



Good Times Ahead-NOT

by Denise Burns

For Verizon employees with job security it looks like this year is going to be a mobile one. Don't get to comfortable in any location. The workforce is going to be shifting to where the work is, or rather where the work that Verizon wants us to do is. Copper maintenance will still get the short end of the stick. Verizon management can't even wait until the exiting workforce, those affected by Article 35, are gone either off the payroll or on to new jobs before they are disrupting more lives.

Construction splicers (FTTP) are being force moved to FiOS and or DC/Montgomery County to maintenance. They were asked if anyone wanted to volunteer to be trained for FiOS or go to maintenance. Some were told if there weren't enough volunteers they would be forcing people to go and some were not. As I am writing this people are being told they are going to be moved to FiOS but not when it will take place. While they are still under the Construction budget they will be trained for the FiOS job. This is certainly not the type of work life we want for our members.

It amazes me that Verizon's decision makers, the "visionaries", keep changing horses in the middle of the stream. Fiber was the big thing until we got smack in the middle of it and now they claim the return on that investment isn't high enough. And all we ever hear is that we are losing landlines. Of course, we

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Verizon FMLA Process Changes

In an effort to enhance our FMLA process, the FMLA team will implement the following process changes effective immediately.

The FMLA team will begin accepting FMLA forms prior to the employee's first day of absence. An employee may apply for provisional approval of FMLA leave in advance of the anticipated first day of absence. Applications will be processed and approved on a provisional basis until the first day of absence has occurred. On the employee's first day of absence with respect to this applica-

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Union Response

by Shannon Opfer

With the Article 35 declared by Verizon, people are waiting to see what the Union is going to do. There have been comments and accusations that the Union is just sitting back allowing this layoff to happen, we don't care about our members, we're not doing anything.

First of all, this is the furthest thing from the truth. We care about all our members. The union's motto has always been "an injury to one is an injury to all". We haven't agreed to anything involving a layoff, we haven't sacrificed a few in order to save the many. We know that we need young blood here to do the work and to carry our union into the future.

Since the Article 35 was declared, our District has been meeting with the company to see if there were any other options. We asked for special pension offers to add time and/or age as well as financial enhancements. We proposed included allowing CST's to downgrade to Serve Tech positions in areas where they are currently soliciting OPT's to move to the Serve Tech title. We asked that the Force Effective Dates be made even in order to keep everything fair. None of our suggestions met with any agreement from the

company.

Furthermore, the company does not see this as a lay off. The company's position has been, as long a one job is offered and a member does not take the offer – their lack of action allows the company to stop at section 4 of Article 35 and further that there has been no layoff, but the employee has self terminated. We know what this is whatever they want to call it. You are being laid off from your position as a cable splicer, or clerk, and now you have to find something else to do.

CWA D2 has filed Executive level grievances over these issues, because the union and the company do not see eye to eye on the language of the contract. We feel contractors should be pulled from our jobs prior to a surplus, where the company feels they can work right up until the surplussed people are off the payroll. In discussions, Verizon did give the impression they would do their best to get rid of contractors, but to date we do not have any validation that arrangements with contractors have been terminated. The Union feels that all employees in FiOS areas are covered by the job protection clause in the contract. We'll continue to investigate and pursue our legal options regarding all aspects

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Welcome DirectSat Techs

by Denise Burns

Over the last few months I have been attending organizing meetings with Lynette, our local organizer. The group we met with is Direct Sat USA; the installer/repairmen for Direct TV in the metropolitan area, located in Beltsville. On 12/30, they had an election to vote for representation by CWA. The vote was 44 for and 24 against. Four people didn't vote.

I am proud of this group. Through all the adversity; lies, threats, anti-union tactics, and job visits (4 each), they remained strong. They stuck to their belief that they needed a say in their workplace and needed workplace protections. They are no longer at will employees. That is a major step.

Bargaining for this group begins on 2/3/10. We have 3 people who stepped up to be on the bargaining team and to be stewards,

James Stewart, Antonio King and Victor Tejada. We've already had our first meeting to discuss their workplace concerns and issues for bargaining. Next we will send surveys out to the rest of the group so they can tell us what they think is important for bargaining.

Direct Sat USA upper management did their best to intimidate, harass, lie, coerce, divide, scare and threaten these workers. They held captive audience meetings. They brought in people to speak against the union. They brought in a union buster. Oh and yeah, they fed them.

I want to welcome these workers into our local and to CWA. I hope when you see them you will welcome them and congratulate them on a monumental task. It is not easy to organize anyone these days. These workers were determined and that made the difference.

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President's Point of View.....

