

March 30th, 2009

C.A.T. Distribution #20

While I want to start out this CAT report by saying we made some progress this past week at the negotiating table, the truth is we were simply able to keep some of the things we already had. If you recall, the company wanted to take away the money they promised us for working the 4th of July. This lump sum (each year) goes into our RIF (retiree insurance fund) and is in fact the reason we were all able to stop contributing to this on a monthly basis. We told the company right from the start that this was not negotiable and would be fought between our attorneys, not at the table. We did have attorneys at the USW headquarters preparing to take on this case but as of last week it has been removed from the company's agenda and for now is a non issue.

Another step in the right direction is that we are much closer to keeping our current PPO insurance plan. We still have some hurdles to get over but I'm optimistic we will reach an agreement in keeping what we currently have as well as creating some other options.

We were also able to reach an agreement on CP5 which pertains to overtime. The initial proposal was that the company would not pay for any mistakes made by the schedulers but instead would give you an opportunity to come in to work at another time. So, to put it another way, instead of holding their people accountable, we would suffer. Anyway, this got settled by agreeing that the procedure would remain the same UNLESS the mistake is made in a self managed department AND the person (filling the vacancy) didn't use a temporary vacancy form. There are actually several grievance answers out there right now that reflect the same verbiage. To put it a little clearer, if you are in a self managed area and you are filling a temporary vacancy, you MUST fill out a temporary vacancy form.

For those of you that try to keep track of the TA's we have mentioned in the CAT reports, I want to bring your attention to a change we made last week. Union Proposal 7F was changed to read "The parties agree that when there is a vacancy of more than 4 hours that needs to be filled, the overtime will first be offered to the employees on their day off. This language will be incorporated into each overtime procedure as appropriate". The change was necessary because the old proposal said "when there is a vacancy of 4 hours or more". After hearing concerns from those of you on the floor and watching how it played out on some schedules, it made sense to change it. It doesn't happen too often and just needed to be cleaned up.

As you can see by looking on the back of this report, the company presented us with another economic package. It's not even close to where we expect to be so we are preparing a counter offer which we will present when we get back to the table in late April. In fact you will notice the offer has changed very little since their previous one. We will be going back to the table on April 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, and May 1st. This is just my gut feeling but I would think things are going to start happening relatively fast now as we are getting down to the nuts and bolts of things.

Last but not least I want to once again ask for your help in controlling the rumor mill. If it's not in the CAT report, the newsletter, on the message board or if you didn't hear it at the steward/union meetings, it's probably not true. I know for a fact that 2 salaried people spread some rumors last week and I'm darn close to proving they started them. What I need to find out is if it was by the direction of those above them. This is the oldest trick in the book that companies use during these times. Let me put things into perspective for you; Ken Bower, Joe Richer, and I will be spending between 16 to 20 hours in meetings this week to discuss job redesign with the affected areas. Part of the reason for this is, to clear the air of misinformation that has been spread around. Before we could put something accurate out, the rumor mill took off and is now out of control. This is a huge amount of time to spend curbing wrong information but it is absolutely necessary. People are upset and rightfully so. So please folks, if it's not from the medium listed above: **It's just not true.**

In Solidarity,



Bryon Branstrom