



August 7, 2009- CWA District 6 /AT&T Bargaining Update

RE: CWA District 6/AT&T Bargaining

Dear CWA Members:

I want to thank each of you for your ongoing support and mobilization these past 6 months. We all knew these negotiations would be the toughest we have faced in our careers; we just had no idea the extent of the greed of this wealthy Company. I also want to express my appreciation for our elected bargaining committee. With all the challenges they have had to face, they remain determined to bargain a fair contract.

I offer my congratulations to District 4 on the ratification of their contract with AT&T. Now that the District 4 AT&T Midwest contract has ratified, it would seem a simple matter for our District 6 Bargaining Committee to accept the same contract. However, it is not that simple. AT&T did not agree to a National table for bargaining. And our District 6 members expect and deserve to have their contract bargained by their elected District 6 representatives. AT&T maintains that we must operate in the economic framework established in the Midwest. We in District 6 disagree that another bargaining unit will set the parameters for our bargaining. AT&T is certainly unwilling to accept the parameters of the Verizon East Agreement.

When we entered into negotiations, we were aware that some changes to our health care plan may be necessary. We never expected AT&T to throw out our entire benefit package and have us adopt the Company's philosophical idea of health care. One of the Company's major arguments has been they need "consumer driven" health care. However, premiums have nothing to do with "consumer driven" plans. I think AT&T has forgotten that we had a 21-day nationwide strike over health care premiums in 1983. The truth is AT&T wants you to pay more for your health care. Every dollar that comes out of your pocket for health care is added to the already \$6.2 billion in profits they have made this year.

Before the ink was dry on the 2004 contract, Randall Stephenson stated AT&T needed a different "cost structure." What this means is AT&T intends to lower our members' standard of living! The shift of health care costs is just the first step. Service Reps and CSTs have been two of the core jobs you could depend on to earn an upper middle class living--jobs where you could afford to buy a house and send your children to college. You could also depend on a good pension and health care when you retired. AT&T wants to lower the standard of living for those who have traditionally sold their products and those who have traditionally provided installation and repair at the customer's premise.

AT&T proposed a Leveraged Service Rep title prior to bargaining. District 6 and every CWA bargaining unit refused the Company's proposal. It is a race to the bottom. Only the IBEW agreed to the Leveraged Service Rep. A Leveraged Service Rep would receive 60% of the base pay of a Service Rep. Then he/she would need to earn the other 40% of compensation through Company-controlled commissions or bonuses or whatever management may determine their objectives are for that day. In addition, many Service Reps are working 6 days. A Leveraged Service Rep would only be paid

Communications Workers of America Local 4250
3055 Glenwood-Dyer Road, Lynwood, Illinois 60411
Steve G. Tisza, President (708) 757-4065(Office)
stevetisza@sbcglobal.net (E-Mail)
<http://www.cwalocal4250.org> (Website)

overtime on the 60% of the base salary, not on the commission or other gimmicks the Company may institute. In my opinion this race to the bottom is a mistake.

Prem Techs are the Installers/Repairmen of the future. They are required to work in attics, drop walls and perform much more technical work than Installers of the past. Yet, the Company expects them to work for less pay and less retiree benefits. The Company even refuses to allow them to have the same work rules as other outside craft. It is just another example of a new management style that no longer views us as partners.

It is my belief that we should leave things better than we found them. We should strive to make this country a better place to live for our children and grandchildren. We should strive to make our Union a stronger Union for the younger members. And we should strive to make AT&T a better place to work for the next generation. We have always had to fight to improve the future for those who follow.

Myself, I would rather stand and fight AT&T, win or lose, than bow down to them and live on my knees.

In Unity,

Andy Milburn, Vice President

Communications Workers of America Local 4250
3055 Glenwood-Dyer Road, Lynwood, Illinois 60411
Steve G. Tisza, President (708) 757-4065(Office)
stevetisza@sbcglobal.net (E-Mail)
<http://www.cwalocal4250.org> (Website)