



Important Information & Events

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

www.freckmanandassociates.com (800) 331-3226

Retiree Get Together 1st Wed 10am - Union Hall

Union Meeting: 2nd Wednesday - 7 pm – Dinner 6 pm

Steward's Meeting: 4th Wednesday – 3 pm

Welfare Club Meeting: 1st Monday - 7 pm at the Mead Rod & Gun Club

Total Benefit Solutions: Union Hall hours on the first two Wednesdays of each month from 9:30 to 3:30. Call 1.877.265.2212 to schedule an appointment.



	Work	Personal
President Steve Benoit	233-2529	399-4195
1st Vice Jeff Skorupski	233-2556	399-5472
2nd Vice Bob Larson		420-2256
Insurance Gerald Kell	233-3135	869-7943
Comp Ross Strand	233-2531	280-1494
Secretary Brandon Stromberg	233-2556	284-1604
Treasurer Guy Trudell	233-2534	399-9143
Hall Rental Steve Kennedy		789-1933



What's the Plan?

Steve Benoit, President

The positive vibes have been shared throughout the corporation about the great results we're experiencing from moves that have been made to improve the status of Verso and its mills. So why doesn't management share more of these positive outcomes here in our mill? Why do they focus on the negative when there are great things happening? Anything come to mind?

According to our CEO, Chris DiSantis, we've had great feedback from customers of our E3 System; positive comments on the Investor's Call and Verso's stock is selling for more than \$10/share-far outpacing even the most optimistic predictions. Note the following comment on Sharepoint from E3 Supervisor, Mike Sylvester, in October:

*"Everyone's efforts are really paying off on this grade. When someone like Joe Briganti tells me more than once, "thank you" and Escanaba UniSil is running well, "keep it up".... it's humbling and almost embarrassing at the same time on a personal level. The "THANKS" and appreciation go to all of the folks on E3, product development and technical service. I'm not the one making the product or keeping things on the tracks, YOU are. It's really nice to hear some positive feedback. Thank you for your efforts!
 Roger A"*

The numerous positive things that Chris DiSantis shared in his video town hall meeting concerning the 3rd quarter results was interesting compared to what we hear in Escanaba. (cont'd)

Some positive notes are as follows:

- *Good news on safety.*
- *What a difference a few months makes.*
- *Chris repeats it is all good.*
- *Specialty products running well.*
- *43% growth in release liner.*
- *Graphics 72% of Verso YTD Revenue.*
- *Rebound in profitability (EBITDA) 47 million in the 3rd quarter versus a loss in 2nd quarter.*
- *Exceptional cash flow performance in 3rd quarter.*
- *Term loan decreased by \$61 million over last ten months.*
- *Inventory down. Killed it in inventory reduction goal.*
- *Conversion of paper to cash is the fastest in company history-from 77 to 69 days.*
- *No planned downtime in 4th quarter, order book is strong and there is favorable pricing.*

On the Investor Call they reiterated the positive movement the Company is making:

- *Gross profit is up due to improved operational performance.*
- *Cash conversion down 8 days from 77 to 69 days.*
- *Improved sales.*

The Stock Market has grown and so has Verso, according to many analysts and financial investors buying Verso Stock:

- *Schwab Charles Investment Management Inc. acquired a new position in Verso Corporation (NYSE:VRS) during the second quarter, according to the company in its most recent filing with the Securities & Exchange Commission. The institutional investor acquired 58,500 shares of the basic materials company's stock, valued at approximately \$275,000. Schwab Charles Investment Management Inc.*

