

Pay Raise

It turns out that Delta can give contract employees a raise even though they are under a union contract. In his Weekly Update for February 10, 2010 Vice President Gil West says, “The IAM has stated that nothing in the IAM contract prevents Delta from giving a raise to IAM represented employees. And that is true.”

In his February 4, 2010 Memo Richard Anderson said, “...we have also continued to honor the packages of pay, benefits and work rules provided for in contracts still in place in workgroups where representation has not yet been resolved.” Implied in this statement is the idea that if a 9.4% raise were given to contract employees it would be a contract violation.

While we appreciate Gil West’s ability to admit what is true, we are confused by his logic. He says, “But Delta will not make costly improvements to one part of the contract when we are prohibited from aligning the rest of the package...” But Gil, you have just said you plan to make a costly improvement to the pay of pre merger Delta workers.

This raises 2 questions. Does this mean that if pro union workers lose the election you will cut the benefits of pre merger Northwest workers? Is the total compensation package of PMNW employees superior to PMDL employees?

The unmistakable answer to both of these questions has to be yes. Gil West goes on to say, “...it must be treated as a whole as separate work rules and benefits have a cost which must be considered when determining pay.”

So, finally we have arrived at the truth. The superior sick, OJI and vacation accruals, the superior pension, medical benefits, Long Term Disability benefits, work rules and job security of the IAM contract are worth a lot of money. Additionally, the truth is that if the union loses these things will be taken from PMNW employees.

Of course, this also means that if the union wins, the new combined group will be in a strong position to align the pay and benefits upward – the best of both worlds. That is what we are fighting for.

Two Different Approaches – Years ago the IAM negotiated a program called the Special Leave Incentive Program (SLIP Leave) [A23 of the Equipment Service Stock Clerk Contract]. During times when Northwest needed to reduce its workforce, SLIP Leaves were offered.

This allows senior workers to voluntarily take a lay off with unemployment compensation and continue to have medical insurance, vacation accruals, OJI accruals, pension credit and flight benefits. Junior workers can stay on the job and keep all their benefits. It is a benefit for all affected.

Delta has had a different approach to seasonal downturns. Ready Reserve workers are simply sent home. This group of disposable workers gets no seniority toward a pay progression, no medical benefits, no vacation, OJI, retirement, no long term disability – nothing.

Is this the best way to deal with the cyclical nature of our industry – on the backs of the most junior workers. We think not.