



THE STRETCH

Local 746L



VOLUME 35, ISSUE NO.7

TYLER, TEXAS

JULY, 2005

From The President's Desk

At the June membership meeting several questions were raised, and answers given, about which I want to share information with you. In addition, I want to begin a discussion concerning the upcoming Master Contract negotiations that will take place beginning about May of 2006, as we near the July contract expiration next year. I know that sounds like a long time out, but it's really just around the corner and will be upon us before we know it.

I also want to talk about the "Pattern Bargain" with the three major tiremakers doing business in North America (Goodyear, Bridgestone-Firestone and Michelin-Uniroyal-Goodrich). Some decisions will be made at the Rubber and Plastics Industry Conference convention this fall about what the union will strive to accomplish with all three, starting with the "target company" contract which will then be "patterned" in other contract negotiations with Cooper, Yokohama and others. In 2003 Goodyear was the target company and, once an agreement was reached there, the USWA went on to reach agreements with Bridgestone and Michelin that were different in some regards but were considered consistent with the objectives for the pattern set at Goodyear. The Bridgestone-Firestone talks dragged on for over two years. It was only a few weeks ago that a tentative agreement was reached there. The details of that agreement haven't been released at the time of this writing, as it's still being voted on at the local level. At Cooper Tire the USWA was unsuccessful in reaching a pattern bargain. Earlier this year the Cooper Texarkana plant went on strike for about a month to try and get a pattern agreement, but failed to do so.

What I want to say to you is that you need to begin to get your finances in order now, concerning the 2006 bargain. Prepare for a strike by paying off bills and notes over the next year. Be prudent about taking on new debt. We haven't had a strike here in over thirty years, but one reason for that is that Tyler, and the other Kelly plants, weren't in the Master Contract negotiation until 1997 and our contract expiration dates weren't the same until after that negotiation. Now the Kelly, Dunlop and Goodyear local agreements all expire at the same time the Master Contract expires. That common expiration date saved our plant in 2003, as Goodyear wanted to shut down Huntsville and Tyler but had to address it with the Union in the Master Contract discussion. We kept Tyler, though we lost Huntsville.

The 2003 Master Contract negotiation with Goodyear drug on for six months and was extremely tough. We came very close to a strike, even though the company couldn't survive one without bankruptcy and a re-organization. We would likely have lost more than one plant if we had struck. We came out of it with a contract that set the standard for the industry and, three years later, one that everyone recognizes as the best of those that have been negotiated since. It called for a lot of change and that hasn't been pleasant. It

also kept intact most of our benefits, all of our pay and still allowed the union and company to pull together to make Goodyear a profitable operation once again. However, the company is still saddled with a tremendous debt of over \$4 billion.

In 2006 we will be faced with a company that will be able to take a strike without immediately going broke, and one that is under tremendous pressure from China and other offshore tire producers, as well as Wall Street, to import more tires. The company's debt picture will be another factor and will be driving them to maximize profits to reduce that debt. Going after our pay and benefits will almost surely be a part of the game plan to reduce debt. It will be a tough negotiation, one that could very easily result in a strike, and you need to get ready to fight to keep what you've got. It's that simple. If we begin the fight, we have to be able to win it. You have to be able to support that fully. If the company knows we are weak, we will be guaranteed of a fight. If they know we are prepared, we have a much better chance of avoiding the fight. Nothing we have is just given to us by a benevolent company, even in the best of times. Always remember that.

I am sending a letter out this week to the floor stewards concerning a meeting they will be attending during the first week of July. The purpose of the meeting is twofold. We will begin a PAC (Political Action Committee) check-off drive here. Mike Scarver, the USWA International PAC Coordinator, will kick it off with a training session for our stewards. The last half of the meeting will be devoted to updating the stewards on developments since the last steward training session and, then, to having a round table discussion. I have committed to holding these meetings on a quarterly basis. Thanks to the way we're managing the grievance hours, we have the hours to clear the stewards for such sessions.