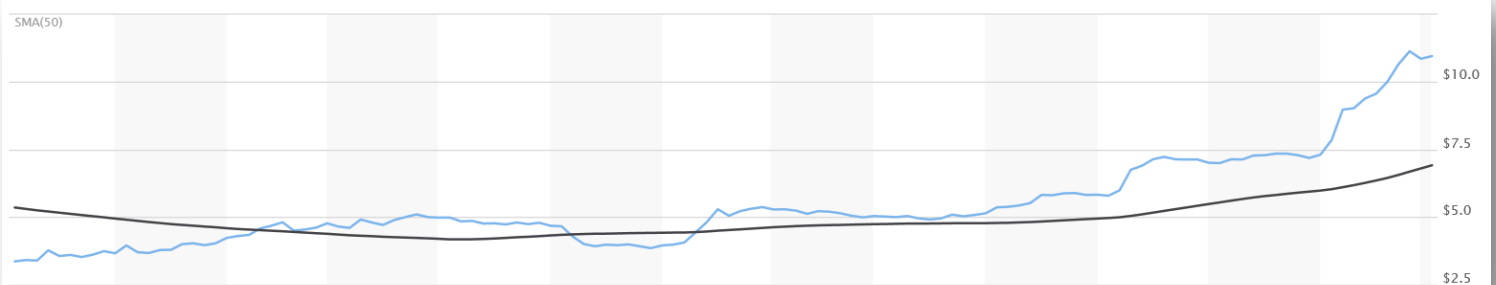


owned 0.17% of Verso at the end of the most recent reporting period.


- *Zacks Investment Research upgraded shares of Verso Corporation from a "hold" rating to a "buy" rating and set a \$7.75 target price on the stock in a report on Tuesday, October 24th. ValuEngine upgraded shares of Verso Corporation from a "strong sell" rating to a "sell" rating in a report on Friday, September 1st. Finally, BWS Financial boosted their target price on shares of Verso Corporation from \$15.00 to \$20.00 and gave the company a "strong-buy" rating in a report on Friday, November 17th.*

It seems to me that they can make money without stealing from me, you, and this community as long as they manage properly. I guess what I would like to know most of all is, "What is the plan for Escanaba?" To continue claiming the need for a modern-day contract to keep the doors open or to be competitive is an insult to every employee in this corporation who comes to work every day and puts forth their all and makes this mill successful. Without a plan for Escanaba I have no idea where we are going. Without a plan to treat employees fairly and with respect, I will have no respect for those managing this mill. Without a plan to keep valuable employees—hourly and salaried—here rather than threatening them to 'get on the bus or find another ride', I can't fathom what the future holds.

Things sound positive at corporate. Why are they not here in Escanaba? Escanaba management: What is your plan? Is your plan positive or negative?



Jerry's Body Shop
#1 Collision Experts



1000 1st Ave S
Escanaba, MI 49829

Phone: 906-786-6425
Fax: 906-789-6026
jerrysbodyshop01@sbcglobal.net

Jamie Sebeck
Owner/Operator

Utility Relief

Jeff Skorupski, 1st Vice President

The Company has proposed adding 30 Utility positions throughout the mill. To avoid future issues we want this to be laid out correctly and all sides must understand what this job entails before it goes up. The Company has given us an initial proposal and we sent back our recommendations. We will continue this process until a reasonable agreement has been achieved. A primary issue we are facing is the Company wants, for example, to add two Utility relief positions to E-1 Winders; we ask that they should have the first option of their preferred schedule for the week. There are a number of issues we are attempting to resolve with this proposal and we will continue to work through them as this could be a win-win if done correctly. We are behind on training and our bankers and vacations are constantly in jeopardy, so the ultimate goal is to help fill that hole and improve what we currently have. We hope to have an outline of what these jobs will look like soon so people know exactly what they are bidding on when the time comes.

Current Situation

Tricia Pendergraft, USW Member

I find it interesting and important to note that with all this talk of high labor costs and the importance of securing a "modern" contract, there is no acknowledgement of management's *sole* responsibility for the bankruptcies experienced in recent history.

We are continually reminded that we are in a market experiencing loss at the rate of about 5% per year. Why wasn't this 5% loss responded to appropriately by management when it was detected? One conclusion: Mismanagement. Repeat mismanagement.

Many examples can be cited to prove bad financial outlays by the company. The party just went on and on, despite the oft-cited 5% *per year* market decline. The party just goes on to this day.

The company's solution of the membership reaching into its pockets and contributing to correction of this financial mismanagement only *proves* and *highlights* management's ineptitude! We need to see some good decisions on the part of upper management. There is an unbelievable amount of potential that can lead to a greater amount of cost savings other than this ill-conceived "solution" which lacks creativity and highlights management's continued determination to take the easiest path which, consequently, does not provide the greatest gains. This "solution" also illustrates management's refusal to acknowledge their culpability in the bankruptcies which has put us all in this position. This position, by the way, that our membership had no control over! Acknowledgement would allow a review and possibly provide an opportunity for management to learn from their past mistakes.

