



\$20.2 Million Well Spent?

by Shannon Opfer

According to a regulatory filing, Ivan Siedenburg, Chief Executive for Verizon Communications, Inc. received \$20.2 in compensations in 2008. This is roughly the same he has received for the last two years.

Why is it we lowly employees have trouble getting the tools we need to do our jobs properly and yet, the company has that type of money just sitting around to be used as bonuses?

While the country is screaming for AIG's head on a platter about bonuses, maybe its time we looked a little closer to home. Although Siedenburg's bonus doesn't come from the taxpayer's pocket, that doesn't mean it's right. How is it that we can't get tools or supplies, but Ivan has "earned" \$60 million in compensation in the past three years?

What's Going On Where You Are?

by Denise Burns

The companies this local represents, at&t mobility and Verizon, are racing to the bottom on how they treat their employees.

Everyone reading this article needs to share the information with others. The economy is in the toilet. Verizon and at&t Mobility are profitable companies, but they are crying costs and competition. What is the real deal?

The managers are under threats of their own. The only power they have is to make your life miserable. They might not agree with some of what they have to do to you, but they will do it.

at&t Mobility may be the only union wireless company, but it doesn't mean they are union friendly. There is good and bad management in this company, as in others. I have been told numerous times by HR that at&t Mobility management has been trained

on the grievance procedure. The only conclusion I can come to is they must be ignorant or don't think they need to comply with the contract. I have one ARSM out of the ones I deal with that understands and works with us. The others are impossible. I have not worked with some of them so I don't know how our relationship will be with them.

There are two levels of standards at this company, one for members and one for management. I find most problems come from stores where management doesn't do their job, but it is not management that gets the punishment. How many times is management absent from the store? Do they have someone there to open and close? Can you reach them so you can do a price match? Do they put your schedule out on time, per the contract? Are they fair to all workers or do

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at&t Mobility Contract Ratification Vote

by Shannon Opfer

A tentative agreement has been reached between the CWA and management at at&t Mobility. Some of the most significant changes are listed below.

The General Wage Schedules for all employees will be increased at every step of the wage progression schedule as follows: 2009-1%, 2010-2.5%, 2011-2.5%, 2012-2.5%.

See Wage Tables

All employees will also receive a \$500.00 lump sum payment upon ratification.

Effective Jan. 1, 2010, new hires will be covered under a new pension plan. This is a cash balance account that allows vesting at three years and graduates contribution amounts by age.

Job Upgrades for the following titles:

Wireless Technician I and Wireless Technician II titles will be eliminated. All existing Wireless Technician I and II employees will move into the Wireless Technician title at the wage schedule associated with the current Wireless Technician II title. CSR 1 reps in the Technical Support Group will be upgraded to a new title of Customer Support

Specialist with a new maximum rate of \$683.00 for year 2009. Current employees in the Technical Support Group above the new maximum rate will receive the general wage increase based on existing wage rates.

CSR I reps in the Office of the President will be upgraded to a new title of Client Service Specialist with a new maximum wage rate of \$672.50 for year 2009.

CSR I reps and Clerks in the Workforce Operations group will be upgraded to a new title of Workforce Administrator with a new maximum rate of \$632.50 for year 2009.

Care Function Evaluation—The Company will evaluate the CSR functions to see if additional titles should or could be created. To see a full rundown of the new contract, visit our website and click on the CWA at at&t Mobility icon.

This contract still needs to be approved by the members. Ballots are being sent out by 3/16. If you have not received one by 3/23 contact the local and we will send out a replacement. Please vote and return the ballot as soon as possible. The ballots will be counted by the international in Washington on April 2, 2009.

Sharp Dressed Man

by Shannon Opfer

Every morning we come into work, there is some new policy the company wants us to follow. There are so many, it's hard to keep them straight.

There is an executive level grievance about the dress code. Executive level means that we file with the higher ups that created the policy. We'll let you know when we get a result with that.

New schedules have come out in several areas with fifty percent of a crew in on Saturdays. This is because we are so far behind in our trouble repair load and we need to work on Saturdays to catch up, right? Well, no because its only in areas where there is FiOS. Copper trained technicians are not being lent over to bring down the trouble load, they're out installing FiOS services.

What can we do about the new policies and directives the company is issuing? Document every minute of "non productive" time, whether it is the company not having work ready, sitting on hold with the center, or even being stuck in traffic. Let them know if you don't have the proper tools or supplies.

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LOCAL 2107 NEWS
 Published Monthly By
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 Local 2107**
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(ISSN 0890-8532) Periodical Postage
 Paid at Annapolis, MD. 21401
 Office Located at:
 2441 Holly Ave
 Annapolis MD 21401-3116
 Phone: 410-224-0166
 Fax: 410-224-0165

Postmaster, send changes to:
 Local 2107 NEWS
 2441 Holly Ave.
 Annapolis, MD. 21401-3116



President's Point of View.....

