

STEVE TISZA, *President*



LOCAL 4250

Workers of America

(AFFILIATED WITH AFL-CIO)

3055 Glenwood-Dyer Road
Lynwood, IL 60411
708-757-4065

CWA D4 AT&T Midwest Bargaining Report #32 4/21/09

Negotiations resumed today with no progress on our key issues. While there are a number of critically important issues unresolved including employment security, pensions, retiree health care, Prem Techs and Datacomm, health care for active employees remains a major sticking point. Why? Because the company is seeking massive retrogression that would more than triple our health care costs. Unbelievable? Well, here it is in their own words from today's Zanesville (Ohio) Times-Recorder (quoting AT&T national spokesperson Walt Sharp):

" We want to continue providing good health care, but we need something that is more market-based. We cannot have this group of employees in the declining part of the business have the best health care," Sharp said. "Yes, we are seeking some changes in health care, yes we think it's a fair and reasonable request. The kind of health care that these core contracts have is virtually unheard of in today's era. We're looking to keep health care benefits, but we need something is much more reflective of the market place."

He said the wireline business of the company has declined and is expected to continue to decline.

Under the current contract, employees pay eight percent of their health care costs, the lowest in the company, Sharp said. The company has about 50 different union contracts and the other unions pay anywhere from 20 to 35 percent of health care costs.

In 2007, AT&T Wireline non-management employees, like the ones in negotiations, paid \$930 of \$11,200 of their annual health care costs. Internet non-management employees paid \$2,300 of \$9,200, and management and internet call center non-management employees paid \$3,150 of \$9,500."

That's where they are at; here is where we are: our bargaining committee has worked long and hard to find reasonable solutions on the issue of health care costs. However, AT&T doesn't seem to be interested in solutions, they'd rather dump thousands of dollars in average costs on their employees. Note that these are averages, which means that those of us with serious health problems in

our families are paying many thousands more per year than that. This is from a company that made \$12.9 billion last year and will announce profits for the first quarter again tomorrow.

AT&T is telling the public that this is somehow justified by the "decline of the wireline business." We need to let the public know the part that they fail to mention--what is the backbone of wireless, data and U-Verse? It is the wireline network. **We** are that network!

As we continue to tell them, we are willing to discuss reasonable concepts on the issue of health care costs, but to expect us to simply accept massive cost shifting that more than triples our members' average costs is a sick idea!

Mobilization News: Locals across the district continue to mobilize both on and off the job. As pressure builds, reports are that management is becoming increasingly irritable and unreasonable. Keep up the good work!

Yesterday, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin members and retirees rallied at the AT&T headquarters location. This evening, Local 4321 is holding a rally at the Muskingum County Courthouse.

CWA Staff is continuing to hold meetings with Local Stewards to discuss the next phase of our fight to win a fair contract in more detail. Contact your Local's mobilization coordinator or officers to find out about your Local's activities.

Please go to <http://www.standupforworkers.com> sign the online support statement for our fight to win a fair contract with AT&T, and ask your family and friends to sign on as well.

The next bargaining report will be Wednesday, April 22, or sooner should developments warrant.

