

NEWSLETTER

Communication Workers of America

108 West Main St.

Sun Prairie, WI 53590

Non-Profit Org
US Postage Paid
PERMIT NO. 95
Wausau WI 54401

March / April 2010



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TENTATIVE AGREEMENT REACHED AT VERIZON

At this time a new 3 year contract is being voted on by our Verizon union members. The tentative agreement reached is a good, solid contract and it will protect many very important benefits for the next 3 years. Pensions, health care for active employees and retirees, 2.75% in wages each year of the agreement, to name just a few. We will know the balloting results on March 27. A word of caution, although the contract is a good one and it will have to be honored by Frontier, should their purchase of Verizon come to pass, any labor agreement is only as good as the employers ability to pay for it. And on that note we must recognize that the New Frontier Company will be starting out under a crap load of debt! Add to that the fact that they are not getting the jewel of the Nile to begin with, what with all the fatigued infrastructure that Verizon has, it's a dicey deal at best.

SHOULD I GO OR SHOULD I STAY

Lately there's been a lot of angst and fretting about leaving Verizon before the completion of the proposed sale or staying on to complete or further a career. It's not an easy decision nor should it be taken lightly. But let's try to look at it from a couple of sides.

For those who leave before the sale. Regardless of your personal financial situation, leaving a full time income behind is no small bet. In addition to that struggle we have to consider that after the sale Verizon will have only a small presence in the Midwest. Less than 100 BZT technicians. Over the years every time we went to the bargaining table with Verizon we went there with the authority and power of 1500 working members behind us. Now with less than 100, keeping the company interested in a relationship that includes the care and feeding of several hundred retirees, is going to be very difficult at best. What's to stop Verizon from abandoning and walking away from it's commitment to maintaining viable retiree health care benefits? Certainly not their integrity at the corporate level. We've always been able to compel them to deal honestly with us in large part because of our size. That's going to change. Drastically. As far as I see it we will need to use our influence with the company and the union to push for an agreement, national in scope, to protect our retiree health care benefits. We've begun that push already and we will continue it. But it's a gamble. It's not like we're

going to sneak up on Verizon and fool them about our intentions. They'll know what we're coming for and they'll play hardball with us. But we've seen that before and we will have little choice but to meet them turn for turn. So for those who choose to stay, get prepared for that battle. It's coming.

For those who choose to stay and become part of the new Frontier. Life for those members will be anything but easy and tranquil. As we all know, Frontier has never been the kind of employer who provided "Verizon type benefits". Even their senior management has been going around the country lately saying that exact same thing! That can mean one thing and one thing only, they have cards they aren't showing us. That is to say, they have plans for benefit changes. And not for the better. True, they will have to wait for 3 years to get their first whack at our benefits but the troubles they have may start well in advance of that. On day one of the sale they are going to be 8 billion in debt just from the purchase. Their history as a company has been to spend way beyond their means and then look around to purchase another company only to sweat the equity out of it! That's a terrible business model. That equity that they want to squeeze out of it is our wage and benefit level. That's where they will turn to make up lost ground or erase debt. So even though they are obligated to honor our Contract, how are they to do that if they don't have the money? What happens in the worst case scenario if they file for bankruptcy? If they file for bankruptcy (which we know has happened in the last Verizon deals) we will be in big trouble. Then all bets are off. The best we can hope for at that point is to get cents on the dollar for what we're owed. But long before that would happen the funding of the pension plan might be in jeopardy to the point that the beloved "lump sum" would be restricted or eliminated by pension laws now on the books. No one can say with absolute certainty that they will go broke but several money minded people (Wall Street types) have said that if you wanted to see a recipe for disaster you need look no further than this deal. Bankruptcy is a lose, lose for everyone. Best case scenario for members at the new Frontier is a real dog fight 3 years from now when they sit down to their first bargaining table with us. They won't be bashful about it. They'll come ready to fight. They'll want many severe changes, downgrades, in our contract. It will be up to us to convince them (long before then) that we have no intention of giving anything back. Having said that, it's not all doom and gloom. They will find a work force ready to help them be successful in telephony from day one of the sale, but only if they play fair. Otherwise, as they say: "it's on".

So if you've stayed with me in this newsletter opinion piece you can see there are certain risks and rewards with whatever decision you make. I wish you the best with it. Not everyone is in a position to retire, to those members staying on with Frontier let us pledge to fight to keep what is ours. To those who leave before the sale we must pledge much the same, to fight to keep Verizon interested in continuing a positive relationship with their retiree population the very same retirees that helped them to be profitable all those years. Both groups deserve nothing less, they've earned it!

Be well, keep safe, stay unified.

Mike Oliver

Why the Citizens United decision undermines our Democracy and what we can do about it.

