

NEWS RELEASE



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IBEW Opens Negotiations With AT&T May 18

Workers Seek Fair Contract

Washington, DC – The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) opens negotiations with AT&T on Monday, May 18, aiming to get a fair and equitable contract with the nation’s largest telephone company, whose net income in 2008 rose 7.7 percent to \$12.9 billion.

The bargaining, which will take place at Hoffman Estates outside Chicago, covers about 10,000 IBEW members in New England, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Illinois, California and the Northwest. These historic negotiations will include workers who were original AT&T employees and remained working for the company after it was forced to divest its original Bell Telephone units as a result of a 1984 federal anti-trust enforcement order. AT&T’s contract with the IBEW will expire on June 27.

“We have a long, rich history with AT&T, and we’re looking forward to building on our partnership,” said IBEW President Edwin D. Hill. “Our members are a big part of the company’s success, and we expect that their value will be recognized and rewarded as a result of these talks.”

In other bargaining already underway, AT&T is demanding concessions in health care benefits from members of the Communication Workers of America (CWA). The IBEW vowed to work with the company on the issue of cost containment while protecting benefit levels. “The problems with health care facing America will require a national solution and cannot be solved by individual companies slashing coverage for their workers,” said Ronald Kastner, chairman of the IBEW’s negotiating committee. “We invite AT&T to work with us before Congress to pursue legislation to that end.

“Our members look forward to new work opportunities brought by AT&T’s investment in new technology, and we will be seeking an equal investment in job security and training,” Hill added.

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The IBEW is an international labor organization that represents approximately 750,000 workers in the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Republic of Panama. The IBEW has members in construction, utilities, manufacturing, telecommunications, broadcasting, railroads and government.