operations Subcommittee held a hearing titled, “Is the Railroad Retirement Board Doing Enough to Protect Against Fraud?” The three witnesses were the Retirement Board’s Inspector General (IG), an opponent of the current Occupational Disability program; a representative of the GAO, an agency that had been critical of the RRB; and the “public” member (Chairman) of the RRB.

Following the hearing, the Carrier Member of the RRB jumped on the bandwagon, proposing the RRB adopt 22 recommendations made by the IG regarding administration of the Occupational Disability program. Then, the RRB, acting through the Carrier Member and the Public Member Chairman—over the strong objections of the Labor Member—adopted the IG’s proposed recommendations. The IG, with the support of the Carrier Member and the Public Member, is pushing for, among other adverse changes, a two-year limitation on receipt of the disability annuity. What would happen to a former railroad worker after those two years if he or she couldn’t obtain a total and permanent

Continued on Page 11

A Vice President Speaks
An update on the Brotherhood’s CAT program

Beginning in March of this year, our Brotherhood’s Communication Action Team (CAT) started visiting railroad worksites around the country. CAT organizers focused on in-person engagement with membership and gathering member input concerning National Bargaining through a Contract Survey. We’ve also strived to ensure a collection of good contact info for all BMWED members so that we can communicate effectively through email, social media and text messaging.

Hopefully, you’ve had the opportunity to meet with a CAT organizer or trained Front Line Communicator at your worksite and been able to complete a survey. If you have not, please reach out to your General Chairman or the CAT Internal Organizing Coordinator and let them know you are interested in more information. The CAT Coordinator is Carey Dall and he can be reached by email at cdall@bmwe.org.

Several members have inquired about the survey results. Below is an update of what we’ve achieved so far (through the end of September). We have accomplished a lot in a short time, but we are not stopping here! The following numbers are only preliminary results. We will continue our worksite visits with the survey for another few months at least. Our goal is to get 10,000 surveys from BMWED members by the New Year. (It is important to note that these numbers are not completely reflective of how the membership views the issues overall – we still have a lot of members to survey!) + Worksites visited: 380 and counting + Surveys collected: 4,000 and counting + Survey results:
- Health care as the #1 issue: 50.3 percent
- Wages as #1 issue: 23.8 percent
- Additional paid time off as #1: 9.7 percent
- Safety as #1 issue: 6.3 percent
- Travel pay as #1: 4.7 percent
- No response: 5.2 percent

In addition to the results above, members selected Health Care as a #2 issue on 23.1

Continued on Page 10
Pursuant to BMWED Resolution #38, reaffirmed by the 2014 BMWED Convention, two annual scholarships in the amount of $2,000.00 each will be awarded in November 2015 to BMWED members or eligible dependents, with preference given to applicants enrolled or scheduled to enroll in an accredited college or university in the pursuit of labor-related studies. The annual scholarship award is designed to encourage and recognize the achievements of BMWED members and their dependents, and to assist them in obtaining a college education.

"This is an especially important benefit to BMWED families in light of the escalating cost of higher education," said BMWED President Freddie Simpson. "For many working families, the cost of a college education has become largely unaffordable. The BMWED scholarship is intended to help educate the future leaders of our nation and our unions, and will serve to strengthen Organized Labor's efforts to protect workers' rights and preserve the middle class."

Continued on Page 6

Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division
Annual Scholarship Notice

The BMWED annual scholarship is designed to encourage and recognize the achievements of BMWED members and their dependents and assist them in obtaining a college education.

Two $2,000 BMWED Scholarships will be awarded in November 2015 to members or dependents of members of the BMWED in good standing.

Application materials must be submitted by mail and received by BMWED no later than close of business October 30, 2015.

Please visit www.BMWED.org for application forms and more details regarding Eligibility, Application Procedure, and Selection Criteria.
ELIGIBILITY:
Applicant must be: (1) a dependent of a BMWED member in good standing who is a high school senior enrolled or planning to enroll in an accredited college or university, or a full-time undergraduate or graduate student enrolled at an accredited college or university; or, (2) a BMWED member in good standing enrolled as an undergraduate or graduate student at an accredited college or university.

