Salt Lake City Mailers Local 14759/M-21 is once again in contentious negotiations with MediaOne of Utah. MediaOne of Utah is the joint advertising, circulation and production arm of The Salt Lake Tribune and Deseret News, Utah’s largest daily newspapers. The current collective bargaining agreement expired on August 23, 2014. The Local and the company have been operating under a contract extension that expired at the end of January.

Local 14759/M-21 President Heather Porter explained that the company is proposing oppressive concessions from workers. “Initially they asked for 20 percent across the board wage cuts,” Porter said. “When we said no way, they came back with a proposal that included an 11 percent wage reduction, elimination of the second highest pay code, and an almost 18 percent reduction in pay for new hires.”

Although the company admits it’s profitable, company representatives say their margins are small. The Union says the company has also refused to comply with the Union’s requests for information on their financial status. MediaOne of Utah has a long and storied history dating back to 1952 when it was formed under the name Newspaper Agency Corporation (NAC). NAC created a partnership for printing, circulation, and advertising operations under the Newspaper Preservation Act. After World War II, the owners of the Deseret News and The Salt Lake Tribune entered into a Joint Operating Agreement (JOA), where each published separate editorial material but shared printing, advertising and circulation costs. The original agreement was the subject of a Congressional antitrust investigation in the 1960s, but in 1970, Richard Nixon signed the Newspaper Preservation Act, protecting the NAC. In 1982, the JOA was renewed, with some changes. The Newspaper Agency Corporation was renamed to MediaOne of Utah in 2007 and a new Joint Operating Agreement was signed the following year. That agreement expired in 2012.

New NLRB Rules Expedite Elections, Ease Organizing for Unions

Beginning in April 2015 new National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) rules will make it easier for unions to organize. “Strengthening protections for workers seeking to come together and bargain collectively is critical to workers winning much-deserved wage gains and improving their lives,” said AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka. The new rules will cover all NLRB representation petitions, including elections to select union representation. The new NLRB election rules set forth an “accelerated election” process speeding up the time between the filing of a representation petition and the union election. Trumka explained that the modest but important reforms to the representation election process will help reduce delay and

“Strengthening protections for workers seeking to come together and bargain collectively is critical to workers winning much-deserved wage gains and improving their lives.”
—Rich Trumka
AFL-CIO President
Around the Sector

Joplin Typographical
Joplin Typographical Union 350/14612 reached an agreement with Joplin Globe in mailroom negotiations. The one year agreement includes medical participation in the company medical plan and a one-time wage increase to cover any additional costs associated with the benefit. Other included language states that Mailrooms employees will participate in up to five furlough days per quarter, the same as other Globe employees.

Central Illinois Typographical
District Managers in the Circulation department at the State Journal Register reached a tentative agreement on a new two-year contract. The negotiating committee diligently bargained to keep contract provisions in place that the company had proposed eliminating. Although wages remained frozen, an attendance bonus was agreed upon. Changes in language that cover District Manager call-ins changed to actual hours worked with bonuses paid for the sixth and seventh workdays. New performance reviews will also be implemented.

Chicago Typographical
Chicago Typographical Union 16/ CWA 14408 negotiations continue with Cook County Offset Print Shop and the Cook County’s Sheriff’s Office they are close to an agreement.

Spokane Mailers
CWA Local 7618 Spokane Mailers are in negotiations with the Spokesman-Review. The committee is tackling some difficult issues but reaching some tentative agreements as bargaining continues.

Omaha Mailers
Omaha Mailers 100/14744 are in negotiations with Omaha World-Herald. They have some outstanding issues that they are working towards resolving.

Detroit Typographical
Detroit Typographical Union 18/14503 has filed a grievance with Michigan.com—a Detroit Media Partnership—in the layoff of employees at the newspaper. The committee is investigating and will be setting up meetings with the company.

Last year, the company moved composing toning work for ad copy to a regional toning center and all creative production to Gannett Image and Design Center resulting in the reduction of employees.

