

June 18th, 2009

C.A.T. Distribution #26

During my past 8 years on the committee, I've often had to explain to some of our members why we make the decisions we do. In these conversations I will usually quote the contract or side agreements and in some situations explain that the contract is either silent or unclear, therefore we usually lean on the intent of the language surrounding that issue. I will always end those talks by telling the person that I'm not asking him/her to like our decision or that they agree with it, but to please understand the thought process behind it.

I'm telling you this because such was the case yesterday pertaining to our conference call with the International, but this time the shoe being on the other foot. I'll be straight forward with you by saying the call got very heated at times and I'll even take it a step further by saying all the union leaders on the call (from the other NewPage mills) were behind us 100%, but the International held their ground that we take the company's contract offer to a vote. By the end of the call I was still not convinced and will tell you now I definitely don't agree with the International and I damn sure don't like it BUT I do understand their thought process behind their decision and I do need to respect it. I'm not comfortable exposing strategy or ideas in this forum so I'll just say the bottom line is we will be voting on the contract on Wednesday July 22nd with informational meetings held on Monday July 20th.

The first meeting will be at the union hall at 7:00am, the second will also be at the union hall at 11:00am, the third meeting will be at the Escanaba Junior high Auditorium at 7:30pm. Please remember that your spouses are encouraged to attend with you. I'm expecting these meetings to last approximately 2 hours. Because the other 2 Locals in our facility have been waiting patiently for us to conclude negotiations before they go to the table, we are inviting anyone from those two Locals (979 and 486), and their spouses, to attend as well.

While I realize there is no perfect date for these meetings (or the voting), I hope the dates we have set will accommodate most of you. With the announcement today of more down time in July, combined with availability of people and the auditorium, our window of opportunity was greatly reduced.

If there is one thing I want to drive home today, it is this; GET EDUCATED, PLEASE attend these informational meetings, read and understand the flyers that will be coming your way, attend future informational picket lines, attend the rallies as they happen. Get involved, get educated, and ask questions.

REMEMBER TO KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE PRIZE

In Solidarity,



Bryon Branstrom