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21 NEWS

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Positive Change

Steve Benoit, President

When we arrived to work on Friday morning (February 9th), it looked as though a bomb had gone off in E1. There were slabs everywhere because the pulper was not working at full function due to mechanical failures. Crews had been voicing their concerns to management in the area about the pulper and its loss of oil for months. The guillotine operator had to go down to the basement and refill this oil about every 3 hours.

Two days earlier, during the E1 Machine Down, the pulper was to be fixed by a contracted maintenance crew. This contractor feared they may damage it more and would not have the appropriate parts to fix it. The contractor put the pulper back together only to see the oil leak worsen. Then the guillotine operator had to go down every hour to fill the oil and it began leaking onto the belts causing slippage. The pulper could not run at optimal speed making it impossible to keep up with the needs of the area, hence the bomb of paper. The next day a plan was devised to fabricate an oil pan to divert the oil from the belts. This did *not* happen, and paper continued to pile.

That Friday morning, I contacted the new mill manager, Todd Downey, at 6 a.m. and invited him to come see this. He came down immediately and was shown all the safety hazards and listened to the concerns of the workers in the area. He apologized to the guillotine operator and said that he would be leaving town later, but would have someone on it. From that point on we saw more action by management in the area than we have seen in some time. There was maintenance, safety, supervision, superintendents, and others on the floor working to get the drip pan in so that the area would be safe until the proper maintenance

could be performed. Crews were communicated to throughout the day (something we don't see often) from lead Maintenance, Communications, and Safety. The drain pan was put in, within the next week the parts arrived, and the pulper was then properly fixed.

I share this because it wasn't the typical outcome we experience. I feel encouraged that we can bring a concern to our mill manager and see immediate action. It was a positive change and we hope to see more of this in the future. I personally hope to see the mill manager on the floor talking to union members regularly to see the whole story.



We have set dates for future negotiations.

April – 9th, 10th and 12th

May – 9th, 10th and 31st

June – 6th and 7th

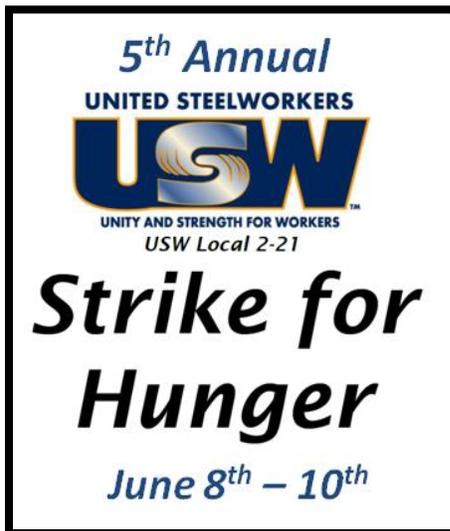
Union Negotiations comprise of all three Unions, USW, IBEW, and Teamsters. On April 9th, 10th, and 12th the Teamsters will not be present due to the discussion being only about Maintenance and E&I.

Strike for Hunger V

Brandon Stromberg, Secretary

It's nearly time to host our 5th annual USW Local 21 Strike for Hunger! Looking back on the last few years it's easy to see how much we have helped our community. We have helped families and individuals get the most essential human need. It's easier to search for a better job when you don't have to worry as much about your child's next meal. It's more likely one can focus on studying for a test when they're not scrambling to put something in the refrigerator or malnourished. It's easier to help others when you yourself have been helped. Last year's Strike for Hunger resulted in nearly 3,000 pounds of food and more than \$5,000 donated to local pantries which support about 500 families per month. That's 6,000 families per year!

Our community is better because of your dedication and support. This year's Strike for Hunger will be June 8th - 10th at Elmer's County Market in Escanaba and Pat's Foods in Gladstone. Please volunteer an hour or two of your time. Bring your family along! If you have any ideas or suggestions, please let me know!



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Mechanical Maintenance Bids

Bob Larson, 2nd Vice

An agreement has finally been reached to bring more people into Mechanical Maintenance. They will be coming in at a first class designation. These 12 positions will be offered to mill employees first including probationary employees, then to outside applicants.

Every applicant will be required to take the same tests. The first two, the Bennet's test and the math test are *pass* or *fail* and once taken are good for the rest of your career at the mill. The next test is the N.C.C.E.R. test. This is a written test given by a nationally accredited company; and lastly, a hands-on test given by our own people.

