

## Idearc Bargaining Reaches Settlement Amid Layoffs

On October 3rd, CWA District 2 announced a tentative settlement with Idearc Media for a new three-year agreement.

Negotiating a new agreement in these difficult economic times is challenging to say the least. Negotiating with a company in the midst of bankruptcy proceedings simply makes the task that much more difficult.

Notwithstanding those complications, we were able to reach a tentative agreement without resorting to the more drastic measures of working without a contract or calling for a strike. Of course, the new agreement still must be ratified by the members to take effect. Contract ratification is in progress.

While we had some small increases in the cost to employees for medical and dental benefits, we were able to hold the line to one increase for the life of the agreement. There will also be added surcharges for Emergency Room care that doesn't result in an admission, and a new spousal surcharge. There are changes in the pension plan for employees with less than five years NCS as of January 1, 2010.

On the other hand, we did achieve wage increases for all non-sales employees ranging from 6.12% to 9.27% through the life of the contract. Effective January 1, 2010 the Performance Bonus, paid to support titled employees, will be increased from an additional \$50.00 in the lowest category to an additional \$300.00 in the highest category.

For Sales employees, the New Business Sales Performance Bonus Trial will continue for 2010, Pay Period 1 through Pay Period 26. The Business Tools and Resources Letter Agreement was modified to reflect the current treatment for reimbursement of business expenses such as wireless telecommunications services up to \$100.00 per month and the cost of one standard handset or PDA. The Auto Allowance Plans are identified in this letter and remain the same as today. Parking Fees and Tolls are identified as reimbursable expenses in this letter for the first time. We also achieved greater protections for Outside Media Consultants who wish to telecommute.

We kept the Tuition Assistance Plan with certain modifications and a cap on the reimbursement amount of \$8000 per year.

Recognizing that our strength at the bargaining table comes from our numbers, we have now consolidated the four current collective bargaining agreements (Chantilly, Greenbelt, Chesapeake and Richmond) into one collective bargaining agreement with an expiration date of October 13, 2012.

Is this new agreement everything we would have liked? The answer is, No, it never is. Were we able to reach a fair settlement when bargaining with a bankrupt company? My opinion is, yes we were. Of course, the final say will come from our Idearc members who must vote to ratify it! Stay tuned.

## GIVING SINGLE PAYER A SECOND LOOK

Representative Anthony D. Weiner  
(re-printed from the Sept. 7, 2009 Huffington Post)

During the eleven town hall meetings I've held around my district, I've had some direct experience with the anxiety this debate has produced. Much of the fear comes from two groups: those who have Medicare and don't want it changed and those who have never had a government-run reimbursement system like Medicare and are worried about the impact it will have on their quality of care.

In both cases, a calm, reasoned and vigorous defense of the American single-payer plan is just what the doctor ordered. The truth is that the United States already uses single-payer systems to cover over 47% of all medical bills through Medicare, Medicaid, the Veterans Administration, the Department of Defense and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Understanding that these single-payer health programs already are a major part of our overall health care system should help us visualize what an actual public plan would look like. These institutions also provide health care to millions of satisfied customers in every community who would heartily agree that the government can build and run programs that work quite well.

If Medicare has been such a success, why not extend it? Why not have single-payer plans for 55 year olds? Why not have one for young citizens?

Under a single-payer system Americans would still go to the same doctor and the same neighborhood hospital. They would be able to delete the 1-800 number of their insurance company and doctors would have to get rid of all those file cabinets full of paperwork while their assistants who spend time fighting with insurance companies would actually be able to speak to patients. Everyone would adjust, I'm sure.

The real reason we haven't seen the country embrace the obvious and simpler idea is that it boils down to pure beltway politics. We've been reluctant to tackle the real inefficiency in the current system, namely, the very presence of the private insurance companies. Too many in Washington would rather stay friends with the insurance and drug companies when real reform probably can't be achieved in a way that makes these powerful institutions happy.

That's not to say we should vilify the industry. When they pocket up to 30% in profits and overhead (compared to 4% for Medicare) or when their executives take multi-million dollar salaries, insurance companies are doing what their shareholders want them to do.

