

LOCAL 2-21

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21 NEWS

Editor: Steve Benoit

WWW.USW2-21.COM

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21 News is a periodic publication of USW (United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union) Local 2-21, 1201 Sheridan Road, Escanaba, Michigan 49829. The views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily that of the International Union, the Local 2-21 membership, or the officers of these bodies. The editor reserves the right to refuse any article that is detrimental to the Local Union or the USW. Article accuracy and content is the responsibility of the author.

Important Information & Events

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
(www.guidanceresources.com)
1-800-428-4650

Retiree "Get Together"

First Wed. of each Month 10 am at the Union Hall

Union Meeting: February 11, 7pm - Dinner at 6pm

Next Generation Meeting: February 11, 5pm Union Hall

Steward's Meeting: January 28 -3:00pm

Welfare Club Meeting: Monday, February 9 at 7:00pm
Mead Rod and Gun Club

Steward School: Tuesday January 27 from
7am -3pm (see article)

Edward Jones Seminar: Wednesday/Thursday,
January 28 and 29, 7pm at the Union Hall

Total Benefit Solutions will be at the Union hall
Wednesday February 4 and 11 from 10:00am to 4:00pm
for Union Benefit questions and to help "soon to be
retirees" investigate the insurance market place and
answer questions on the union insurance. Call 1-877-
265-2212 to set up an appointment.

Committee Members

	Home	Work	Cell
President Ken Curtis			241-8417
1st Vice Chuck Way.....		233-2705	280-1698
2nd Vice Joe Curran		233-2511	420-3918
3rd Vice John Dubord		233-2782	280-1044
Insurance Steve Benoit.....	233-7126	233-2366	399-4195
Comp Mike Nantelle.....	786-9039	233-2655	399-0466
Secretary Brandon Stromberg.....		233-2714	284-1604
Treasurer Guy Trudell.....		233-2922	399-9143

Next Gen/Rapid Response.....Brandon Stromberg...233-2714 284-1604
Hall RentalsSteve Kennedy 789-1933



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www.usw2-21.com



<http://pacelocal21.proboards.com/>

THE LATEST FRONTIER

info: Ken Curtis, President

Verso, the latest frontier. It's finally here. The jury is still out on if this is good, bad or more of the same. We had a chance to meet the Quinnesec Mill Manager, Adam St. John on Friday. Adam has been the manager there for four years, and has quite a resume. He hails from Maine, and has done everything from being a Boiler Maker to a Nuclear Sub Engineer in the Merchant Marine. Don't know how he figures into Escanaba, but it would appear that he was the Manager closest to the mill, and that was why they sent him on day one, with the others being split up amongst NewPage's other mills. He said a couple of things worth noting, one being that in the next 90 days the whole corporate structure will change. We locally will probably only see changes in signage, and I.T., as well as finance. This week, Verso will be sending 38 - 40 people to Wisconsin Rapids to work on that facility, I would imagine, to bring it around to the Verso way of thinking. Wisconsin Rapids has not been without turmoil this year. The week following those 38 - 40 will be visiting Escanaba to do the same thing, and so on throughout the rest of the NewPage mills. He talked about the gap analysis system Verso uses to drive down manufacturing costs. To hear him talk, they have had great success with it. He also spent some time on Verso's safety policy. He was told that we have heard that a person can be fired for getting hurt. He said that is ridiculous, and that is not true. He did point out however, that a person can get in trouble for not following safety policies. Common sense stuff, really.

But what concerns me is that he brought up Verso's TCIR number. I forget what it is, but at Quinnesec it is really good. And he pointed out that no one hid any injuries to achieve the number. That won't work here. Not because the hourly in Escanaba are hiding injuries, but because our Safety Department is. Not the hourly Safety advisors, but the salaried managers in that department. Did you know that Escanaba finished 3rd amongst the mills in our system this year for TCIR? Yep, we even beat Duluth. That has been the Holy Grail for some time now. But did we? Or did we hide at least one recordable that occurred in December? Did Tom Willis investigate an incident involving a foreign object in an employee's eye, and then choose not to credit it as a recordable? Was John Adrihan aware of it? Yes. I spoke to the employee, and he was baffled himself that it wasn't a recordable. After all, he received prescription medicine, and eye drops from the Doctor that the company drove him to. They removed something from his eye. But after an interrogation from Tom it was decided that no one was really sure if he had gotten the foreign substance in his eye at home, and then it didn't start bothering him 3 hours after his shift started. The whole thing may not seem like a big deal, but one has to wonder, what else has been hidden? If you are going to turn a blind eye to this (sorry), what else are you afraid to report? Those numbers are bullshit, and I am hoping that each and every one of you has an hourly safety advisor, or Union Steward present each and every time you talk to Tom Willis or John Adrihan.

