



CWA Local 1170 – First Frontier Bargaining Negotiations of 2011

Local 1170 members in Rochester, NY are on the frontlines as the first local in the nation to begin bargaining agreement talks with Frontier in 2011. President John Pusloskie is leading his local into what is sure to be a tough month of talks and negotiations. Pusloskie said the local has been presented with heavy demands from Frontier in regards to eliminating job security clauses, changes in contract work and demands for more scheduling flexibility among other issues. The talks have not yet reached the point of discussing economic demands, but Pusloskie expects Frontier to try and make shifts in health care costs to workers as Frontier has done in past bargaining agreements. Local 1170 has been through this before, with the assistance of the national CWA in 1996 they put together a year-long inside campaign which resulted in an agreement that kept their place as the strongest contract in the Frontier system.

This bargaining session will set the tone and be an indicator for other local bargaining sessions that will follow in 2011. It is vital that we show Frontier that we are strong and united as one union and show unyielding support for our brothers and sisters in Local 1170.

Day of Solidarity – January 27th

CWA is planning a national day of solidarity to show we are united with Local 1170 on Thursday, January 27th. We will ask all CWA members to wear signs of solidarity to demonstrate our strength and commitment to a united front. Look for more information on this upcoming event soon.

CWA Maintains Strong Presence at PSC Meetings

Telecommunications does not function in a vacuum; federal and state regulatory boards can have a giant effect on communication companies and the lives and livelihoods of CWA members with their decisions. The big communications companies employ large legal teams to deal with public service commissions, but CWA matches it with our own vigilance and dedicated attorneys.

Near the end of 2010, the West Virginia Public Service Commission opened an investigative review into the cutover process and future plans to improve retail service quality. The findings of the WVPSA could have a major impact on Frontier employees, both beneficial and detrimental. Therefore, CWA attorney Vincent Trivelli filed a motion to intervene in the investigative review.

CWA files motions to intervene in regulatory matters because it gives workers a voice in the process. Once CWA is granted status as an “interested party” in a matter before a regulatory body, it means the views and opinions of CWA members will be taken under consideration in all pending matters. This gives the workers an equal voice, alongside the corporations and industry representatives, in front of regulatory bodies.

This is not just about lawyers and legal motions. When CWA goes before regulatory bodies on behalf of workers, we want our members there. Seeing the people who work in the industry day in and day out at the regulatory meetings gives weight to our arguments and allows us to get vital input from our members.

So the next time CWA is representing workers at a regulatory meeting in your state, get out there and get involved – together we can make a big difference.

Do you have a story about how members at Frontier are working together to improve their pay and benefits, provide the best possible quality service, and secure the good jobs our communities need? Send stories and pictures to:

Laura Unger at lunger@cwa-union.org

or

Maria Armada at marmada@wvtpg.com

ULP Charges against Frontier Management

The Truth behind the “West Virginia Appreciation Awards”

CWA recently filed an “Unfair Labor Practice” charge against Frontier over their “West Virginia Appreciation Award” bonuses with legacy employees. We would never begrudge our members a wage increase and have no intention of requesting the bonuses be withdrawn; however, we want our members to understand why this was filed and why that bonus was unfair to workers in the long run.

When negotiating with Frontier before the sale with Verizon was finalized CWA fought hard to get Frontier employees pay equal to their Verizon/Spinco counterparts, or even just an increase in base salary. Frontier rejected both unequivocally. Shortly afterwards the “memorandum of understanding” (MOU) was signed with Frontier refusing to address the pay equity issue between legacy and Verizon/Spinco employees.

After the deal closed, without any notice to CWA bargaining representatives, and handed out “West Virginia Appreciation Award” bonuses to legacy employees. CWA believes if they really appreciated their West Virginia legacy employees, they would have given them pay equity or at least an annual base wage increase. A bonus is nice to receive, but CWA would like to see that applied to annual wages, not as a onetime band-aid to the pay equity issue.

The other major problem with the bonus was it demonstrated Frontier making decisions about your wages and working conditions without negotiating with the union, your legal bargaining agent. Not many

will complain when corporate change involves getting more money, but if that change involved decreasing wages or taking away a negotiated health care benefit, you bet workers would be justly indignant and demand remedy. CWA will never stand silent when an employer makes decisions about your wages and conditions without any input on behalf of the workers affected.

We filed the ULP because we felt Frontier’s decision represented a dangerous precedent in making decisions about your livelihood without your consultation. We also felt to deny any and all wage increases during negotiations and then to turn around and grant a onetime bonus gave the appearance of lacking good faith during bargaining.

CWA and Frontier reached a settlement on this issue that included Frontier’s agreement to not make any changes to your wages without negotiating with your legal bargaining representatives, to not rescind the bonuses and not interfere with your rights to union representation. This formal agreement will be posted at all affected locals and emailed to all affected bargaining unit employees.

We strongly believe that this “bonus” cannot be a substitute for negotiating real wage inequities. CWA is fully committed to fight for fair wages all workers deserve and we will continue to make this issue a priority until there is a fair and equitable solution, which begins with Frontier’s agreement to bargain in good faith with CWA.

Frontier Culture Integration Committee

Recently Frontier sent out a notice about the creation of “Culture Integration Committees” and asked both legacy and new Frontier employees to volunteer to be committee members. One of the stated goals of these committees is to “identify cultural gaps in the work environment and recommend strategies and tactics to accelerate the integration of The New Frontier.” While some of the stated goals of this committee are admirable, what is troubling is the fact that Frontier has not contacted or involved union representatives in this process. We find it worrying that Frontier expresses a desire to bring different people together and then turns around and neglects an important group that represents a broad spectrum of their employees’ interests, CWA.

Keeping open communication and transparency in processes such as these is paramount to their success and building trust among employees. Without transparency, and the involvement of all parties with a vested interest, the committees will fail in their stated mission and could instead be used as tools to suppress dissent or enforce conformity.

CWA will continue to monitor the progress of “Culture Change Committee” and welcome any member’s reports or experiences with Frontier’s implementation of these committees or their input.

CWA Local 3603 Contract Negotiations

CWA Local 3603 has begun bargaining with Frontier and proposals have been exchanged. Negotiations are currently in recess while Frontier reviews the proposals. We will keep you updated on the status of bargaining as events warrant.

Frontier Bargaining Calendar

January 2011–December 2011

Expiration Date	Local	Location	Origins
January 31, 2011	CWA Local 1170	Rochester, NY	Legacy
April 14, 2011	CWA Local 2276	Bluefield, WV	Legacy
April 23, 2011	CWA Local 3673	Whittier, NC	Spinco
May 15, 2011	CWA Local 7471	Columbus, NE	Legacy
June 30, 2011	CWA Local 1111	Elmira, NY	Legacy
June 30, 2011	CWA Local 1122	Buffalo, NY	Legacy
July 31, 2011	CWA Local 2001	Charleston, WV	Legacy
November 5, 2011	IBEW Local 723	Fort Wayne, IN	Spinco
November 14, 2011	CWA Local 7019	Phoenix, AZ	Legacy