



IBEW Local Union 21 • CWA Local 4250



## Illinois & NW Indiana 2009 AT&T Mobilization & Bargaining News

**August 10, 2009- IBEW Local 21 Update # 39 - WTF!**

**As our IBEW bargaining teams continue negotiations with AT&T** in Hoffman Estates, IL, there are two bargaining news reports coming from the CWA, in Districts 4 and 9.

**First, as reported on our last update**, CWA District 4 members at AT&T Midwest in Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin ratified a new three-year agreement on Friday, August 7, 2009.

**Second, announced early this morning**, CWA District 9 announced they have now reached a tentative agreement with AT&T West, covering about 23,000 CWA-represented workers in California, Nevada and Hawaii. As part of that announcement, CWA also says their mail ratification vote will be completed September 1, 2009.

**The remaining** CWA districts are still bargaining with AT&T and have not reached an agreement. This means, that as of Monday, August 10, 2009 at 8am, in addition to our **IBEW** talks, CWA negotiations for about 70,000 other CWA-represented members continue as well, at AT&T East (District 1), Southeast (District 3), Southwest (District 6), and AT&T Legacy, a nationwide CWA unit.

**As reported numerous times**, we remind all members **that** the **IBEW** is completely separate from the CWA. We have not reached an agreement, and our negotiations are continuing, and that our IBEW bargaining teams are working hard to resolve all of our issues at both the **IBEW**-AT&T national and local tables.



*As the sun rises in the early morning day, AT&T wonders ... Where will they be today?*



[www.ibew21.org](http://www.ibew21.org)

[www.cwalocal4250.org](http://www.cwalocal4250.org)

**SET TO TALK – READY TO WALK**

**In other news**, as reported on our last update, we take this opportunity to break down the latest news and proposals related to benefits and to share news about expanding mobilization activities in our union.

**As we have continuously reported**, our Union came into these negotiations understanding the crisis in healthcare and the costs of health insurance both in our country and here at AT&T. Knowing that discussions in this area would be extremely difficult, we were more than prepared to work through this with creative solutions – including our **IBEW** proposal which would reduce the cost of healthcare for AT&T *without overburdening our members with excessive costs or scaling back on medical services*. In other words, we presented a rational and progressive plan that would reduce health care spending for AT&T while maintaining a high level of benefits for all **IBEW** members and retirees.

**On the other end of the spectrum, AT&T** came in to negotiations with tunnel vision, demanding that we agree to the current management benefit plan, one which, if accepted, would cost our members over \$7,000 each year in out of pocket expenses, before the plan would even pay a dime.

**We responded by proposing** numerous benefit plan models to AT&T which would have represented cost savings to them. AT&T rejected these proposals. Talks have moved away from what AT&T dictates for boss' benefits. We have moved towards a plan that wouldn't have that kind of drastic impact to our members, but we are still not in agreement on a plan we could accept. **AT&T has also placed the following conditions on their benefit proposal:**

- **AT&T is demanding the ability to change and diminish the benefit plans, including medical and pensions, at any time during the term of the contract and the Union would have no right to challenge.**
- **AT&T wants the right to cancel retiree healthcare at any time during the contract and limits retirees from taking any legal action against AT&T.**
- **AT&T wants the ability to eliminate all benefits for active members at the expiration of the contract.**

**These are demands that our Union simply cannot accept.** With these items attached we are no closer to a benefits package than we were on day one of bargaining.



*Lollapalooza Fest - Grant Park, Chicago*

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**In positive news**, reports from the field of creative rank-n-file member driven mobilization activities continue to expand. Here's the latest, from one AT&T garage in central Illinois. Members there have expanded their participation of Blue Thursdays by declaring the following:

**MONDAYS** are **SAFETY MONDAYS**, MEANING all members are checking their vehicles before leaving the garage. This takes 2 people to properly check the vehicles lights, brights, brakes, parking and turn signals. A safe and proper vehicle check includes making sure the oil level is sufficient, tire pressures are correct, the cab is clean, the windows are clean for good visibility, the drivers log is checked, and more, they're just following the list. As should be done every day and on every job, they making sure all poles are examined and tested before they climb.

**TUESDAYS** are **T-ZONE TUESDAYS**, reinforcing the quality performed on the job, an **IBEW tradition**, reminding each other the AT&T I&M quality handbook states that it is REQUIRED of every technician to T-ZONE and correct all issues at the serving terminal of the customer that techs are dispatched on; along with the terminals in both directions of the customer you are working on. They are reminding each other of the company rule stating that if the corrections will take more than 30 minutes to contact your manager.

**WEDNESDAYS** continue to be **INFORMATIONAL PICKET WEDNESDAYS**.

**THURSDAYS** are now **Blue Snake T-shirt THURSDAYS**. Over \$200.00 was collected last week just in this one garage, and an order for the shirts has already been placed. Not a 100% participation yet, but getting close.



*Working Together on Fridays!*

**They haven't decided yet** what their **FRIDAY** action is, but another work location has revived the **WTF** buttons – **Working Together on Fridays!**

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*Being Part of Lolla*

**Members organizing members!** That's the power we have when we work together for one cause, collectively. **Working Union – Acting Union!**

***As IBEW International President Ed Hill reminds us, the IBEW wants a productive negotiation with no disruption of the company's operations. These negotiations should help, not hurt, the building of a healthy and productive relationship between the parties into the future.***

***We are ready to bargain, but we are always willing to stand up for what we believe is fair and just.***

To read International President Hill's complete [statement click here.](#)

**We will continue to update you as events warrant. WE STAND TOGETHER and WE STAND UNITED!**

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