

Regional Bargaining Report # 45

Friday, October 7, 2011

CWA District 1/IBEW Local 2213 and IBEW New England Regional Bargaining Committee and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Committee met separately yesterday with the Company at the Rye Town Hilton in Rye, NY to hear the Company's initial response to our counterproposal from Monday.

Although, the Company expressed some interest in our proposals which were counterproposals to their original demands, they seemed to have no interest in returning jobs to the bargaining unit which was the foundation to our proposals.

Yesterday, the Company did say that they will continue to evaluate our proposals and have a counter proposal to the Union next week. Today, Verizon decided to put out a Company update which states they completed their initial review of our proposal and they state ***"In costing out the various elements of the unions' proposals, the company determined that they significantly exacerbate the problem of Wireline's high cost structure by adding more than \$1 billion in annual operating costs."***

That is a fact. CWA made a counterproposal to that proposal. We are fighting for jobs and our middle class standard of living. The Company has been stripping away our work and giving more and more work to contractors. We are fighting for those jobs and the return of good jobs to our communities. We are fighting for the Middle Class. Our Fight is America's fight.

What the company did not tell you in their update is that the Company's proposal would save the company **\$1.3 billion** by stripping away and diminishing every benefit we have negotiated over the last 50 years. Verizon wants to lower the bar for the American Worker. If Corporations like Verizon who are extremely profitable continue to lower the standard of living by cutting wages and benefits they will destroy the middle class. Corporate Greed must be stopped. Our members are joining the millions of Americans across this country in this fight to stop Corporate Greed. The 99% of us in this country are fighting back. CWA will do its part at the bargaining table and in the cities across this country as the "Occupy Wall Street" Movement gains strength in NY City and moves to cities across this country to fight Corporate Greed. Vice President Chris Shelton defined what we needed in bargaining in his opening statement, he said:

“Good jobs at Verizon are union jobs. We are here to negotiate a fair agreement that protects the union jobs we do now and increases the number those good union jobs so that our members will have the opportunity to grow with the company as it continues to grow.

Our unions have negotiated contracts with Verizon, Bell Atlantic and their predecessors since before any of us started working here. During the last 50 years, we worked together to solve problems, to address one another’s needs at the bargaining table, to deliver quality service to customers and build a strong company.

And we have changed together as well. Our members have never stood in the way of technological change. Our union has always advocated efforts to insure that our members worked to stay abreast of the ever changing telecommunications industry.

But in recent years, this company has turned its back on its employees. This company that we built together has taken its profits and headed off in new directions, to new products and technologies, and left behind the very workers that are responsible for its success. Since 2005 Verizon has cut 80,000 wireline jobs from its rolls through access line sales, segment spin-offs, layoffs, attrition and retirements. In the same time period, Verizon Wireless has added 23,000 jobs.

The Union gave the Company a proposal on October 3rd which gave the Company a pathway to a contract. The Company needs to return to the bargaining table and begin bargaining by concentrating on the issues that will get a contract. The company needs to take the path the union has outlined which will bring a fair contract to our members and their employees. The company needs to re-invest their profits back into the Company and their employees. This will be good for Verizon, good for the economy and good for America.

A reminder our mobilization at Verizon Wireless and Apple stores is in full swing as the iPhone 4S is being introduced. We need to keep the pressure on Verizon and to continue to get our message out. If you have not already volunteered to handbill at a store location please contact your steward and sign up. By everyone working together from the bargaining table to handbilling the store locations, we will stand strong against Verizon’s attempt to strip our contracts of provisions gained over 50 years of collective bargaining.

Get ready to join the “Occupy Wall Street” movement as we make Verizon the “Poster Child” for Corporate Greed.

Stay Strong – Stay United
Mobilize! Mobilize! Mobilize!