These two tests must be passed with a 75% minimum score. This only applies to this particular bid, if the Company cannot get the amount of people they need the job will be reposted with 65% minimum scoring requirement. These scores are good for two years. The Company has agreed to offer entrance classes this year.

The Union Committee and the Multi-craft Committee have put a lot of effort into this bid. I realize that there is apprehension around raising the minimums and possibly going outside the mill to hire, but the Maintenance department has been depleted by about 2/3 and while this not a problem created by our members, we need to help the brothers who are still left.



Welcome the newest USW Local 2-21 brothers and sisters. From left to right, Back Row: Jordan Bower, Stephen Hill, Kristopher Hewitt, Cole Possi, Chris Lauscher, George Zahornacky, Andrew Crevcoure, Keith Whitman, Andrew Robere; Middle Row: William Peters, Jordan McKnight, Derek Griffin, Tyler Gagne, Austin Berg, Brad Farley, Jeremy Mason, Cory Kositzky. Front Row: Gina Vandeville, Cathy LeBresh, Steve Dubord, Matt Valima, Jessica Way.

Call-outs

Jeff Skorupski, 1st Vice

There have been a few instances lately where members have contacted us about call-outs they feel they should receive. As much as I would love to say anytime you are called in to work you should receive a call-out that is not what our contract states. Below is what our contract states and it's pretty clear you do not get a call-out when you are asked to work because of another employee's absence. Pretty much the only way a call-out is given is if you're called in to start up equipment or your fellow employee cannot complete their shift and you're called in to relieve them partway through their shift. It is always a good practice to ask on the phone if a callout is warranted.

Section 5. Minimum Guarantees

Call-In Work – Any employee called in for emergency work at any time other than the start of their established shift shall be paid two (2) hours call time plus the actual time worked but not less than four (4) straight time hours on any one call, except employees called for such work between the hours of 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. shall be paid three (3) hours call time plus the actual time worked but not less than six (6) straight time hours on any one call between these hours.

- A. To receive call time pay an employee must have left the mill premises at the end of their shift.
- B. **Exceptions (For Supercalender, Rewinder, Coater & Machine Room Departments):**

1. No callout time shall be allowed for the same job in any twenty-four (24) hour period, provided the second call is caused by negligence or unsatisfactory work done on the first call.

C. Exceptions (For All Departments):

1. No call-out time shall be allowed any tour or shift worker whose schedule of hours is rearranged because of the absence of another worker, unless the tour worker is called in on a startup to fill a vacancy created by the absence of a regularly scheduled worker, or the tour worker is called in to substitute for another employee who is unable to continue working during the shift, regardless if the employee has left the plant.

No call-out time shall be allowed any worker who has been notified to return to work before leaving the premises of the plant or who has been notified at least twelve (12) hours prior to the time for reporting.

AMY DYER

ASSOCIATE BROKER

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Safety Proposal

Steve Benoit, President

On January 31st the Union Committees along with Steve Sallman presented the proposal for safety. Safety is the most important thing when we come to work and as far as we are concerned it should have the most extensive part of our contract. On Verso's Insight webpage they say, "Nothing at Verso is more important than the safety of our people. Being "Safe from the Start" is first among our founding principles, and it's why we're dedicated to making sure that every Verso team member returns home uninjured each day." If Verso truly feels this way, then they too should want safety to be one of the most extensive parts of our contract. Below is a synopsis of our proposal.

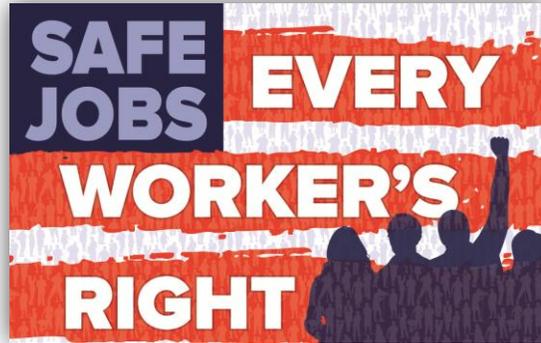
An addition that we have proposed speaks to the installation and maintenance of equipment that will protect employees from hazards. This language would also speak to an inspection and maintenance program that gives priority to equipment that protects our health and safety. Most importantly, there is language that speaks to *eliminating* the hazards not *masking* them by adding PPE which is the last line of defense against a hazard.

