



LOCAL 2-21 C.A.T. Letter

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Monday started out right where we left off (on November 3rd) with much discussion around flexibility. By the end of the day we made the company a verbal offer that we felt our members would support. The company took most of the day Tuesday thinking about our offer and came back in the room at about 1:30PM. I guess it was no surprise that they couldn't accept our offer as presented but said we were getting close to what they wanted. As always, we are expected to move even further while they stand still on their original position. Quite frankly we feel we have moved as far as we can.

When I asked what issue we will discuss first when we come back to the table in January I was surprised by their answer. I asked if we will start with discussing Christmas first, or CP1, CP2, meal tickets, bankers, deferred maintenance or transfer language. The answer was; they gave us their offer back in September. For clarification I asked point blank....."are you telling me you are done talking about these issues? Do you think you are getting Christmas for nothing?" The answer from them was this "you received our offer and yes, we do expect Christmas for nothing."

Folks, it is game on!! These people are daring us to take them on. Remember the buttons we wore back in '02? "IF WE SETTLE FOR WHAT THEY'RE OFFERING US, WE DESERVE WHAT WE GET". Well, that's where we're at, seriously. In a year and a half of negotiating, we have never been to this point. Bill Smith, with Mike Entz at his side said they will not be moving on the rest of these issues. I'll tell you that it seems everything we have done has been for nothing. These people never planned on moving and just sat back and laughed at us for all the efforts we were making to try to reach an agreement. The truth is; they didn't want an agreement or they would have moved a little bit on these issues.

The company has forced our hand!! I will be meeting with the leader of the C-5 group and will be moving forward with some activity in the near future. I'm sure you will be seeing some parking lot rallies in the near future followed with some meetings at the hall. As I said, I'll be meeting with the people involved to move these plans forward and will be communicating with you either personally or through the C-5 team. We talked about being united; now we need to show it!!

At the request of our committee, I asked the International for a special conference call to discuss our negotiations with the rest of the USW NewPage mills. Our District Director has taken it a step farther and has scheduled a NewPage Council meeting in Taylor, Michigan for sometime in January. They are in Pittsburgh deciding on the date as I'm writing this report. We're in this together as the contracts for the old Stora mills all expire March 1st with Rumford and Wickliffe expiring July 1st. I will be verbally communicating the expectations as well as the results of this meeting but you won't see too much in writing.

At this point, I'd like to wish every member of local 21 a very Merry Christmas. Please enjoy your Christmas... it may be your last one away from the mill.

Thank you for your support.

In Solidarity,

Bryon Branstrom