



LOCAL 506 SUPPLEMENT

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UE Local 506 Deeply Upset With GE's Bargaining Position

Throughout the last two weeks of decision bargaining on GE's work transfer notice, UE Local 506 has repeatedly attempted to get GE to lay its cards on the table. On repeated occasions, President Scott Duke and Business Agent Wayne Burnett told the company, "You (GE) announced the possible transfer of work to Fort Worth, we want you to tell us what it is you want in order to keep the jobs in Erie."

On each occasion when pressed, GE has told the 506 bargaining committee: "You have our proposal. Our proposal is to move the jobs to Texas and to subcontract the work. We're interested in hearing the Union's proposals."

"The Monster In the Room"

During our bargaining session held yesterday (May 9), GE representatives finally started to level with the UE bargaining committee and urged us to talk about "the monster in the room." According to GE, the "monster" is our UE wages. GE asked whether we were interested in wage concessions. Speaking on behalf of the UE committee, International Rep. Gene Elk told GE: "We have no interest in negotiating wage cuts, reductions, or freezes and will not propose any to you." However, the union did tell GE it would listen to any proposals or ideas that the company may have and once again, urged GE to make some concrete proposals.

The UE Local 506 bargaining committee reminded GE, that we had already worked with them on code consolidation, lean, and the 2011 contract. The company agreed that the new medical plan had saved the company about \$1,000 per year for each employee. We also reminded GE that it's Erie plant manager in his year-end 2011 statement said that the new contract had made the Erie plant "competitive." The company could not give us an answer on why it now claims that we are not "competitive."

Work Practices Also Discussed

In talks yesterday afternoon, Company representatives attempted to re-focus the bargaining session by raising issues pertaining to attendance before and after holidays, overall attendance policy, lunch breaks, work rules, and job posting. The discussion was particularly frustrating because the Company once again seemed unable or unwilling to provide the UE committee with specific proposals to address these so-called issues.

At the end of this unproductive day of bargaining, the Company although claiming that they had substantially reduced farmout, actually announced new farmouts to us, involving Building 18 pack and ship and Building 12 shaft line. On Building 18 Pack and Ship, management claimed that it didn't have enough people to pack the international orders. Scott Duke sharply questioned management and asked the Company to add a second shift to the area.

Negotiations are scheduled to continue today (Friday May 10) and next week on May 13, 14, and 15. We will continue to keep the membership informed about the bargaining.

GE MOVING WORK OUT OF ERIE NOW! UE FILES NLRB CHARGE

Today, UE filed an NLRB charge claiming that GE has illegally removed work from Erie without providing Local 506 with notice and bargaining, which is required by both Federal labor law and under the terms of the UE-GE National Agreement. The Union also charges that prior to building the Ft. Worth plant, GE misrepresented the Texas operation as an “overflow” facility and erroneously told us and the Erie community that there is “enough work for all.” According to the UE’s charge, GE actually began transferring work from to Ft. Worth when it discontinued most third-shift OHV operations early this year.

The Union is also claiming that GE illegally transferred production of locomotive platforms from Erie to Fort Worth. Prior to the transfer of that work earlier this year, all domestic locomotive platforms were built in Erie and none had been produced by GE elsewhere. Transfer of OHV and locomotive work has already resulted in temporary layoffs and significant reductions in overtime opportunities.

UE Local 506 President Scott Duke told GE during decision bargaining last week, that the Union is very angry that the Company is already moving work out of Erie. The Company did not offer a direct response. Duke said, “The Company in its April 9 work transfer notice promised not to shift work out of Erie until October 2013”. According to President Duke, “we have plenty of evidence that GE is steadily shifting work out of Erie now, even though it is claiming that it wants to bargain about the work transfer.”

UE ASKS FOR AN INJUNCTION TO STOP WORK TRANSFERS

In filings submitted to NLRB today, UE charged that OHV and locomotive work transfers occurred well before GE’s April 9 work transfer notice and its offer to bargain. By transferring the work before such bargaining, GE has acted in bad faith and the premature transfer has made it impossible for the Union to bargain in good faith with GE. Therefore, UE has asked NLRB to enjoin GE and stop it from moving work out of Erie while the Union and Company continue bargaining. According to UE International Rep. Gene Elk, the Company’s actions illegally put us in the position of trying to bargain on work transfers which have already occurred. “We are asking NLRB to take immediate action to stop work transfers so we can have fair bargaining,” Elk said.

We will continue to keep all UE Local 506 members updated these legal developments, as well as continuing discussions with the Company on work transfers.