

## Selling Land Lines

**Friday May 12, 2006**

Thank you for calling CWA Local 1400. It is Friday, May the 12th.

My name is Barbara Erickson. Having read the various news reports of Verizon's intent to sell off the Upper States' land lines, I asked and received the okay from our President, Cheryl Ahern, to share my thoughts with you via this tape. Although I presently am the office secretary here at the Local, I have worked for the Telephone Company for 26 years as a service rep (AT&T, New England Telephone, NYNEX); I was the second President of this Local. My track record supports my qualifications.

Those of you 'long in the tooth,' as they say, might remember the Quality of Worklife Committees set up by the Company and the Union. The goal was to improve the relationship between the two, and in doing so, improve working conditions at each location. I remember. We spent weeks researching picnic tables: the cost, type of wood, color, where we would put them, etc. Had the money approved, bought the tables, and no one could use them because we had forced overtime during lunches.

Needless to say, when I heard about the creation of the NEAT committees, I was a bit skeptical. Both the Company and the Union say they want to work together to make Verizon bigger, better, stronger. Really? Then this is where you put your money where your mouth is. The sale of landlines won't just affect our Members on the front line. Every single management employee will be affected as well. The Company repeatedly asks the Union for its' help in allowing this, or trying that, or compromising on this issue, or trialing that issue. And now, the Union needs your help.

The vehicle is already in place: The NEAT committees. I can hear the voices of management now: oh, we can't get involved and speak out against the Corporation. Really? Do you honestly believe a smaller Company, successful as the new 'owner,' will be able to maintain the standard of pay, bonuses and benefits you're accustomed to now? I'm not sure what the job market will be like if such a sale goes through, but even in the Northern tier there are fast food establishments. And to those well-dressed, dapper management folk: there are always openings in Wal-Mart selling men's' underwear.

And you people in Massachusetts think it won't affect YOU? Who are you kidding? There is strength in numbers, if you haven't heard. You think the pressure to perform and produce is overwhelming NOW? If a buyer is found for

the Northern tier, what makes you think YOU won't be next up on the auction block?

CWA, along with IBEW, along with the State AFL-CIO's, are coordinating an all-out effort to bury and defeat the sale of the Upper States' landlines. We will be contacting politicians, PUC's, the media, to name a few.

And now the challenge:

To the NEAT Committee: use your contacts, your resources, and coordinate a similar campaign. If your words are true, to work together to better this Company for everyone, here is your opportunity to prove it. This is not a picnic table; it's the future.

To management: use the same strongarm tactics we are accustomed to seeing you use on our Members on your friends, your Social and community organizations, your fellow managers.

To our Members: do not call the Local and ask us what WE are doing unless you are prepared to answer the same question. You talk to customers every day, as well as each other. Take the energy and time you spend whining and complaining and direct this toward the effort to Save Your Future.

**Together, we cannot be defeated. I repeat: together, we cannot be defeated. Thank you for calling.**