The same is true for Big Pharmaceutical. If large box and chain stores can pool its customers to be able to offer the \$4 prescriptions, why shouldn't the federal government drive the same hard bargain on behalf of the tax payers so they too get the best prices under Medicare? I pose this exact question at every town hall meeting I attend and if my colleagues and the President did the same, they would mix good policy with good politics. Instead, we have watched a puzzling dance as policymakers have effectively limited the savings we would find in the enormous drug expenditures that are a fixture in our current system. Is it any wonder citizens are confused?

I have no delusions about the muscle needed to overcome resistance from the insurance and pharmaceutical industries. But I believe that for every American we may lose to a slash-and-burn TV ad funded by these businesses, we will gain five among those who are looking for a clear rationale for what we are trying to accomplish and an example for what it may look like.

Anthony D. Weiner is a Democrat representing New York's 9th Congressional District.

**EDITORS NOTE:** CWA has neither endorsed nor opposed the single-payer option for Healthcare Reform. CWA adopted minimum reform standards to include: Cover Everyone, Control Costs, Share Responsibility, Improve Quality. (See the [May 2009 2108News](#))

# Verizon Nixes "Loaned Tech" Agreement

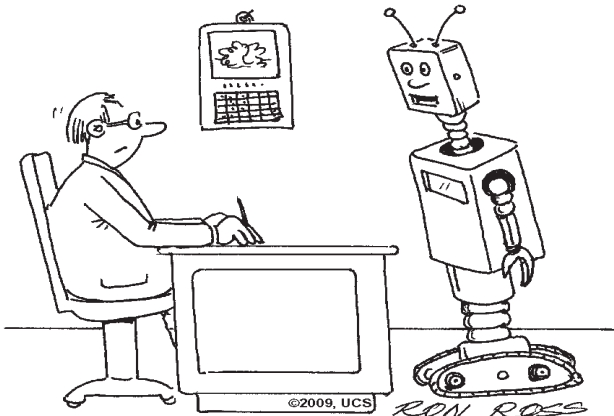
In March of 2009 CWA District 2 agreed to a loan of 100 technicians from other Vz areas (CWA & IBEW) to work in the Stephenson and Childs organizations for up to one year. The loaned technicians performed FiOS work in Montgomery County, MD and Norfolk, Richmond, and Northern VA. The company's need for the technicians was not long term and not intended to be constant for the entire year. In fact, not long after those technicians arrived in Maryland, they were all sent to Virginia to work.

In exchange for our agreement on the loans, Verizon withdrew an Article 35 in Virginia and further did not process any other Article 35's in MJ Johnston's organization for the duration of the agreement. This agreement provided job security for all members with the NCS after 8-03-03 in MJ's organization in the core contract. Either party retained the right to cancel the agreement with 30 days notice. The agreement was in effect whether the company had technicians on loan or not.

Well, the axe has fallen. Verizon notified CWA District 2 they are cancelling the agreement. This removes the added protection that was in place for any not covered under the current Job Security Letter.

Does this mean layoffs are imminent? Not necessarily. We know the FiOS work has slowed considerably in the past month or so. We also know the majority of our members still have the Job Security protection either by virtue of their NCS date or the language in the Scope Agreement. Verizon has not had techs loaned in from outside our bargaining unit for quite a while so there really wasn't any incentive for them to continue the agreement.

Whether a layoff announcement will follow at the end of the thirty days remains to be seen.



"I've been programmed to tell you that your services are no longer needed."

## FROM THE PRESIDENTS DESK

*If hard work were such a wonderful thing, surely the rich would have kept it all to themselves.*

Lane Kirkland



I can't tell you how often someone will call me and ask the one question you should never ask a Union Representative, "Can they do that?" They usually ask that after management has done something to them. "Can they do that?" is the wrong question at that point because as a point of fact they have already done it. The correct question to ask is "Can they get away with it?"

Without a Union, the final answer to that question would be yes. With a Union, we can challenge what management has done and at times, get it overturned.

Local 2108 represents four different employers today, Verizon, VCSI, Avaya and Idearc.

Two investment firms bought Avaya a couple of years ago and we are down to somewhere around twenty members in Local 2108. They have scaled down and contracted out so much work that there are fewer than 2,000 left in that bargaining unit.

Another employer, Idearc, is in Chapter 11 bankruptcy and pretty much ignoring the contract we have in place. We are fighting them tooth and nail.

