



BELL BARGAINING REPORT #29

Bell Bargaining Caucus Recommends Acceptance

Thursday, May 8, 2008

To all Bell Locals

Sisters and Brothers,

On May 7, 2008, the Bell Bargaining Caucus met in Montreal to review Bell's contract offer presented on May 5, 2008.

Following a thorough review of the offer, the Bargaining Caucus voted that the offer should be presented to the membership for a vote, and that the Union should recommend to the membership that the offer be ratified.

This has been an incredibly difficult round of bargaining with Bell.

Since October, the bargaining committee has worked tirelessly to fend off Bell's concessions as much as possible, and to work for the improvements that are important to the membership. Twice we have rejected inferior offers from Bell.

On April 30, the bargaining committee and senior CEP officers, including CEP President Dave Coles, met to prepare a plan to make one last shot effort at negotiating a settlement with Bell before taking the ultimate decision of strike action.

From May 2 to May 5, the bargaining committee, which now included President Coles and the other senior CEP officers from Ontario and Quebec, worked diligently to reach a settlement. On May 5, Bell presented a significantly improved offer that addressed most of the areas that members had pointed out as being particularly unacceptable in the previous offers.

The bargaining caucus delegates then reviewed the offer and voted to recommend that members accept this offer, which, while not meeting all of our goals, provides continued job security and respectable wage increases for the next five years.

Solidarity Works!

Sean Howes, National Representative
Richard Chaumont, National Representative

Highlights of the Proposed Settlement

The following points represent the changes from Bell's April 1 offer.

1. Wage Increases: One of the unacceptable aspects of Bell's April 1 offer was an immediate pay cut of 22 cents per hour.

In Bell's new offer this has been addressed with wage increases in each of the five years of the agreement.

		Hourly	Annual Salary Class 1
On ratification	1.5 %	\$33.18	\$67,199.25
Dec. 7, 2008	2 %	\$33.85	\$70,391.22
Dec. 1, 2009	2 %	\$34.53	\$71,799.04
Dec. 1, 2010	2 %	\$35.22	\$73,235.02
Dec. 1, 2011	2 %	\$35.92	\$ 74,699.72

2. Lump Sum – the lump sum payment in lieu of retroactivity will be \$500 for RFT employees and \$400 for RPT employees.
3. Basic Hours of Work – the basic hours for full-time employees will become 40 hours per week effective December 7, 2008. In the meantime, employees will have the option of working 37.5 hours or 40 hours per week.
4. Reclassifications – The number of employees being reclassified has been increased from 329 to 353 (221 in Ontario, 132 in Quebec). 21 of these additional 24 reclassifications are from RPT to RFT.
5. Standby Program –The Company clarified that they anticipate that this will apply to approximately 20% of the bargaining unit. The “pools” of eligible employees created in these areas means that, in most cases, employees will be required to be on standby no more than four weeks per year.

It was agreed that, where possible, employees with 30 or more years service will not be required to participate in the standby program.

6. Article 24 – The 912 procedure will be replaced by a full job posting system. However, the new system will not be implemented until January 1, 2009, so as to allow a joint union-management transition committee to work out all of the details of the new system on a win-win basis.

7. Fluctuations in Work Volumes - The letter of agreement has been modified to ensure that the joint union-management committee has no mandate or authority to make or recommend changes to the collective agreement or to deal with issues that are more properly addressed through collective bargaining.
8. Weekend Scheduling -The letter of intent on weekend scheduling has been converted to a memorandum of agreement, and has included a new provision whereby, where possible, an employee with 30 years or more of service may not be scheduled on a weekend except by consent.
9. Minimum Employees on Vacation – Article 21.10 (b) is amended effective January 1, 2009 to allow for the minimum number of employees permitted on vacation to increase from 20% to 22% of the Tier D group.
10. Insourcing Activities - It was clarified that this memorandum deals exclusively with new work that would be brought into the bargaining unit as a result of contracts signed with customers. These employees would bring their own work into the unit and would be integrated into the bargaining unit no later than 24 months after the work is insourced. This will also repatriate the 112 technicians from Bell Connexium immediately into the bargaining unit along with their work.
11. Banked Time - Article 18.04 has been modified so that employees can bank half an hour of basic hours worked per day up to the full 100 hours per year rather than 80 hours per year.

Ratification Procedure

Ratification meetings will take place in locals from May 12 to May 28. The ballots will be counted and the results announced on Friday, May 30.