

CWA @Cingular

CWA's online update for Cingular customer service, sales and network employees

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Bargaining countdown...is there time to complete this contract?

An interview with Cingular bargaining committee member Ed Mooney, EVP of CWA Local 13000...

Q: Ed, which Cingular employees are in your local?

Ed: Our local represents about 200 Cingular employees in Eastern and Central Pennsylvania who just recently organized into CWA. They work out of the Cingular Corporate Center at Warner Road, in King of Prussia, the Regional Network Operations Center in Trooper, PA, and the retail stores and network cell sites throughout the area. Our local represents all job titles under this "orange" contract.

Q: Your group has just organized into the union - what were the major issues in the organizing campaign?

Ed: Just like you would expect, most of their issues are the same as the Cingular employees already covered by the contract: Job security issues due to the acquisition of AT&T Wireless are number one, then salary increases and commission increases to make up for our declining income levels, tech safety and training, etc.

Q: You said job security in the merger consolidation is number one; how is that issue going in the bargaining?

Ed: In my opinion, not good. We have made a very simple and clear proposal to the company - no Cingular employee should lose his or her job because of the acquisition. That's the kind of commitment Cingular execs made during the acquisition process when they were seeking our support, and that's the kind of commitment we want in this contract. We have made very reasonable proposals to put that into effect.

Q: How has management responded?

Ed: Again, not well. We have had discussions at the bargaining table and there have been discussions with management involving CWA'ers from the other Cingular Contracts - it's a national issue and we all want the same thing. But so far we haven't seen a response from management that could lead to a settlement. This is the make-it or break-it issue. And time is running out - we only have a few days before the expiration date.

Q: You say this is the make-it or break-it issue?

Ed: Definitely. What good is it to bargain salary increases, commissions, better training, etc., if the Cingular employees are not around to benefit from it? There will be lots of Cingular jobs lost if we don't get this resolved in a way that protects the employees covered by this contract. We're not going to sign something that let's our members get wiped out.

Q: How are the other issues being resolved – are you making progress?

Ed: To be honest, the committee feels like the company response has been way too slow, way too cautious. We think they should have resolved a lot more of the issues by now. The pressure is building on us and on the mobilizers to start planning other job actions and work actions in case this isn't settled this week.

Q: What do you think is going to happen?

Ed: We can't say at this point. The company's response seems to have picked up in the last 24 hours. We're starting to get more responses to our proposals. But we can't tell - time is running out. Do we have time to finish this before the deadline? Will the management team make agreements on our big issues like job security and pay? We don't know. All we can do is keep bargaining and ask our members to mobilize for all possibilities. The mobilization is the key to this. Whether we are able make an agreement this week, or whether it turns more confrontational, either way our workplace mobilization will be the key.

MOBILIZE!
WEAR BLACK
ON THURSDAY