


LOCAL 506 UNION NEWS

Volume 66, Issue 8

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Friday, November 13, 2015

THE OFFICERS, EXECUTIVE BOARD
AND OFFICE STAFF OF
UE LOCAL 506
WISH YOU AND YOUR FAMILY A

HAPPY
Thanksgiving



President's Report

By Scott Slawson

As everyone is well aware, on Friday, November 6th the company has issued the **WARN** notice. They stated their intent to start laying people off in December and pay them out on their 60 day notice. They also stated it was their intention to have all 1500 PLOW's completed by March 31st. We have been in contact with the Department of Labor, Career Link and Unemployment Compensation. We have also reached out to several of our legislative representatives about **ACT 60** and its effect on our members. Over the next couple of weeks we will also be discussing ways to minimize the impact to our members with the company.

Our **TAA** petition from the transfer of work is still active. Our case number is **83328**. The only stipulation to be eligible for the TAA benefit is that you are or have been laid off (TLOW or PLOW) between the impact date and the expiration date of the petition. The impact date is 12/20/2012 and the expiration date is 6/3/2016. There are many benefits that go along with this including **TRA and RTAA**. Each case is specific to your individual circumstance. To find out your eligibility requirements we urge you to call Career Link. Again, each case is person specific, so you will need to have a case worker with Career Link.

Also required is a **Benefit Rate Interview** for TAA eligibility. We are in the process of trying to get these **BRI's** set up at the hall. They would include people from the Department of Labor, UC and Career Link. You must attend these interviews either here or Career link before you can utilize your TAA/TRA benefit. If you attended one of these interviews for this case number before, and filled out the appropriate paperwork, you will not be required to do it again. It would however be recommended to attend for a refresher on your benefit rights.

Another question that keeps surfacing is: If I utilized TAA in the past on a different petition am I eligible to utilize TAA under this one? The answer is yes. If you have not utilized your benefits under this case number, you have benefits available to you. If you have exercised a portion of your benefit under this case number you need to contact your case worker to determine any future eligibility.

There are also **Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA)** benefits available for eligible members over the age of 50 that are getting reemployed

at a job that pays less than \$50,000 annually.

It is a cash subsidy paid to trade-affected workers. The RTAA pays 50% of the difference of your qualifying wage at separation and the wages of your new employment, up to a maximum of \$10,000 or a maximum of 104 weeks, whichever comes first.

As stated before, we are in the process of setting a day up at the hall for the members to have access to people from Unemployment, Career Link and the Department of Labor. They will be on hand to answer all of your questions on TAA/TRA, RTAA, and Unemployment as well as provide you with the required Benefit Rate Interviews.

We would like to thank all **Veterans** for their service and wish everyone a **Happy Thanksgiving**. To all the hunters good luck and be safe.

Recent Retirees

Plant Services
Bruce Perdue
Building #6
Patrick Littlefield
Daniel Krol
Building #7
James Perkins

Building #10
Cheryl Gailey
Thomas Lazarz
Building #12
Jay S. Miller
Boyd Hecker
Building #18
Robert Grant



Building #26
Bruce Vogt
Building #63
Timothy Klein
Thomas Adams

St. Vincent's E.R. Bills

Back in October Health America/Coventry sent out letters informing our members that St. Vincent's E.R. doctors were "out-of-network".

Beginning Dec. 1, 2015, the Allegheny Health (AHN) Network Emergency Group will be participating with HealthAmerica and Aetna at the following locations:

- Allegheny General Hospital
- Alle-Kiski Medical Center
- Canonsburg General Hospital
- Forbes Regional Hospital
- Jefferson Regional Medical Center
- **St. Vincent Health Center**
- West Penn Hospital

Claims through Nov. 30, 2015 will be re-processed at in-network rates, and employees should not receive any balance (i.e. amounts in excess of in-network rates deductibles & co-insurance). Please direct any employees with questions about reprocessing to HealthAmerica by calling the Customer Service phone number on the back of their wallet insurance card.

C.P. Steward's Report

By Leo Grzegorzewski

We all are saddened by the company issuing the **Warn Notice** on November 6th and what it means to our members, their families and the community. The numbers of employees potentially affected are going to cause great hardship throughout the tri-state region. We must now more than ever unite and stand together to help each other throughout these dark days. There may be some of our members who are not eligible for unemployment benefits at time of lay off. They need to make the most of the time they have here before layoff. We will have a better indication to what extent the layoffs will impact each job family in the near future. ***When we know, you will know.*** ***In closing, keep in mind the company made the decision to make deep cuts in Erie and not share some of the almost 500 locomotives to be built in Texas next year.***