We come to work anticipating and accepting long hours, hard work, and too often, finding ways to complete our job successfully and safely without support.

To sum it up, current and past mismanagement has created our current situation. Don't ask the membership to pay for it!

um UPPER MICHIGAN LAW
BRAY, CAMERON, LARRABEE & CLARK, P.C.



YOUR FIRST CALL

JESSICA BRAY GABE CAMERON SAM LARRABEE KATIE CLARK

NO FEE UNLESS BENEFITS OBTAINED

Workers' Compensation • Social Security Disability
Injury, Illness & Death Claims • Vehicle Injuries - Fault & No Fault
Wills • Trusts • Estate Planning • Criminal Defense

906-786-3902 www.uppermichiganlaw.com
1-800-562-0954

Iron Mountain Escanaba Marquette Menominee Houghton

MEMBERSHIP
EDITORIALS ARE
ENCOURAGED!

Verso the Grinch

Bob Larson, 2nd Vice President

The Holiday Season is upon us with all of its joys and traditions. The season starts for me and my family with the opening of deer season. Families have different traditions and customs. The paper mill will draw most of us away from our loved ones for at least some of these festivities. These are just some of the sacrifices we make for our families and for this mill, so be sure to spend as much time with your loved ones as possible. Take the time to watch a favorite Christmas cartoon like *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas*. Do you think that the Grinch is Verso green? They look very similar to me. When the Grinch was asked why he was taking the Christmas tree, he said it was to fix it. That was a lie. But when he saw the solidarity of the people he had an epiphany, came back and joined them. That is where Verso may be different. They want to take the tree and the Roast Beast and ride off to their caves in faraway places and never look back!



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Negotiations

The next Contract negotiations are scheduled for December 11th and 12th. Between the inability to fill the vacancies for the Teamsters' bargaining members and a scheduling conflict for our staff rep, December 18-20th had to be canceled. We're working on future dates for the weeks to come. We continue to negotiate in good faith while the Company continues to say that our proposals are too restrictive or costly. What they fail to understand is that their proposals are too restrictive and costly to us, our families, and our community. In our last round of negotiations, we passed proposals across the table concerning Contracting, Fitness for Duty, Seniority Break, Flexibility/Temporary Transfer, Job Bidding, Mill Trainee language, the Affordable Care Act, Union Membership, and Payroll Deductions. There was open discussion on the Union's part concerning Lines of Progression, E&I and Maintenance, the Apprenticeship Program, the Drug and Alcohol Policy and Company Rules/Misconduct Rules. We were able to get one Tentative Agreement on mutual trades of Sundays within the same pay period. Continue to be patient and strong as we move through the negotiation process. If you have any questions, please contact a Union Committee Member. United We Stand.

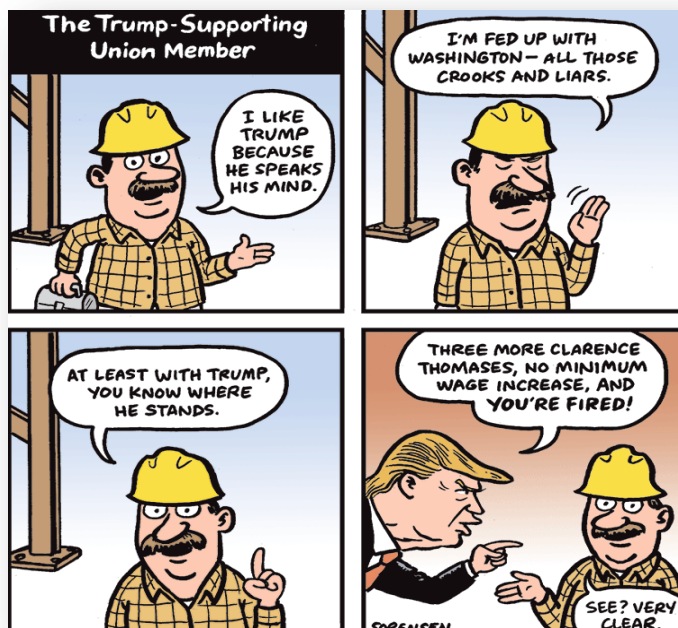
UNITED STEELWORKERS



WOMEN OF STEEL

BLANKET AND PAJAMA DRIVE

USW Local 2-21 Women of Steel are collecting pajamas and blankets to be donated to various organizations throughout the community. The drive will continue through December 17th which will culminate with a family day to be held at the USW Hall from 1 -6 pm. Families are welcome to come and make a tie blanket for those in need, enjoy movies, popcorn, and hot chocolate. For more information please contact Donna Dams at 906.282.3430. Donations can be dropped off at the USW Hall or in the Union office at the mill.