Then we have VCSI and Verizon. I lump those two together because for the most part, they are the same. Many of the decisions made by upper management make very little sense. They implement a dress code policy and spend more time and energy focusing on how people are dressed than how best to serve our customers. They are downsizing, either through layoffs or by terminating people for the tiniest of infractions.

Sometimes we can modify the way they do things, other times not. Some things they have the right to do, whether we like it or not. Other things we can challenge if they persist in doing them over our objections. The dress code is a good example of the latter. We told them we thought it was a bad idea. They insisted on moving forward anyway and now the case is scheduled for arbitration in November.

Recently, Local officers from across Maryland and DC met with management over some of the issues causing discipline for our members. While we have the individual cases in the grievance process, we met with management to talk about the process they are using leading up to our members being disciplined.

Among other topics, the discussions included Skycreek. As a result, management committed to training every technician responsible for using the Skycreek customer contact system. Skycreek is a tool management has chosen to use for contacting customers. We don't have to agree with it or like it. What we can and are doing is challenge the way they are disciplining our members for their Skycreek results. When management had these training sessions with our members, they trotted out the line they are most fond of using, "The Union agrees with this". That's their favorite cover. Don't you believe it. We neither agree nor disagree with the process known as Skycreek. What we don't agree with is management disciplining our members based on their Skycreek results.

That was the topic of our discussions. It wasn't ours to give this flawed system our approval. Quite frankly, they don't need our approval. They've already proven that by implementing the thing. What we hoped to get through to them is that before they make the decision to discipline someone, they do the fair and complete investigation they are obligated to do.

So the next time someone tells you the Union has approved some ridiculous thing management has decided to do, don't believe it. Our only interest, our only job, our only goal is to make sure you are treated fairly and with dignity and respect.

*Les*

Communications Workers of America Local 2108

### 2108News

Published Monthly  
Printing done in-house

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- Avaya ..... (301) 595-1834
- Idearc ..... (301) 595-3072

## Retirees Corner

Calvin Foster, President RMC 2108

I hope that every one had a nice summer. While we did not have a meeting in August, the Health Care Reform debate continued.

We will hear much more about this issue during the coming year until a bill is passed or defeated in Congress. There are many and varied viewpoints about all parts of this bill, and you should read as many as possible to stay truly well informed.

The Senate and House need to hear what you think. The big issue is the so-called "Public Option," with many Senators and Representatives at odds as to how to handle it, or even if it should be included in the final package. Here are some places to find information:

[www.WhiteHouse.gov/realitycheck](http://www.WhiteHouse.gov/realitycheck)  
[www.senate.gov/senators](http://www.senate.gov/senators)  
[www.house.gov/Representatives](http://www.house.gov/Representatives)

More information will be available as we move through the Fall meetings.



## Welcome to 2108

### New Members

#### Mike Carter

Joseph Hall  
Aung Win  
Justin Dowtin  
Hubert Brown  
Terrell Harrison  
Walter Gorham  
Maurice Debrah  
Edgar Morales  
Christopher Duncan

### Transferred Members

#### Micki Wade

Donna Dillman-Butler  
Ronald Finney  
Marsha Boykin  
Mark McDonough  
Denise Chandler  
Heather Frye  
Karen Poulton

Carla Queen  
Angell Stargell  
Amanda Brooks  
JoRae Armstrong  
Eva Bailey  
Linda Biddy  
Pamela J. Boulter  
Theresa Day  
Jennifer Eichner  
John Fenton, Jr.  
Angelet Gowen  
Karen Holland  
Jeanette Howell  
Monyette Johnson  
Sharon Kochol  
James Leakan  
Melissa Lester  
Joyce Morton  
Shannon O'Connor  
Kimberly Pettersen  
Richard Rector  
Sandra Richard  
Betsy Shepet  
Howard Simon  
Lynn Smith-Kirkley  
Sandra Snyder  
Amy Turner  
Kimberly Montgomery

Laraine Haughton  
Mitzi Turner  
Charles Leath  
Tracy Williams  
Cecilia Denver

#### Cleo Young

Shawana Fludd

#### Latasha Carpenter

Theresa Hunter

#### Johnny Brown

Anthony Anderson  
Chester Bennett  
Robert Bohmer  
Matthew Crome  
Brian Harkness  
Mitchell Hoskin  
Yavicreci Hunter  
Richard Mumma  
Adam Fernandez

## Personals

### We wish to extend sincere sympathy to the family and friends of:

**Robert Lee Glotfelty**, father of **Mark Glotfelty** who died on August 9, 2009

**Ruth Evans**, grandmother of **Sylvester Gaines** who died on August 13, 2009

**Mary Grace Balster**, mother of retired member **Bill Balster** and mother-in-law of retired member **Barbara Eden-Balster** who died on April 7, 2009.

