

Regional Bargaining Report # 24

Sunday, August 7, 2011 12:01 PM

The current round of negotiations with Verizon has been unprecedented, both in terms of the scope of Verizon's attacks on the middle-class jobs of our members, and in terms of the company's absolute refusal to engage in serious collective bargaining towards a new contract.

There has been absolutely no movement by the company at the table since talks began on June 22nd. Over 100 concessionary company proposals remain on the table. We have never seen anything like this in 50 years of bargaining with Verizon and its corporate predecessors.

As a result, CWA and IBEW have decided to take the unprecedented step of striking to force management to stop its Wisconsin-style tactics, and to start bargaining in good faith.

45,000 CWA and IBEW members walked off the job at midnight to demand that a company which made \$19.5 billion and paid its top executives \$258 million over the last four years start bargaining in good faith and stop its attack on middle class jobs.

If and when the company agrees to bargain, then we will return to work and bargain until a fair agreement is reached.

The following is a message from Chris Shelton:

CWA/IBEW TAPE MESSAGE

AUGUST 6, 2011 11:59 PM

BROTHERS AND SISTERS

WE HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTING TO NEGOTIATE A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT WITH VERIZON SINCE JUNE 22, 2011. I SAY ATTEMPTING BECAUSE SINCE VERIZON PUT THEIR DEMANDS ON THE TABLE ON JULY 1, 2011 THEY HAVE NOT MOVED ONE INCH.

THEY PUT DOZENS OF DEMANDS ON THE TABLE ON JULY 1ST WHICH COVER CONCESSIONS ON WAGES, PENSIONS, MEDICAL BENEFITS, WORK RULES, JOB SECURITY, DOUBLE TIME, DIFFERENTIALS, SICK PAY, DISABILITY PAYMENTS, REDUCING VACATIONS, TUITION REIMBURSEMENT, INCREASING RETIREE COSTS FOR BENEFITS...AND ON...AND ON....AND ON.

THE COMPANY'S DEMANDS COVER EVERYTHING WE'VE NEGOTIATED OVER THE LAST 50 YEARS AND THEY WANT CONCESSIONS ON ALL OF IT. AS OF TODAY, THE COMPANY HAS ACTUALLY INCREASED THEIR NUMBER OF DEMANDS.

THE COMPANY IS NOT BARGAINING. THEY ARE NOT TRYING TO NARROW THE ISSUES. AS THE DAYS WORE ON WE HAVE GOTTEN FURTHER AND FURTHER APART.

IN SHORT, THEY ARE NOT BARGAINING TO TRY TO REACH AGREEMENT, THEY ARE, AT BEST, SURFACE BARGAINING.

WE CAN NO LONGER PARTICIPATE IN THIS EFFORT IN FUTILITY.

I MUST INFORM YOU THAT AT 11:59PM WE ARE ON STRIKE UNTIL VERIZON DECIDES TO ACTUALLY NEGOTIATE WITH US IN GOOD FAITH.

PICKET LINES AND ALL OTHER MOBILIZATION ACTIVITIES WILL BEGIN ON SUNDAY MORNING. KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THIS TAPE AND OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION.

It's Midnight
We are fighting for the Middle class
Mobilize! – Mobilize! – Mobilize!