Enclosed is the Upper Peninsula Labor Management Council (UPLMC) scholarship application. Any student that attends a High School Collective Bargaining Workshop while in high school is eligible to apply for this scholarship. If your school does not send students or has already sent students for the year your child is able to attend by contacting Doreen Bower, Business and Project Manager for the UPLMC at 906.466.0155 or by email at dbower@uplmc.com. This is a great opportunity for your child to learn the collective bargaining process through an interactive event while gaining an opportunity to receive a scholarship.

Mediation-Safety Meetings

Recently, through mediation, the Union and Company agreed that the Safety Meeting Attendance Policy and any discipline associated with attending safety meetings would return to the previous policy:

- ✓ All employees must attend a monthly safety meeting. Each employee will sign the sign-in sheet to document attendance.
- ✓ For shift workers, the decision of when to schedule the safety meeting will be made by the General Superintendent. For day workers, they will be part of their normal schedules.
- ✓ If someone has approval not to attend their regularly scheduled meeting, because of illness, vacation, work schedule, or other circumstance they need to make up that meeting before the regularly scheduled meeting or by the end of the calendar month following the missed meeting.
- ✓ It is the supervisor's responsibility to track attendance and notify those that missed the meeting via posting a copy of the regularly scheduled safety meeting attendance sheet in a central area within the department after the conclusion of the meeting. It is the employee's responsibility to assure that they have made up the missed meeting.
- ✓ Making up a meeting will consist of, as a minimum, viewing the Prepared Resource Packet materials and reviewing the completed Safety Meeting Leaders guide.
- ✓ If someone chooses not to follow these expectations, missing safety meetings will be dealt with as a performance issue. Progressive discipline will be used as specified in "Misconduct Rule 30 - Failure to attend a safety meeting as outlined under the Safety Meeting Attendance Guidelines".

Note: The check mark system, utilized as part of the mill's attendance policy, **will not** be used.

Mediation-Delay Pay

In June of 2016, the Union and Company began looking to bring in new third-year equivalent maintenance and E&I employees. Many meetings took place resulting in two agreements. While the meetings were being held, a decision was made to post for six maintenance jobs, three E&I positions, and a hiring pool for maintenance to be utilized, as needed, throughout the year.

After being awarded one of the maintenance positions, one of our stewards noticed that they were not receiving delay pay and filed a grievance. Months went by with many back and forth discussions. Finally, after a third step grievance meeting, we received a grievance denial letter from Human Resources. We requested a mediation on the issue and the result is the Company agrees to pay the six maintenance and three E&I members their delay pay reflective of the contractual language:

"...the employee will be paid the difference in the rate of the two jobs, whichever is higher, plus \$4/day delay pay."



"Your Personal Partner in Healthcare"

Before – during – and after retirement

- ✓ Individual Health Insurance
- ✓ Marketplace – Non-Metallic
- ✓ Individual Retirement Insurance
- ✓ Medicare Supplement / Advantage Plans
- ✓ Prescription Drug Plans
- ✓ Union Voluntary Benefit Plans

Call **1.877.265.2212** for an appointment. A qualified representative will come directly to your home and help qualify your options. As a service to our Members, a TBS Representative is available at the Union Hall two days each month. Stop in or call for a specific appointment time.



In addition to your healthcare, it's important to pay close attention to the health of your retirement funds. Many retirees have a Defined Benefit Plan (Pension) and a Defined Contribution Plan (401k). Your income goals, needs, and wants are all factors that should be addressed with professionals to ensure the most stability and predictability possible through retirement. You've worked a long time to earn what you have and it's best to keep as much of it as you can.

