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

NEWS CLIPS

June 19, 2009

Randall Brassell, Director of Communications
Telephone: 615-521-4097 (Fax) 615-824-2164
email: rbrassell1@aol.com

CSX blames GE for Kentucky derailment

June 15, 2009

CSX Transportation has sued Fairfield, Conn.-based General Electric Co. and four GE subsidiaries for producing a freight car with a defective bolt, which failed and caused a derailment near Brooks, Ky., in January 2007.

CSX filed its complaint in federal court in Lousiville, Ky., June 9, seeking $44 million in damages resulting from the derailment of 26 railcars, including 12 holding hazardous materials.

"The Federal Railroad Administration conducted anextensive investigation to determine the cause of the derailment" and identified the cause as the failure of a bolt on a car owned or placed into service by the defendants, according to the CSX complaint.

Also named as a defendant is a third party vendor, Railcar Associates LP.

Norfolk Southern eyes Birmingham area for hub

June 15, 2009

Norfolk Southern is scouting sites in the Birmingham, Ala., area to build a terminal as part of its Crescent Corridor stretching from the Northeast to New Orleans. NS is seeking incentives and is talking with state and local officials about the facility, and believes as many as 8,000 jobs could be created in the area as a distribution hub develops around the project. "We are certainly looking in the Birmingham area for constructing a new terminal that will hopefully be part of a larger logistics hub," said Rudy Husband, spokesman for Norfolk Southern.

6/15/2009 MOW

UP to upgrade Wisconsin line

On Saturday, Union Pacific Railroad crews began a trackwork project on the Class I's Altoona-to-Humbird, Wis., line.

The more than $9 million project calls for removing and installing about 25,000 ties, upgrading rail, spreading 15,600 tons of ballast, renewing road surfaces at 50 grade crossings and replacing 12 switches. Work is scheduled to be completed by October's end.

This year, UP plans to spend $1.7 billion to improve infrastructure along its more than 32,000-mile system.

Big Business: Two-Faced Talk on Arbitration

by Seth Michaels, Jun 16, 2009

The big-money corporate interests against the **Employee Free Choice Act** are continuing their disinformation campaign, throwing around misleading rhetoric and bad-faith arguments, seeking to confuse policymakers, the press and the public.

The latest Big Business tactic is to attack the provision of the Employee Free Choice Act that guarantees workers who form a union a fair first contract—a vital provision, because more than 50 percent of workers who form a union don't have a contract after one year and more than a third still don't have a contract after two years.

Corporations are crying about the possibility they might have to take part in arbitration with employees if they don't reach a first contract after three months of talks—even though they're enthusiastic about arbitration in a wide variety of circumstances where they have the advantage.

In a **new ad** running in key newspapers, **American Rights at Work** again challenges corporate hypocrisy on arbitration. When it's a big corporate entity against an individual, as in credit card disputes or personal injury claims, corporate spokesgroups like the Chamber of Commerce say arbitration is a way to settle any sort of dispute "fairly, quickly and inexpensively." But when it's time to bargain over better wages and benefits for their workers, these same groups are viciously opposed to even the possibility of requesting arbitration.

As we've said before, the Employee Free Choice Act provides a process to help first-time bargainers reach an agreement, through mediation and, for issues the parties are unable to resolve on their own, arbitration. The reason we need first-contract arbitration is to create an incentive for companies to bargain voluntarily with their workers. Arbitration would only occur under the Employee Free Choice Act if either side requests it, after months of negotiations.

Again we ask: If it's good enough for banks, credit card companies and insurance companies to use in disputes with their customers, why is arbitration so terrifying to corporations when it comes to their own employees? The answer is easy: Because right now, corporations have all the power, and they're not eager to give workers a share of it.

BNSF's Rose: Economy has leveled off, but expect a slow recovery

jstagl

The U.S. economy has reached the bottom-out point, but a recovery likely will be a drawn-out affair. So said BNSF Railway Co. Chairman, President and CEO Matt Rose recently at the National Summit in Detroit, according to a Reuters article.

"It appears that we've seen a leveling out," he said. "The next logical question is: When does it start to come up? It's going to be a slow recovery, as there's nothing out there that suggests this will turn around quickly."

For now, Rose is getting a vibe from shippers and executives at other companies that there's "a lot more sense of calm than there was 90 days ago."

While everyone in the rail industry is searching for signs of a turnaround, it's comforting to hear comments from a top Class I exec that perhaps the worst is behind railroaders and better economic times lie ahead — no matter how long they take to get here.

Train crew jobs down nearly 18%; total rail employment off 8.33%

June 17, 2009

The Surface Transportation board released statistics Tuesday showing that train crew employment on Class I railroads sank to 56,370 in mid-May. That was a decline of 17.99% from May 2008 and represented a loss of 2,963 positions in the transportation (train and engine) category. The decline from April to May this year was 4.14%.

Total Class railroad employment in May stood at 151,536, down 8.33% from May 2008 and 1.77% from April 2008.

Employment of executives, officials, and staff assistants in May was up 0.11% to 10,081 from a year ago and up 0.4% from April. Also showing an increase was the transportation (other than train and engine) category, up 4.23% to 6,929 from May 2008.

The three remaining categories showed declines from last year: maintenance of way and structures, down 0.69% to 35,442; maintenance of equipment and stores, down 3.75% to 29,303; and professional and administrative, down 2.12% to 13,411.

Rail traffic continues to edge upward

JUNE 19, 2009

Railroaders looking for even the slightest signs of a recovery got just that Thursday. In its latest weekly report, the Association of American Railroads announced that traffic on U.S. railroads in the week ended June 13 "continued to show signs of gradual improvement."

"Rail carloadings and intermodal were up from the previous week with carloads at their highest level in 10 weeks. While traffic showed signs of improvement from the previous week, compared year-over-year traffic remains down," said the association.

Carload traffic totaled 261,956 cars, up 0.6% from the previous week this year, but down 19% from the same week in 2008. Intermodal volume totaled 189,508 trailers or containers, up 0.4%

from the previous week but down 17% from last year.

Total U.S. volume for the latest week was estimated at 27.7 billion ton-miles, down 17.8 % from the same week last year.

Eighteen of 19 commodity groups were down from 2008, with declines ranging from 5.5% for coal to 61.4% for metals and products. The only group showing an increase was farm products other than grain, up 4.8%.

Canadian railroads reported volume of 56,978 carloads for the week, down 26.6% from last year, and 39,081 trailers or containers, down 18.8 %. Mexico's two major railroads originated 12,441 carloads, down 14.4% from last year's twenty-third week, and 4,762 trailers or containers, off 29.0%.

Total North American roll volume for the first 23 weeks of 2009 on 14 reporting railroads included 7,677,555 carloads, down 20.2% from last year, and 5,307,734 trailers and containers, down 16.7%.