BMWE NEWS RELEASE

Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes

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BMWE Rail Union Members Overwhelmingly Approve Merger with Teamsters

Southfield, MI–October 27, 2004. Members of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes (BMWE) have overwhelmingly approved the merger of the BMWE with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) as well as the transfer of jurisdiction agreement for the BMWE Canadian members.

76 percent of BMWE members voting approved the merger with the IBT today.

BMWE President, Freddie N. Simpson, who will now become President of the BMWE Division of the Teamsters Rail Conference, congratulated BMWE members for making such an informed and historic decision. "The BMWE members today have voiced their commitment to a strong and positive future and have taken a giant step in consolidating rail labor," said Simpson. "I would also like to offer thanks to the members of the BMWE merger negotiation committee, Gary Cox, David Tanner, Bill Palmer, Paul Beard, Mark Wimmer and Scott Dawson, as well as offer my appreciation to committee advisors Rick Inclima, Steve Powers, Gail Meisel, Don Griffin, Bill Bon and Bill Hildenbrand. A special debt of gratitude also goes to BMWE Secretary Treasurer Perry K. Geller, Sr. with thanks to BMWE Chicago staff member Sandy Mattox."

"More than two years ago, the BMWE's leadership embarked on a path of reform aimed at strengthening the union's hand in fighting for its members' interests. The membership's vote today is a milestone in that process – an important step on the road to rail unity," declared Simpson.

"We are proud and excited to be part of the Teamsters Rail Conference. Ratification of the merger with the IBT has demonstrated our members determination to strengthen and improve our positions both within the rail and labor communities," stated Simpson. "With over 42 percent of union members in the rail industry now united under the Teamsters banner, our strength at the bargaining table will most certainly be improved. With both the BMWE and the BLET together as autonomous divisions of the Teamsters Rail Conference, railroad workers will have greater power at the workplace, in the halls of Congress, and in negotiations."

"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."

The BMWE will become a division of the Teamsters Rail Conference, which was established in January 2004. In the beginning of the year, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen became the first division of the Rail Conference when their members overwhelmingly approved their merger with the Teamsters. With the addition of the BMWE members, the Teamsters Rail Conference now represents almost 70,000 union rail members and becomes the 7th largest Division at the IBT.

BMWE members build, maintain, inspect, and repair the railroad tracks, bridges, and related structures throughout North America.

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