

To Get There Together

The term "union" means together or with.

The basic purpose of a labor union is and always has been to better the environment -- "caring" -- for the working class; those of us who make the products and perform services: and in turn advance the corporate profits in American businesses.

A tool to put pressure on a corporation is the voluntary strike by the workers. Management in turn may counter by hiring replacement workers to do the work making the products and/or performing the services. Such a situation has now materialized between the multi-national Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company and its Union the USW (United Steel Workers).

There is yet another tool that workers may encourage -

BOYCOTT

Some historical background to our present situation:

After negotiating with Goodyear from early June until October 5, of 2006 the USW (United Steel Workers) called a strike against Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company. Here are some of the particulars about the issues:

1) Goodyear had combined losses of over 2 Billion dollars from 2001 through 2003.

In 2003 the USW and Goodyear negotiated a contract that returned Goodyear to profitability in 2004, for the first time since 2000.

Goodyear's CEO Robert J. Keegan rewarded himself, for our sacrifices, with a \$3 Million bonus in 2004.

We saved Goodyear from bankruptcy in 2003, Keegan took our reward and now he wants us to finance his next bonus with more concessions in this round of negotiations.

2) The cost to our current members if we accept Goodyear's contract proposal, on wages, is a tiered wage structure that will cause 35% of our workers to take over a 40% reduction in their pay.

Goodyear has tried to cover up this issue by saying that only the new hire's will be affected by this proposal. But, the truth is, future COLA (cost of living) increases won't be incorporated into our base rate.

COLA contributions will be incorporated in the new hire rate structure and when those wages exceed ours we will move into the new pay structure. This could cost some of our members more than \$24,000.00 a year in lost wages based on a 40 hour week, if they were forced to move from an upper tier job to a lower tier job.

3) Goodyear had over 1 Billion Dollars in cash reserves when this strike began, and they have borrowed 2 Billion more to fight the USW.

The money Goodyear has invested in the fight against the USW would have provided us with a contract that would have enriched us instead of stripping us of our dignity and removing us from the middleclass.

4) Perhaps the largest travesty of this conflict is what Goodyear intends to do to our retirees.

Goodyear wants out of the Retiree Health Care business and they intend to make a one time contribution to a Voluntary Employees' Beneficiary Association (VEBA) of \$660 Million. Additional funding will come from a \$1.00 COLA diversion (\$30 Million a year) from Active Employees, and Profit Sharing diversions from Active Employees of \$10.5 Million a year (assuming that Goodyear makes enough profit to share).

This plan could leave current and future Retirees without medical coverage as soon as 2013.

The \$660 Million that Goodyear wants to invest in a VEBA is a little more than half of the \$1.2 Billion that Goodyear currently list as a liability for Retiree Medical Benefits.

So, Goodyear cares so much about the people that built this Company that they are willing to give them fifty cent on the dollar that they owe the Retirees for their future medical necessities.

This is picking on a group that can't fight back. Retirees can't vote on this Contract and most are on a fixed income and can't get a part-time job or work overtime to help with the additional cost being pushed off on them.

5) Goodyear claims to be an American company and yet they are willing to close down an American Plant (Tyler, Texas) so that they can import more tires from China. Goodyear was told by Sir James Goldsmith during his hostile takeover attempt in 1980s that Goodyear needed to return to its core business of producing Tires. Mr. Goldsmith took \$90 Million from Goodyear for this advice.

This advice is free! Goodyear you should invest in America. America and its workers made you great and America will protect your interests. China wants your money and your technology. China's promise is cheap labor and little else.

And, if Goodyear thinks that the USW is hard to bargain with wait until the Chinese Government wants to take over Goodyear factories in China.

6) What does all this mean to those who receive this letter that don't work for Goodyear?

Goodyear is now hiring replacement workers. These workers will be inexperienced in the process of building tires and other products for Goodyear.

Hopefully this inexperience doesn't affect the quality of the product that Goodyear wants to sell to its customers.

The USW has worked hard to help Goodyear, "Protect our (Goodyear's) good name." And, we would hate to see our efforts and Goodyear's reputation tarnished by replacement workers who aren't qualified to supply the Customer with a quality product.

Video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDKGJu5eMZo

7) The word "greed" is not the definition of this United Steel Workers Union. We feel that we have a duty to share our efforts to keep Goodyear profitable-the same as if we had invested money in its stocks which most of us have done. Another need for both Goodyear and the Union is customer satisfaction. Together we can have a harmonious relationship.

But Goodyear has apparently chosen to be a "union busting" company. You might ask "What can I do?" We feel that our last option is to exercise the option of "Nothing" That is, refusing to buy Goodyear products: In essence to buy NOTHING from them. It is popularly called BOYCOTT. You can help in this.

Pride Goethe before a fall.

http://www.usw.org/usw/program/adminlinks/docs/Goodyear_Investor_Alert_%203.pdf

Is this a chain letter?

I think of it as Change letter, to change the corporate minds of cut, slash and burn and save American jobs everywhere union and non-union.

There is a website <http://www.helpboycott.com/> for more updated information on any progress in the company-union negotiations. We hope we may again start buying Goodyear products with mutual benefits to both.

Please bookmark the above website and visit it to see when Goodyear and the company have settled so you can start buying Goodyear products again. Look for Goodyear boycott or boycott on the websites home page and click for updated details.

God bless and thank you

Please forward this to all your friends and colleagues-and help workers everywhere.