



West Virginia Approves Sale

from the district

The Communications Workers of America said it is weighing all options after the approval on May 13, by the West Virginia Public Service Commission of the sale of the Verizon's phone lines in the state to Frontier Communications.

"We're in the process of evaluating the order," said CWA District 2 Vice President Ron Collins. "After full review we'll look at what we can do that will best serve West Virginia consumers and CWA members." The union has 10 days to file a motion for reconsideration. If the ruling on that motion is unfavorable, CWA has 30 days to file an appeal with the West Virginia state Supreme Court.

"Of course, we're disappointed but we're heartened by the fact that at least one person on the three-member commission agreed with us and the more than 80 legislators, several county commissions and a broad coalition of consumer, union and first responder organizations who stated that this deal is too risky and not in the public interest," Collins said. "The split decision shows our arguments about the deal had validity."

Collins also pointed out the commission's ruling earlier this week requiring Verizon to put \$72 million into an escrow account to improve the company's aging copper network shows the commission agrees with the union on the issue of Verizon's quality of service.

"The ink was barely dry on the first ruling which, in essence, says Verizon hasn't done its job in taking care of its operations," Collins said. "To give Verizon a pass to leave the state and turn over these problem-riddled lines to a smaller company doesn't make a lot of sense to us."

The \$72 million ruling also shows Frontier didn't know what it was buying when it entered into this deal. Had it known the true conditions of the operations and that the PSC would require \$72 million in improvements, would Frontier have committed billions to this deal?, Collins said.

CWA, which has opposed the deal since it was first announced a year ago, maintains that Verizon shouldn't be allowed to leave

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Current EISP Offer

by Shannon Opfer

By now, you should have received your EISP offer. Included with the usual offer, there is the ONE TIME Supplemental Voluntary Termination Bonus (VTB), which is \$40,000, less taxes and withholdings. The caps for the years of service have been raised to 40 years, rather than 30. A Pension Band Increase will be amended to change the effective date of the 3.75% pension band increase.

If you are a Service Pension eligible employee, but under the age of 55 with less than 30 years of service, any early retirement reductions will be eliminated. These reductions can equate to 6% a year, up to a maximum of 30%.

In addition, should a minimum of 12,000 associates in the former Bell Atlantic foot print accept the offer and leave the company, no post August 2, 2003 hires will be laid off prior to May 1, 2011.

These are all facts we currently have about the offer. What is still confusing are the different dates and numbers of employees affected by the Article 35. All the numbers we received prior to this offer are no longer

valid. In the last newsletter I said that Service Techs were not a part of the Article 35. That is no longer the case. This offer is being put out there to everyone, but there are several job titles that will be subject to a lay-off if the numbers are not met. Maintenance Administrators, Cable Splicing Technicians, Office Clerks, Service Technicians, and Outside Plant Technicians are all on the surplus list. The complete list of surplus job titles is on our website.

So if you were hired after 8/2/03, whether you are a splicer, lineman, or serv tech, your job is potentially in jeopardy. Please look closely at the offer and make the best possible decision. If the company gets enough people to take the offer, you may be safe until 5/1/11, but we don't know if they will get that many people off the payroll. If they do not get enough and you miss this offer, you will probably receive \$1100 per year of service, and no healthcare. Consider carefully.

We have many people asking questions about the offer. The company has decided to have two off payroll dates. The first will be 7/3/10 and the second has not been an-

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AT&T Arbitration

by Shannon Opfer

Though the wheels may move slowly, they do move. Recently CWA has won several arbitration cases against AT&T Mobility. We received an award from the National Labor Relation Board. We filed a Board charge concerning the company's refusal to provide contractor information. The Board issued a complaint and ordered a posting. However, we are still arguing with the company for the contractor information or the lack of information.

One of the Arbitrations that we won revolved on the issue of bargaining. The company decided to remove all the chairs from the stores, requiring all employees to stand throughout the day. We won this arbitration, in part, because the company changed the working conditions without bargaining it with the union.

When AT&T Mobility laid off Information

System Technicians in Dallas, Texas in May 2007, the company did not implement the layoffs in seniority order as required by the contract. As a result 6 high seniority CWA members who should not have been laid off lost their jobs. CWA filed a grievance but the company refused to settle so CWA took it to arbitration. The arbitrator decided that the company violated the contract and ordered the company to reinstate the employees and pay them full back pay. The employees returned to work in June of 2009 but the company did not cooperate with the CWA in determining the amounts of back pay to which the 6 members were entitled. At CWA's insistence the arbitrator then conducted more hearings to determine the amounts of back pay the company owed the 6 CWA members. In February 2010, the arbitrator issued his final award, ordering the company to pay the 6 members back pay in amounts ranging

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LOCAL 2107 NEWS
 Published Monthly By
**Communications Workers
 Of America**
Local 2107
 Affiliated with the AFL-CIO
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(ISSN 0890-8532) Periodical Postage
 Paid at Annapolis, MD. 21401
 Office Located at:
 1825 George Ave, Suite 4
 Annapolis MD 21401
 Phone: 410-268-2107
 Fax: 410-268-2150

Postmaster, send changes to:
 Local 2107 NEWS
 1825 George Ave, Suite 4
 Annapolis, MD 21401



President's Point of View.....