Preference will be given to applicants pursuing the study of labor-related subjects or pursuing a degree in labor-related subjects.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE:
To apply for the BMWED scholarship, an applicant must meet all the eligibility requirements and submit via mail the following: (1) A completed application form (available on line at www.bmwe.org); (2) Most recent academic transcript (if applicable); (3) College entrance examination, i.e., ACT and/or SAT scores (if applicable); (4) A list of extra-curricular, community service and/or union activities; (5) A statement of 300 words or less written by the applicant outlining his or her employment history and career goals; and, (6) A statement of 300 words or less written by the applicant explaining how the BMWED has impacted his or her life.

SELECTION CRITERIA:
Three (3) applications verified to meet all necessary criteria will be selected by random draw from the pool of applications received by the close of business on October 30, 2015. The selected applications will be copied and distributed to the BMWED Vice Presidents who will independently review and rank each application on a scale of 1 - 3, with 3 being the highest ranking and 1 being the lowest ranking.

The two applicants garnering the highest aggregate rankings will receive notice of the scholarship award in November. Any tie in ranking score will be decided by the National Division President based upon his final review of the tied applications.

The BMWED Scholarship award check will be made out directly to the college or university where the award recipients are enrolled or accepted for enrollment. Upon notification of the award, it will be necessary for each recipient to furnish the National Division President with information to facilitate the issuance of the award check payable to the accredited college or university where the applicant is accepted or enrolled.

Application materials must be submitted by mail* (USPS or UPS only) and be received by BMWED at the address below no later than the close of business October 30, 2015. Faxed or emailed applications will not be accepted. Please submit to:

BMWED Scholarship
Attn: Rick Inclima
International Brotherhood of Teamsters
25 Louisiana Ave., NW, 7th Floor
Washington, DC 20001

An application form and a complete description of the application procedures and eligibility requirements can be downloaded from the Brotherhood’s website at www.bmwe.org. Any questions regarding the BMWED Scholarship or application process may be forwarded via e-mail to BMWED Director of Safety and Education Rick Inclima at Ricki@bmwe.org or by calling 202-508-6449.

*Note: Pursuant to Teamster policy, delivery of any package or mail by non-union carriers will not be accepted by the Teamster’s shipping/receiving department. Therefore, to assure delivery please mail through the United States Postal Service (USPS) or United Parcel Service (UPS) only.
BM&ED to Conduct Research

From Page 1

President Simpson asks the membership for their full participation, stating, “Membership input is absolutely critical to the success of this project, so please participate and encourage your Brothers and Sisters in the BMWED to do the same.”

Please notify the BMWED National Headquarters of the passing of any retired BMWED members.

Call (248) 662-2660 extension 636.

LOCAL LODGES

Please notify the BMWED National Division of the passing of any retired BMWED member.

BM&ED organizes MOW workers

From Page 1

an agreement setting rates of pay, rules and working conditions that cannot be changed unilaterally by the company.

The Indiana Railroad Company, headquartered in Indianapolis, is a 500-mile regional railroad operating in central and southern Indiana and central Illinois. Many of its MOW employees came off Class 1 railroads, including Norfolk Southern, CSX, and Canadian Pacific. Those employees lost their seniority when their lines were sold to those Class 1 railroads and the Interstate Commerce Commission and Surface Transportation Board determined their seniority, wages and benefits had to be sacrificed for financial transactions that benefited the Class 1 railroads and the Indiana Railroad Company.

“The BM&ED is proud to be the elected representative of the maintenance of way employees on the Indiana Railroad Company,” said BM&ED President Freddie N. Simpson.

Simpson said, “It is a duty and responsibility that we take seriously and sincerely, and our Brotherhood is stronger because of the faith these new 24 members have in our Union.”

The organizing victory is a win for BMWED Director of Organizing Tim McCall and his Assistant Organizer Wayne Morrow. Brother McCall also wanted to extend much credit in the victory to Allied Fed Vice Chairmen Brian Thompson and Pat Quigley and the Consolidated Rail System Federation Second Vice Chairman Jeff Bainter.

If you have a special hobby or talent, hold public office, or have a story you would like to share, we would like to hear from you. Share your story with our BMWED Brothers and Sisters in the BMWED J Journal.