This PAC drive is important. We are past all the rhetoric of the election. Why you may have voted for one party or another isn't the issue any longer. How individual legislators support labor and keep American jobs determines who gets funding from the Steelworker PAC fund, not whether a legislator is a Democrat or Republican. Supporting those who support us is something everyone needs to contribute toward. Just a dollar a week through payroll contribution from everyone will help provide money for lobbying for our jobs and supporting those who support us on key legislation. Please sign up when we do the PAC drive.

At the union meeting one of the things discussed was summer help. I was disturbed to hear one of our members refer to these kids as "non-union labor." I guess nothing should surprise me any more, or disappoint me. But it does. The summer help program was negotiated by the local and approved by the membership. They are working here as part of our contractual agreement with the company. They certainly aren't "non-union labor," though it's true they

continued on next page

From The Presidents Desk...

continued from front page

aren't paying dues. The summer help program here was re-started in 2004, as part of the Productivity Plan, to help the plant save money by reducing overtime and to allow more people to get vacation during the summer, where applicable. Last year because we were in the process of recalling laid off people and they had priority for training, the plant didn't train most of the summer help people on job codes. This year we are training more of them on classifications and they can cover for people who want to be off on vacation, which is what the language provides for in our contract. Because they are trained on just one classification people who are trained on several classifications could get moved at times, rather than the summer help or anyone else trained on just one job. We have met with the company and the Division Chairmen and Business Center Managers are working to lessen moves that may occur. And even though overtime is virtually wide open, people still get upset if they think it might not be as plentiful. Summer help does reduce the overtime somewhat. None of which justifies the kind of comment I'm talking about. The membership approved a contract with summer help in it. The provisions of that agreement, concerning summer help, are being kept.

I also want to talk about solidarity and what's real, as far as this union is concerned. I talked earlier about getting ready for 2006. One of the things that disturbs me a lot is how we have people constantly trying to convince our rank and file members that the union "ain't doing nothing for us." Sometimes it's politics, cause they're out of office or can't get elected. Sometimes it's scabs trying to justify their freeloading. Sometimes it's someone who can't get a day of vacation when they want it, or who is upset because they're being disciplined, or has been moved from their usual job, or whatever. Sometimes it's someone who has a complaint, or "gripe," but not a grievance and has to be told just that. Sometimes, they did get

done wrong and the union is pursuing their grievance, but it isn't moving fast enough to suit them. Sometimes, it's a member looking back at the way it used to be before Goodyear nearly went broke and we had to make changes to survive. But at no time is it right to say "the union ain't doing anything for me."

We have a lot of people working hard to represent our members each and every day. We do a good job of it. Our contract sets the standard for the tire industry and for every other industry. We have COLA, and just got a thirty-five cent raise as a result. We have the highest wages in Goodyear and the highest of almost anywhere else, as well as a benefit package that is about as good as it gets today. We belong to a union that others are looking to for leadership and merging with to survive. We only have these jobs in Tyler because we have a union. Goodyear is only staying on shore to produce tires because of the union.

Every bit of that comes from a strong membership, one willing and able to fight for it's rights and able to produce representatives that can lead that fight, even in these tough times. Valid criticism is not something I resent. People questioning what's going on isn't a bad thing, it's a good thing. I would love to see hundreds of our members at each union meeting, listening and asking questions and stating opinions and discussing issues, being treated with respect and showing respect for one another, even when they disagree. But be careful of those who are so misguided that they come around saying something as ridiculous as "the union ain't doing nothing for us."

In June the Tyler plant went into a hiring mode for the first time in nearly two years. It's been a tough fight to get to this point. I appreciate everyone who comes to work, does their job and has supported keeping these jobs in Tyler. It hasn't been easy. We have survived and, as I've said before, we still control our destiny.

