

# February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2009

## C.A.T. Distribution #13

As many of you are well aware, there has been a lot of tension on the floor with the number of rumors floating around. I have had literally hundreds of questions pertaining to job cuts, down time, or layoffs. The news is full of stories about this in the paper industry, not to mention the recent announcements of layoffs from our sister mill in Rumford. This meeting was no exception as Mike Entz gave us a couple fact sheets full of information pertaining to the struggling paper industry and facts about NewPage in general. These facts were of no surprise as we all know how bad things are right now. I guess the good thing that came from today's meeting is that there won't be any layoffs in Escanaba, at least there is nothing currently planned. There will however, be a drastic change in the way we conduct business around here as well as a number of job cuts in the very near future.

The job cuts will be similar to those from 2003 in which the company intends on cutting a person from a line of progression and distributing that work within that department. There are no crossing lines of progression so this is something they can do without negotiating with us and, in fact, they have.

One of the jobs being affected is the second helper in the RMP mill, in which that job will be eliminated and replaced by 1 person on day shift (-3 jobs). Another is the utility person in the boiler house. The company will go back to using mill trainees for this job when needed (-4 jobs). Paper Lab Press Operator is another position being eliminated (-4 jobs). The Janitors will go from 7 to 6 (-1) and the yard is going to lose one job (-1). As I said, these are jobs that are being cut with the work load staying within their respective departments so there are no contractual violations, therefore the company does not have to negotiate these with us.

The highlights from today's meeting are the announcement that things are going to be run quite differently from what we are used to. Bankers must be filled at straight time or they will not be granted (with the exception of deer season, which will remain as current practice), vacation guidelines are going to change as far as the number of people allowed off during prime time, short notice bankers will not be granted, no free meals unless it's contractual or for safety celebrations, all overtime will be closely monitored, elimination of weekend overtime in yard, maintenance, and Tech Lab. Safety meetings can still be done on overtime but all training must be done at straight time unless approved by area superintendents. There will be less summer students and interns hired too.

As far as any down time scheduled for this mill, that is hard to predict. While there isn't anything currently scheduled for Escanaba; that can change in a heartbeat. If I was a betting man, I would guess any down time would be tied in with the #11 boiler down in April but that is only my opinion. Mike Entz has committed to keeping us informed about any possible down time and in fact will hold a meeting next week to keep us updated. He feels he should know more by then. The information mentioned above will be communicated throughout the mill by area supervisors by the end of this week. Have any questions prepared in advance for these people should you have some.

That is a description of today's meeting in a nut shell. None of you need me to tell you the condition of the economy or that of the paper industry in general. The whole world is going through difficult times and we here at NewPage are no different. There isn't anything I liked about today's meeting other than the fact that no one is going to lose their job. With that being said, there were also no surprises. Any business that is going to succeed through these times is going to have to rethink how they do things on a day by day basis. We may not like it, but we're still working.

In Solidarity,

Bryon Branstrom