Denise Burns

As I write this newsletter article, Verizon is trying to stick it to us and the consumer. I was going to be writing to you about the not so sincere letter from Bill Roberts that was sent to his "colleagues". By the way, I think he meant employees because we know we are not his colleagues. His letter said things like "maintaining strong customer service", "Verizon Maryland continues to invest and hire", and "Our employees are the best in the business and we look to expanding the workforce".

While Roberts was putting that letter out, Verizon had proposed HB 1494 and SB 1026-Deregulation bills- in to the Maryland House and the Senate. That must mean that we are putting the pressure on at the PSC and Verizon doesn't think they can win there. This bill essentially will give them the settlement as is instead of taking their chance on the PSC decision. What ever the case, we need to keep alert about what Verizon continues to try to do.

As far as Roberts' statements, as employees, we know that they aren't and haven't been maintaining strong customer service. And we know the customers are the one who will suffer if they pass these bills. Oh yeah, Verizon is hiring. They are hiring more consultants to take more orders but not more tech to do them in the field. If this happens you will be working every Saturday and every other Sunday. We know they aren't increasing the workforce because they send out an EISP every quarter trying to get rid of

us. If Roberts thinks Verizon has the best employees then why is it everyday there is something new to punish, degrade, harass or just simply overwork us.

When you get a letter or an email like this beware. They want us to support them to our demise. After all, the Union is what makes them accountable in some ways. Roberts also stated, "I will also keep you informed of other initiatives and policy issues important to the health of our company". Why then didn't he mention the bills they had going to the Maryland House and Senate? It's just another back door tactic. When getting information from Verizon on these issues please look hard at what is being said. Read between the lines.

I ask all of the members working at Verizon to please keep up on what the company is trying to do and get involved in some way. It doesn't need to be something that takes a lot of time or commitment. Let your steward or officer know if you are able to assist us in anyway. We need to know what is best for Maryland consumers and Verizon employees, not just what will benefit Verizon.

"Employees of giant corporations often are propagandized to believe they belong to some kind of company family. This suits the business purpose of the company. When business turns bad, however, the family idea is dropped. Loyalty goes out the window and dismissal notices go out in the mail." Andy Rooney, columnist, CBS, 60 Minutes

Workers' Memorial Day

by Shannon Opfer

April 28, 2009, we will be celebrating Workers' Memorial Day. This year 2107 has been blessed that we have not had any workplace fatalities. We have had been very lucky, and this day is a day to remember those who have not been so fortunate.

While remembering and mourning for those who have been injured or killed on the job, it is also a good time to think about your own safety. Whether inside or out, safety is our responsibility. The most important job we have is to arrive home unhurt.

We know that there are shortcuts that we can take to make our job faster or easier. Unfortunately one of the first things to be rushed over is our safety. We laugh it off, but it is something that we need to take seriously.

Many of the rules that we scoff at are there for our own good and if we ignore them, we are the ones that will ultimately be paying the price.

There are so many horror stories of things that can go wrong even when we have taken all the proper precautions. The difference is that if you have all of your safety equipment, you can be the one telling the story of your near miss, instead of being the victim in the next safety flash.

Never forget the original Bell Atlantic slogan, "No job is so important, and no service so urgent, that we cannot take time to perform our work safely. Let's make this Workers' Memorial Day more significant by not giving them any more names to add to a sadly long list.

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they have their favorites?

You can and will be fired for any reason at at&t Mobility. Don't make a mistake because it is not allowed. They make unrealistic quotas for the sales reps. When someone is being investigated by HR their "investigations" amaze me. With the amount of terminations we are seeing, if I was employed here I would watch my back. Do they want to get rid of people? I believe they are downsizing by firing. But yet they are still hiring at the same time. What is their strategy?

I need all of you to pay attention to what is going on. You need to grieve any type of discipline or contract violation. Don't wait until you are on final warning. We need to start at the first step of discipline. If you think something isn't right but aren't sure what should be done call the local and ask. Be safe, not sorry. There are way too many incidents happening that should be reported. Remember, managers are held to the same Business Code of Conduct that you are. You can bet they would report you. Don't be intimidated by them question what you think is wrong. If you don't feel comfortable doing that call for assistance. You can make your workplace better and should make sure that management is not abusing your rights.

(Sharp from page 1)

Technicians in FiOS are also being told that the center will not take jobs off their log at the end of the day. They are to either finish their job, or get a "customer mistreat". This is going on when no forced overtime has been declared, so what's the deal? The deal is we have quite a few new employees that are unaware that the company can't force one or two people to work. If there is an emergency situation and the company decides to force, there is a policy set forth that they have to abide by. They can't make you stay when you informed them that you need to get off on time. It is your supervisor's job to find some one to replace you if you told them you need to leave.

Here's the thing. If you were to be disciplined because you had to leave, and you had followed proper channels to get off on time, file a grievance. As long as you did what you are supposed to do, the union will fight it.