Goodyear Akron Facility Visits Tyler

During the week of June 20th several people from the Goodyear Akron facility visited Tyler, including Local 2 President Howard Kropff and the maintenance division chairman and alternate from that local union. Other Akron visitors included the production manager, maintenance manager and the plant scheduler for the Akron facility, which is also called the Akron Tech Center. Currently race tires and other specialty tires are produced at the Tech Center in Akron, where Terry Tennyson was the plant manager for a year before coming to Tyler.

"President Kropff and the maintenance stewards were here to learn about the lead hand program and our recent move to hourly maintenance coordinators, or planners, among other things. They, and the company people, spent time with their counterparts discussing what we're doing and sharing what is being done in Akron to perform maintenance and schedule production. We learned from them, and they learned from us, as a result. Four Goodyear NAT locations have been in jeopardy in the last few years. They include Huntsville, Gadsden, Tyler and Akron. We lost Huntsville in 2003. The other three share a special bond, often supporting efforts at the Goodyear Policy Committee level to help one another survive. Howard Kropff came onto the Policy Committee shortly after I came into office, first as a Policy Committee member and then as Local 2 president. He has gone out of his way to support us. We are glad to have him and his group here and to be able to share information that may be of help to his local and the Tech Center," said Local 746L President Jim Wansley.



From left: Bud Allred-Maintenance Division Chairman, Michael Manholt-Engineering Vice Chairman, Howard Kropff-Local 2 President, Jim Wansley-Local 746L President, Kathy McNeil-Production Control, Donald Headrick-Engineering Chairman, Larry Walz-Plant Manager (Interim), David Fiedler-Engineering Team Leader and Charles Benson-Senior Cost Accountant

Hot Weather Hazards

If you work outdoors in hot weather, or work in other hot environments, you are at risk for heat illnesses. The most serious of these illnesses is heat stroke, a lifethreatening condition requiring immediate medical attention.

Take these precautions to avoid heat illness:

- Take it easy. Working in a hot environment is a stress on your body, so don't overdo it. Take frequent short breaks.
- Drink plenty of water, and drink it frequently. Avoid alcoholic beverages and drinks containing caffeine which can contribute to dehydration.
- Dress in lightweight fabrics that provide ventilation. Light colors are cooler than dark colors which absorb the sun's heat.
- Know you are at particular risk for heat illness if you are overweight, in poor health, poor physical condition, have heart disease, diabetes or other medical conditions.

Know the symptoms of heat illness:

- Heat cramps are caused by heavy sweating which can deplete the body of salt. They may be accompanied by hot, moist skin and a slightly elevated body temperature. The cramps in the arms, legs or stomach can occur while you are working, or when you are relaxing after your shift. Heat cramps are a danger signal of heat stress.
- Heat exhaustion may be characterized by heavy sweating, strong thirst, cool and moist skin, a quick pulse, rapid breathing, nausea, a feeling of fatigue and possibly fainting. Heat exhaustion indicates the body's mechanism for controlling heat is beginning to break down.
- Heat stroke is a serious medical emergency that can quickly proceed to unconsciousness and death. It occurs when the body loses too much salt and water so that sweating stops. At that point, the body's temperature control mechanism fails and body temperature increases rapidly. Symptoms include hot, red, dry skin, a quick pulse, difficulty breathing, dizziness, confusion, strange behavior, weakness and nausea. Heat stroke can quickly progress to convulsions, coma, loss of pulse and an extreme body temperature. Death can follow rapidly.

Know how to treat heat illness:

- Treat heat cramps by moving into the shade and loosening clothing. Drink a lightly salted liquid. If cramps persist, seek medical help.
- For heat exhaustion, cool the victim as fast as possible, fanning and pouring water on the victim if necessary. Have the victim drink water and call immediately for medical help.
- For heat stroke, immediately begin cooling the victim to lower the body temperature as fast as possible. Immerse him in water or use ice to cool his body. Call for an ambulance immediately.

