Rail Carriers Push for Single Crews in Section 6 Notices

As expected on November 1st of 2019, the major rail carriers in the U.S. formally unveiled their long held desires to reduce train crew size, making it clear that they intend to bargain the subject of crew size in the upcoming round of national handling. While it has been 15 years since the National Carriers Conference Committee (NCCC) first raised the specter of single employee train crews, the carriers have had almost no success in pushing the issue forward. However, the carriers have become more and more emboldened in recent years, as various technological and political developments have coincided, providing the carriers with the confidence to make a full court press for an end to the standard two-person crew (see Editorial, The Highball, Fall 2019).

As our Editorial in that issue of the RWU newsletter makes clear, while the carriers have gained some tactical and logistical advantages in the struggle, so have workers, their unions, and groups like Railroad Workers United. This fight is far from over, and there is no saying which side will win this round of the war. We remain optimistic. If the unions can stick together, and if the members rise up like they did against BNSF in 2014, victory is possible.