

February 18, 2009

An Open Letter to Mobility Orange Employees from Bill Bates, CWA Bargaining Committee Chair

In bargaining with AT&T Mobility, CWA has repeatedly said that it's important to look at all the elements that go into a contract.

Economic issues are important and CWA definitely is pressing for economic improvements that will benefit Mobility workers and address the issues you've told us are important.

By now you have received many different communications, some from your Union, CWA, and some from AT&T. In a recent communication from AT&T Mobility's Ralph de la Vega, the company seems surprised that we have not accepted its last offer.

We know that because of your efforts, AT&T Mobility is a successful company. In the last quarter of 2008, 2.1 million new wireless subscribers signed up, that brings the total subscribers to 77 million, a strong gain of 7 million over the previous year. For 2008, total wireless revenues were \$49.3 billion—that's an increase of 15.6 over the previous year.

AT&T said it well: Despite the economic environment, we grew revenues in 2008 and I expect 2009 will be another year of overall revenue growth and solid progress for our company. (Source: [AT&T Reports Fourth-Quarter and Full-Year Results Highlighted by Robust Wireless Data Growth, 1-28-2009](#))

Clearly AT&T is a leader in the telecom industry. It should be a leader in helping turn the economy around and in providing good middle class jobs.

Of course economic issues are important. And one of the main economic factors for us to consider that didn't exist when we bargained contracts in Districts 3 and 6 was future changes to the health care plan over the next four years. While the final details are being worked out, we know that, based on the recent arbitration decision, Mobility workers will be paying more.

Also, economic issues are not the only issues on the table. The non-economic items are a major reason why we haven't been able to reach a proposed settlement. Unfortunately, Mobility has been unwilling to address a wide range of issues that employees say will make working life better.

We've talked some about a career path for customer service professionals. Clearly Mobility workers are doing their job and more, as the number of new customers grows. Mobility customer service professionals are providing the quality service that keeps customers coming back. These employees want and need opportunity for growth within customer service: for training, increased responsibility and increased compensation.

Mobility customer service professionals provide quality service, and will continue to do so as negotiations go forward. It's time for Mobility management to recognize this contribution to Mobility's success.

Scheduling is another critical area. Mobility employees need and want to know in advance what hours we will be working, and more than just a couple days in advance. That's the only way workers can begin to balance their work lives, personal lives and family responsibilities.

Quota relief in the retail stores is another important issue for Mobility workers. Right now, retail store employees are

disciplined for not meeting their full week's sales quota when they were off work a day during that week.

These are just a few of the non-economic issues we're pushing Mobility to resolve.

And finally, you need to know that the total CWA family is behind you. Just last week we reached out to our telecommunications workers who work for AT&T and we received hundreds of e-mails of solidarity and support.

Lisa from Local 9575 in California wrote, "Our local is committed to help AT&T Mobility workers with any help requested. We will be there for the workers. This fight is not just the fight of workers at Mobility but is also a fight for all CWA members. You can count on Local 9575 to be there for you." Watch for more messages of support like this.

With patience, perseverance and solidarity, we will get the quality contract that Mobility workers deserve.