Please send us your pictures and brief details along with a name, address and telephone number.

You may email cballew@bmwe.org or send by U.S. Mail to:
BM&ED J Journal
c/o Clark Ballew
41475 Gardenbrook Road
Novi, MI 48375-1328
Philadelphia’s Helen Gym Endorsed by BMWED

The Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division is proud to go on record and announce our endorsement of candidate, Helen Gym, who would go on to be elected to Philadelphia’s City Council-At-Large. We believe Helen is the most qualified candidate to tackle the problems plaguing Philadelphia’s school system. Helen shares many of the same sentiments as the BMWED and has proven herself to be a strong supporter of labor and fair wages. Helen has vowed to fight for Philadelphia’s working families and promises to make sure that everyone, especially the poor and working class, have equitable access to city services.

“Our Union does not normally endorse candidates for local office. However, Helen Gym is clearly worthy of our support,” J ed Dodd, General Chairman of the Pennsylvania Federation BMWED-IBT, stated. “Now and then a person comes along who seeks political office who is different and wants to represent the people and not some rich patron, corporation or themselves. Helen Gym is one of those rare exceptions in politics today and we can rest assured that her integrity, grit and compassion will be at work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week representing the working families of Philadelphia and only the working families of Philadelphia.” Gym happily responded to the statement saying, “I’m incredibly honored to have the endorsement of an organization that values working families as much as I do, and pledge to continue fighting for schools, neighborhoods, and the values of working families throughout our great city.”

In April of 2015 Helen Gym marched in solidarity with the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way and other labor supporters during the MLK D.A.R.E Coalition, Fight for 15 “March to End Poverty.” She joined members of the BMWED on the anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and marched with the mission of bringing attention to crucial issues such as deep poverty, the need for a livable wage, and the right to organize; the same rights that MLK fought for up until his death. Helen said, “I’m honored to stand in solidarity with members of the MLK D.A.R.E Coalition and the Fight for 15 movement to honor the memory of Martin Luther King Jr.

Helen Gym marching alongside Penn Fed General Chairman, J ed Dodd, and other BMWED members during the “March to End Poverty.” April 4, 2015

by bringing much-needed attention to the important issues he died fighting for.” Gym continued, “As a mother of three children in Philadelphia’s public schools and a former teacher, I’ve seen firsthand how issues of poverty and injustice in the workplace are harming our citizens of this great city. We need to work together to address these tough issues, and when I am elected to City Council I will continue to lend a voice to the struggle each and every day.” Helen has had a long career participating social activism and advocating on behalf of social justice, even when it meant a great personal risk to herself. Gym was one of many Philadelphians who helped co-found the advocacy organization Parents United for Public Education. She also co-founded the School Notebook which is an independent newspaper that has reported on the conditions of public schools for the last 20 years.

Considered an upset by many, Helen’s victory is a demonstration of a city clamoring for positive change. Though described as a newcomer, Helen has been a widely respected community activist and education advocate for years. Helen was among the top five Democratic vote-getters in the race for city-wide council seat. Gym narrowly beat her nearest competitor, Isaiah Thomas, who came in sixth by about 1,100 votes. Heading into November, the five winning Democrats and top five Republican finishers will vie to fill the seven at-large Council seats. Two of the seven seats, however, are reserved for the minority party. Traditionally that’s been the Republicans, but no longer, thus the Democrats are expected to maintain five of the seven seats.

Helen Gym is the right candidate to get the job done in Philadelphia. The BMWED is proud to have contributed to such a passionate and dedicated campaign. It is with great enthusiasm to be able to state that the BMWED helped get a candidate elected who is poised to create and continue a positive legacy in the city of Philadelphia.

With the numbers on her side, Helen thanked her supporters in a post on her Facebook saying, “I’m incredibly grateful to countless Philadelphian’s who supported an incredible campaign to uplift our communities and prioritize our youth. The real work begins today.”

Director of Government Affairs
Charlie Hogue

Helen Gym is the right candidate to get the job done in Philadelphia. The BMWED is proud to have contributed to such a passionate and dedicated campaign. It is with great enthusiasm to be able to state that the BMWED helped get a candidate elected who is poised to create and continue a positive legacy in the city of Philadelphia.

