



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 647

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Company Negotiations Committee:

Thank you for accepting our contingency and coming back to table with us to present a final statement in conclusion of this round of negotiations. We appreciate this gesture knowing it is outside the norm. Our committee felt it was crucial we expressed the sentiment of our membership to you as well as to the station leaders and to the corporate executives. Through this extended process, I have had the opportunity to speak to almost every member of our local about their concerns and opinions on the direction of this company; and in most instances, the overwhelming sentiment is the company does not care about the PEOPLE it employs. The people feel they are just a number. The people feel they are disposable. The people feel they are forgotten.

The company's approach throughout this round of negotiations has enhanced and strengthened those feelings. It's vital for people to have their value reflected in their pay, benefits, retirement, and work-life balance. The people within this membership no longer see that reflected. They feel they are no longer distinctive and are certainly not compensated as such. The company's consistent decreasing of benefits since the early 90s has allowed other companies to become more attractive for experienced talent. With the company no longer enticing highly qualified candidates, they are hiring trainable people with little to no experience. That would be a suitable strategy if the company was offering enough incentive to maintain that trained personnel. On the contrary, the company is making a high-dollar investment into individuals who accept this "training experience" only to transfer their career elsewhere for a better deal – taking their newly acquired skills and experience with them. On the company's dime. That is not the strategy of a PREMIER utility. That is a losing strategy.

I have heard that term – premier – thrown around, and I cannot determine whether the meaning is understood by corporate or not. According to Merriam-Webster, the word premier means *first in position, rank, or importance*. I have stressed to corporate what would make this the premier utility since they first started using the term, and it's clear I need to reiterate it: **PEOPLE**. This company is only as good as the people within it. ANO brought itself out of column 4 NRC status to earn an INPO 1 ranking and did so faster than has ever been done by anyone, and that's because of the people. These are the same people we are losing because the company refuses to appropriately sustain them with pay and benefits. ANO doesn't operate independently; you're conveniently forgetting the names and faces functioning inside of it.

Throughout this process, our team has asked for the company to consider or employ different strategies for addressing these personnel issues, and each time we have been told by your team, "Nobody else is doing that," or "That would be outside the norm for the industry." That mindset and response doesn't sound very **PREMIER** to me. As my kids would say, that sounds very **MID**. A premier company would be setting a standard rather than dispassionately following a norm. Coming to work at this place used to be a badge of honor. People were proud to work here. People wanted their children to work here. Everyone in the River Valley community wanted to work here. Now, this company is struggling to attract a single qualified candidate.



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Our team made several proposals during this round which would appeal to outside talent and retain individuals to stay at this station – competently trained and supporting the company – after investing time and money in them. The response, or lack thereof, was disappointing and disheartening. Instead of leading the utility industry, this company appears content with being middle of the pack. Not great. Not the worst. Just **MID**. That indifference needs to change when we return to the table this summer.

Our membership agreed to accept the extension proposal, but something must change in the company's tactics moving forward. We must return to the concept of actual bargaining, not dictating. The job market has shifted this decade with the mass retirements of the baby boomer generation. It is no longer a flooded labor market, and employers are going to have to adapt. That needs to start now. That needs to start with us. Help us help you. We have given your team a road map to this company becoming a premier utility. What benefits us also benefits you. We expect your committee to start bargaining in good faith with us – without pre-prescribed limits in place by the executives of this company. They are not present in these negotiations and may or may not be informed of the relevant information we are bringing to the table.

Pay rates for employees in our membership have fallen behind the curve with inflation. Throughout the last contract period, we were behind inflation by more than 5%. Inflation over the last two years alone has been greater than 15%, yet the company is currently unwilling to offer more than a 2.75% GWI – all while raising insurance costs and eliminating retirement benefits. For a company who has averaged more than 300 million dollars per quarter in profit over the last 5 years, this is unacceptable. To address the objectionable retirement and benefits, I will be meeting with the other Business Managers who bargain with Entergy to prepare a uniformed benefit package which would be advantageous to all parties involved. You agreed at the table to hear and consider this collaboration, and we expect a genuine and deliberate look at the worthiness of this proposal rather than be given a passive gesture. We truly believe this plan would once again draw the level of talent this company is accustomed to recruiting and incentivize employees to continue their service once trained to our standards.

We have been assured GWI rates will improve once the compensation study has been completed during the May timeframe. We recommended your extension proposal to our membership in a show of good faith that the company will honor its word. Once we resume bargaining, the company must also honor its commitment to bargain fairly without corporate caps in place and without jeopardizing ongoing relations with IBEW Local 647. ANO is a dissimilar dual unit site which is unique in an industry unique itself, and the people within it deserve to be compensated accordingly.

Respectfully,

Brian Erwin
Business Manager
IBEW Local 647