

Pulp truth

Issue 27 • March 8, 2010



Please copy Pulp Truth front and back and distribute it during non-work time using your Communications and Action Teams, steward system or Rapid Response network. Be sure to leave copies in lunchrooms, break rooms, etc. We want to hear what's happening in your workplace. Send your news to lbaker@usw.org

Our Paper Program Got us through Tough Bargaining Year

While 2009 was the worst year economically since the Great Depression, we were still successful in maintaining the basic pattern in our paper bargaining: three-year contracts; yearly 2% wage increases; defined benefit pension multiplier increases if \$1 per month/per year of service; and, 80%-20% employer/employee premium contributions for quality healthcare.

In 2009, the first year wage increase for contracts averaged 1.7 percent nationally.

In the second year the wage increase averaged 1.9 percent nationally. Third year wage increases averaged just over 2 percent (2.1%) nationally.

We have had a lot of success maintaining a \$1 increase per month, per year of service for our defined benefit pension multiplier. However, some paper companies are trying to replace our defined benefit pen-

sions, which guarantee a certain amount of retirement income each month, with risky 401(k) programs that only pay off if our investments do well. We must reject retirement schemes that do not provide us with a substantial chance of a respectable retirement. There is no way that a company's 50-cent match on our five or six percent wage contribution toward a 401(k) will provide us a retirement income we can live on.

The Union Difference

The standard insurance plan in the paper industry has single/family deductibles ranging from \$400 to \$500 for single/\$800 to \$1,000 for family and 80% employer/20% employee co-pay on major medical.

Compare this to non-union facilities where the premium sharing is 65% employer/35% employee and deductibles are \$1,500 single/\$3,500 family.

News Briefs from around the Industry

Tentative Deal at Canadian Bargaining Table—Bob Matters, chair of the USW BC Wood Council, called a tentative deal with Canfor “unprecedented” in the history of collective bargaining in the British Columbia forest industry. For the first time wording has been included in the package on seniority protection, severance protection and employment security. Matters said the deal also offers the potential for significant pay increases down the road. He said a ratification vote will be held in a few weeks. If passed, the agreement would form a template for negotiations between the council and its other employers.

USW Wood Council locals, representing more than 11,000 workers, are in the process of bargaining contracts with employer associations in the northern and southern Interior, as well as with Canfor's northern operations and West Fraser Timber. All the contracts expired June 30, 2009.

It Pays to be Union—No matter where you live, being in a union on average means you will be paid more and be more likely to have employer-provided health care and an employer-sponsored retirement plan. The Center for Economic and Policy Research's study, “The Unions Of The States” finds the typical union member earns 15% more money, is 19% more likely to have employer-provided health care, and is 24% more likely to have a retirement plan from an employer.

Lifeline for Mills—Canopy, an environmental non-profit organization that works to improve the environmental performance of paper and wood companies, reports that the number of leading environmental printing and writing grade papers produced in North America has more than doubled from 97 to 228 in the past 18 months. Large paper buyers are demanding more papers with ecological attributes. “We're witness-

ing a phenomenal shift in the paper industry where sustained and growing green demand is steering paper production towards eco-friendly options, giving a lifeline to mills and a future for our endangered forests and species,” said Nicole Rycroft, Canopy executive director.

PCA Mill Goes Green—The Packaging Corporation of America (PCA) mill in Valdosta, Ga., is undergoing a major expansion. A new recovery boiler that will run on renewable energy is replacing three boilers that ran on fossil fuel. The project also includes a turbine generator and paper machine drying efficiency improvements. The new equipment is reportedly pollution-controlled, and a large percentage of it produces self-sustained, green energy. “The result is that this will be the greenest mill in the U.S. and possibly the least costly to operate,” said PCA Chairman and CEO Paul Stecko. to The Valdosta Daily Times. “This mill will become the mill of the future instead of the mill from the past.” The investment ensures a future for the mill and protects the jobs there.

AbitibiBowater Plans to Renegotiate Labor Agreements—AbitibiBowater says it expects to emerge from Ch. 11 bankruptcy by mid-summer and file its restructuring plan by the end of March. Prior to the end of June, the company will seek approval from its creditors and the courts to emerge out of bankruptcy. The company says it has to finalize “several critical tasks” including renegotiating labor agreements with unions in Canada and the U.S. to address cost reductions and pension issues; completing a creditor claims process; selling a number of closed pulp and paper mills to reduce carrying costs; and negotiating and securing exit financing.

Contracts that Reopen in March

If the re-opener date for your local contract is not listed here, please contact Pulp Truth editor Lynne Baker at lbaker@usw.org to have your contract listed. (The re-opener date is not the expiration date.) Madison Paper Co., Madison, ME, 3-1-10; Lincoln Paper & Tissue, Lincoln, ME, 3-1-10; Bancroft Bag, Inc., West Monroe, LA, 3-1-10; Pratt Industries, Grand Rapids, MI, 3-1-10; Ivex Corporation, Joliet, IL, 3-1-

10; Procter & Gamble, Green Bay, WI, 3-1-10; Kimberly-Clark Corp., Marinette, WI, 3-1-10; Katahdin Paper, E. Millinocket, ME, 3-1-10; Rayonier Inc., Fernandina Beach, FL, 3-1-10; Miami Valley Paper, Franklin, OH, 3-2-10; Rock-Tenn, St. Paul, MN, 3-2-10; Menasha Corp., Coloma, MI, 3-15-10; Greif Brothers, Van Wert, OH, 3-20-10; Rock-Tenn, Aurora, IL, 3-29-10.



HAZARD ALERT

Fatal Accidents - Mobile Equipment and Foot Traffic

In 2009 there were six fatalities involving mobile equipment and foot traffic at USW represented worksites. There were two fatalities in 2008 and seven in 2007. Here is one example:

In 2009 a mechanic was fatally injured when he was struck-by a CAT 950H front-end loader. The CAT operator thought he heard someone calling for him while he was driving forward; he then proceeded to drive in reverse to the area where the call may have come from. During this time the mechanic entered the work area, but was not seen by the CAT operator due to the inherent blind spots of the equipment and physical obstructions in the area. Neither employee was trained on the equipment's blind spots and there was no written procedure as to how foot traffic should make contact with the operator.



Recommendations to Prevent Recurrence:

- Apply the Hierarchy of Controls to eliminate/separate mobile equipment from foot traffic. For example: use a different type of truck or conveyors where possible, barrier guards/knock-down markers/designated (painted) walkways with gates, eliminate blind spots, widen passageways, limit material storage height and install proper signage "No Foot Traffic."
- Identify unavoidable blind spots and their distances to assist in designating the right equipment for the task - see NIOSH Highway Work Zone Safety Publication.
- Install and maintain safety devices: backup cameras/sensors/mirrors & alarms that can be heard above ambient noise, install lighting/traffic mirrors, motion activated lights/gates, position co-workers to act as spotters, use/maintain radios and more.
- Ensure that operators, other employees and contractors are adequately trained and evaluated on the specific equipment and operations used at the workplace, including a distance rule and approach procedures to mobile equipment. (The USW provides a wide range of health and safety training including mobile equipment).
- Wear work zone safety clothing that meets ANSI A107

***NOTE:** The workplace above did not have a joint labor/management health, safety & environment committee, instead the employer implemented a behavior based safety program. This is one deadly reason why the USW is opposed to blame-the-worker safety programs.*



5 Gateway Center
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
safety@usw.org
412.562.2581

The information provided in this alert is based on preliminary data only and does not represent final determinations pertaining to the nature of the incident or conclusions regarding the cause of this event.