Linda Morris-Cooley

UTAH Local Fighting for Fairness on the Job

Under the JOA, the Deseret News, owned by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—colloquially referred to as the Mormon Church—received 48 percent of the profits. The Salt Lake Tribune, having larger circulation numbers, received 52 percent. Initially a family-owned newspaper, the Tribune merged with the cable company Tele-Communications, Inc., in 1997. The deal included an option for the Kearns and McCarthey families to buy back the Tribune after five years. When AT&T purchased TCI in 1999, the paper’s interest was sold to Dean Singleton’s MediaNews Group. Although the family opposed the sale, and sued AT&T to block the transaction, they eventually agreed to a settlement in 2007. MediaNews Group filed for Chapter 11 in 2010 and the Tribune was again sold, this time to the New York hedge fund Alden Global Capital. In 2013, the Deseret News Publishing and the New York owners of the Tribune secretly amended the Joint Operating Agreement. The new agreement radically altered the profit split between the two papers. The new JOA gave the Deseret News 70 percent of the profit and the Tribune just 30 percent. The deal also gave the Deseret News a majority position over MediaOne. Alden also sold the Tribune’s real estate holdings and printing operations to the Deseret News. A Utah non-profit organization, the Utah Newspaper Project, dba Citizens for Two Voices, have filed an antitrust lawsuit over the 2013 JOA.

MediaOne of Utah has once again changed its name, now operating under the moniker of Utah Media Group. Utah Media Group claims to be Utah’s largest media company serving more than 1.7 million weekly readers in Utah and 99 percent of all households in Salt Lake and Davis counties through the combined distribution of the Deseret News and the Tribune. Having grown its original business, the Utah Media Group now prints and distributes the Wall Street Journal, USA Today, circulars for the Associated Food Stores, and dozens of other publications.

“Having secured all of this new work, Utah Media Group admits they are profitable,” says Porter. “We negotiated a one-year agreement in August of 2013. At that time, we agreed to a three percent pay cut and all employees lost their right to shift differential of 1.4 percent. They even imposed strict productivity standards. We gave them those concessions because we wanted to give the company a chance to get back on solid ground. Now, with an explosion of new work they are asking for more concessions. It’s just not right.”

The roughly 95-person bargaining unit defined as all mailroom workers perform the company’s post-press operations. Workers are preparing lists or wrappers, tagging, wrapping, stamping—whether by hand or power machines—inserting, handling conveyors, and all other work as it relates to preparing papers for distribution to carriers, rack sales and wholesale distributors.

“It is hard work, and the productivity standards we are being held to are frequently unreasonable. The machinery could be in disrepair or we could be understaffed but we are still expected to meet quotas. We want more fairness on the job. Our fight isn’t just about economic issues,” Porter says. “Although we don’t want to give in to more pay cuts we are also fighting for justice on the job.”

Dan Wasser, Printing, Publishing and Media Workers Sector President, is working with the local in their fight. “Be ready, the time may come where we ask all of our members, family and friends to help M-21. This company is producing materials for nationwide corporations, we need to educate the public about this company and the unreasonable demands they are making on their workers.”

“While workers across the country are calling for an increase in the minimum wage to $15.00 per hour, this company is trying to impoverish workers’ with cuts to their wages and benefits. They are asking new hires to take a nearly 18 percent cut in pay from $11.78 per hour down to $10.00 per hour. It is high time employers understand that when they look to impose oppressive concessions and working conditions, we will mobilize and stand united against those attacks,” says Wasser.

“Our members are already having to pay almost $5 an hour for their family’s health care, which carries an $8,000 annual deductible, and an admittedly profitable company wants to cut their pay. That’s ridiculous,” exclaims Wasser.
In 2012, the Printing Sector began its Organizing Cooperative by holding a three-day training hosted by the AFL-CIO’s Organizing Institute. The training was geared specifically to the needs of the Printing Sector. In addition to focusing on the Sector's traditionally represented fields, the Sector expanded its focus to the field of digital media.