Denise Burns

Anyone that is given discipline in any form should be grieving it. We let Verizon and AT&T Mobility get away with too much. Stop worrying and being intimidated. Stop working off the clock. Document everything. Leave nothing to chance and cover your ass. Come to work on time (meaning be there a few minutes early so that you are ready to work at your starting time), be where you are supposed to be doing what you are supposed to be doing. Do your safety checks! Work safe. Take your time and make sure that you are putting out all your safety equipment. Check and make sure everything is still in date and safe. Report the things that aren't safe. Don't work without the tools you need so that you can stay safe. Don't share your logins and passwords. If anyone tells you to use their code it is a violation of the Business Code of Conduct (BOC). Anyone doing it is subject to termination. Don't take company property for your own. Don't give away your work to contractors. If you get a callout and you know it will be sent to a contractor if we don't go-someone needs to step up. If you work side by side with contractors let your stewards know. Don't forget that there is no FiOS tech and no Copper tech. You are technicians that work for Verizon, FiOS and Copper are what you work in.

If you have one of those managers that just can't seem to get supplies for you or the store you need to go to the next level. If you don't feel comfortable doing that, contact a steward. Don't let management keep you from any type of productivity because they don't do their job. This also applies to not having enough vehicles. Let your manager hunt around for a truck while you pull your supplies to be ready when it is available. If you are told from an MA you have to finish your work even though you tell them, within the time limits, you can't stay, contact your manager. Your portion is done. If it is still

on your log when you are ready to leave, tell your manager to have it fixed before you return the next morning so you can again be productive without wasting time.

Currently what I am seeing at both companies are more rules and less flexibility. Scheduling is a problem for both. It was, at one time, that some managers would be lax with the rules and let things slide. From what I can tell it is only the rare occasion now.

These are heartless corporations. They think of you only as producers. They keep pushing you to go higher and higher with the numbers they set, while eliminating more of the work force. If you believe you are on friendly terms with your manager, you may be, but you still need to protect yourself. Don't look for them to protect you when it comes down to it. If you have something in writing from them we can almost believe it. They will do what they are told because they fear for their jobs more than you do. They have no protections, you at least have the ability to grieve an issue to fight their decisions. If you have kept everything documented it makes it easier for us to dispute what they claim.

I didn't go into a great detail here but the bottom line is to work smarter, not harder. Document, document, document. Don't do your managers' work for them unless you are told to and paid for it. Help your brothers and sisters out when they need it. We are all in this together. Whether these corporations believe it or not we also want them to succeed.

"I ask you leaders of labor; I ask you union members; I ask you young people who have yet to be tested: Why are you so weak? Why are you so self-serving? Why are you not outraged? Will all have to be lost before you awaken? How much is enough?" Ron Benevento, IUE shop steward

CPS Award

by Shannon Opfer

Verizon's Corporate Profit Sharing Checks will be sent out March 4 or 5 depending on pay schedules. You should be receiving paperwork if you want to roll your CPS into your savings plan. In order to roll it over, you must act by February 5, 2010. Otherwise, you will receive your award as a separate check.

Haiti Donations

by Shannon Opfer

We all know of the devastation in Haiti. Thousands have been killed, many more are missing and injured. Medical supplies and water are in short supply. Please consider donating to the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center's Earthquake Relief for Haitian Workers. www.co.clickandpledge.com/advanced/default.aspx?wid=20780

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of these Article 35 declarations

The Union has never had to deal with this before. There have many threats of layoffs, but we've never had to deal with the reality of it in recent memory. The difficult thing is the company is following the contract. We may argue about language, but the bottom line is they are doing what they need to do to downsize.

All of this information/updates can be found on our website. Now here's a question for you. What have you done to help your union brothers and sisters? Are you still working all the overtime you can, figuring screw it, I'll get it while I can? Have you called the Public Service Commission? Have you told your friends and family what this company is up to? Do they know what kind of profit Verizon is making?

Want the Union to do something? YOU are the Union. Without standing together, we don't have the strength to fight the way we need to. Working to the rule now is not going to save any of the people already being surplused. Is this the last we'll hear of this? We don't have anything concrete, but we've heard that different job titles may be at risk within the next few months. How many more coworkers do we need to lose? Are you going to continue to sit back or will the UNION be working together?

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are losing landlines lines and FiOS customers. We aren't maintaining the copper, so we lose some landlines that might stay. Why would a customer want to go to FiOS if their experience is that we take forever to deliver bad service? We can blame deregulation and competition but that has been here for years. What wasn't here was Verizon pricing our deregulated services higher than others, even if it is a better product, and giving bad customer service while expecting our customers to stay with us. All the while Verizon sends out the message, in mailings or by commercials, to go wireless. The have even lowered rates on the wireless services.

Blaming the Union and each other isn't what we need. We need to put the blame squarely where it belongs. Mismanagement and corporate greed. Splicers haven't been allowed to do their jobs. They are no longer allowed to fix anything, they just have to get it done. The higher ups who are making these decisions sit in their offices and have no idea what kind of consequences they are inflicting on our lives. Maybe its time to show them. If their numbers start to drop, how long will their lives be unaffected?