**Richard Gilliam**, father of retiree **Carolyn Tomlinson** and father-in-law of retiree **Jim Tomlinson** who died on August 23, 2009.

**Dianne Joice Johnston**, sister of **Cheryl Piquette** who died on September 6, 2009.

**Allen Blackwell**, father of **Tonia Thomas** who died on September 9, 2009.

**Dave Hammonds**, a retired member who died on September 14, 2009.

**Mildred Eden**, mother of **Judith Eden** and retired member **Barbara Eden-Balster** who died on September 17, 2009.

**Eddie B. Ingram**, father of **Sandra Ingram** who died on September 16, 2009.

### Congratulations to:

**Cyndi and Brad Krolczyk** on the birth of their son, **Brandon Christopher Thomas Krolczyk** on July 6, 2009.

**Georgette Hoyah** on the birth of her daughter, **Grace** on August 31, 2009.

**Tambra Ellis and Orlando Douglas** on the birth of their son, **Christen DeSean-Corez Douglas** on September 24, 2009.

## Workers Helping Workers You Make a Difference



That's what the Community Services Agency of the Washington Metro Council AFL-CIO is all about. Reaching out to local working families in need. Workers helping workers in their own communities.

To contribute through the United Way:  
**Use designation number 8253**

Your donation will:

- Help laid-off or striking workers and families in financial crisis buy groceries, avoid utility cutoffs, evictions and other emergencies.
  - Provide holiday baskets of food, clothes and gifts to families that would otherwise go without.
  - Educate youth about careers with good wages and benefits, and help adults needing job training.
- And so much more!

To find out more - [www.dclabor.org](http://www.dclabor.org) • 202.974-8220 • Email: [kmckirch@dclabor.org](mailto:kmckirch@dclabor.org)



## Verizon to Offer Flu Shots at no Charge to Employees

Because of the positive response to last year's Flu Shot Initiative, Verizon has decided to continue it this year. The vendor, Passport Health, will provide flu shots to employees and will be at the following work location.

**13100 Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD**  
**10/21 12:00pm – 4:00pm**  
**10/29 9:00am - 1:00pm**



Passport Health nurses will be on site to administer the flu shots. Flu shots will be free of charge for all Verizon employees. In addition, the employee must sign an "Influenza Immunization Consent" form in order to receive the flu shot.

Those wishing to get a flu shot must do so on their own time (e.g., during breaks, lunchtime, if it coincides with the hours Passport Health is available).

## Open Enrollment Season

It's the time of year for Open Enrollment in our respective union negotiated benefit plans.

We encourage all of our members to watch for the Open Enrollment materials from your respective employer. This is a good opportunity to review what you have, make sure all of your information is up-to-date and make any corrections or changes necessary.

## Local 2108 Union Calendar

### October 2009

- 2-5** CWA Occupational Safety and Health Conference  
San Diego, CA
- 7** Chief Stewards Meeting - 9:00am  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 14** Retired Members Chapter Meeting 11:00am  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 14** General Membership Meeting 6:00pm  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 29-31** Md State & DC AFL-CIO Biennial Convention  
Pikesville, MD
- 31** Halloween



### November 2009

- 1** Daylight Savings Time Ends
- 3** Election Day
- 4** Chief Stewards Meeting - *Cancelled*
- 11** Veterans Day  
Local Office Closed
- 11** Retired Members Chapter Meeting - *Cancelled*
- 11** General Membership Meeting - *Cancelled*
- 11-14** Chief Stewards Conference  
Ocean City, MD
- 26-27** Thanksgiving Holiday  
Local Office Closed



**SAVE THE DATES: December 4th: --- Local 2108 Holiday Gala December 12th: -- Local 2108 Breakfast w/Santa**

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COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA  
 LOCAL 2108  
 10782 Rhode Island Avenue  
 Beltsville, MD 20705-2513  
 ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED  
 ISSN: 0162-248X