

July 2nd, 2009

C.A.T. Distribution #27

Below is a letter, by Mike Entz, that was sent to the homes of all the USW employees working at NewPage. While there are no surprises in this letter, I want to comment on it so you know where your committee stands. My comments will be in parentheses and **bolded**.

June 29, 2009

Dear Escanaba USW Employee,

The purpose of this letter is to communicate some of the facts around the Company's proposal on flexibility. The C-5 letter distributed last week at the mill identified several areas of concern that I believe need to be addressed.

First of all, the entire Escanaba team is to be commended for their participation and improvement in our safety performance over the last several months. **(Even though in the closing comments at negotiations Bill Smith tried to give the company complete credit for our success of our safety program)** I still firmly believe it is possible for our mill to be an injury free workplace. The utilization of the new flexibility language will not deter us from that goal. In fact, the flexibility proposal includes a commitment that *"Employees will not be asked to perform duties that would jeopardize their safety or the safety of a co-worker. Proper instruction or training will be provided, as necessary."* The Company commits to the safe application of flexibility and you have my assurance that this commitment will not be compromised. **(This was also promised to us during the multi-craft talks and it didn't happen. In fact, after the first year of multi craft, the company came to us asking for an extension for training. They were supposed to have everyone trained within 1 year and when it was obvious they dropped the ball, we protested that someone is going to get severely hurt so we extended the period before going live with multi-craft. Again I want to say that we had this in writing and it didn't happen.)**

The flexibility proposal is not in any way intended to reduce any jobs at Escanaba. Flexibility is intended to maximize the efficiency of the Escanaba Mill, improve productivity and protect the employment security of employees with full regard for safe work practices. This is very similar language that is contained in the agreements of most of our competitors. Additionally, the proposed language includes the Company's commitment that *"No active employee as of the date of ratification will lose permanent employment as a direct result of the implementation of this article."* This has been communicated to the Union committee during the negotiation process. **(This is a true statement that the company has communicated this to us during negotiations. I've been very clear in all of my communications that it is the committee that believes there will be job cuts as a result of flexibility. All you have to do is look around you, ask anyone from Niagara. Bill Smith has made a mess of every NewPage mill that he has negotiated at. My fear is if the company gets this flexibility, they will invent ways to cut jobs while telling you all along that it isn't because of flexibility. Let's also consider the day in the near future when the present salaried leadership is gone and the next group is left to determine the "intent" of the language. Remember, this is the same group of people that didn't think they needed to honor our 4th of July agreement so you tell me how much their word is worth, even if it's in writing!)**

The Company does have a proposal (separate from the flexibility proposal) to consolidate and eliminate 26 positions in the mill. The Company made a commitment to the Union that these reductions will be achieved by attrition and not by layoffs. Again, this proposal is completely separate from the flexibility proposal.

The Company's commitment that "no active employee will lose permanent employment" is not the same as committing that we will have the same number of jobs in the future as we have today. In the future, we are likely to have fewer salaried **(I sure as hell hope so because if they don't back off pretty soon there will be 1 salaried for every 2 hourly out here.)** and hourly jobs than we have today due to productivity **(What does that mean...productivity, are we going to work ourselves out of a job?)** and technological advances. The decision to make these reductions would occur regardless of the proposed flexibility language. **(None of you need me to dissect this paragraph for you. You can see the writing on the wall.)**

To facilitate the effective implementation of the flexibility language, a Flexibility Manager will be appointed to oversee this process for an extended period of time. **(This hasn't worked in maintenance. Mike Entz said he has a good person picked out but wouldn't reveal who it was. Quite frankly, I don't think it matters who it is, flexibility is not going to work as currently proposed by the company.)** This manager will work with both hourly and salaried employees and will assist in many areas which include such things as communications **(What's that?)**, training, appropriate applications **(This is where we don't think we can do the job and they tell us we can)**, problem resolution and best practices. I believe this position will be a tremendous asset in the transition process for all involved.

In summary, flexibility is not about restructuring and consolidating positions. Instead, we believe that it is an essential part of insuring a successful and secure future for the Escanaba mill.

Sincerely,

Mike Entz
Mill Manager

It's very obvious flexibility, job cuts and Christmas have become the biggest issues during these negotiations. **Please come to the informational meetings we will be holding on Monday July 20th. The 7:00AM and 11:00AM meetings will be at the union hall and the 7:30PM meeting will be at the Escanaba Junior High Auditorium. We will discuss these issues in great detail.** Also, be looking for your monthly newsletter in the next couple day as it will have much more about the flexibility issues.

One more unrelated item.....**the C-5 committee** will be walking in the 4th of July parade in Gladstone handing out candy, fans, and educating the crowds as to what we are facing here at NewPage. Please join them in this walk if you don't have something already planned for Saturday morning. I'm sorry for the late notice but final preparations were just made yesterday.

In Solidarity,



Bryon Branstrom