The Company will install and maintain any equipment necessary to protect employees from hazards. The Company will ensure that all equipment is maintained in safe condition. The Employer's inspection and maintenance program will give top priority to equipment that is critical to employee safety and health. The Company will take all necessary steps to eliminate the risks posed by faulty equipment. If necessary, such equipment will be shut down until repaired, unless doing so would create a greater risk to the health or safety of the workforce. "Equipment" in the meaning of this article includes fixed and mobile equipment, structures, and surfaces on which employees travel or work.

Our contract currently speaks about all employees being given proper training, but some added

language would be "***Employees will not be asked to perform any duties that would jeopardize their safety or the safety of a co-worker.***" In another section of the proposal an employee's rights under safety is addressed further:

Every employee has a right to stop any task they feel is unsafe and/or unhealthy. Employees are not required or expected to perform a task they believe places them at risk. Should such a situation arise the employee will notify their supervisor without fear of retaliation or discipline to discuss their concerns and participate in the discussion and planning for how the task can be performed safely. The employee also has the right to involve their union safety representative of an unsafe and/or unhealthy condition and/or task. If the unsafe condition or hazard cannot be mitigated or abated, the work will be delayed until such time as the task can be performed safely by an agreement between the Company and the Union. (Cont'd on next page)



Nominations will be held during the March 14th Union Meeting for all Union Committee positions

- President
- 1st Vice President
- 2nd Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Worker's Comp Advocate
- Insurance/Retiree Advocate
- Inner Guard
- Outer Guard
- Three (3) Trustee positions

Qualifications for the positions are:

- ✓ At least one year's membership in USW
- ✓ Must be present at the meeting to accept a nomination or give the president a written notice of intent to accept a nomination if nominated.

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Jamie Sebeck
Owner/Operator

A very important section speaks to overtime fatigue, ***"No employee will be required to work overtime when that employee has a reasonable, good faith belief that he or she cannot work safely due to fatigue."*** This is something every employee at the mill has experienced and knows is unsafe.

Work related injuries at this time are a major concern because of the intimidation that was laid out in the past few years by management. The following language would address this type of treatment from management:

The Company shall not retaliate in any way against an employee who reports a work-related injury or illness; reports a safety or health problem; files a health or safety complaint; requests access to health or safety records; who violates a safety rule, absent malice or reckless intent; and/or otherwise exercises any other health or safety right afforded by local, state or federal law and/or by this collective bargaining agreement.

In the event the Company imposes any discipline regarding items in the above paragraph, and the union files a grievance after discipline, the affected employee shall remain on the job to which his/her seniority entitles him/her until there is a final determination on the merits of the case. The employee shall remain whole.

When an employee is retained pursuant to this section and the employee's discipline is finally held to be for the proper cause, the effective date for all purposes is the date of the final resolution of the grievance.

Also addressed in the Union proposal was the Management of Organizational Change (MOOC). Every industry contract should have language that addresses the protocol when a change is made by the Company to ensure the change was addressed completely and can move ahead without any undue stress or safety risks to the workers.

When the company deems the need to make an organizational change the importance of approaching these changes in a proactive way and not a reactive way should be top priority. If a job would be eliminated and/or other positions within the area or mill would be affected by incurring work responsibilities of the eliminated or changed job/task(s) the Union will be notified immediately in writing that Escanaba Paper Company management will begin to evaluate this elimination/change. The eliminated/changed job/task(s) and all affected positions will be listed in writing. Within six months of this announcement a Management of Organizational Change Report will be made available to the Union and all involved in the Management of Organizational Change process in writing. The Management of Organizational Change Report will show that the job/task(s) changes will not be a safety/health risk to the workers, that technically and logistically the job can be performed, the modifications that will be needed to perform the job /task(s) efficiently and safely will be listed along with cost and feasibility. Along with this the company will provide in writing to the Union and all involved, the necessary time to review the proposed change or terminate the change before the change is made, the authorization requirements to make the change and the procedural and training changes that will be implemented should the parties feel the change is safe to move forward. The report out will be provided by trained and educated company personnel in each of the areas. The report will also list in writing any issues that are found during the processes and the corrective actions and timing it will take to solve these issues. A pre-start review/training will be provided to all employees and anyone involved in the reporting of this MOOC, this is to ensure that everyone is on the same page and any questions can be answered before starting the job/task(s).

To see more of the Union's Safety Proposal go the Union Message Board. We are awaiting the Company's response on the proposal and will more than likely hear from them in April.



