



LOCAL 506 SUPPLEMENT

© 21 Biroscak Printing Co. Inc.

Friday, June 7, 2013

After 12 Meetings – NO GE PROPOSALS TO SAVE ANY JOBS

After three meetings last week and two bargaining sessions this week (June 3 and 4), we regret having to inform you that there has been no real progress in our efforts to save the 950 jobs. At every bargaining session, your officers and the national union have repeatedly asked the Company for proposals to save jobs. As of yesterday (June 4), GE made no proposals and has not offered any concrete ideas to save even one job.

Unfortunately our meetings with GE have moved at a very slow pace and have bogged down over the Company's insistence on re-writing the Erie plant work rules and attendance policy. During meetings last week, GE attempted to radically change the attendance policy so that management could give us a contact after more than 3 unexcused absences, a warning after 6 unexcused absences, and terminate us after 7 unexcused absences within a 12 month period.

GE claimed that improvements in hourly employee attendance could lead to annual plant-wide savings of \$800,000 per year. Responding to GE's claim of savings from attendance improvements, UE Local 506 President Scott Duke told the Company: "We're not interested in saving money, we're interested in saving jobs."

Although UE did offer to look at reducing the number of contacts which are given before GE issues an attendance warning, the Company rejected that offer and with some minor changes continued to propose its tough new policy. After GE rejected the union's ideas on the attendance policy, we told management to move on to another issue.

New Work Rules ... But Nothing New on Saving Jobs

Since May 24, the Company has now offered 4 different sets of new plant-wide work rules. Discussions on work rules have been as frustrating as talks on the attendance policy. GE claims that new work rules will make Erie more efficient, but management continues to avoid talking about the most important issue – saving jobs.

Instead of talking about saving jobs, GE has slowed down bargaining by proposing new rules to give out disciplinary warnings for parking violations and requiring us to wear badges at all times, or for using our cell phones while at work. GE has also demanded mandatory overtime and for most jobs (except welding and painting) it now demands eliminating paid wash-up time at the end of each work shift. UE has rejected GE's overtime and wash-up demands.

GE Rejects UE Offer to Extend Bargaining to July 1

On Thursday May 30, because so much of the bargaining has been focused on work rules and attendance policy with NO substantial discussion on jobs, UE suggested continuing bargaining until July 1. GE politely told the UE bargaining team: "Thanks, but no thanks."

We continue to be disappointed by GE's refusal to have meaningful and concrete talks on how to save jobs in Erie. We are equally upset that GE refused our good faith offer to extend the bargaining deadline to July 1.

May 31 Rallies – A Huge Success

Your union officers want to express our deep thanks and appreciation to all the members and supporters who attended the three rallies last week. The combined attendance was somewhere around 2,000 and the rallies effectively demonstrated our unity and commitment to saving jobs. Third shift workers rallied at 7:00 a.m. after a long night of work; second shift workers gathered before work at 1:30 p.m., and the first shift came off the job at 3:00 to support their union. Speakers included Local 506 President Scott Duke and UE International Rep. Gene Elk, who both gave eyewitness accounts of the company's unwillingness to talk about saving jobs at the bargaining table. UE General President Bruce Klipple pledged continuing the national union's wholehearted support for our fight here in Erie. Eastern Region President Deb Gornall, who chaired the event, reported that other UE members and supporters were simultaneously delivering thousands of petitions at GE world headquarters in Fairfield, CT and at GE Transportation's office in Chicago. This news drew cheers at each rally. We also wanted to recognize and thank UE Local 506 members Terry Gigax and Lee Singleton who traveled to Connecticut and Bill Bane and Joe Bradney who attended the Chicago rally.

Wage Increase and Cost-of-Living Adjustment Due on June 24

On June 24, under the terms of the UE-GE National Agreement, all UE members in Erie will receive a 2.5% wage increase. In addition to the 2.5% wage increase, a 5 cent/per hour cost-of-living adjustment will also be provided, based upon increases in the Consumer Price Index as reported by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. All UE-GE members nationally will receive the same wage and cost-of-living increases.