If you have questions about how our retirement or healthcare plan works, please call me at 869.7943/233.3135 or contact Transamerica through the Verso One Number 800.422.6103, Option 4. All too often we hear about someone who has made a hasty decision based on hearsay or rumors. Retiring should arguably be easier to do, but until they've made an easy button, please do your homework and plan accordingly. Simple adjustments can have years-long implications.

We've watched dozens of our co-workers make their last trip across the bridge over the past few years. It's both exciting and somber; we're excited for them to enjoy their retirement and somber to know we will see them less often and of course that many of us still have years of bridge-crossing ahead of us.

To all upcoming and recently retired members, congratulations and best wishes in retirement from your Local Union, 2-21!

Retiree Information

Gerald Kell, Insurance Advocate

The Union Local has moved the grievance pertaining to the Company's unilateral termination of retiree healthcare benefits to the 3rd step of the grievance procedure. We encourage affected retirees to seek alternative healthcare for 2018 to allow the grievance process to play out.

The Company will be hosting meetings at the Mill with Mylo, a healthcare exchange broker, for current and future retirees. These meetings will be held in the Large Training Room next to the Lunchroom on:

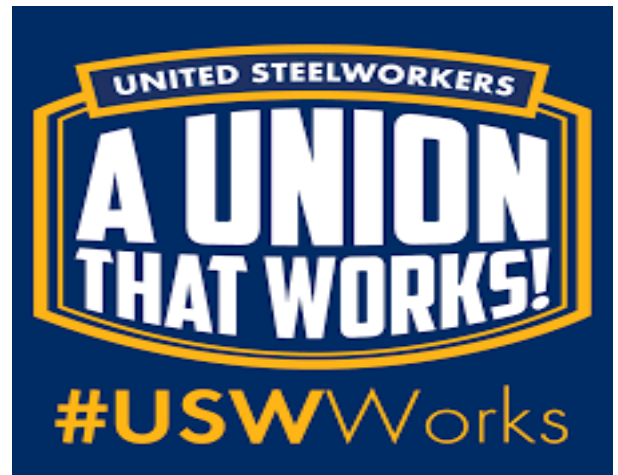
Tuesday, December 5th 1:30 pm
Wednesday, December 6th 10:00 am

Mylo is a division of Lockton—one of the world's largest privately owned insurance brokers—who is currently contracted by Verso for the administration of some of our healthcare. There is no additional subsidy being offered or funded by Verso and the Union does not necessarily advocate for these representatives. As with anything, we implore our members to seek additional resources and make educated decisions on their post-retirement healthcare needs. It appears the Mylo exchange is simply a conduit to the ACA's Healthcare Marketplace. Feel free to seek the professional help of local insurance agents who can help you personally navigate this very important aspect of your retirement.



November Union Meeting Minutes

- A Trainer's report was provided. There is a great deal of training that still needs to be completed throughout the mill.
- The Welfare Club report was provided. Seven people are off receiving this benefit. Nomination of officers was held this last Monday.
- A Charity Club report was given and there will be a meeting next month.
- The lime kiln is down for a few days and the company will be looking for all qualified employees to help haul lime. The company will contract this work out if our members can not cover the work.
- The company is trying to have tour maintenance do lube work instead of calling an oiler out for the job.
- A member reported CR Meyer performing work on a bathroom in E1.
- Another member reported CR Meyer working on a pumping system (\$6,000 est.) for a chemical trial. The system was not set up which caused extended time to wait for the pump to be put in place.
- Mediation for November 14 has been set up for a Worker's Comp Case.
- After working on a Worker's Comp situation with a CNA from Bishop Noa Home, the CNA was able to return to work.
- The grievance concerning the elimination of retiree benefits was moved to 3rd step.
- There was a discussion around open enrollment for healthcare and Gerry Kell offered to help anyone in need of assistance.
- The membership was informed of the Healthcare Committee meeting in Wisconsin Rapids and we will have a rate increase of 8.6% to our medical.
- Information was shared on the election results and all were encouraged to take part in future elections.
- Mediation is scheduled for this Thursday to discuss delay pay for maintenance and discipline over safety meetings.
- The Company asked to extend an ODR position and then came back with another special assignment position that would combine lube/ODR.
- A Steward Meeting for this month was confirmed.
- There will not be any International or District elections since all are running unopposed.
- There is a meeting to discuss utility relief position in the near future.
- A side agreement for Heavy Equipment Crane Operators was created and the company denied it.
- We had a designated crane trainer training two people. Concern was brought by a number of members over this and the committee. The Company has stated that it is not there intent to do this again.
- The company tried to flex someone to train in another department. A grievance has been filed on this.
- An update on negotiations was provided and the company's lack of movement was discussed. Luke just started with economics.
- We discussed vacation sign-ups and throughout all of Verso we are the earliest.
- A discussion around a safety issue in the boiler house took place. One of the last storms caused a major leak in the control room and it is still not addressed.
- There was a serious injury at the Biron paper mill on a winder as air leaks in E1 winder continue to plague the machines that could lead to an injury.
- A summary of the union/management meeting was provided.
- Bishop Noa Home support staff voted to unionize and will become part of our local union. A summary of how this will work was provided.