Another thing that Adam St. John talked about was preventative maintenance. He said Verso is big on it. That they will spend when needed. We intend to continue to hammer our message that maintenance is understaffed, and working unsafely on a regular basis. We do not believe that the only way to lower our maintenance cost per ton is by reducing manpower. We think that this is the easy way out. That the system the company allowed to grow has to be looked at

from every angle. And we believe that the current system is going to reduce numbers to the breaking point. I am hesitant to say we are already there, because that would be giving up on my part as well. Something needs to be done about the numbers, and the management of employees. Every time I say we are short on guys, a manager tells me a story about someone not using his time effectively. The story never ends with "so I told him what I expected him to do". It just ends.

One final note about EAP. This is typically the time of year that folks get the blues, stressed out, suffer from a lack of sunshine and so on. Please take advantage of the services provided by EAP. They are many, and they are all good. If you or a co-worker is having difficulty, by all means use it or tell the co-worker about it.



12 Hour Vacancy Procedure Vote

info: Joe Curran, 2nd Vice President

The proposed 12 hour vacancy procedure that was put to a vote passed last month. The committee is now waiting on the company as they want clarification on how certain situations will work if we run into them. This meeting was pushed back due to the Verso acquisition but hopefully will take place soon. I would like to thank those who came out to vote as your voice is our Union.





Steward School

info: Joe Curran, 2nd Vice President

We will be hosting a new steward orientation on January 27th for Stewards or those who didn't attend in 2013, if you cannot

remember please contact me I will review the 2013 attendance sheet. This will be held at the Union Hall from 7am-3pm and lunch will be provided. We will give you tools that you need to answer member's questions on the floor or the avenue to take to get those answers. Those who attended in 2013 are welcome to attend on a voluntary basis.

In order to attend you need to contact me @ 9064203918(Home), 9062332511(Work) or joe.curran@versoco.com. You will also have to contact your scheduler if you are scheduled to work and request it off for Union Business, but please contact me first.

If you have any questions at all please contact me ASAP; Stewards please shoot me and email if you want to get on the steward mailing list. A few times a month we send out emails to all Steward's home and work emails depending on the issue.



Insurance

Info:

Info: Steve Benoit,
Insurance Advocate

Recently one of our union Members stopped in the union office

concerned with charges from their families emergency room visits. They were being charged \$250.00 for each emergency room visit no matter the maximum or the minimum amount. After looking into the summary plan description we found that when you visit the emergency room In-Network you should only pay 20% up to

a maximum of \$250.00. People are being charged a flat fee of \$250.00 just for going to the Emergency Room. Below is a picture from the Summary Plan Description showing what is covered. Everyone please take some time if you visited the Emergency Room this year or last and be sure to review your EOBs. Please be sure that you were charged accordingly. If you need help looking up your EOB or if you find that you were charged incorrectly please notify me as soon as possible so we can get this fixed. The company has said that they will be running a program to check into this but let's be proactive and look into these ourselves.

MeadWestvaco just announced to our post 65 retirement members that they will be making changes to their health care coverage. They have announced that as of March 31, 2015 the group Medicare coverage that they were providing will end. Our local is looking into this and seeing if this was a negotiated benefit or if we can push back at them on that this is an implied benefit that they were providing to our members. In the mean time anyone that has received a letter from MeadWestvaco that says they will be losing their group Medicare insurance should start looking for insurance well before the March 31st date so that they are prepared for the change. Please be sure to keep all the information provided to you from MeadWestvaco if you are in need of assistance please feel free to contact me at 906-233-2366 or 906-399-4195. TBS, the local's third party insurance reps, will be at the hall on the first two Wednesdays of every month and can assist you with looking into new insurance. You can contact TBS toll free at 877-265-2212.

Union Meetings

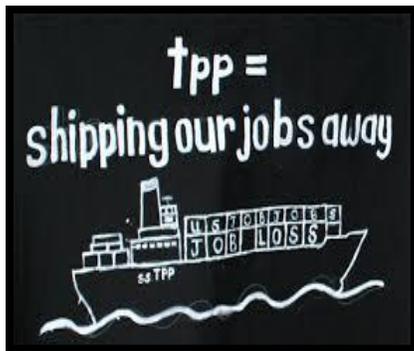
info: Joe Curran, 2nd Vice President

Do you want to know what is going on with your Union? Please attend the Union meetings; many topics are discussed that simply can't be put on paper or discussed on the message board. We get so many ideas and so much information from the membership at meetings that help us in our

everyday battles and your voice is beneficial as well.

We make choices on how to benefit the local community and the labor community with approval and guidance from those in attendance on where we will donate our time or monetary donations.

