

RED TALES

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(612-726-2230) Newsletter of the MSP ESSC Shop Committee (612-201-0383)

Profits Up – According to the Minneapolis Star Tribune the 3rd quarter profits of UnitedHealth Care Group Inc. were up 13% over last year. The health care giant registered a \$1.04 billion profit for the quarter. Commercial enrollment, however, was down 6% due to workers losing coverage because of high unemployment.

UnitedHealth (UHC) is the insurance carrier for all Delta and Northwest employees. Consumer Report ranks them 39th out of 41 large health insurance providers for customer satisfaction. They have raised monthly premiums across the board for 2010. Why, you may ask? Massive executive compensation packages, for which United Health is well known, are not cheap. Interestingly, UHC is the former employer of Delta CEO, Richard Anderson.

Profits Up? – Delta reported a \$161 million loss for the 3rd quarter of 2009. You might not have caught this if you read only Deltanet or listened to your manager in a daily briefing. Deltanet led with a story about a \$51 million profit for airline operations. This is a positive step but soaring interest costs are worrisome and more than cancelled out that gain. According to the Wall Street Journal, interest costs surged from \$140 million to \$319 million year

over year. Load factor rose from 83.6% to 84.7%, but passenger revenue per available seat mile was down 18%.

Violations – By law Delta is not allowed to interfere in any way with the upcoming representation election. The Railway labor Act reads, “**No carrier, its officers or agents shall deny or in any way question the right of its employees to join, organize, or assist in organizing the labor organization of their choice, and it shall be unlawful for any carrier to interfere in any way with the organization of its employees...**”.

The Act also allows for fines of \$1,000 to \$20,000 and/or up to 6 months in prison for any carrier, officer or agent who violates the law. When you see managers throw away union material, refuse to allow employees to discuss unionization issues in non work areas such as breakrooms, during non work times or otherwise interfere in the election process, be sure to include the manager’s name when you fill out a carrier interference form.

Pro Union Editorial – The Star Tribune had printed an editorial attacking the AFL-CIO request for an NMB rules change on October 18. The AFL-CIO response can be found at startribune.com/opinion/commentary for October 23.