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Another class graduates from BMWED Advanced Officer Program

BMWed members from several System Federations gathered once again in Hendersonville, Tenn., to participate in the Brotherhood’s two-week Advanced Officer Education Program this past July. The Educationals take place at Volunteer State Community College, with curriculum focused on Union-specific subjects ranging from claims and grievance writing, negotiation prep, safety protection review (“whistleblower” laws), labor law and history (the Railway Labor Act, right-to-work-for-less legislation), discipline representation, conducting local lodge meetings, and effective Union communication. An emphasis on the Brotherhood’s newly-implemented Communication Action Team was also included in this session, and several Front Line Communicators were recruited to help unite and prosper the future of our Brotherhood.

The two-week Educational program began with the first class in the summer of 2011. Since that time, hundreds of BMWED members have successfully completed the rigorous coursework. Several BMWED system officers and national appointees are graduates of the class, proving the program can be a successful springboard to a more prominent Union role. Those graduates who remain in the BMWED rank-and-file find that the program enhances their understanding and participation in the Brotherhood, and many skills are reinforced or developed during the two-week training.

Those interested in attending a future Advanced Officer Education Program are encouraged to reach out to their respective General Chairperson or call BMWED Project Coordinator Katie Fruzynski at 202-508-6446.
DEATH BENEFIT DEPARTMENT

REPORT OF DEATH BENEFIT CLAIMS PAID DURING MARCH, APRIL, MAY AND JUNE, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>CITY/STATE</th>
<th>LODGE/SYSTEM/RR</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>REYNOLD J CASIMIR</td>
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<td>PENN/LIFE</td>
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<td>FEDERAL WAY, WA</td>
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<td>ARTHUR J ACOBSON</td>
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PAID MAY 1, 2015 TO JUNE 30, 2015 ................................. $ 9,000.00
AMOUNT PREVIOUSLY PAID ................................. $45,502,307.75
TOTAL AMOUNT PAID TO DATE ................................. $45,511,307.75
NUMBER OF CLAIMS PAID – 18

REPORT OF DEATH NOTICES RECEIVED DURING MARCH, APRIL, MAY AND JUNE 2015

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<td>ROBERT D. DUFFIELD</td>
<td>KANKAKEE, IL</td>
<td>05/23/15</td>
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<td>LEONARD GARCIA</td>
<td>Luling, NM</td>
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<td>DONALD E. GOUY J R.</td>
<td>HIGHLANDS, TX</td>
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<td>CELSO GUERRERO</td>
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<td>MICHAEL J. KENNEDY</td>
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<td>CHRISTOPHER R. KORTHOF</td>
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<td>JAMES K. LAFER</td>
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<td>FERNANDO S. LOPEZ</td>
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<td>RONALD L. PERKINS</td>
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<td>05/02/15</td>
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<td>DARRIN C. PETERSEN</td>
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<td>ALVIN C. WILSON</td>
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Report of Death Notices Received during March, April, May and June 2015

Number of Claims Paid – 18

Paid May 1, 2015 to June 30, 2015 ................................. $ 9,000.00
Amount Previously Paid ................................. $45,502,307.75
Total Amount Paid to Date ................................. $45,511,307.75

VP Speaks, From page 4

percent of surveys, while Wages as a #2 issue received 37.8 percent. Clearly, those two issues are the primary concern of our membership, as well as the leading focus of our leadership as we head deeper into National Bargaining.

While the survey is an important portion of our CAT program, the ability to meet with members at the worksite has been a truly remarkable and vital aspect of this campaign. Our presence on the property has been very well-received, and the conversations our Internal Organizers and Front Line Communicators are having on the ground with our rank-in-file are productive, enlightening and exciting. It is obvious that taking the CAT out to the jobsite is producing encouraging results.

While face-to-face interaction is invaluable and impossible to replicate, we do still need ways to communicate important CAT and BWMD information. In the spring of 2014, the BWMD redoubled its efforts in social media, with a heavy concentration on Facebook. The “Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division” Facebook page has quintupled in size in just 18 months. In March 2014, the page had just shy of 800 followers. As of the end of September, that number hovers close to 4,100 and continues to grow by the hundreds every month.