In Pittsburgh, Kim Gill is working on several locations. One in particular is a multi-shop location that would enable the Sector to expand into the Print and Media fields. "They have Graphic Artists, CAD designers, Artists, IT, CNC operators along with printers and laborers," says Gill.

"It's unfortunate that the issues are usually the same with most workers I talk with. They want to be compensated for their hard work without having to beg for it," Gill reports.

At another location in Pittsburgh, workers are building the face of their union in the form of solid functioning committee. The workers are dedicated to helping educate their co-workers on the benefits of standing up together to have a voice at work. The bosses are getting bolder and they are blatantly telling them if they discuss a union they will be pushed into the office, disciplined and fired and that they would close this location. It's illegal, but to someone who desperately needs this job it is scary. With our support and encouragement, the workers are moving forward," says Gill.

Gill reports that her organizing efforts have paid off at Color Junction, a three shop from the Wilkes-Barre area. Workers secured a three-year contract.

Working to find ways to identify new organizing leads, Kim and Norm have been beefing up their communication efforts. "We've added a form to the website so that those who are interested in learning about unionizing can reach us directly," says Gill.

"Since then, we've had several people reach out to the Sector to inquire about how to form a union or how to promote their small business with a union label."

"We have gotten more referrals in the past few months through the website than the whole previous year. I believe workers may be realizing they do not have to settle for less and that being a member is a positive thing for them and their co-workers," says Gill.

Both Kim and Norm have been reaching out to small screen printers and small commercial printers to bring them on board.

Looking at new and innovative ways to spread the word about the Print Sector and the benefits of union membership in these modern times, both Kim and Norm have implemented strategies using social media to build the Sector's presence online.

Generating leads is one of the most difficult tasks when organizing. Norm has been using social media sites in an effort to contact potential leads. "I spend countless hours searching sites like LinkedIn, Facebook, and Indeed as well as using traditional organizing methods," says Norm. "With Michigan winters the way they are, driving from shop to shop is not always possible, so I spend time online looking up new shops to find leads. I do have a few options in my future."

Sector President Dan Wasser will join Norm this Spring in Salt Lake City, for one such lead. The two will meet with the owner and employees of a small shop who are interested in becoming members of the Sector.

In Illinois, a grocery store employee reached out to Norm to find out how to organize his coworkers. "He knows other stores in this chain of stores are organized and is upset that his isn't. I think this is a valid lead, and we are working together to determine the next steps for him and his coworkers," reports Norm.

In Cincinnati, Norm has been working with the graphics department of a design magazine. "They are one department of an over 650-employee company that has location all over the US including many in Ohio and their headquarters in New York City. Kim and Norm are expected to begin a house call blitz in the mid-West later this Spring with targets in Michigan and Ohio—all of which are 70-plus employees."

Tom Grenfell, President of Detroit Typographical Local 18, is working with Norm to organize a small shop in Toledo, Ohio. Norm says that by using social media to contact small shops he's been able to generate viable organizing leads. "I sent more than 100 private messages to smaller shops through Facebook last month. When I contact them I ask if they have ever given any thought to joining a union. I find out about shops I have never heard of this way, and get an idea of what may be available to look at in other parts of my region."

If you have a shop you think Norm and Kim should talk to, you can contact them through the website at www.cwa-ppmws.org.

To contact Kim Gill: Office: 412-561-8770 Cell: 412-496-7109 kag0507@gmail.com

To contact Norm Stachulski: 313-408-3313 rstachulski@yahoo.com

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Union Elections Could be Expedited Under New NLRB Rules

GOP Tries to Block NLRB from Speeding Up Elections

In early February, Senate Republicans sought to employ the little used Congressional Review Act in a bid to block the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) from speeding up union elections.

The statute empowers Congress to overturn executive branch regulations it doesn’t like, provided enough lawmakers sign on to the effort.