Grievance Report

On October 16, 2015 we had a Step II grievance meeting at the plant in 42-4. The following are the results of that meeting. **21** cases were closed or settled. Several warnings were removed and a grievance on installing emergency lighting in buildings 20 and 24 will be performed by our maintenance group. This was a good win do to the relentless work done by Plant Services Chief Steward **Brian Welch** along with the Stewards and members he represents. **13** cases were put on hold due to lack of information or further investigation needed. **6** cases were sent to Step III. Harassment, valid doctors excuses not being accepted for absences and drug testing are some examples. The next Step II grievance meeting will be on Friday, November 13, 2015, that will be the last Step II meeting for 2015. We will also have a Step III grievance meeting on Friday, December 18, 2015. There is an arbitration meeting on December 16, 2015 and one scheduled for January 8, 2016. As you can see we have a very busy schedule ahead of us through the end of the year. So far this year we have had 403 grievances filed.

Retiree News

*Rewritten for use in the
UE Local 506 Newsletter*

Unions File Class Action Lawsuit Over GE's

Plan to Renege on its Retiree Health Care Obligation

Pittsburgh, Pa -- A coalition of labor unions including the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) filed a federal class action lawsuit against the General Electric Corporation in the Northern District of Ohio on November 9. The coalition includes the members of the GE Coordinated Bargaining Committee (CBC): UE, United Auto Workers, Machinists, Steelworkers, Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Teamsters, IUE-CWA, and the Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers.

The coalition of unions and more than twenty individual retirees contend that GE is violating federal labor law and the Employer Retirement Income Security Act by depriving its post-65 retirees of important retiree medical coverage, coverage that these individuals earned during decades of work for GE and that was promised to them in their union contracts.

UE Director of Organization **Gene Elk** commented on the suit: "GE is a very profitable company and despite its great wealth has chosen to break its promise to provide decent health care for retirees during the most vulnerable time of their lives, after they gave decades of service and built the company. UE is proud of the CBC action and pleased to participate in efforts to turn back GE's shameful attack on our retired members."

GE has announced that effective January 1, 2016, it will unilaterally terminate its post-65 retiree medical plans and replace them with an opportunity for retirees to purchase post-65 health insurance coverage from a private broker health care exchange selected by the company. GE is offering, for now, a \$1,000 yearly credit for its retirees to offset some of the cost of replacing this medical coverage that was being provided by the company. Thousands of GE retirees, including long retired employees who have very small pensions, are facing substantial increases in health care and prescription drug costs even though their fixed incomes cannot meet the new costs. GE is also refusing to commit that it will continue the \$1,000 per year credit for its retirees beyond 2016.

UE and the other CBC unions participating in the suit are confident that the terms of their labor contracts require GE to provide lifetime medical benefits for GE retirees.

Safety Corner

Hunting season is upon us. As you begin to gather your gear it is important to think of safety. Just like with any activity you must follow specific safety precautions to avoid injury and/or death. A hunter's safety course is recommended, regardless of age. Check your gear and make sure everything is in proper working condition. Wear proper clothing for the weather. Consider dressing in layers. This small step can make a difference when the weather changes. Be sure to include plenty of blaze orange. Wearing orange is not only safe, but in most states required.

With all sports you should have a physical to make sure you are in good health before you participate. You might want to consider slowly building up your cardio endurance prior to the season, especially if your physical activity is normally low. Hunting, tracking and dragging an animal can be exhausting. Many injuries occur due to lack of physical training necessary to complete the task.

Going to hunting camp with family and friends is half the fun. Remember alcohol and guns do not mix. Keep hunting and driving separate from drinking. Never pull the trigger unless you are sure of your target and beyond. It is always good practice to keep your finger off the trigger and the safety on until you are ready to take the shot. Let family or friends know where you are hunting and when you expect to be home. When possible avoid hunting alone and check the weather forecast before heading out. Remember weapons are not permitted on company property even if they remain in your vehicle. Good luck!

NOVEMBER MEMBERSHIP MEETING NOTICE

Agenda:

- Swearing in of Stewards
- Update on WARN Act
- Officers updates
- Committee reports and General Business Matters

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS & TIMES ARE:

Thursday, November 19, 2015 (All meetings)
 7:20 a.m. (3rd Shift)
 12:30 p.m. (2nd Shift)
 3:20 p.m. (1st Shift)

Having A Personal Problem?

Call **Keith Eller** at 875-4EAP (Ext. 4327)

AA Meeting Schedule

Where: Building 6, Rm. 150, Conference Rm.
When: Thursdays 1st Shift - 12:00 noon
2nd Shift - 7:30 pm 3rd Shift - 3:00 am

Change of Address Form

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Pay Number _____

Return To: The Union Hall, 3923 Main Street, Erie, PA 16511

DECEMBER 2015

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 R.A.G.E. MEETING 618 MEMBERSHIP MEETING	10	11	12
13	14	15 EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING	16	17 506 MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS	18 R.A.G.E. BOARD MEETING	19
20	21	22	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE HOLIDAY	25 CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY	26
27	28	29	30	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE HOLIDAY		

Income and Extension Aid

Questions & Answers

Q. *What is Income Extension Aid (IEA)?*

A. Income Extension Aid is a negotiated benefit available to financially help GE Workers when temporarily or permanently lack of work.

