

'ANGUS BARKS'

By Jeff Francis
AEG Executive Board

Imagination vs Reality

Eco-imagination- GE CEO Jeff Immelt delivered a speech in Detroit last July titled 'An American Renewal'. Quote: "We should set a national goal to create high-value-added jobs and have manufacturing jobs no less than 20 percent of total employment, about twice what it is today." He criticized past business strategies that relied on quick profits from financial services, and debt-ridden consumers. He advocated rebuilding our technological and manufacturing base. Speaking for GE, he said, "In some areas, we have outsourced too much. We plan to insource capabilities like aviation component manufacturing and software development."

The Union agrees with all these ideas that are new to Mr. Immelt. Unfortunately, it was GE under 'Neutron Jack' Welch that promoted downsizing, plant closing, global out-sourcing, which devastated our manufacturing capacity and our union's membership.

Reality- Ideas meet reality on the shop floor. The Lynn Plant is a prime example of high-value-added manufacturing jobs. Look around. We are starved for manpower, crippled by machine repair and programming needs, and frustrated without basic services. We have brand new productive machinery waiting for work. GE sent that work to China, Korea, Japan, Romania, Turkey, Germany and Sweden. The manufacturing worker in Lynn has yet to see Mr. Immelt's ideas spring to life.

Healthy-imagination- Now the Company has a new commitment to help make employees healthier. They will use their Six-Sigma and LEAN expertise to help us improve our nutrition, fitness and stress-reduction. Little announcements and competitions will appear in the fourth quarter.

Reality- GE rocked their own exempt employees with a new medical plan, effective Jan 1st. It includes big contribution increases and bad benefit choices. No one's too happy, but the exempt have no avenue to protest, since they have no union to represent them. Our benefits are protected by the union contract. But don't smirk too much. When our contract is up in 2011 GE will attack our families healthcare with something similar.

Quality-imagination- In several executive updates since May, Plant Leader Maria Deacon has committed to redoubling efforts on quality at all levels. Have you noticed cell leaders with quality charts next to their DLP charts? Have you seen MQE's fighting for quality procedures instead of sneaking around them? Didn't think so.

Reality- Based on input from LMO stewards, here's 3 things necessary to renewing the quality culture in Lynn:

AUTHORITY- Quality leaders should report to the Plant Leader, not to Production Managers. When production areas fail quality audits, those areas should be shut down. No shipments, no output dollars, no schedule, until you can follow procedure.

Employees need independent quality reps to referee quality disputes with operating management.

CERTIFICATIONS- Existing rules need enforcement regarding stamps, coupons, TG fixtures, etc. We don't need inexperienced MQE's with kindergarten level shop floor education.

TRAINING BUDGET- Money is required to give comprehensive quality training to all new-hires. Money is required to conduct a plant-wide quality campaign. IME time is required to properly cross-train employees within their existing classifications. Each sub-section manager should have a training matrix and training rotation.