The Trump Effect?

Gerald Kell, Rapid Response

You told me you were voting for him because he was going to help the middle class. You agreed that he tweeted too much and that you didn't like him personally, but that's just the candidate, you said once he's president, he'll be presidential. You assured me he would fix healthcare and bring manufacturing jobs back. You were elated and anxious about the money he was going to save us on taxes and how he was going to put his 'businessman skills' to work to reduce the debt.

Well, we're a year in and insofar as can be objectionably measured, these assurances are indefensible today. Rest assured the economy he inherited (like his fortune) has predictably continued to trend positively for many things which is a good thing—any economist will admit that was to be the case had we elected [insert any random inanimate object here]. But we want to look to the future.

His Supreme Court appointment has now taken national "right-to-work for less" legislation from very unlikely to very possible. Janus vs. AFSCME will be heard by the High Court in January or February and Trump's anti-labor, anti-union stance will come to the forefront. The devastation we've incurred in several states could be nationwide by Spring. That's without even considering his choices for the National Labor Relations Board who will negatively impact our ability to secure a fair contract from Verso. Yet you told me he was for the working people.

His purported victory in the USW-based Carrier plant in Indiana quickly became another outsourcing to Mexico and a political stunt. It should really be no surprise considering he thinks manufacturing workers like us make too much money and that companies like Verso should:

"...shift production away from Michigan to communities where workers would make less. You can go to different parts of the United States and then ultimately you'd do full-circle — you'll come back to Michigan because those guys are going to want their jobs back even if it is less.." - Trump, 2016

Executive orders and hastily constructed healthcare policy have actually made healthcare far more expensive and less stable. Can we really be shocked when he so confidently explained that his overall plan would be to ***"let if fail"***?(2017) Run to failure? That sounds familiar. Let's not fix the leaks or repair the equipment, let it fail. Does he realize that the bankruptcy systems he exploited as a private businessman is not a viable option for an entire nation?

The campaign promises on trade have produced nothing more than adolescent-like tweets to foreign leaders, zero progress on NAFTA negotiations, and a flip-flop on China's trade policy as he proclaims:

"After all, who can blame a country for being able to take advantage of another country for benefit of their citizens? I give China great credit." -Trump, November, 2017.

Who can blame them? How about the employees in the paper, steel, and auto industries who went from good middle class jobs to nothing? The same people he will discredit as "losers" when they realize he's sold them snake oil.

After the aforementioned failures and defeats, he seems poised to move on to any victory he can claim. So now he wants to tackle taxes and the budget. The one place you were absolutely sure his skills would be an asset. But rather than fiscal responsibility and tax breaks for the middle class working men and women like you and me, he offers up unprecedented breaks to his elitist friends and corporations who have defrauded, bankrupted, and exploited taxpaying employees, all while actually raising the deficit. Verso execs and upper management will now get to keep more of their earnings because he's assured us it will trick-down to us. Did you hear that? They will, without a doubt, and without prompting or incentive, simply pass those savings along to us. Well, I don't see why we shouldn't believe him.

Looming national right-to-work for less legislation, manufacturing losses, ballooning healthcare costs, trade devastation, tax breaks for the executives, *and* an expanding deficit of which the middle class will now own a greater percentage. But *you* said....