



Safety Sucks!

(and someone's going to get hurt)

by Ray Pomeroy

Safety at Verizon isn't what it used to be and Cingular's program could use some work too.

Management can't be blamed for all the problems and so far no one has been seriously injured (that we know of) in Local 2107's area.

We haven't identified all the problems at Cingular but we are planning to approach management to arrange a meeting at which the members can help us identify the shortcomings. We understand that one manager has already approached a member to see if we could set something up and we'll be glad to.

Cingular technicians have pointed out a potential problem for our Verizon members that enter cell sites concerning RF emissions. We are investigating further but in the meantime stay away from the RED danger signs and if you have to go to a site on a building rooftop have a wireless tech from your customer meet you at the site to verify if there is a "hot-spot" on the roof you should avoid.

Some problems at Verizon are known however and while we can't completely blame management for some of what our members

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2107 Election Results

Thanks to all those that voted.

Here are the results of our alternate delegate election.

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Eligible voters | 750 |
| Ballots printed | 770 |
| Number voted | 186 |
| Number spoiled | 19 |
| Number challenged | 0 |
| Number Unused | 20 |

Jeff Savin won with 57 votes, followed by Chris Barriger - 55 votes Dutchin Webster - 37 votes Damon Gaither - 18 votes

A 25% voter participation is sad when all you have to do is check your choice sign your name and put your postage paid envelope in the mailbox.

Cingular Bargaining Set to Start Soon

by Ray Pomeroy

Our Cingular "orange" contract expires on February 5, 2005 and we have already been in a "pre-bargaining" conference with our Brothers and Sisters from across the country.

Lamar Maddox, who will be the CWA District 2 representative on the bargaining committee, and myself attended the three days of meetings in November. We discussed what our members indicated were their priorities on the bargaining surveys that were returned, mobilization, likely scheduling for bargaining and what the Cingular/ATT merger might mean for our members.

The initial bargaining date is December 16. The company and union bargaining committees will most likely meet and exchange proposals and then recess to reconvene after the holidays.

That means the 16th will be your first opportunity to show the company that you are 100% behind your bargaining committee, through your mobilization efforts.

We are asking everyone that is not under the dress code policy (techs, customer service reps, etc.) to WEAR RED on December 16th and everyone who is under the policy (stores) to get together and WEAR THE SAME COLOR that day. We would like to see you wearing ORANGE if everyone in that location has the orange shirts, if not then whatever color everyone at your location has.

If you are groaning and rolling your eyes right now you need to understand mobilization is very important and something as simple as wearing the same color helps. The company will be getting reports to their bargaining team letting them know if you are behind them. If you can't even do something simple to back the committee it will be very difficult for them to bring in a contract that meets your needs.

We need mobilizers to get the word out to

our members when actions are planned and to help me (Ray Pomeroy your mobilization coordinator) come up with mobilization ideas/tactics. You know your workplace best and you will have an idea of what should be effective in your work environment and there is absolutely no way one person can get the information to everyone in a timely manner. If you can help send an e-mail to 2107@cwa-2107.org. We will be getting most of our mobilization information out by e-mail and cell phone so if you haven't sent you're PERSONAL information already please send it to 2107@cwa-2107.org. This will be very important when our committee puts the word out that we need to apply some kind of pressure to move the company on something important.

We will also have a bargaining update line set up here at the Local and we will get the numbers out as soon as we have them. Don't expect a lot of details because we sometimes get something in bargaining and then trade it away for something better later on in the process.

Part of what we will try to bargain is aspects of the merger that affect our members. Keeping in mind that while we hope to get the ATT side of the house organized and under our contract, our first priority is protecting the members we already have.

We also participated in breakout meetings at the conference. Lamar attended the Tech breakout, I went to the Retail breakout and there was also a Customer Service session.

Among other things our concerns are Job Security, Wages, Sub-contracting, Justice on the job and the high turn over rate.

We want to thank everyone who turned in their bargaining survey and to encourage everyone to get involved. We can only make things happen if we stick together.

TO KEEP UP WITH WHAT'S HAPPENING AT CINGULAR GO TO:

www.cwa-union.org/cingular

Be sure to click on the link to receive the newsletter



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President's Point of View.....

Denise Burns

One step at a time, we are nearing the end of the year. When we look back what do we see? Have we, as a group, accomplished anything? How about individually? I hope that all of us have made progress.

