

Let's Not Forget Our Brothers on the W&LE - Fighting for All of Us!

While the fight against the BNSF attempt at engineer only operations was big time news amongst rail workers, our brothers at the Wheeling and Lake Erie (W&LE) remain on the front lines of this critical battle, soldiering on in relative obscurity.

For several years the W&LE has been aggressively pushing engineer-only trains, and the conductors and engineers said "no thanks". On September 13, 2013, the carrier began to run engineer-only with a manager behind the throttle, no less. In response, the BLET represented members of BOTH crafts - conductors and engineers - went on strike September 20, 2013. The strike shut down the regional carrier's operations in Ohio and Pennsylvania before the 100+ union members were ordered back to work by a temporary restraining order.

Since that time, the W&LE remains intransigent on the engineer-only issue. The workers there remain defiant, but they have now gone seven years without a raise. Simply put, the W&LE is attempting to economically bludgeon our brothers and sisters into submission. They are no doubt feeling the pain; who wouldn't? This is an outrage.

If the W&LE has their way, the major Class 1 railroads will get a much needed boost in their attempts to run engineer-only. So the stakes for *all* of us rail workers is a no-brainer. By logical extension, the general public has a vested interest in safe railroading operations. As some state legislatures and corporations are trying to housebreak our unions at best and bust them at worst, this is one of several battlefronts that the entire working class has a stake in. They deserve and need the solidarity and support from all of us - rails, other workers, and the general public.

At the BLET convention last October, a rank & file delegate proposed the following resolution from the floor. It carried with unanimous support (minus one "No" vote). RWU encourages all railroaders of all unions - BLET or otherwise - to push adoption of similar resolutions in your respective locals. Then forward them on to RWU. We will send them on to the Local #292 leadership to let them know they are not alone, and that we all have their backs.