On the BWMD’s Facebook page, you can find Brotherhood news updates, newspaper stories on relevant rail and rail labor subjects, classic track work photographs, messages from BWMD members and leadership, as well as CAT team updates. Please click “like” on our Facebook page and encourage your Brothers and Sisters to do so as well.

Our CAT team is making great strides in connecting our rank-in-file membership ahead of what will be a contested bargaining session and an unpredictable political climate. We are just getting started, but I am excited to see the early progress we have made. I believe the CAT program is vital to the health of our Brotherhood, and I am encouraged to see the traction we have made so far. I hope that you will stand in unity with us as our Brotherhood powers forward on this important project.

Sign up for BWMD News Alerts and get the latest news sent directly to your email account. To sign up visit the BWMD webpage at www.bmwede.org, or send your name and email address to dyack@bmwe.org, along with a request to be added to the BWMD News Alert list.
Perhaps there is support for Unions after all?

This August, a Gallup poll revealed that 58 percent of Americans approve of labor unions. It was welcoming news for organized labor — a positive turn of public opinion from just six years ago, when the same polling company found only 48 percent supported unions (Gallup poll, 2009).

The newest polling coincided with the August 24th stock market nose dive, billed as “Manic Monday,” where the Dow Jones took a plunge of 1,100 points in the first few minutes of trading. Markets are prone to peaks and valleys, but “Manic Monday” shook up Wall Street by workers, who remain weak in the knees from the Great Recession of 2007.

There is a corresponding theme to the volatility of the stock market and the American public’s renewed faith in unions. In an economy that is rigged to benefit only the top 1 percent where real wages have stagnated for decades, and meager savings accounts have been tapped in order to stay afloat, the average American worker is worried about never reaching the finish line.

The Baby Boom generation is approaching retirement age. Estimates are approximately 77 million Boomers are within sight of retirement, at least age-wise. Financially set for retirement? Well, that’s an entirely different story.

You probably know some Boomers who have retired on their Railroad pensions. After 30, 40, even 50 years working on the tracks, their day finally arrived. A party was thrown, hugs and perhaps even tears were shed, and that Brother was sent off to enjoy the spoils of his or her Railroad Retirement. Everyone who has ever picked up a spike maul has looked ahead to the day their retirement becomes reality. But, when it comes to retirement, we are the fortunate ones.

Far too many Americans — hard-working, talented, responsible, dedicated people — are living in financial instability. Working paycheck to paycheck, saving is all but impossible and retirement is out of reach. Opponents of defined pension plans, like our Railroad Retirement system, argue that prudent saving and strategic investment can replicate and replace pensions. However, that assumption is predicated on making enough money to save and invest, as well as having a stable and reliable stock market.

Unfortunately, pensions have disappeared for most Americans — replaced, in best cases, with more volatile 401Ks and IRAs, or in the case of underpaid workers, nothing at all. For decades now, more and more American workers are facing the reality that their retirements are uncertain. For some, retirement may never arrive.

Wisconsin Governor and notorious Union hater Scott Walker’s campaign for President of the United States lasted a scant 70 days. Less than a week after delivering what he hoped would be a campaign revitalizing anti-Labor stump speech, doubling down on his reputation for Union busting, Walker’s poll numbers continued their nose dive into “no-chance-ville.” (“No-chance-ville” is in a right-to-work state, by the way!). Walker’s calling card as America’s top Union buster not only got him zero traction in the race for the Republican nomination, it propelled him even further down the drain. I think that is particularly noteworthy.

For many American workers, it is rough going out there. Our organized railroad jobs are some of the best working class opportunities in the entire country. This does not go unnoticed to those who are stuck in jobs without Union representation. I truly believe that most Americans do not view Unions as an “enemy.” They recognize that Unions exist to help the middle class. The ever-quick demise of the spoils of his or her Railroad pensions. After 30, 40, even 50 years working on the tracks, their day finally arrived. A party was thrown, hugs and perhaps even tears were shed, and that Brother was sent off to enjoy the spoils of his or her Railroad Retirement. Everyone who has ever picked up a spike maul has looked ahead to the day their retirement becomes reality. But, when it comes to retirement, we are the fortunate ones.