Three top GOP lawmakers introduced a motion of disapproval against what they refer to as the NLRB’s “ambush” election rule.

Senate Labor Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) was joined by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and Senator Mike Enzi (R-WYO) in introducing the measure.

Under the Congressional Review Act, the House and Senate vote on a joint resolution of disapproval to stop, with the full force of law, a federal agency from implementing a rule or regulation or issuing a substantially similar regulation without congressional authorization. A resolution of disapproval only needs a simple majority to pass and cannot be filibustered or amended.

Both chambers or Congress must approve the resolution and President Barack Obama must sign it—something he’s unlikely to do since the rule was approved by the board he appointed. Congress has only once successfully used the review act to overturn a regulatory action, in 2001.

NLRB Chairman Mark Pearce defended the rule in a statement saying the board “remains committed” to its work and to “fully carrying out the law” the agency is in charge of enforcing.

“Republicans are making it clear that they are more interested in putting the profits of the biggest corporations ahead of the rights and opportunities of middle-class workers.”

—Senator Patty Murray

Union Elections Could be Expedited Under New NLRB Rules

According to The National Law Review, union elections could be held within 20 days of the filing of a petition, with the NLRB scheduling a pre-election hearing within eight days of an election petition filing.

Beginning April 14, 2015, when a petition is filed, the employer will be required to post an initial “NLRB Notice of Election,” which contains information about the petition and advises the parties of their rights and obligations. Employers will have to submit a “Statement of Position” form to the Board within seven days of receipt of the election petition. The position statement must include a list of prospective voters, with their job classifications, shifts, and work locations. Should the employer fail to raise a particular election issue in the “Statement of Position,” it may not present evidence on the issue at the representation hearing.

Election stays pending an appeal to the NLRB will no longer be permitted.

“Too often, lengthy and unnecessary litigation over minor issues bogs down the election process and prevents workers from getting the vote they want. We commend the NLRB’s efforts to streamline the process and reduce unnecessary delay,” said Trumka.

Under the new rules, voter eligibility issues will be deferred from the pre-election hearing to post-election hearing proceedings. Pre-election hearings will be limited to whether or not questions exist regarding representation. The list of all eligible bargaining unit employees, called an “Excelsior list,” must be filed electronically two days after a Direction of Election has been issued, and must include employees’ home address, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses. If an objection is filed, a post-election hearing will be set 14 days after the filing of objections.

New Computer System

The Plan office is in the process of converting their old computer system to an offsite system managed by ISSI located near Cherry Hill, New Jersey. All the data from the old system has been converted to ISSI’s system and they have been running parallel since mid-December. All data files will be backed-up and maintained on the ISSI system. There will no longer be a need for the Plan to maintain the servers in the Plan office.

There have been no changes to benefits or to the Rehabilitation Plan adopted by the NPP Board of Trustees in March 2010.

Annual Statements

Annual statements showing contributions and accrued pension amounts were mailed to active NPP participants in February. Statements may also be requested from the Plan Office by emailing itunpp@aol.com.

Plan Administrator

John Foss has announced that he will be resigning as Administrator of the NPP on April 30, 2015. John has been the Administrator for over 20 years. We wish him good luck in his future endeavors. All benefit related matters will be handled by Carol Anderson and Sharon Ianacone.

New NPP Trustee

On December 30, 2014, James Brill was appointed as a Management Trustee. Mr. Brill brings a strong background in the newspaper industry to the NPP Board. He is currently in charge of production for New York Daily News. Mr. Brill replaces Mr. Daniel Murphy, who served the NPP very well until a job change required his departure.

Financial Results for 2014

NPP overall return in 2014 was 5.5%, earning $39 million. The NPP received $21 million in contributions and withdrawal liability payments, and paid $89 million in benefits during the year. Total assets were $747 million as of December 31, 2014, compared with $777 million as of December 31, 2013.

CWA/ITU Negotiated Pension Plan

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