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Maintenance of Way WORKERS Strike

Canadian National Railway

Union Strikes to Resolve Longstanding Dispute as Carrier Refuses To Schedule Negotiations

(Southfield, MI) - Members of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division (BMWED) of the Teamster's Rail Conference initiated a strike against the Canadian National Railway (CN) today in an effort to resolve a longstanding contract dispute. BMWED's strike targets properties of the former Grand Trunk Western, Detroit Toledo & Ironton, and Detroit Toledo & Shore Line portions of the CN.

The strike and related lawsuit were initiated by BMWED after many months of attempts to resolve the dispute through bargaining and mediation. However, CN has now failed and refused to exert every reasonable effort to make an agreement, to settle the dispute, and to bargain with the BMWED in good faith as required under provisions of the Railway Labor Act (RLA). As a result BMWED struck in order to resolve the dispute.

BMWED served contract demands on CN in December 2004. The parties bargained and participated in mediation with the National Mediation Board through March 2006. Just prior to the March 2006 mediation sessions, CN suddenly took a giant step backward by submitting new proposals that would decimate longstanding employee rights. Among other things, CN proposed to eliminate existing seniority rights, give CN a free hand in contracting-out all maintenance of way work, allow CN complete discretion in making work assignments and impose unprecedented huge and annually increasing health insurance contributions.

The parties have not met since March 2006 even though BMWED has written repeatedly to CN requesting direct negotiations between the parties. CN has continued its refusal to meet directly with BMWED negotiators, and they have refused to offer alternative dates to schedule bargaining.

CN's actions violate the Railway Labor Act because CN has failed and refused to make every reasonable effort to settle the dispute, has failed to bargain in good faith, and failed to meet with the designated representative of its employees. Due to CN's continuing failure and refusal to bargain in good faith, the BMWED has been forced to strike the carrier in an effort to resolve the dispute.

BMWED represents approximately 250 maintenance of way employees who construct, maintain, inspect and repair the tracks, right of way, and structures at CN Railway.

