

Quincy wins suit

■ A St. Louis jury awards \$4.75 million to a train engineer injured in a head-on crash in 1993.

A St. Louis jury has awarded a Quincy man \$4.75 million in his lawsuit against the railroad industry.

Larry D. Allen, 46, of Quincy, a train engineer, won the lawsuit against Burlington Northern Railroad, Southern Pacific Transportation and Southern Pacific Chicago St. Louis Railway Co. Allen said he expects the railroads will appeal.

The case stems from a Jan. 20, 1993, accident that occurred when a Burlington Northern train and a train Allen had been running collided head-on, killing a co-worker.

Allen was an engineer for the Southern Pacific Chicago St. Louis Railway Co.

The accident occurred in Aurora. The lawsuit alleged a Burlington Northern crew failed to obtain authorization and improperly entered the main line being used by the Southern Pacific train.

Allen suffered injuries to his back, pelvis and right knee, as well as frostbite. He had to have a toe amputated this summer because of the frostbite.

He was trapped in the collapsed cab of his engine for more than three hours in the cold while awaiting rescue.

"It was three hours of hell," Allen said. "I'm lucky to be alive and I just thank the Lord for that."

In addition to undergoing numerous sur-



The lead locomotive in which Larry Allen of Quincy was trapped in 1993.

geries and therapy. Allen also suffers from nightmares and flashbacks. He has been unable to return to work.

Allen said the 2½-week court case was traumatic.

"It was a jury trial and it's scary to have 12 people with control over the rest of your life in their hands," Allen said. "But to me the big part's over with."

Defense attorney Jerome Schlichter contended that the Southern Pacific Transportation Co. locomotive was not crashworthy. Schlichter also argued that train engineers do

not get adequate instructions.

"This case demonstrates the importance of teaching railroad workers survival tactics," Schlichter said. "There are few safety features in train engines, such as reinforced collision posts or thickened cab walls, and the evidence was that Southern Pacific failed to follow recommendations for a safe place to which a crew member can go when a crash is imminent. The technology existed for these safety features, but the railroad didn't use it."

Allen and his wife, Lori, have three sons at home. He also has a grown daughter in Hamilton.