

Opening Statement – Verizon Connected Solutions Bargaining

Over the next several days the CWA and IBEW will make many proposals which we have developed after consulting with our members about their concerns and their experience working for this Company.

We will make a proposal to fold the remaining technicians employed by Verizon Connected Solutions into the Verizon core agreement. The creation of the VCS subsidiary at the time of inception, made sense in the fact additional work would be marketed for the bargaining unit. No longer does that appear to be VCS' objective. For over 15 years this subsidiary has simply been the contractor of choice for the core bargaining unit's telephony work. Now is the time to bring all of these workers into the core bargaining unit.

In the area of benefits, we have major concerns maintaining the security of our pensions and health care.

The pension funds suffered significant losses during the recession. Nonetheless, we expect a company with profits sufficient to pay its executives millions every year, including post retirement benefits as lavish as their annual compensation, has the wherewithal to make up for those losses and return the pension funds to full funding and insure the retirement security upon which our members depend.

Similarly, we recognize that the costs of health coverage continue to increase at a rate well in excess of inflation. This is not a justification for shifting costs to our members and reducing the share of future costs for the corporation. This will not change the trend. It will just assure that everyone will pay more, and get poorer quality as a result.

Finally, Verizon is a Company that can well afford to share its vast wealth, to meet all the demands we make and to include substantial wage increases as well.

Our members are the professionals that make Verizon a success in the competitive marketplace. Our knowledge, skills and experience make Verizon the company of choice for quality service.

We expect disagreements at this table but when all is said and done we plan on reaching a fair and equitable settlement. One where the Company remains profitable and also one where our members share in the profits so we can all move forward together. We demand a fair share of the proceeds for our labor and we will do what is necessary to win a good contract that meets our member's needs.