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>
> Railroads Seek Release from Mediation With Teamsters' Coalition; Cite
> "No Discernible Progress" Toward Agreements
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> WASHINGTON - December 16, 2005 - The National Carriers' Conference
> Committee (NCCC) today announced it has asked the National Mediation
> Board (NMB) to release the railroads from mediation with the
> seven-member union coalition led by the Teamsters union, citing "no
> discernible progress" toward voluntary agreements.
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> Despite the best efforts of the mediator assigned by the NMB, "vast
> differences between the parties still persist on virtually every
> significant issue," Robert F. Allen, chairman of the NCCC, said in
> letters filed today with the board.
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> The release is required before negotiations can progress to the next
> level. Under the Railway Labor Act (RLA), the parties must complete a
> series of steps aimed at encouraging negotiated settlements.
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> The NCCC had filed applications with the NMB on June 10 for mediation
> with the Teamsters' Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition. The railroads are
> continuing negotiations with the United Transportation Union under the
> auspices of the NMB and are not asking for release from mediation at
> this time. The NCCC is also in talks with four other rail unions.
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> The NCCC emphasized that the railroads are confident the issues will
> be resolved without any disruptions to freight rail service. The RLA
> process historically has led to voluntary agreements before or after
> the appointment of Presidential Emergency Boards (PEB) to review the
> issues and make recommendations.
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> "We need to reach agreements in a timely manner," Allen said. "Our
> goal is to modernize work rules to ensure long-term growth and
> stability for the industry."
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> In letters to the NMB, the NCCC said "there is no reasonable
> expectation that further mediation will produce a voluntary agreement"
> with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, the
> Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, and the five other unions
> that belong to the Teamsters' coalition.
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> The National Carriers' Conference Committee of the National Railway
> Labor Conference, headquartered in Washington, DC, is the national
> bargaining agent for 32 railroads, including all of the nation's major
> freight carriers, involved in the current round of bargaining with 13
> major rail unions. Employees covered in the current round include more
> than 90 percent of unionized freight rail employees.
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