

Settlement at Verizon for 45,000 Union Workers

CWA Thanks Labor for Support During a 15-Month Battle vs. Verizon

Statement From Chris Shelton, CWA District One V.P.

We have reached a contract settlement with Verizon!

It has taken almost exactly 15 months of bargaining—negotiations began June 22, 2011—a militant two week strike last August, and 13 months of on-the-job mobilization.

It took the hard work, in the workplace and on the streets, of tens of thousands of CWA members—and thousands upon thousands of you—who leafleted, lobbied, wrote letters, picketed and rallied, and prepared for another strike if necessary, in an effort to defeat Verizon's sweeping attack on the living standards of 45,000 CWA and IBEW members from Massachusetts to Virginia.

We could not have gotten to this point without the incredible support of all of our friends and allies, who understood that the nation's 15th largest corporation could not be allowed to slash health benefits, destroy job security, eliminate pensions, and roll back 50 years of bargaining gains, just because it believed the political and economic climate was ripe.

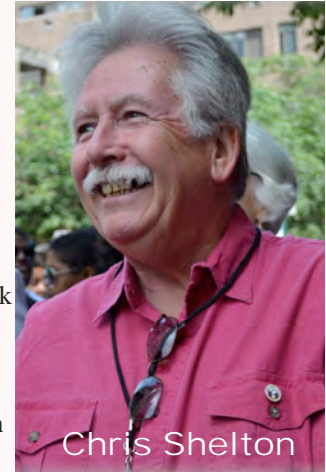
Right now, we are only releasing a few details of the settlement, so that our members can get details of the settlement from their locals. The new contract will require our members to make a modest contribution to the cost of health care premiums for the first time, but they will still be able to choose from the best health care plans in the industry. And new hires will get a 401(k) plan rather than a Defined Benefit Pension. But on every other front, we have beaten back the company's all-out assault on our contract. Highlights include:

- A solid 8.2% wage increase over the next three years, an \$800 signing bonus and annual corporate profit sharing bonus of at least \$700.
- Total preservation of all of our existing job security language, including no layoffs, forced transfers or downgrades for pre-2003
- Preservation of language limiting the company's right to move work out of the region.
- Preservation of Defined Benefit pension coverage with no change in accrual rates for all current employees.
- A company paid, tax-exempt \$850 Health Reimbursement Account that can be used to offset payment of co-pays and deductibles.
- The addition of hundreds of new jobs to the bargaining unit through a reduction in contracted out work.
- Elimination of all company demands for elimination of night and weekend differentials, protections against long-distance forced transfers, gutting of Sickness and Accident Disability Plans and gutting of sick time leave provisions.

This was a long and very difficult fight. We did not achieve every one of our goals. But we negotiated an excellent agreement that above all, protects the job and retirement security of 45,000 CWA and IBEW members.



TWU at CWA picketline last year.



This settlement would not have been possible without the support of so many throughout the labor movement and in our allied community organizations. We thank you for your support, and we look forward to working side-by-side with you wherever and whenever workers face off next against corporate power. We will repay your support with our support. We know—you know—you have proven to us once again, that we are all in this together, and that it is our mutual solidarity that is the lifeblood of our movement. Thank you again.

Sincerely,
Chris Shelton
Vice President, CWA District One

