



LOCAL 2107 NEWS

VOLUME XXI-NO 2

March 2010 Edition

DirectSat USA Bargaining

by Denise Burns

Bargaining for a contract has begun at DirectSat USA.

So far, we have met with the company twice. The first time was a meeting to set the process and some ground rules. At the second meeting, we presented the company with a few proposals. In the beginning the proposals are pretty much generic in nature. They are things like; Recognition of the Union, Non-Discrimination, Union Security and Dues, Union Bulletin Board, Probationary Period, Seniority, Reduction in Past Practice, Duration.

We will post any information about bargaining on the web (cwa-2107.org) as it becomes available. Please remember that bargaining is a give and take process. Don't expect a lot of specifics just yet because things can change from day-to-day.

Thanks to those of you that filled out and returned a bargaining survey. In the future, we will be presenting proposals on 401 K Contribution, Holiday Pay, Overtime Pay, Minimum Salary, Trainer Pay and Safety just to name a few.

Keep in contact with your stewards on any information the company is giving you or regarding any changes in your working conditions. This is critical to bargaining and beyond. Remember the company will always try to do what they want. We will always have to keep our eyes and ears open to keep them in check.

We are in this fight together. Stay solid and stay alert!. Below is a picture of your bargaining team/stewards. Your stewards are James Stewart, Victor Tejada, Antonio King and Phil Houston (not pictured).



Verizon-Let the Games Begin

by Shannon Opfer

No, I'm not talking about the Olympics. Here we are in February with one of the worst winters in recent memory. What does this mean? Forced overtime and a "Service Emergency". Yeah! According to the contract, a service emergency can be called when there is severe weather such as a hurricane, or blizzard. In these situations, the company can force employees beyond the regular overtime caps. At least there seems to be a legitimate reason for it this time.

We all know the score. Maryland has not seen a winter like this since 1889 when they started keeping records. The amount of snow has brought drop wires down throughout the area. Pedestals have been buried, or knocked over by plows. People are being told it will be March before they can get service.

As employees for a Utility company, we know that in extreme situations we will be called on to do what we can to help. While our hours are going to be much longer than we may be used to, we still need to be aware of our safety responsibilities. Our biggest concern needs to be going home safely every

night. Please be careful when carrying ladders, or walking on icy roads. Be aware of people walking in the street as sidewalks may not be cleared. Look for children plying outside. Watch for cars that can't see around huge snow piles. As the sun goes down, watch for roads that may refreeze. BE SAFE. Yes, we need to get people back in service, but not at the expense of our safety.

Also, be careful about being tired. Working 12 hour days for any stretch of time can lead to exhaustion. If you find yourself falling asleep at the wheel, pull over. Call your supervisor and tell him or her that you need a nap, or you need someone to come and drive you back. This is rare, but can happen. The last thing you need is to get in a vehicle accident. It doesn't matter that they are forcing you to be there, you will still be the one punished.

Yes, with the "Service Emergency" the company can force us to work 12 hour days, doing whatever it is they tell us to do. What they can't do is force you to be unsafe. Take care of yourself. Don't put yourself in a dangerous situation. Use your common sense, and be careful.

Executive Level Grievances Against Verizon

from the district

The following is a summary of the Executive Level Grievances the Union has filed against the company in relation to the recent Article 35.

1. Failure to Pay Proper Termination Allowance to employees forced off payroll on October 22, 2008. (Central Office Technicians) Grievance Heard 12-8-09. In process of scheduling Arbitration.
2. Surplus Employee Fail Rate on Consultant Test. Grievance Heard 12-8-09. In process of scheduling Arbitration.
3. Improper Article 35 Application to employees covered by the job security agreement under the 2008 Scope Agreement. Grievance Heard 12-8-09. In process of scheduling Arbitration.
4. Failure to pay the proper termination allowance to employees who left the payroll on the Force Effective Date of January 30, 2010.

Grievance scheduled to be heard on 2-18-10.

5. Failure to cease the performance of "enhanced copper duties" by VCS Multimedia Service Technicians working in the jurisdiction of District 2. Grievance scheduled to be heard on 2-18-10.
6. Failure to administer Article 35 properly. On January 30, 2010 Verizon removed qualified employees from the active payroll while maintaining contractors throughout the Potomac Region. Grievance scheduled to be heard on 2-18-10. (Technician Work)
7. Failure to administer Article 35 properly. Over 90 CWA members were forced off the payroll on January 30th and were classified as voluntarily terminating their own employment. Grievance scheduled to be heard on 2-18-10.
8. Failure to administer Article 35 properly. Verizon has applied its' RAMP (Regional Grievances on page 3)

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President's Point of View.....

Denise Burns

Ok folks. I am going to once again state the obvious. Quit giving these companies a reason to discipline and or fire you. Do your job, be where you are supposed to be, be cordial to your co-workers, and do as you are told unless it is unsafe!