It seems that our contract doesn't matter to the company. Well, it may not matter to them, but it matters to us. We are not going to just lay down and let the company ignore what we have fought so hard for.

by Denise Burns

All the articles in this newsletter seem to be talking about the same things. Whether it is at&t Mobility or Verizon there is no difference. The companies have no respect for CWA, its representatives or its members.

Verizon is creating a hostile environment with their disparate treatment between LOB's, crews, garages, offices and job titles. They are taking full advantage of intimidating the newer workers. There is no such title as FiOS technician; you are either a Cable Splicer, a Service technician, a Systems technician or an Outside Plant technician. You are given work on your log everyday. Until you reach that location you do not know what the situation might be. The company can estimate the amount of time a job should take you, but they can not say all jobs are the same or take the same amount of time.

To make matters worse the company thinks putting technicians inside to do office work (clerk/MA work) is the correct thing to do. Does anybody out there know just how many technicians never go to the field? I am not talking about technicians that do damage investigations or compliance work. I am talking about Cable Splicers, OPT's, Systems and Service technicians that are doing work that should be done by clerks, MA's or even what some management used to do before they downsized everywhere. Perhaps we could give better service commitments and better quality service if everyone were doing the job that they were hired, promoted or transferred into.

by Shannon Opfer

On March 18, 2009, a hearing was held on HB-1494. This bill was proposed by Delegate Davis, and asked for the deregulation of some Verizon services.

There is already a settlement proposed before the Public Service Commission, but this bill was presented because it was felt that the decision was taking too long. Jimmy Tarlau, from District 2, spoke to the committee and told them that we strongly oppose the bill as it doesn't speak to the true problems that are causing Verizon's issues. Verizon is hiring consultants in fields that have nothing to do with repairing phone lines and saying it will fix the problems. Customer service will not improve if this is their plan.

Verizon management employees were out in

No Respect For Anyone

We have management that will settle grievances and clear up issues with agreements and then just disregard them. How can we trust anything they say or do? Don't get me wrong, there are some managers that live up to their word. Others are so arrogant they totally disregard the union like we weren't there. I have reached out to one manger in FiOS several times but he has yet to call me back on his own. I have to involve Labor to get a call from him. I have never met the man but his attitude tells me all I need to know. It is a shame that Verizon lost most of their good management when they screwed them out of pensions and kept on taking from them. Did you see the article about Seidenberg? He gets his and then they have to promote ignorant uncooperative people that will do as they are told no matter how ridiculous it may be.

Don't be a Verizon victim. Don't stress out, do your job one at a time and do the best you can. Do your safety checks and be safe on every job. If you need assistance because it becomes overwhelming with all the extra nonsense the company puts out there, call EAP. You get 5 free appointments that can be taken on company time if you can't get one outside of work hours. This is one of your bargained for benefits. Use it. Most of all, stick together in the workplace. The company would love to see us bickering with each other. Keep focused on who is really creating the unfavorable atmosphere in the workplace. If you need to be upset with someone it shouldn't be your coworker.

Deregulation

force to testify. Many of them then spoke about the settlement's proposal that after a \$1.00 increase, rates would stay the same for three years. No one mentioned what would happen after that. According to the proposed settlement, Verizon would have to put aside \$4 million dollars that would be held in reserve. If they failed to meet the customer service standards, part of that money could be "at risk" of being lost.

These agreements were done without the support of the CWA. We are the ones on the front lines dealing with customers every day. Our elected officials need to know that Verizon wants quantity, not quality. Call or write your elected representative and tell them what you deal with every day. Deregulation is something that Verizon is fighting for. We need to fight just as hard against it.

Retirees Corner

The next regular meeting will be April 13, 2009. RMC meetings are held on the second Monday of every month. Unless otherwise noted all meetings are held at the Local 2107 office at 2441 Holly Ave, Annapolis and begin at 10 am.

Congratulations to:

Tony Oliver on the birth of his daughter

Sympathies to:

The family of Ted Daly
Doug Fuentes on the death of his grandmother

Dates to Remember

Membership meetings

04/06/09	North Membership	06:00 pm
04/08/09	South Membership (United Way in La Plata)	06:30 pm

Other Meetings

03/23/09	Metro Baltimore Council	5&7 pm
03/23/09	Union Night at Lawyers Mall	6:00 pm
03/25/09	at&t Steward meeting tba	
03/26/09	Verizon Steward meeting	4:00 pm
03/31/09	Executive Board	4:00 pm
04/01/09	CSC	4:00 pm
04/15/09	ACFC	
04/16/09	Metro Baltimore Council	5&7 pm
04/21-04/23/	CWA District 2 Conference	
04/29/09	Executive Board Meeting	4:00 pm

Other

03/23/09	Labor night in Annapolis
03/30/09	Joe Corbi Pizza Delivery

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ISSN 0890-8532