Most important we make sure the company is honoring the contract; we can't be everywhere so we depend on you to hold us accountable and we will hold the company accountable!



Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)

info: Brandon Stromberg, Rapid

Response Coordinator

In the past year, I have spoken about the TPP frequently. One

of the main goals we had was to stop "Fast Track." If "Fast Track" is allowed, it would deny Congress the right to amend any portion of the agreement. Congress would be shown the agreement and they would be allowed a yes or no vote. That is it. "Fast Track" has been stopped twice, but this trade agreement is still very much in the works.

The TPP has been written behind closed doors by large, multi-national corporations. Twelve countries are involved in the agreement. Over 500 corporations, including Wall Street, the pharmaceutical industry, and major media, have a full understanding of what is in this agreement while Congress and the American people do not. In fact, the only way a member of Congress can see what is in the TPP is to sign a privacy agreement stating he or she will not share the contents of the trade agreement with anyone else. The TPP follows past agreements like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). American jobs were promised, but American jobs were lost.

The TPP will undercut workers rights. It will

dismantle labor, environmental, health, food, safety, and financial laws. Corporations will be allowed to outsource jobs even more. Corporations will be allowed to challenge our laws before international tribunals. "Buy American" laws will be threatened. Prescription drug costs will increase for everyday Americans. We will be forced to compete with foreign workers. China is not involved in this agreement yet, but this is an open-ended agreement and they could be in the future.

The USW International is fighting this, but our local has been very active in this fight too. Last year we met with Congressmen Dan Benishek (R) at our union hall to discuss the TPP and "Fast Track." He knew very little about the TPP. He did say he was opposed to "Fast Track." We will continue to make phone calls and have regular meeting with our legislators. We encourage all our members to educate themselves on this issue and get involved.

Young Worker Group Movement

info: Brandon Stromberg, Next Generation Coordinator

Across our nation, Young Worker Groups (YWG) are being formed. The purpose is to get young people involved, educate them on labor history, train them to be effective leaders, and build a strong community relationship through volunteer work.

In conjunction with the National AFL-CIO, we are building a YWG in the U.P. We have a good number of people working together already. Our group has steelworkers, ironworkers, bricklayers, a college professor, and carpenters. We are diverse and will continue to grow. Currently, we are working on getting two delegates, 18-40 yr olds.

When young people get educated and get involved, labor has a bright future. If you would like to get involved in the Young Worker Group and in our community or if you have a community action project in mind, please give me a call at 906-284-1604. With your help, we can make history and have a bright future.



Note from HR:

As part of the Union Master Agreement effective April 1, 2013, the following changes will go into effect for

Escanaba **grandfathered** employees. There are no new changes for the non-grandfathered employees.

- 1) The new match formula (100% first 3%) for grandfathered union hourly will go into effect January 1, 2015.
- 2) With this change, the other provisions will go into effect, such as trueing up the pay for grandfathered union reps. The additional true-up contribution would be made when the true-up is completed in January 2016 for the period Jan 2015 to December 2015. To be eligible for this true-up compensation, a participant would need to be contributing more than 6% to their 401(k) throughout 2015.
- 3) Additionally, the first Fixed Contribution will be made January 2015, taking into account pay during the prior 12 months, January 2014 to December 2014

Kraft Mill Donates to Help Others!!

Since the late 1970's the Kraft Mill Department has taken up a collection called the Kraft Mill Flower Fund. This fund has been used to offer condolences to families of Kraft Mill workers in the case of a family death with the buying of flowers for the funeral, to help a coworker in the Kraft Mill that is off because of sickness or an accident, and to provide to help others that may struggle around the holiday season. This fund has paid out over \$88,330.02 over its many years of existence. The fund has had many contributors over the years and as of now has 27 contributors.

This year the Kraft Mill Flower Fund Group for the second time has donated to USW Local 2-21

to help with donating food to the local community. Our local with the help of the Kraft Mill Flower Fund donation will be contacting a local grocer to use the donation to purchase food for local food pantries. The Kraft Mill Flower Fund Group this year chose to donate \$600.00. Thank you to the Kraft Mill Group for providing the funds to the USW so we can help others in our community.

The generosity of the Kraft Mill shows how much we can do for the community we live within. Thank you once again to each and every one of the contributors in the Kraft Mill this year and in years past.

Christmas Party Thank you!

This year's Christmas Party hosted over 800 people and thanks to the generosity of those 800 people and the Christmas Party Committee we were able to sponsor four families for Christmas. These four families received gifts for the whole family, food and a family gift. We donated many toys to Community Action to help make other's Christmas special. A great deal of food from these donations was brought to local food pantries. Because of our solidarity we were able to help others in the community. Thank you to the Christmas Party Committee for their time and dedication to this local and the community.

