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Case against Union Pacific certified as class action

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A judge has certified a case against Union Pacific as a class-action lawsuit and instructed lawyers to "promptly" notify members of the class.

Lafayette County Circuit Judge Jim Hudson, as of Wednesday, had not yet set a date for a hearing in the case. The lawsuit alleges Union Pacific officials pressured families of those injured or killed by trains to quickly settle for amounts lower than what they might have received with a lawyer's help.

Phillip Duncan of Little Rock, a lawyer for three Arkansas residents who brought the suit, said the class includes people involved in accidents between 1992 and Feb. 14, 2005, who settled with the company without a lawyer. They must be Arkansas residents and non-railroad employees, he said in a news release.

Duncan said at least 100 people fall within the class but he expects there are many more.

Hudson's order, issued last week, was filed Monday.

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