This year was a tough one. There have been many struggles, some won and some lost. Verizon has become an uphill battle with some departments and some management. We have management that will work with us to resolve issues and make a better work environment. We have others that have a lack of respect, integrity and common sense.

At the end of 2003 we had 674 members, currently we have 771. In 2003 we had a total of 137 grievances for the year, currently we have 170. In 2003 we had three Cingular grievances, in 2004 so far we have 8. In Southern Maryland for 2003 we had 14, in 2004 so far 12. This means that the bulk of our grievances are in the north at Verizon, primarily Annapolis. Most of them occur at Riva Road.

We are working hard to make this Union, this local and ourselves better. We must grow as a Union to be prepared for all that the future will bring. Our companies are changing, they are growing to become more competitive and we must do the same. We

must be the best we can be by coming to work on time, doing our job, being open to change and being respectful of each other. To be competitive you must educate yourself. If you don't understand the RAMP system or Verizon PED forms ask your supervisor to have Joni Shipp from HR come out to your location for training. You may submit your PED forms on-line now.

Changes are taking place at Cingular with the acquisition of AT&T Wireless. Verizon is building the Fiber To The Premise network. We don't know what else may happen but we have to be ready to work through it.

Personally, I hope that all of you will put a plan together for the upcoming year, one that will help you achieve your goals. Use all the avenues available to you. We have great bargained for benefits to help us receive ongoing education. Use the tuition assistance programs to pay for your education. We have EAP to help us with problems that affect us day-to-day.

Have a wonderful, prosperous and safe New Year!

"A man's worth is no greater than the worth of his ambitions." Marcus Aurelius

NEW MOA ON BUSINESS ATTIRE at VERIZON

Standard business attire may be required of employees who perform installation and repair work, including customer premise work, associated with Fiber to the Premise (FTTP).

Other employees in job classifications with face-to-face customer contact may be offered to participate in this program on a voluntary basis at any time. Additional employees in job classifications who may be required to wear Business Attire under this program may be included by mutual agreement.

The Business Attire Program includes the following features:

- An annual allowance toward the purchase of Business Attire for the employee of up to \$240 the first year and up to \$ 180 per year thereafter.
- An approved catalog (hard copy or on-line) will be made available for the purchase of Business Attire. All shirts available through the approved catalog will have a CWA logo. The shirts will be manufactured in the USA by union represented employees.

- Purchases in excess of the allowances identified above will be borne by the employee.
- Additional Business Attire items may be purchased from the catalog at the employee's expense.
- Employees who are required to participate in the Business Attire Program will wear approved Business Attire each day the employee is assigned to work.
- The employee will be responsible for the cleaning and continued upkeep of the Business Attire items, subject to applicable state regulations.
- Baseball style Verizon caps or caps with only "CWA", and/or a Local number, and/or the official CWA logo affixed must be worn if employees desire to wear a hat at work (except for required hard hats).
- It is further expected that all employees will exercise good judgment and common sense in projecting the proper professional image appropriate for their assignment and be neat, clean and well groomed.

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are doing, the pressure to do more, more, more isn't helping. Safety takes time just like quality does. The last thing any of your officers want to do is help guide a spouse through how to collect on your life insurance.

What kinds of things are we seeing?

Safety glasses and other PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) not being used when required. Again the blame can be split. Some people, for instance don't wear safety glasses when they know they are required or don't use their 188A when they are supposed to, on the other hand a lot of people honestly don't know they are supposed to wear their hard hat when entering/exiting a CEV (Controlled Environmental Vault) or standing under the opening.

Another concern is the number of people that don't know not to go in a CEV if the alarm light is on, an alarm is sounding or even if the A/C isn't running depending on the CEV.

A CEV is a confined space and when the environmental equipment isn't working properly or an alarm is indicated you MUST treat it just as if you were entering a manhole.

The CEV should be ventilated and if you are not equipped to do so or can't get someone who is you should notify your Supervisor and under no circumstances should you go in. CEV's are a big concern right now just because of the sheer number of them we have found with problems such as A/C not working (one was 146 degrees inside), environmental alarms going on for weeks etc and then determining that people were still going in because they had a job to do. Getting the job done is admirable and important but your Director doesn't want you to die on the job any more than you do.

We also see motor vehicle safety violations (not using chocks when required), climbing infractions and improper work area protection.

