

Guild Updates August 2008

Inside Circulation subcontracting: Guild wins medical benefits & bumping rights.

Guild objections to the handling of layoffs of eight inside circulation department employees has resulted in paid medical insurance and bumping rights for senior workers. The workers are slated to be laid off in September when their work is transferred to the Philippines.

Originally, the company offered to trade medical benefits for the Guild's recent arbitration win. In May, an arbitrator ordered the company to rollback a cut in pension benefits. Instead of horse trading away employee benefits, the Guild filed a grievance, which was resolved in the favor of workers slated for layoff.

Bargaining: T&G complains Guild stands in way of benefit cuts.

During a July 31 bargaining session, T&G negotiators complained that the Guild was preventing the company from cutting pension, medical and LTD benefits. The Company is seeking the unilateral right to modify these benefits without having to negotiate with the union. The Guild countered that if the company is seeking specific changes, it should propose them across the bargaining table, with the resulting agreement being locked in for the term of the contract. Company negotiators suggested that the Guild was also blocking potential benefit improvements, even though the company has only sought to cut benefits in the past four years.

Guild seeks arbitration on 2% "Me-Too" wage increase

During negotiations, the company informed the Guild that employees covered by the production department unions have received 2 percent wage increases. The Guild believes that triggers the "Me-Too" clause of our contract and requires the company to increase our wages by the same amount. The issue is headed to arbitration. (The company has not made any wage offers in negotiations, but is seeking to eliminate both the "me-too" and no-wage cut clauses.