Message to Oberg Employees

I appreciate the fact that Dave Bonvenuto advertised our November 18th meeting in his recent memo, but want to comment on some of his assertions and mischaracterizations.

As we’ve discussed, this campaign is about Oberg employees making a choice between bargaining collectively with management for a written contract, or retaining the current “at-will employee” relationship where Oberg management calls all the shots unilaterally. It’s easy to see why Oberg management prefers the “at-will” relationship. Workers who take advantage of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) and form a union, gain the right to bargain collectively with their employer for a written contract that spells out the terms and conditions of their employment. Such contracts can only be changed by mutual consent from both parties, the workers and management.

Another item I’d like to discuss is management’s portrayal of unions as outsiders, or a third party. They’re suggesting that you’ll be choosing between the company and the union. It’s a common tactic and an effective one, which is why employers use it. The truth is, this is a choice between you continuing to be “at-will” employees, or becoming employees who work under the terms and conditions of a written contract. Our bargaining committee will include Oberg employees, and experienced negotiators from Local 1914 and the IBEW. The proposals put forward by the union during negotiations are those that come from the Oberg workforce.

I remind you that employees don’t bring in a union; they form one with their co-workers. If a majority choose to do so, their employer becomes obligated to bargain with their union in good faith for a written contract. Once an NLRB election is won, by law management must maintain the current terms and conditions of employment while negotiating with its workers for a contract. (You as a group would have to agree to any changes management wants to make.)

Lastly, I’d like to respond to their assertion that the IBEW is a business that just wants to collect union dues. The IBEW organizes new members because it’s what keeps us a strong and effective union. Our strength comes from not only our size, but the solidarity of our membership and the issues that bind us. Further, no one pays a cent in union dues during an organizing campaign, and won’t until a first contract is negotiated and accepted by the employees in that unit.

You can expect letters like Dave Bonvenuto’s to continue, so the only way to help distinguish fact from fiction (and protect yourself from being duped) is to educate yourself on what unions are, what rights employees have under the law, and to what extent employers will go to dissuade its employees from organizing.

I encourage you to contact Maria Vooris (518-703-2365), or the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) with any questions you may have, and to do you own fact checking. They can be reached by telephone at 412-395-4400. In addition, you should view their website, [www.nlrb.gov](http://www.nlrb.gov).

Thanks,

Steve Rockafellow