Some of these problems are training issues because that little CBT (Computer Based Training) session that we rush through once

FMLA Handbooks Available

We have a lot of members, particularly at Cingular who are unfamiliar with or just don't understand FMLA.

If you would like a copy of the handbook call the local or e-mail us at 2107@cwa-2107.org and we'll be happy to send you a copy.

a year is inadequate, some are lazy people issues and some are related to the building groups budget. CEV maintenance is minimal at best (that may change some when we start losing equipment to heat related failures). Most issues could be partially solved if our Supervisors had more time to go out in the field and see these things.

We're not saying we want Supervisors catching you so you can be disciplined, we'd just like the behaviors and shortcomings addressed. We also would prefer that management apply a common sense approach such as realizing that when you are parked downhill side to a curb or parking block that a chock isn't required as well as not requiring that safety cones be put out whenever a vehicle is parked (although this no doubt came about because people weren't doing a "circle check" as required).

Unions were involved at the start to require these rules to protect our members and were instrumental in the creating of OSHA and government safety standards.

We think safety rules are as necessary now as they ever were and will gladly consult with the companies we bargain with to improve safety in a real way.

Our members work in dangerous jobs and hazardous locations. Near power lines and in traffic, in confined spaces and forty plus feet in the air. We encourage all of you to follow the rules that are set out for us and to ask questions when you aren't sure about something. We'd also like to encourage all of you to point out an infraction to a co-worker when you see one.

Nobody ever got hurt thinking that it was about to happen. It only takes a second to get seriously wounded or killed.

PED Forms Now on line

In order to help improve processing time and reduce errors, Associate

Staffing intends to offer PEDs on-line beginning November 29, 2004. The on-line version of the PED will follow all existing RAMP rules.

Associates will continue to have the option of submitting PEDs manually via the mail.

The on-line process will reduce turn-around time. Errors will require immediate corrections. Mail exchanges of PED error forms will be eliminated. Also, previous Verizon experience (within the last 5 years) will automatically populate in the on-line system.

Future Link

I just recently attended a region advocate meeting in Baltimore, Md. where I learned about new programs from Future Link and how to be a better advocate to serve my fellow CWA members in my area. One thing that I want to pass on to you is that the cash incentive program for higher learning is being cancelled, so if you have any degrees or certificates (in the past 5 years) you might be missing out on money that you are entitled to. For more information, your area advisor is Laverne Debnam. She can be reached at Prosper340@Hotmail.com and you can also look at the website at www.futurelink.net. These are your benefits....use them or lose them.

Sincerely, Tim Vagell,

Future Link advocate in Leonardtown, Md.

Call UBS For Your Next Car

Automotive Buying Service for Local 2107

Call United Buying Service for a referral to an Authorized Dealer and get:

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How to use the UBS service:

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Tell the UBS advisor what you wish to test drive.

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UBS advisors have enjoyed helping union members since 1967 so please feel free to call their friendly staff!

(410) 792-9070 (301) 657-1920
www.ubs4cars.com

Retirees Corner

The Annual 2107 RNC Christmas luncheon will be held on December 7 at 12PM, at Prides Cove in Galesville. Please RSVP to the local office if you plan to attend.

RMC meetings will be held on the second Monday in January, February, March, April, May, September, October, November and December. Unless otherwise noted all meetings are held at the Local 2107 office at 2441 Holly Ave, Annapolis and begin at 10AM.

Sympathies to:

Laura Kilby on the death of her mother
Dutchin Webster on the death of her uncle
Nancy Wolnitzek on the death of her mother-in-law

Get Well to:

Bill Aleshire recovering from surgery
Donna Dillman-Butler recovering from surgery
Bruce Cook recovering from surgery
Ginny Carpenter-Riley

Congratulations to:

Ann Crawford on the birth of her grandson
Tim Smith on the birth of his daughter
Bill Wilkinson on the birth of his granddaughter

Community Services

There were 30 pints of blood donated to the American Red Cross during the blood drive at Riva Rd

Dates to Remember

Membership meetings

Other Meetings

Other

Scholarships

The 2005 Union Plus Scholarship is now available. Members have 2 choices; you can download an application at WWW. unionplus.org/scholarships, or send a postcard with your name, return address, telephone number and international union to Union Plus Education Foundation, c/o Union Privilege, P.O. Box 34800, Washington, DC 20043-4800. The application deadline is January 31, 2005

The yard sale made \$365.50 towards the Roberta Mervine Scholarship Fund.

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