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February Union Meeting Highlights

- The USW Women of Steel report was given by WOS Chair, Donna Dams. All were thanked for donating to the Blessing Bag drive. A Pancake Breakfast to be held at the hall on March 25th to benefit the UP Honor Flight was announced.
- Last month's tabled motion concerning Special Assignments was discussed. It was explained that the motion was illegal and that a previous, original motion would have to be rescinded before a second motion could be brought before the hall.
- A motion to accept "Memorandum of Agreement to Maintenance" was made. Vote by show of hands, motion passed.
- A discussion was had concerning the Utility Relief position and the challenges that we are experiencing.
- One of the recent new hires has already quit.
- Stewards were reminded to monitor the filling of vacancies by the new Loss Prevention Officers, there has been a rash of improperly filled vacancies.
- Five paid grievances were reported.
- The Lube Tech vote passed, combining Group 2 and Group 4. Motion to accept the vote was given and seconded, motion passed.
- Announced there will be a maintenance vote held at the mill concerning Heavy Equipment (crane) work.
- 401(k) Non-grandfathered and Grandfathered annual contribution was discussed; it has yet to be deposited and to watch for them.
- It was indicated that the newly retired Myron VanEffen is the new Retiree representative on the Retirement Insurance Fund (R.I.F.).
- We Discussed meeting with a representative from The AirMedCare Helicopter Medivac Network to consider offering their membership program to the union members.

- Reminded people next month we will be nominating for union positions, with a vote held the following month.
- Announced dates for negotiations, April 9, 10, 12 (maintenance and E/I only), May 9, 10, 31 and June 6 & 7.
- The safety proposal was shared and discussed.
- Announced elimination of salvage.
- Described how the Company plans to contact people with 12 hr restrictions to validate them.
- Discussed the Bishop Noa negotiations and associated activities concerning them.



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Thank you Daily Press readers for selecting USW Local 2-21 as your "Best of the Best" for Labor Unions



401(k) Fixed Annual Contribution

Gerald Kell, Insurance Advocate

Several years ago, under bankruptcy, the defined benefit pension plan was frozen. At this time, participating members who met certain requirements were given the option to be “grandfathered” or “non-grandfathered” in regards to the pension plan. All others including new hires were considered Non-grandfathered. One is that each year there is an automatic company contribution made to our Transamerica 401(k) plans which varies depending on your grandfathered or non-grandfathered status and your age plus years of service. If you’re a Grandfathered employee, you receive an automatic contribution equivalent to 3% of the prior year’s eligible wages in addition to continuing to accrue benefit service for your pension multiplier. Non-grandfathered employees receive a contribution based on a tiered scale of your age + years of service as seen below:

Age + Service	Auto Contribution
Less than 40	2.5% of pay
40 to 49	3.5% of pay
50 to 59	4.5% of pay
60 to 69	5.5% of pay
70 or more	6.5% of pay

Example: Steve is 44 years old and has 14 years of service at the mill. His Age + Service is 58 which earns him a 4.5% rate contribution. John is 32 years old and has been at the mill 7 years. His percentage would be 2.5% until next year.

As of the publishing of this article, the annual automatic contribution has yet to be made for any employees. It goes to show that follow up and verification is very important when it comes to our benefits. The Company was made aware of this several weeks ago and has stated that the Non-grandfathered deposits should be made any day. Grandfathered employees should expect their automatic 3% contribution to be made in March. To log in to your account, visit www.trsrretire.com and register. This is also a good opportunity to

look at your contributions. Remember, there is a Company match for members each pay period as well. For Non-grandfathered employees, the match is \$1 for \$1 up to 2% and \$.50 for every \$1 the next 4%. Essentially, if you contribute 6%, you will get a 4% match. Grandfathered employees receive 100% match on the first 3% contributed. It should go without saying that regardless of your retirement goals, this should be your minimum contribution as it’s a benefit that’s been bargained on your behalf. All employees were automatically enrolled at 6% when they entered the plan and there is an automatic annual increase of 1% each year until it reaches 10%. Employees may go in and turn off the automatic increase whenever they like. Also make sure your beneficiaries are listed and that all personal information is accurate. We recently had an employee whose Social Security number was entered incorrectly by someone else performing data entry. Honest mistake, but it’s creating problems now almost two years later.