Q. How does Income Extension Aid (IEA) work?

A. Hourly workers with at least one or more year of service have an IEA Account based on one week's pay for every year of service and a 1/4 *week's pay for each additional 3 months of service. There is a minimum benefit of 4 weeks pay as long as you meet the one year requirement.

***Your GE weekly pay includes your regular base pay (STAT Average for Pieceworkers) plus any nightshift bonus.**

Q. *Is there a waiting week before I can receive IEA?*

A. Technically no, however, to receive IEA for a given week you must provide proof that you are receiving unemployment benefits for that particular week. Since Pennsylvania requires one waiting week at the beginning of every benefit year – you will not qualify for IEA Benefits for that week either.

Q. *How are IEA benefits paid out?*

A1. Prior to exhausting all Unemployment Benefits, the IEA payment will equal 90% of your weekly pay when combined with any Pennsylvania State or Federal Unemployment Compensation. Partial week earnings from GE are also factored in to the equation.

Example: Weekly pay before layoff = \$1100.00 x 90% = \$990.00
 State Unemployment Compensation maximum = \$573.00
 Income Extension aid will pay you \$417.00 per week

A2. After exhaustion of Unemployment Benefits the IEA benefit will equal 90% of your pay.

A3. IEA Benefits will be paid out in the above manner until you exhaust your IEA benefits. If you have not used all or any of your IEA benefits, after one year on layoff, the balance will automatically be paid to you in a *lump sum and your recall rights will be protected. *Note: Withdrawing your IEA benefits in a lump sum before the end of one year will result in loss of recall rights.

Q. *What is the process for claiming a weekly IEA payment request?*

A. IEA Applications are available in Building 42-5, Room 534. They have also been distributed to all Local 506 Board Members. The completed form can be submitted in Building 42-5 or they can be faxed to 239-278-2190. Don't forget to include a copy of your *UC check or proof of UC exhaustion. If there are any questions or problems with your application, you will be contacted by a customer service representative, so please be sure to include a phone number or email address where you can be reached.

*Note: If you have your UC benefit check direct deposited or if you request a UC debit card, you will not receive a check stub to submit with your IEA Application, however, Harrisburg will send you a letter within 7-10 days after you file a claim. You will need that letter to submit with your IEA form.

**Note: Effective 6/22/15, maximum weekly payment percentage for permanent LOW's increases from 75% to 90%.

General Electric Announces “WARN NOTICE”

On November 6, 2015 the Local 506 Officers were given notice of “Mass Layoff” Under the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act. The Local 506 Officers will sit down with the Company beginning November 12, 2015 over their intent to lay-off 1500 workers through volume reductions and Transfer of Work

The WARN ACT requires the employer to give a 60 day notice prior to any permanent lay-offs. If any employees, are permanently laid off before January 6, 2016, they will receive pay and benefits commensurate with the requirements of WARN.

During these difficult times, emotions can play havoc with members of all service ranks. Local 506 Members with low service are obviously concerned about their impending fate, and those in the middle ranges are concerned with being displaced. While many long service members may be secure in knowing they will stay on their jobs, none should or probably will take comfort in being secure while watching their Brothers and Sisters, the very people they’ve worked with for years, go out the door. Let no one forget that we will go through this together.

Q. *How long do I have recall rights?*

A. All hourly employees with Continuity of Service (twelve months) will have recall rights for five years.

Q. *What happens to Health and Vision Benefits?*

A. Coverage continues* for up to 12 months at no cost.

Q. *Does that include my Dependent Coverage as well?*

A. Yes, if you were enrolled in Dependent medical at the time of layoff, you will be able to maintain that coverage at no cost to you as long as your continuous service or service credits are maintained. (12 months)

Q. *What happens to my dental coverage?*

A. If you directly affected by a layoff or work transfer, your dental coverage continues for you and your eligible dependents for up to 12 months.

- **With no Contributions-** if you are directly affected by layoff or transfer of work after completing three or more years of continuous service; or
- **With Contributions-** if you are directly affected by a layoff or work transfer before completing three years of service. You will pay the same amount that active employees pay for the same coverage.

Q. *What about my Saving and Security Program (S&SP)*

A. You cannot make contributions to the Savings and Security Program while you are on layoff, but you may be eligible to withdraw or borrow from your account, as long as your continuous service or service credits are maintained.