



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

BMWED AND NATIONAL CARRIERS' CONFERENCE COMMITTEE EXTEND COOLING OFF PERIOD - STRIKE/LOCK-OUT AVERTED

December 2, 2011

Washington, DC - Late yesterday the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (BMWED) reached agreement with the National Carriers' Conference Committee (NCCC) for a 60 day extension of a mandatory 30 day cooling off period in order to continue bargaining.

A mandatory 30 day cooling off period scheduled to end December 6, 2011, went into effect after a Presidential Emergency Board made recommendations for a settlement intended to avert a national rail strike, or lock-out. BMWED rejected those recommendations and on November 22, 2011, BMWED President Freddie N. Simpson advised the NCCC that the BMWED intended to extend the cooling off period until February 10, 2011, in order to further negotiations with the rail carriers, and spare the country a national rail strike during the holiday season.

In a response to the BMWED's intention to extend the cooling off period, the NCCC advised they would agree to an extension as long as the other two remaining crafts without tentative agreements would also agree to an extension. Those crafts, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET), and the American Train Dispatchers Association (ATDA), both rejected that offer. However, yesterday both the BLET and the ATDA reached tentative agreements that they felt could be sent to their members for ratification, prompting the NCCC to agree to an extension of the cooling off period with the BMWED.

The sticking point for the BMWED is away from home expenses for employees required to travel by the railroads. Without an increase during this round of bargaining it would mean expenses had not been adjusted for more than 15 years.

"The BMWED did not take this action because it was afraid to strike. We took this action because we believe it gives our members the best opportunity to resolve this issue quickly and fairly and avoid an interruption to commerce and avoid a wage loss to our members and other union members who would honor our picket lines," said BMWED President Simpson.

"We have conceded no legal rights by our actions, we have merely postponed the date we will consider ourselves able to exercise self-help if that is the correct and necessary course of action."

The BMWED represents 35,000 men and women who build, maintain, and repair the nations railroad tracks, bridges, buildings and equipment.