It’s also important to look at services provided by Transamerica. There’s a variety of support options for anyone looking for additional guidance on their 401(k) options. Whether you’re just unsure of how to read the reports you receive or you’re interested in Target Funds or Index Funds or just want to better understand your portfolio, call them and use their services. You’re certainly paying for them. Specifically, everyone should look at the “Managed Advice” service. This service, when selected, opens up additional options for support and can really act as your personal adviser. But remember, you’re paying an additional fee for this service, so if you’re not going to use it, consider whether or not you want to pay for it. If you’re reading this and have never heard of “Managed Advice” I implore you to call Transamerica or login to your account to make this determination as everyone was automatically opted into this program; which I still think is an inappropriate method. To be clear, I’m not suggesting it’s not a valuable service, but like any purchased good, if you don’t know you have it, or you don’t use it, there can be little value. Be sure to make an informed decision. There is a mobile app available and you can call Transamerica through the Verso One Number 1.800.422.6103, Option 4.

27th Annual Benefit

Delta County Trades & Labor



Charity/Scholarship Fund Saturday, March 3, 2018

Starts at 5:00 p.m. EST

Eagles Club, 608 Ludington St. • Escanaba, mi

Registration.....5:00-6:00
Deluxe Buffet.....6:00-7:00
Prize Drawing.....7:00-9:00
Dancing.....9:00-Midnight

\$12.00 per person in advance • \$15.00 at Door

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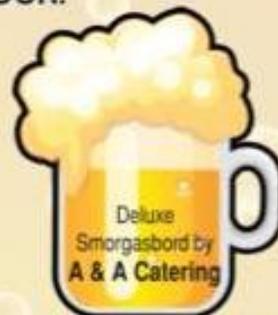
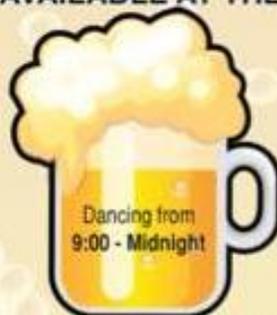
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USW Hazard Alert

In an effort to keep safety at the forefront in our mill, we will be posting past USW Hazard Alerts for our members to review and compare for similarity to any possible hazards in your areas. This will hopefully assist in eliminating or addressing those hazards before we repeat a catastrophic event. If you see a similar hazard that needs to be addressed in your work area, please reach out to a safety adviser, committee member, and management.

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**Bishop Noa Negotiations continue
with a total of 18 tentative
agreements after 4 meetings.
Future negotiations are slated for
March 12th & 13th**

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Retirement Insurance Fund

Gerald Kell, Insurance Advocate

Shown below is the annual overview report for the Retirement Insurance Fund (RIF). This employee driven fund is used to offset healthcare premiums for employees when they retire. Qualified retirees may apply for up to \$110 in monthly reimbursement for out-of pocket premiums. In order to be qualified, you must have been employed at the mill for 5 years, after 1988, have been a union member in good standing, age 55 or older, have proof of medical insurance premiums being paid, and retired from the mill.

Retirees can apply for this benefit through Accuserve, the administrator of the benefit distribution. The benefit can be direct deposited into an account and enrollees must re-apply each year to confirm qualified coverage and expense.

The RIF board meets quarterly and is made up of two USW members, one IBEW member, one Teamster, and a retiree. Currently, those board members are Chairman, Sean Reese – IBT Local 406, Trustee, Bill Anderson – USW Local 21, Trustee, Brian Lesnieski – USW Local 21, Secretary, Mel Anderson – IBEW Local 906, and Retiree Rep, Myron VanEffen – USW Local 21.

2017

ANNUAL REPORT

YEAR	TOTAL RIF INCOME	BENEFIT CAP (75% of PYTI)	BENEFITS PAID OUT
2007	\$498,098	\$348,724	\$236,931
2008	\$496,446	\$373,573	\$251,790
2009	\$475,398	\$372,334	\$260,486
2010	\$496,060	\$356,548	\$273,880
2011	\$506,493	\$372,045	\$322,780
2012	\$521,432	\$379,870	\$330,234
2013	\$518,270	\$391,074	\$343,215
2014	\$561,707	\$388,703	\$383,938
2015	\$598,741	\$421,280	\$408,288
2016	\$548,903	\$449,056	\$400,423
2017	\$557,473	\$411,677	\$402,579

Note: A seven-year benefit limit became effective Jan 1, 2005.

Total RIF Income = All contributions, interest, and dividends

Benefit Cap = 75% of the Previous Year's Total Income

Benefits Paid Out excludes distribution fees effective 2016

As of 12/31/2017, plan assets totaled \$5,760,191. There were 407 eligible retirees, 317 of which were drawing monthly RIF benefits. There are approximately 716 active hourly employees who also have some claim to the plan assets having paid into the retirement insurance trust fund.