Denise Burns

“What counts now is not just what we are against, but what we are for. Who leads us is less important than what leads us—what convictions, what courage, what faith—win or lose. A man doesn’t save a century, or a civilization, but a militant party wedded to a principle can.” Adlai E. Stevenson, governor of Illinois, welcoming address before the Democratic national convention, Chicago, Illinois, July 21, 1952

How fitting is that quote today? I think it is right on.

At AT&T Mobility quite often a co-worker is telling a supervisor or security/ethics what another co-worker is doing wrong. So many people are terminated because of this. Is it right?

I know the Business Code of Conduct (BCOC) says you should report everything you think is wrong to the company because it is against the BOCC and if you don’t tell you too can be disciplined. That is rare. Tattle tales-there is a better way to resolve the situation. Now if the incident is blatant such as stealing out right or “real” threats then I believe you do need report them. However, calling us or talking to the co-worker is the better way to handle it. A sales environment is tough. Everyone there wants to make money. It doesn’t have to be cutthroat. Work smarter not harder and be aware you may be the next one someone throws under the bus! Most of the time it is not a serious enough issue to report but AT&T Mobility thinks firing everyone, instead of using other discipline, is the way to go. Work it out with your co-worker or ask for our assistance. Firing is much too easy for AT&T Mobility, there is less work involved. It is the easy way out.

(West Virginia from page 1)
 West Virginia without first fixing the existing problems. As a public utility, the Public Service Commission has the power to take action and Collins said the \$72 million isn’t enough. The deadline for putting the \$72 million into an escrow account was May 14, 2010. The Public Service Commission ruling also set out conditions that must be met by Frontier, including an initial outlay into the plant. CWA is reviewing those conditions as well. This is not the final say however. The FCC still has to give their ruling on the sale. Hopefully they will be able to see that this deal is disaster for everyone.

At Verizon, there seems to be a movement growing over the company’s movement of technicians. It is good something is finally making people get upset and stick together. Unfortunately, and as usual, the union is getting blamed for the actions the company takes. The union isn’t sitting back and letting moves take place without discussion. The problem is the company can permanently move people under the Article 23 language. Other than wages being discussed, the main determination is the 35 mile rule unless the company is willing to move the person’s residence and then other language applies. Article 22 is about temporary moves. It’s language also describes how the wages will be paid. At no time is seniority mentioned. Article 34 describes Seniority and what it is used for; vacation selection, tour selection and everything being equal a tie breaker in promotions.

Now having said all of that, I do understand what has taken place in the past. I also know what is happening now. What used to be done by inverse seniority is now being done by productivity. This company is fighting us over \$13.00 parking fees. I have never seen that in the past. This company does not care about you or me, and the only thought they have about the union is how can we break it? They are doing everything in their power to upset the workforce hoping that people will leave the company.

With all being said, we should question and grieve, but the grievance can only happen after a move is made not before.

"Those Who Stand For Nothing, Fall For Anything" - Alexander Hamilton

DirectSat Bargaining

by Shannon Opfer

Bargaining continues with the DirectSat contract. Many smaller issues have been settled, but now it is coming down to the nuts and bolts of the issues. There has been a lot of give and take between the company and the union, and some progress is being made.

If you haven’t gotten your information to the hall yet, please do so. We can’t send out any information to you if we don’t have your address. You can email it to us or call and let us know. Also keep checking the website for any updates.

Happier Company? Not Hardly!

(AT&T from page 1)

from 13,825.31 to \$99,479.55. The total amount rewarded was \$288,423.47.

We also won an award in which a steward was fired when she didn't meet her numbers because she was not given credit for time used for CWA business. The contract allows for numbers to be prorated for union time and this was not done. The grievant was reinstated to her former position and made whole for loss of wages, benefits and seniority.

It may take a while, but as these cases show having a union pays off when you need them.

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nounced as of yet, but it will be by the end of the year. The company will decide what date you will receive. They say that they will try to honor preferences and seniority as much as possible.

The company will pay you for any unused vacation. They will not pay you for your 4 E-days or your floating holiday, so if you don't use them, you will lose them. If you have a class approved through the TAP (Tuition Assistance Program) prior to your off payroll date, it will be paid for as long as you successfully complete it.

Also, please be aware that if you have taken a loan against your 401K, you will need to pay that back in full after you are removed from the payroll. So make sure you take that into account when adding up your numbers.

You will receive 6 months of healthcare for you and any dependents if you take the offer, but you will need to get COBRA for dental and vision.

In the offer there is a withdraw form. If you put in for the offer and change your mind, you must withdraw before the volunteer period ends.

If you are planning on taking this offer, you should expect to get the VTB in a lump sum payment, about thirty days after you are off the payroll. EISP payouts valued over \$10,000 are paid in either 48 equal monthly payments or half approximately 30 days after you leave the payroll and the remainder in 48 equal monthly installments, depending on what you choose.

