



'ANGUS BARKS'

By Jeff Francis
AEG Executive Board

Jobs, Overtime & Farmout

Last year in 2007, total employment in the Riverworks declined slightly. Once again the number of employees retiring or breaking service outweighed the number of new and re-engaged employees hired from the street. In 2008, judging from the huge backorders for aircraft engines, there is enough work in GE Aviation to stabilize the Lynn plant or let it grow. Manpower levels are set by the Company, not the Union.

Due to restrictions on manpower, many areas relied on overtime to meet schedule in the last half of last year. These long hours put in by our members helped the Riverworks keep delivery commitments, and provided the labor base necessary to balance management's financial books.

The Company is always cautious, and usually reluctant to add new heads, figuring the benefits cost of a new employee outweigh the premium costs of working veteran employees overtime. But based on last year's excessive overtime costs, some managers are taking a second look at the wisdom of hiring, at least enough to balance attrition and maintain current job levels.

From the Union point of view, given a choice between hiring or working overtime to meet a long-term business need, we favor hiring. Given a choice between farmout or working overtime to meet a short-term business need, we favor working overtime.

No matter how you arrange your personal finances, all of us should support more jobs in the Riverworks. These days, union jobs are rare and valuable. As a long service employee, you may have a relative or friend you hope gets hired to follow in your footsteps. As a short-service employee your job becomes more secure as new employees are hired. Or you may simply be concerned with the Union's declining strength, and the Plant's declining importance to GE, as our numbers decline. Any way you look at it, there is strength in numbers, and advantages that outweigh personal income goals.

On the farmout front, and in the struggle to farm-in work, we did pretty well in Plants I & II last year. If we maintain what we have, and introduce some new work, we increase the overall direct labor base, which is needed to defray the large overhead expenses of this big, old plant. The manager who farms work out to the attractive low-cost supplier, loses that work out of his labor base, and makes it more difficult to pay his own salary and support his exempt staff. Again the decisions where to do work are made by the Company, not the Union. If management chooses to increase farmout, we will return to the conflicts that put us out on the street in 2002 in the Jobs Not Greed strike.

MANAGEMENT VIOLATIONS

Incidents of managers performing union work are on the rise. Several flagrant and sensational cases from Plant II were heard at Step II. The oldest unresolved grievance at Step II involves exempt management doing Production Clerk work across the plant.

At a brief meeting last week, ***production followers and clerks in Bldg 74 requested your support.*** New overtime guidelines instituted by Plant I have restricted the overtime offered to indirect employees. This group in Bldg 74 can live with what they are offered. ***They cannot live with management doing their work in their absence, or management asking other classifications to do their work.***

In one grievance, the area manager himself, along with another exempt employee, unloaded a truck on Saturday, after denying that work to appropriate production followers. If you witness a manager doing union work, speak up and challenge him to say why he doesn't have enough of his own work. If you are asked to do the work of another classification, go get your steward.

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