Every company has a Business Code of Conduct (BCOC). It is a catchall for the company to fire you. While some of the BCOC's language are very vague, trust me, the company will twist it to their benefit. It is much better to grieve something while you are working than after you have been terminated. You may or may not get your job back depending on the incident.

Communicate with your supervisors. If they tell you take two hours and then turn something back that is what you should do. Is it right to leave the customer out of service- NO! But the company makes the rules. If you are running into roadblocks because of this weather take a picture with your phone if you have one and let your supervisor see what it is that you're are dealing with. Document your jobs in detail. At AT&T Mobility if they tell you to makes notes on accounts for specific reasons, do it. Don't use any company equipment for personal use. None of these issues are worth the money you are making.

Don't be a tattletail either. We aren't children any more. If you have a problem with someone and you don't feel you can approach them call a steward or an officer. Things are better worked out amongst the ranks then getting supervisors, ethics or security involved. I realize it will depend on the seriousness of the situation, but perhaps just walking away when you feel yourself getting angry or upset is the best decision to

make. There are alternatives to getting yourself fired.

If you work for Verizon, we are all on notice that they no longer want to deal with land-lines. We can see it everyday in how they are routing the work. They called a service emergency because of the blizzard. I believe it had a little to do with the blizzard but not entirely. They are applying the pressure. Above all be safe. Don't take the six days of 12 hours each out on co-workers. No one wants to be forced to do anything. Especially since they are putting people off the payroll! It is like rubbing salt into a wound. It's not right, but it is the hand we are currently dealt While you are being forced, if they tell you to do a job such as pending pole transfers, service orders, or future dated troubles that is their prerogative. They assign the work. We still believe they should be accepting reasonable excuses. Keep us informed on what is being said and done.

If you think there is any possible way that what you are about to do is questionable, don't do it. If unsure, ask someone. It is much better to ask questions than to suffer the consequences later! The key to staying employed is to come to work (on time), do as you are told (unless unsafe or you know it is wrong), follow the rules, question what you aren't sure of and document your day.

"In corporate America, a business answers to its shareholders and no one else. Workers' interests do not factor into the equation. The directors' of a company have a fiduciary responsibility that obliges them to place the owner interests first; if that means going to part-time help, layoffs, cutting benefits and pay, that is what will happen." Steve Delaney, letter to the editor, Boston Globe

Unemployment

For any employees laid off due to the recent Article 35, we are hearing that there have been some problems with receiving unemployment benefits. The company said that they would not be contesting benefits. If you are told you are being denied unemployment, you need to appeal it.

Keep checking the website for any new information. Any grievance or results thereof, will be posted as soon as we get them. Make sure we have current information for you if we should need to get a hold of you for anything. Any questions, give us a call.

VZ Corporate Profit Sharing

by Shannon Opfer

At the time this was printed, we have not heard the exact amount of the VZ Corporate Profit Sharing this year. The calculations for this can be found in your contract. If you don't have an old copy of the contract, you can access the newest one on our website, as we are still waiting for the company to print them for us.

Per contract, the CPS has to be paid no later than March 15, so look for it coming in the near future. As for the contracts, we don't know, but don't hold your breath.

AT&T Mobility Inclement Weather Policy

from AT&T Mobility

During emergency or other unusual weather conditions, such as severe snow and ice storms, floods, hurricanes, etc., our customers depend on us to provide services. If an emergency closing is not specifically declared for the company, employees are expected to make every reasonable effort to come to work. However, you should never jeopardize your personal safety or the safety of others.

An employee who is unable to report to work or who will be delayed in reporting should call as soon as possible to make his/her circumstance known. If eligible, an employee who is unable to report to work may be granted a PTO or vacation day according to policy applicable to employee's position. Non-exempt employees who fail to report to work due to emergency conditions and who do not have vacation or optional time available, will not be paid.

If a work location is closed, resulting in employees being sent home early, all normally scheduled work hours will be treated as excused, paid. If severe weather conditions develop during the day that indicate that employees should not remain until the normal end of work day, senior management should determine and announce a departure time sufficient to allow for safe travel home. Senior management, with Human Resources involvement will evaluate emergency situations on a case by case basis and ensure appropriate treatment of employees.

If anyone has any situations from the last few storms, please get in touch.

PSC Decision

by Shannon Opfer

The Public Service Commission recently agreed to a proposal from Verizon regarding service conditions and rate hikes. While this deal is better than the original Verizon proposed, CWA feels that it still does not do enough to protect the customers, and employees.

The PSC asked that Verizon get their time for trouble tickets under control. They want a 48 to 96 hour turn around, but that will not include weekends or holidays. It also will not include customers who agree to dates that are further out than 96 hours.

CWA does not feel this agreement is in everyone's best interest and will continue to try other options.