We know this is a huge decision for anyone to make. We will be putting any new information we have on the web, so you can check there. If you have any further questions, call the hall and ask. If we don't have the information at hand, we will find out and let you know.

by Shannon Opfer

I've been saying it for months, but I don't know if any one is listening. Verizon is not the same company that we started with. I'm not talking about name changes, I'm talking about value changes, attitude changes.

Once upon a time the phone company cared about things like quality. No one was out of service for long if there was anything we could do about it. When a trouble was called in for a little old lady with no service, we cared. Now we tell her that she ought to have a cell phone and we would love to provide her with cellular service. Of course we would. Verizon Wireless is where Verizon is making money. This is not our fault. We as employees are not the ones that let the plant disintegrate around us. We're not the ones who know cables are failing and don't take the time to fix them properly. We are not the ones that are suspending people because they are not getting enough done in a day.

We all know who is behind this. We are no longer allowed to do our jobs. We can't take the time to actually fix a defective pair, we

can only rewire it. Yes, you may be proud of your low repeat rate, but if your productivity isn't meeting their numbers, you will be suspended. We have had supervisors tell us that quality doesn't matter anymore as long as productivity is where it should be.

Here's the issue with this. Verizon still feels that they need to lose headcount. If they can't entice you to take the EISP, maybe they can harass you into doing something stupid so they can fire you. Please be careful. We don't want anyone to lose their job over something stupid but it can happen. Watch for supervisors to be out in the field more. Not for coaching or a pat on the back, they will be watching for you do something, or not do something so they can write you up. We have heard right from supervisors themselves that they are being told to come out and catch us goofing off or not having the proper area protection out. Please cover your ass and make sure that you are doing what they ask of you. You need to actively work to keep your job. It seems that keeping it will be more difficult to do in the future.

Financial Advisors

by Shannon Opfer

If you are thinking about taking the offer, we suggest that you speak to a financial advisor. We have received several names from members. We are not endorsing any of these services over another, these are just some of the names we have received.

Retirement Strategies of Maryland, LLC- Christine Dahlby, Registered Representative. Severna Park, MD 410-647-6400/888-335-9601, or www.retirementExperts.com.

Retirement & Investment Group, LLC. Thomas E. Quirk Catonsville, MD 410-744-

8707/888-744-8707 or www.retirementandinvestmentgroup.com.

Wells Fargo. D. Kirk E. Fisher, IV. Bel Air, MD 410-638-9333/800-688-9334 or www.agedwards.com.

Price Financial, Robbie Price, Waldorf, MD. 301-843-3000.

Edward Jones Financial, John Jilek, La Plata, MD. 877-870-0330 or www.edwardjones.com.

This is a life changing decision. Please take the time to talk to someone and get a better idea of what you are looking at.

Shareholder's Meeting

from the National

CWA District 2 Ron Collins recently attended the Verizon annual Shareholder's Meeting in Little Rock, AK. CWA and IBEW members leafleted shareholders outside the meeting.

CWA members are concerned with the deal with Frontier. Everywhere Verizon has sold the plant, the buying company has gone bankrupt leaving employees and customers out in the cold.

Ron Collins told the shareholders "Verizon should continue to build out high speed

broadband networks as the FCC's national broadband plan outlined, with a focus on service to anchor institutions like schools, hospitals and libraries. Without high-speed broadband, citizens have no access to critical applications in telemedicine, distance learning, public safety, along with entertainment and other video. Verizon should continue to be a leader in bringing high speed networks to our communities, not abandoning them," he said. "If Verizon wants to sell landlines, it should find a buyer that has the financial, technical, and operational resources to meet West Virginia's needs."

Retirees Corner

There is no regular retiree meeting in June, due to the Crab Feast, June 18, 2010. The next regular meeting will be July 12, 2010. RMC meetings are held on the second Monday of every month.

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!

Labor Night Baseball Game

This year's game will be on June 25. It will be the Orioles vs. Nationals. Tickets are \$6.00 this year, and will be limited. First come, first serve.

The Union Sportsmen's Alliance has a new giveaway, and any active or retired CWA member who joins the club is eligible to win.

USA is giving away a new, U.S. made Triton boat, plus a visit to the Triton factory in Tennessee and a day of fishing with Triton's CEO, who is proud of his company's union label. The boat will be given away at the end of July 2010.

For info on joining USA, go to www.UnionSportsmen.org.

Did you know that May is Labor History Month? To learn more about oral histories, famous union leaders, or the fight for workers' rights visit www.labor-studies.org.

Dates to Remember

Membership meetings

06/8/10 Combined meeting 6:30 p.m.

Other Meetings

05/24/10 DirectSat Bargaining Committee
06/11/10 President's Meeting
06/23/10 ACFC

Other

06/15/10 Newsletter deadline
06/18/10 Retiree Crab Feast 12:00 pm
06/20/10 Father's Day
06/25/10 AFL-CIO Night at Camden Yards 7:05 pm

Bargained for Holidays

05/31/10 Memorial Day- AT&T Mobility and Verizon
07/04/10 Independence Day AT&T Mobility and Verizon

Combined Membership Meeting

June 18, 2010

6:30 p.m.

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