

February 19th, 2009

C.A.T. Distribution #14

It seems as though all we do lately is share bad news with you. Today is no exception. In an announcement this afternoon, Mike Entz explained there will be additional down time at the Escanaba facility. This downtime will be scheduled for both **March** and **April**. All three machine systems will experience individual weeks of down time in March. E-3 will go down Tuesday, March 10th and start back up Monday, March 16th, E-4 will go down Tuesday, March 17th and start back up Monday, March 23rd, and E-1 will go down on Tuesday, March 24th and start back up Monday, March 30th.

Everyone affected will have five options during these scheduled downs. Those options are voluntary vacations, banked holidays, unpaid personal leave, personal leave with unemployment benefits (if applicable) or employees can work their regular schedule but be assigned work in other areas. Your supervisors will be contacting each affected employee to explain these options in detail.

The April down will be handled differently. All three mills, as well as the support systems, will be shut down for at least ten days, shutting down on Saturday, April 11th and starting back up on Tuesday, April 21st. Utilizing existing contract language; the company is forcing everyone to use a vacation for the week of April 13th. As per a request from the union, a person could use five bankers instead of a week's vacation, as it would be cost neutral for the company. (This is a request we received from several people on the floor). This down could be extended and if it is, the additional day/days will be added to the end of this time frame.

If market conditions change, the March downs could be altered but the April down is pretty firm, unless there are other drastic changes in the market. This announcement is yet another example of bad news for the paper industry. As you all know, many other NewPage mills have taken scheduled downtime to collectively work toward the goal of taking 150,000 tons of paper off the market. There are stories every week about paper mills closing, people getting laid off, and foreign competition driving the price down. While none of us like what is going on here in Escanaba, strong efforts are being made to keep everyone on the payroll and the doors open. We've actually been pretty fortunate as the only people who have had unpaid time off were the mill trainees who were forced home during the recent #4 shut down and several Teamsters that have been sharing time off since last month. When I say "fortunate" I mean we are lucky it hasn't been a higher number, I don't mean to minimize the financial impact of those that were sent home.

More information will be coming out within the next week or two but if you have any question, feel free to ask a committee member and we will try to get you an answer. I also encourage you to visit our web site (www.usw2-21.com) and go to the message board. Many questions are answered right on there, not to mention other information that is shared on a daily basis. Once again I'd like to thank the C.A.T. members for getting these reports out in a timely fashion and I ask that you please don't copy them. It takes a lot of effort to create, deliver and return the feedback generated by the C.A.T letters, not to mention printing them out on yellow paper so they are noticeable throughout the mill.

In Solidarity,

Bryon Branstrom