West Virginia Hearings Begin on Verizon-Frontier Deal

from CWA Newsletter

CWA's campaign against Verizon's plan to sell 4.8 million landlines in 14 states to Frontier gained support this week from witnesses who warned the West Virginia Public Service Commission to carefully scrutinize the deal. Vermont state senator Vince Aluzzi told commissioners that Verizon's 2008 sale of its landlines to FairPoint had been a disaster for telephone service, consumers and workers in New England. "The only jobs they created were for the bankruptcy lawyers in New York City," said Aluzzi. "If you have any lingering doubts, don't hesitate to reject the deal," he told the PUC.

Public safety concerns were raised by Vermont firefighter Matt Vinci, who said 911 systems in Vermont and Maine failed four times after FairPoint acquired the lines. "As first responders in Vermont we were outraged," he said. ARRP's West Virginia state director, Gaylene Miller, warned that "consumers should be assured that this deal does not put customers at risk of rate increases or further deterioration of service

quality."

The hearings opened in Charleston two days after a crowd of 800 CWAers, IBEW members and other activists, and elected officials, rallied at the state capitol. "Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont -- they can't repeat that here. Somewhere in this country a line is going to be drawn," said CWA President Larry Cohen. CWA District 2 Vice President Ron Collins told the group, "jobs will be lost and service will suffer."

West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin energized the rally when he showed up and pledged his support for working families and consumers.

If approved, the deal will mean a \$600 million tax savings for Verizon, but \$3.3 billion in added debt for Frontier, making it very unlikely that Frontier could afford to build out high-speed broadband or provide other advanced telecommunications services. Allies in Congress have introduced legislation to close the "Reverse Morris Trust" tax loophole that permits companies from profiting from these kind of deals.

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tion, an FMLA approval letter will be mailed, provided that the employee is administratively eligible on the first day of absence. PLEASE NOTE: It is critical that employees notify their supervisor of their first day of absence and that the supervisor submits a timely report of the absence into AMTS in order to ensure that the FMLA team is able to communicate the FMLA determination to the employee.

An intermittent absence should no longer be submitted as "New" if an employee has a related absence and has multiple certifications on file. Instead, the employee will be given an opportunity to speak with an FMLA representative to discuss the certifications on file. The FMLA team will communicate the appropriate FMLA certification number to supervisor. The employee will be asked to provide a reach number where he/she can be contacted by the FMLA team on the day of absence.

A member of the FMLA team will contact the employee that day to discuss specific details about the intermittent request so that a certification number can be provided to the supervisor. Upon confirmation of the certification number, the FMLA team will send an email to the supervisor with the appropriate certification number for the supervisor to

enter into AMTS.

Before contacting the healthcare provider for clarification on the FMLA form, employees will be given an opportunity to get the clarification from their healthcare provider. If the employee does not provide the clarification or authorize VZ to contact their health care provider, the claim will be denied.

Verizon won't contact the healthcare provider to attempt to get clarification directly unless the employee authorizes Verizon to do so. Administrative Review team will accept administrative reviews which do not specifically include the language stating that an administrative review is being requested and all documents received within the 14 day review period will be considered for FMLA request.

Any FMLA leave request that has been denied may be submitted as a request for administrative review. An employee must continue to submit all supporting documentation and a complete medical certification form within the 14 day review period specified in the denial letter. All documents received from the employee and/or the employee's healthcare provider will be reviewed up to the end of the 14 days.

If you have any questions about these or other FMLA processes, please contact the FMLA team at 1-877-275-8947.

Retirees Corner

The next regular meeting is February 8.

RMC meetings are held on the second Monday of every month. Unless otherwise noted all meetings are held at the Local 2107 office at 1825 George Ave, Suite 4, Annapolis and begin at 10AM.

The new hall is just past Evolutions Gym on the right hand side.

Get Well to:

Tony Cullemer
John Morino

Sympathies to:

Russell Potter on the death of his father

DirectSat Techs

If you are receiving this newsletter, that's because we have your address. If we don't have someone's address they need to either call the hall or email us their information so we can put them in our database. Get the word out for them to get in touch!

Dates to Remember

Membership meetings

Meeting to be announced

Other Meetings

02/01/10	MD State Council	1:00 pm
	Lobby Night Annapolis AFL-CIO	5:00 pm
02/03/10	DirectSat Bargaining	
02/04/10	Progressive MD Baltimore FiOS	6:00 pm
02/08/10	Retiree	10:00 am
	Lobby Night Annapolis AFL-CIO	5:00 pm
02/15/10	Lobby Night Annapolis AFL-CIO	5:00 pm
02/17/10	ACFC	
02/18/10	Metropolitan Baltimore Council	5&7 pm
02/22/10	Lobby Night Annapolis AFL-CIO	5:00 pm
02/25/10	Executive Board	tba

Other

02/16/10 Newsletter deadline

Bargained for Holidays

02/15/10 President's Day (Verizon only)

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