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From your Apple device, open the App Store, click the Search button that is in the bottom, right corner. At the top of the screen, type “rss” in the search field and click Search. Scroll down the results until you get to XFeed RSS Reader and click it. You will be presented with some more info on the application. Single click the Free button so it changes to say Install. Once finished, click the icon to add the feed. Single click the “Accept & download” button. Once downloaded click the “Open” button. Select your Google account and click “Allow.” Single click the Plus button at the bottom of the screen and type http://www.bmwe.org/rss.xml in the feed URL box. Single click Search so the feed can be found.
Brother Conrad Hundley, Allied Fed E-Board member, retires

Brother Conrad K. Hundley, BMWED Allied Federation Executive Board member and Secretary of Lodge 2162, retired this August after 40-plus years of railroad service. Brother Conrad is pictured here receiving a certificate of achievement from Allied Fed Vice Chairman Russell Farmer.

LABOR members attend educational convention

The Labor Alliance for the Brotherhood of Rail (LABOR) Executive Board and members attended the group’s annual educational convention in Gulfport, Mississippi on June 13. Seated (from left) are Andrew Clark, Murphy Evans, Bryant Moses, and Andrew Shelton. Standing (from left) are Roger Sanchez, Rob Sonny, Carmen Nunes, Jorge Flores, Ramiro Ramirez, Kristina Delgado, Nathaniel Trawick, and Tim McCall.

Local Lodge 991 general meeting

Members of BMWED Consolidated Rail System Federation Local Lodge 991 in Elkhart, Indiana gathered on Aug. 20, 2015 for a general meeting to discuss issues at worksites and the good and welfare of the Brotherhood.

Brotherhood Amtrak retirees host annual luncheon

Two dozen Amtrak (and predecessor railroad) retirees from various crafts attended an annual luncheon in Westbrook, Connecticut on July 8, 2015. The annual luncheon, as well as monthly breakfast get-togethers, are coordinator by retired BMWED Brother Tommy Nall (standing, second from left).

BSD Lodge 509 hosts seventh annual summer picnic

Active and retired members of BMWED Burlington System Division Lodge 509 gathered in Stoddard, Wisconsin in August for their seventh annual summer picnic. Lodge members and their families enjoyed the day of fellowship and camaraderie and hope to see everyone again next year. BSD Lodge 509 encourages every one of its members to attend next summer, and to bring along another member in the hopes of growing the attendance.
BMWED hosts last local lodge officer training for 2015

BMWED local lodge officers gathered in Phoenix, Arizona Sept. 15 and 16 for a collection of training seminars and a general information session on Brotherhood matters.

Many of the attendees are newly elected local lodge presidents, secretary-treasurers and local lodge officers. In training classes hosted yesterday, lodge officers strengthened their skills in conducting union meetings, overseeing lodge finances, filing claims and grievances and handling union affairs.

The Phoenix training is the last of 2015. Local lodge officers who are interested in attending future trainings in 2016 can contact BMWED Project Coordinator Katie Fruzynski at katie@bmwe.org.

Brother Kenneth C. Blount retires

BMWED Allied Federation Brother Kenneth C. Blount or Lodge 1058, retired in August after 38 years as a BMWED member. Brother Blount is pictured here receiving an honorary plaque from BMWED South Region Vice President Roger Sanchez (left) and Local 1058 President Jorge Flores (right).
A Reminder on Holiday Rules

If you are a furloughed employee of a railroad covered by the U.S. National Agreement with at least 60 days of seniority or 60 calendar days of continuous service preceding a covered holiday, and if you had compensation paid by the carrier credited to 11 or more of the 30 calendar days immediately preceding the holiday, you may be entitled to pay for that holiday even though you are furloughed.

The complete list of holidays are:

• New Year’s Day  • President’s Day  • Good Friday  • Memorial Day  • Fourth of July  • Labor Day
• Thanksgiving Day  • Day after Thanksgiving  • Christmas Eve (the day before Christmas is observed)
• Christmas Day  • New Year’s Eve (the day before New Year’s Day is observed)

For detailed information contact your General Chairperson.