(Grievances from page 1)

Associate Mobility Plan) guidelines to surplus employees, consequently denying them the opportunity to test and claim openings in the consultant title. Grievance scheduled to be heard on 2-18-10.

9. Failure to administer Article 35 properly. Verizon removed qualified employees from the active payroll while maintaining contract employees in Local Presence Centers throughout the Potomac Region. Grievance scheduled to be heard on 2-18-10.

10. Verizon's EISP/Surplus Notification, dated July 24, 2009 for the Verizon Services Organization - The continued contracting out of bargaining unit work which could be performed by our Central Office Technicians while declaring a surplus in the title of Central Office Technician violates our General Agreement. Grievance scheduled to be heard on 2-18-10.

11. Verizon's Article 35 Notification dated October 27, 2009 for the Regional Operations EISP/Surplus under M. J. Johnston. The continued contracting out of the bargaining unit work performed in our EVRC's while declaring a surplus in the title of Maintenance Administrator violates the Memorandum of Agreement (Attachment 11) of the General Agreement. Verizon is also in violation of the Letter of Understanding regarding Contract Labor and Article 1, Recognition of the General Agreement. Grievance scheduled to be heard on 2-18-10.

The following are other ELG's that the Union has filed.

1. 2008 Contract Printing - Verizon's failure to provide a copy of the General Agreement to each employee in the bargaining unit. CWA's issue is the employer is in violation of Article 1, Section 4 of the General Agreement. Grievance scheduled for arbitration 4-10-2010.

2. DCPR Closed Time - Verizon violated the Letter of Understanding regarding Closed Time when it reduced certain consultants closed time from 30 minutes to 15 minutes. This grievance was heard and appealed to arbitration. Vz refused to arbitrate the issue. CWA filed in District Ct. asking the court to compel Vz. to arbitrate. The Court agreed to hear the merits of the case and scheduled dates to file motions and cross motions on the issue through March 2010. In the interim Vz. has proposed a settlement to the issue. We are in the process of finalizing the settlement which would provide for the 30 minutes of close time for each scheduled consultant.

3. Workplace Attire Guidelines - Heard at Arbitration over 2 days 11-24-09 and 1-28-10. Case is pending written briefs and arbitrator decision.

4. Failure to Properly Default to MCN/MEP - Filed 10-16-09 - Not Scheduled.

5. Unilateral Implementation of Exclusive Provider Organization - Filed 9-24-09 - Not Scheduled

6. Failure to Properly Default HMO to MCN/MEP - Filed 12-23-09 Not Scheduled

7. Long Term Service Difficulty WV 6-10-09 - In Process of Scheduling Arbitration

8. Long Term Service Difficulty WV 8-11-09 - In Process of Scheduling Arbitration

9. Long Term Service Difficulty WV 12-28-09 - Filed 1-21-09 Not Scheduled

10. Unilateral Change to Progressive Discipline in Business Offices - Filed 11-18-09 Scheduled 2-26-10.

11. Unilateral Change to Working Conditions - Total Performance Plan - filed 1-30-09 Scheduled 2-26-10.

12. Unilateral Change to ACHC Committee Meetings - filed 1-8-09 Not Scheduled

13. Balanced Billing of Diagnostic Lab Testing - Filed 8-27-09 Not Scheduled. Held Open.

14. Relapse Absence Treatment - Heard 7-15-09 - Held Open

15. Article 8 Violation - Withdrew with out prejudice

16. Unilateral decision to bring Loans into WV closed 9-11-09

17. Contractors in WV - In process of Scheduling Arbitration

18. Denial Pension Plan Benefits to Shared Employees - Filed 6-27-07 Not Scheduled. Held Open pending District 13.

The Following are ELG's related to EISP.

1. EISP and Associated Article 35 September 08 - Grievance heard and appealed. Protected for Arb.

2. EISP and Associated Article 35 February 09 - Grievance heard and appealed. Protected for Arb. - Vz withdrew Article 35 as a result of the Loaned Tech Agreement

3. EISP Improper Implementation - November 2008 Offer - Grievance heard and appealed. Protected for Arb.

Any news on these grievances or new grievances will be posted on our web site.

Retirees Corner

The next regular meeting is March 8, 2010.

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.

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

03/09/10 Membership meeting tba

Other Meetings

02/22/10 President Meeting 11:00 am

Lobby Night Annapolis AFL-CIO 5:00 pm

02/23/10 MD and DC AFL-CIO Executive Board 10:00 am

02/25/10 Executive Board tba

03/08/10 Bargaining DirectSat USA, Inc. tba

03/12/10 Presidents Meeting 11:00 am

03/17/10 ACFC

03/18/10 Metropolitan Baltimore Council 10:00 am

03/30/10 Executive Board tba

Other

03/16/10 Newsletter deadline

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