

March 3rd, 2009

C.A.T. Distribution #16

Some of the things you will read in this CAT report will be things you have heard before. You've already heard us say that some of the language we will have to deal with (on the company's agenda) will be every bit as important/difficult as the economic part of both our agendas. You've heard us say that when we get to job redesign and flexibility we will be in for a battle as there doesn't seem to be too much "middle ground" to work with. I'm nervous about this part of negotiations because the language, as proposed, would completely gut our contract. Unless we can make some drastic movement or unless we're strong enough to take a strong stand on this, we may as well throw the contract through a shredder. On the back side of this report you will see an example of what I'm talking about. The 5 bullets on the back of this page (from company's handout) say it all! Add to that the 26 jobs they want to cut and altering our lines of progression and you will quickly realize why we have been warning you for months about this. This is huge folks, and if you think this won't affect each and every one of you, you have your head in the sand. MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT!! THIS LANGUAGE WILL AFFECT EVERY LOCAL 21 PERSON WORKING IN THIS MILL.

In previous statements made in the monthly newsletters and on the web site, I have promised to form small sub committees made up of several people from each area where there is a proposed job cut/redesign. Obviously we aren't expecting you to tell the company how to cut your job. What we're looking for is your input as far as concerns relating to what the company has already proposed. A chief steward (Vice President) and/or I will meet with each group to hear your concerns/thoughts to make sure we have a clear understanding of your feelings to bring back to the negotiating table.

NOTE: FYI, at a recent union meeting someone asked why the committee would even talk about job redesign or such strong flexibility language. That was a great question so I thought I would share it here in case you are wondering about it also. The answer is we have to discuss it or we are not bargaining in good faith and it could become a board charge. There are strict rules how the bargaining process must be conducted and failure to adhere to those rules can result in charges being filed against the union or the company.

We were given several handouts today that pertained to job redesign, lines of progression, and flexibility. While it would have been very difficult to copy everything and hand it out in a CAT report, (about 30 pages total) we do invite all of you to visit our web site, www.usw2-21.com, and go to the message board where we will post all the info we received. You can view everything we received and will be able to better understand why the committee is so upset right now and nervous about our future.

There's one last thing I want to say, and yes, you've heard it before. Times are tough and we have told the company we would work with them to get through this but they didn't take us up on our offer, and instead, decided to take advantage of the bad economy and try to gut us while we're at the table. To give you a good example of what I'm talking about, there is currently a small paper mill in Lower Michigan that went on strike because the company would not bargain in good faith. This company came to the table with guns blazing, thinking they would bring the union to their knees in these tough times. Instead the union filed an unfair labor charge and went out on strike. I'm certainly not advocating a strike, I'm simply pointing out that while times are tough; we need to make sure we don't sell the farm. We will need your help with this. We are going to need you to stand strong with us folks, things are going to hell in a hand basket real fast.

In Solidarity,



Bryon Branstrom