

COMPANY WANTS TO ELIMINATE FULL TIME UNION POSITIONS AT KITIMAT WORKS

At a Union/Company Labour Relations meeting on Thursday February 5th, 2009, the Company informed the Union on how they propose to cut costs at Kitimat/Kemano Works. Originally the meeting was scheduled for the Company to respond to the Union ideas or recommendations put out on January 23rd/09 (these were the 5 recommendations on the last bulletin put out on the same day).

The Company chose to respond to our Unions recommendations by putting out their goals on how they planned to save money on manpower. As usually the company wants the impact to hit the hourly paid the hardest and at the same time created jobs for a number of staff people on the Modernization Project Team to spearhead this cost cutting project. The problem with this is that Modernization Project Team is not part of the plant forces. It begs the question “Why is the Company creating new staff positions for people outside plant forces?” especially when the work they are doing will result in a reduction of hourly positions in the plant.

You want to hear one better in light of the way the company is handling this cost cutting regime. The Union had a report from our members that this week the Company had four staff members, I repeat four staff members, wandering around Lines 7&8 just checking to see if everyone was wearing their seat belt. It reminds me of an old joke:

Q: How many people (staff) does it take to change a light bulb?

A: One to hold the light bulb and three to turn the ladder.

The reality is that this is not funny because we all know the Company wastes money every day of the year and this is where they should be cutting costs first rather than shying away from filling openings and providing the badly needed manpower required to run the plant properly. The most important Union recommendations pertained to replacing open positions and returning all temporary staff back to the bargaining unit. Temporary staff was not mentioned in the Company’s Power Point Presentation but when questioned they said they were looking at it.

The Company’s response was to say they wanted to, quote “Significantly reduce hours worked to produce metal – 250,000 hours” in 2009. What this boils down to is that the Company doesn’t want to replace any of the jobs which are vacant in the plant and probably quite a few that become vacant in the future. This can only result in expecting the same work being done by less people and by the way, the Company wants to get rid of the overtime on top of that. The best way to explain the Company’s direction is to share with the membership part of the actual Power Point Presentation:

As you can see the Company is looking at a lot of cost reductions plant wide. In the areas where it mentions "Restructuring Plan" the Company is obligated under 26-LU-5 to sit down and discuss the situation with a Union Officer and some Crew Reps. prior to implementation. This will be followed up by the Union to insure our input or in other words keeping the Company honest and making them justify any change.

The bottom line is the union believes that most of the change proposed by the Company is neither justified or makes sense based on current low manpower situation.

Your Union Executive will be meeting on Monday, February 9/09 to review all the information and develop a strategy to address what we believe to be an unreasonable approach to the situation.

"Fighting Back Makes A Difference" and this is one of those situations where it applies when the integrity of our Union Local 2301 is being attacked.

The Union Executive will keep the membership up-to-date as new information becomes available.

RESPONSE TO COMPANY SPOT NEWS (FEBRUARY 6/09)

The Company's Spot News as usual lacks detail to the point of just falling short of lying. As you can see the Union has shared with you part of the actual Company presentation and what the results of their initiatives would produce. Notice the terminology the Company uses in their news release (i.e. initiatives, respecting the CLA, Laws & Legislation, HSE a priority, communicating with the Union, etc.). It sounds a lot like their CI (continuous improvement) or Kaisan tactics doesn't it. It doesn't matter whether the price of Aluminum is \$3200 MT or \$1300 MT the Company is always trying to cut costs and find ways to drive their policies down our member's throat. On top of that it's a well-known fact that all these big corporations use low market conditions and the fears that come along with that situation as a catalyst to reduce costs. Once the market comes back the companies are in a position to make even more profit. It's about the ongoing "Profit Race", not about the workers that actually use their sweat, time and energy producing the product.

Everyone knows how the company has been operating the last several years and for management talk about a mode of co-operation with Union and sharing information is really hard to believe.

In the "Company Spot News" they said, "the Union informed us they would not meet to discuss the Company's agenda". That statement is very deceiving. What the Union told the Company was that we were not going to form a task force or committee to deal in over all plant direction as it did not meet the Company's obligation under 26-LU-5. In 26-LU-5 the Company is obligated to notify the Union on every change or restructuring and insure crew input from every area.

Remember the Water Crisis where the Union formed a committee to deal with the situation and signed the Protocol Agreement. The Company ran around telling everyone that it was tough times but the Union and the Company had formed a committee to work through all the problems. The bottom line is they never worked with the Union and used this to push their own agenda. They didn't even follow the Protocol Agreement. We had to take them to arbitration just to get the 8 apprenticeships, which were agreed on by the parties. In fact they never did restart all Lines 1&2 when the water and market conditions came back. On top of that, what about the CLA extension to give the Company a window of labour peace to build the Modernization Project? Where the hell is the Modernization Project now.

Based on the Company's track record, there is absolutely no reason for our membership to trust that management is acting in their best interests.

Don't worry; the Union will be discussing every restructuring in every area based on the rights we have negotiated in the CLA (26-LU-5).

This will guarantee Union/Crew input in every area of the plant instead just feeding into the Company's agenda of discussing over all plant initiatives or direction.

Quite honestly, the Company's initiatives are ridiculous and impossible to achieve without either putting undue hardship on our membership and impacting their Health, Safety and well being.

It is the Unions job to protect the members and to keep the Company honest and that's exactly what we are going to do. Our motivation is not profits but rather ensuring the safety of our Union Brothers/Sisters and protecting the integrity of our bargaining unit CAW Local 2301.