Contact: Candice Johnson, CWA Communications, cjohnson@cwa-union.org and 202-434-1168

Washington, D.C. -- Following is a statement by CWA President Larry Cohen on the Supreme Court's Citizens United decision:



A corporation isn't a person. But the U.S. Supreme Court, in its Citizens United decision, had no problem granting corporations the First Amendment rights that citizens enjoy. The court's 5-4 decision overturned federal and state campaign laws dating back to the early 19th century and declared that corporations have a constitutional right to use unlimited treasury funds to make so-called "independent expenditures" supporting or opposing candidates for public office. It's true that the court's decision applies to unions, too. But CWA continues to support a ban on using treasury funds to support or oppose political candidates, for corporations and unions.

CWA, the United Auto Workers and the millions of active and retired workers that we represent know this is a flawed decision. It will allow corporations to dominate the political process, just like they are able to dominate the workplace, undermining laws that are supposed to protect worker bargaining and organizing rights. Corporations will be able to use the millions in their treasuries to exert massive pressure on elected officials. Just the threat of a "Swift Boat" type campaign will be enough, in most cases. The result: the voices and interests of ordinary Americans will be lost and their faith in representative democracy undermined.

Until we can enact the real reforms needed, including public financing laws, CWA and the UAW are calling on Congress to act quickly and hold hearings that document the corrosive impact that these independent expenditure campaigns have on decision-making by public officials. Congress also must look to impose new requirements on corporate independent expenditure campaigns, including shareholder approval provisions and tougher disclosure and accountability measures.

Ultimately, our nation needs a Supreme Court filled with justices who understand that corporations aren't people and simply don't have the first amendment rights that citizens enjoy. That's the only way we will prevent corporate wealth from dominating our political process.

CWA Local 4671 Scholarship Drawing 2010

Who is eligible:

Children of dues paying CWA Local 4671 members, CWA Local 4671 dues paying members and spouses of CWA Local 4671 dues paying members. Children of dues paying members must be graduating High School Seniors (winter or spring) or a currently enrolled post High School student.

Additional criteria:

Student must be planning to attend or is currently attending a post High School, accredited college, university, trade or technical school.

Selection process:

A simple random lottery style drawing will be held after July 15th 2010 conducted by the Local's Scholarship Committee. No one individual may receive the scholarship more than once.

Applications:

The form below must be received by the Committee no later than July 14th 2010. Please submit only one request per student. Send your applications to:

West Area Rep Steve Kotell 619 Carson Street Rice Lake WI. 54868

Name of Student/Member/Spouse _____ Male Female
(circle one)

Address _____

High School and Address _____
(if graduating senior)

Parents name and address _____

Parents employer and work location/job title _____

Home Phone Number (s) _____

School you are planning to attend _____

Student signature _____

Parents signature _____

Health Care Can't Wait



Mar 9, 2010

Nearly a thousand union members and health care activists rallied outside a DC hotel to put the health insurance industry execs meeting inside on notice: "we'll do whatever it takes to get real health care reform."

No more skyrocketing costs, no more raising rates by 40 or 50 or 60 percent, no more discriminatory practices that deny people the health care coverage

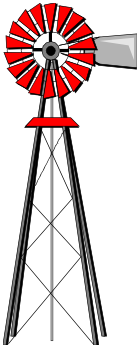
they need – that's our message to the health insurance industry.

A contingent of CWAers, including Sec.-Treas. Jeff Rechenbach, were part of the crowd that encircled the hotel, as protestors shouted out "health care can't wait" and "blocking health care is a crime." The rally was sponsored by Health Care for America Now.

Grievance Report - CWA Local 4671

Status as of February 3, 2010

Century Link



Century Link's purposed changes to the health insurance which take effect January 2010. (North)

Century Link's purposed changes to the health insurance which take effect January 2010. (South)

Century Link's purposed changes to the health insurance which take effect January 2010. (East)

Century Link's purposed changes to the health insurance which take effect January 2010. (West)

Frontier Telephone C.O.

Management employee transferring to craft wanting time bridged for seniority recognition. (Appealed to arbitration.)

Prairie Du Chien Police Department

Prairie Du Chien city official is causing a threatening and hostile work environment to a member.

Verizon Unit

Employee was terminated for attendance issues. (Appealed to top step.) Call Center.

Salaried non union employees are writing work orders and de-loading cable pairs. (Has been approved for arbitration.) South area.

Employee was wrongly denied the option to bump (displace) a junior employee in the most recent force reduction. (Received answer, will be appealed to arbitration.) North area.

Employees not receiving there overtime meals as outlined in the contract. (Has been accepted and approved for arbitration.) Call Center.

Members in the Evrc were coded unexcused not paid when they could not get to work due to the snow storm. (Appealed to first formal step.)

The company is using compensated availability to circumvent normal holiday scheduling. (Appealed to first formal step.)

The company has violated a contract article as well as past regional practices. Pay upgrade for CZT II classification for performing circuit work.

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Compiled/submitted by Timothy D. Gile, Secretary CWA Local 4671.

Keep us informed. If you move please let us know your new contact information, please send that information to:

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