

## **Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters**

For immediate release

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### **RAILROADS REAP RECORD PROFITS BUT REFUSE TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE MEAL AND LODGING ALLOWANCE FOR EMPLOYEES HELD AWAY FROM HOME**

Washington, DC – Late Wednesday afternoon, the National Carriers' Conference Committee (NCCC) categorically rejected the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division's (BMWED) compromise offer on meals and lodging reimbursement for traveling employees. The BMWED made its compromise offer as an attempt to reach a voluntary settlement of negotiations with the nation's railroads prior to the end of the "cooling off" period set to expire at 12:01 AM, December 6<sup>th</sup>. As part of that offer, the BMWED stated it would accept the wage and healthcare recommendations of Presidential Emergency Board No. 243, despite BMWED's disappointment with their terms. No additional talks are scheduled between the BMWED and the railroads at this time.

"I am disappointed with the railroads' refusal to bargain over a simple matter of economic justice and fairness," said BMWED President Freddie N. Simpson. "Our compromise offer would have partially, but not fully, reimbursed the hard working traveling employees who build and maintain the nation's railroads. Instead, the railroads are content to have their employees help subsidize the railroad's operations by paying out of their own pockets for meals purchased while away from home for weeks at a time," added Simpson.

Today, the meal allowance received by railroad employees who work and stay overnight away from home is \$25, a figure substantially lower than the \$46 minimum amount paid to federal employees when they travel. Additionally, BMWED represented employees are the second-lowest paid group of railroad employees and the only employees required to share double-occupancy lodging while traveling. All other railroad employees have single occupancy lodging when traveling while working for the railroad. "I wonder if Warren Buffett, who owns BNSF, eats on a \$25 per diem?" said President Simpson. "I am sure he doesn't have to bunk up with his Chief Financial Officer when they are traveling on company business. Our guys aren't asking to stay at the Four Seasons or eat at the Palm, they just want a fair deal on lodging and meal money."

The BMWED continues to explore avenues to reach a peaceful, voluntary resolution of this dispute. It is unfortunate that the nation's railroads show no interest in addressing this matter of simple economic justice for hard working Americans. Instead, the railroads seem content to require the employees they take hundreds of miles from home to help subsidize railroad operations by refusing to reach an agreement on an increase in meal and lodging reimbursement payments.