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BMWEE merges with Teamsters

More than 40 percent of Rail Labor now belongs to IBT Rail Conference

In a historic vote, members of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWEE) approved a merger with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

The BMWEE is the second major railroad union to merge with the Teamsters this year. An overwhelming 76 percent of BMWEE members approved the merger in the ballots tallied on October 27.

"This is an extraordinary moment in the history of the labor movement," said Jim Hoffa, Teamsters General President. "As did my father, I have envisioned one union representing all transportation workers — roads to rails, ports to planes — that

would provide workers with real power on the job and in the political arena. This historic merger brings us closer to our vision of that seamless transportation union."

Freddie Simpson, the President of the BMWEE, will become President of the BMWEE Division of the Teamsters Rail Conference.

"We are proud and excited to be part of the Teamsters Rail Conference," Simpson said. "With over 42 percent of union members in the rail industry now united under the Teamsters banner, the rail corporations are going to be in for a tough fight at the bargaining table. This merger is going to end rail corporations' 'business-as-usual' approach to contract negotiations. With both the BMWEE and the BLET together as autonomous divisions of the Teamsters Rail Conference, rail workers will have greater power at the workplace, in Congress and in negotiations."

The BMWEE now joins the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen as a member of the Teamsters' Rail Conference. The BLET became the founding member of the Rail Conference when it merged with IBT on Jan. 1, 2004.

"On behalf of the 55,000 members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, I welcome our Brothers and Sisters of the BMWEE into the Rail Conference," BLET National President Don Hahs said. "I look forward to working together with the BMWEE and IBT in a successful partner-

ship."

With the addition of the BMWEE, the Teamsters Rail Conference now represents more than 40 percent of rail labor.

"I'm ecstatic about the possibilities for the future with the BLET and BMWEE in the same house," BMWEE President Simpson said. "The possibilities are limitless." •