Other hot weather hazards:

- Sunburn is another hazard of hot weather. Not only is sunburn a painful condition, but it can contribute to skin cancer. Cover up to prevent sunburn. A hat with a brim, long-sleeved shirt and pants rather than shorts can help prevent burning. Use a sunblock with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. Try to stay out of the sun during the peak hours of 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Too much bright sunlight can cause temporary eyestrain and permanent eye damage. Exposure to the sun can damage the retina inside the eye, and contribute to the development of cataracts which cloud the vision. Protect your eyes from exposure to the sun's rays. Wear sunglasses which provide protection against both UVA and UVB ultraviolet radiation.

Hot weather can bring a host of hazards. Take precautions to prevent heat illness and sunburn.

Blimp Site Gets Interactive Updates

Ever wonder how the blimp works or how it got its name? Now Web surfers can learn anything and everything about Goodyear's 80-year-old fleet of aerial ambassadors through animation, videos, photos and more, at the newly updated www.goodyearblimp.com site.

Interactive features on the site under "Blimp basics" include:

- Blimp Anatomy – what makes up a blimp?; 21 areas are shown and described
- Controls – from the prop pitch to the inclinometer; 18 controls are detailed
- Electronic Sign – a historical review beginning in 1930
- TV Camera – how the airship provides spectacular views for sporting event coverage and more, since 1960
- Flight Scenario – from takeoff to landing and travelling to its next event

The site also features almost 30 short videos, historical information, frequently asked questions, a detailed description of the current 3-airship U.S. fleet, an image archive featuring historical and current photos of the interior and exterior of the airships, as well as a pictorial show of how

Goodyear builds a blimp. Information and pictures of Goodyear's Brazilian airship will be added to the site in the future.

According to Airship Operations, it's very common for community and media members to ask, "how's this thing work?" Now, with the new site and its interactive features they have a chance to see for themselves — it's like a private tour.

Goodyear's foremost goal of the site is to support the mission of the blimps themselves and to help drive traffic to Goodyear's corporate and business unit Web sites. Users can access all of Goodyear's Web sites via a single click on their choice of brand logo at the bottom of every blimp page: Goodyear, Dunlop, Kelly Tires, Sava and Fulda.

The site was designed and produced by Goodyear's internal Web site Operations department and Global Airship Operations.

July Strike Looms at Bridgestone Truck Tire Plant

With the largest voter turnout in its 15-year history, union members at Bridgestone's Warren County, Tenn., plant voted overwhelmingly to reject a contract offer. According to news reports, United Steelworkers Local 1155 officials will notify the tiremaker that it plans to strike on July 15.

The plant, which produces commercial truck and bus tires, was the first of eight Bridgestone plants to vote on the contract. The other plants are scheduled to vote at the end of the month.

Six of the eight unions at Bridgestone's plants are covered by a master agreement. The Warren County plant is not part of that agreement, although the proposed contract is similar. In 1996, during the last strike involving workers bound by the master agreement, the Warren County plant continued production.

The contract was endorsed by the union's negotiating committee, however, Local 1155 leaders felt the contract was substandard, news reports said.

Following their recommendation, 85 percent of the local's members rejected the contract.

A strike at the plant could place additional pressure on the truck tire industry, which is experiencing shortages due to near-record sales of new trucks and an increased demand for freight. North American Tire's Buffalo, N.Y.; Danville, Va.; and Topeka, Kan., plants, which produce commercial truck tires, have already taken steps to expand capacity and enhance productivity.

"The product demand situation in the commercial tire industry is well known," said Donn Kramer, North American Tire's director of marketing for commercial tires. "Goodyear is making every tire it can for its customers, and we will continue to work with them on their tire and service needs."

RETIREES CORNER

by Tennie Hulsey and Carol Swanson

Well, it's summertime again! The retirees are busy, busy as usual.

We are having our annual auction, Monday, July the 11th, at 6:00 P.M. in the John Nash Activity Center. If you have an item you would like to donate, please bring it to the auction, or call Eugene Hulsey and he will have someone to pick it up. There will be hot-dogs, drinks, and desserts available. The food will be \$2.00 per person.

If you are retired and would like to join the club, we would love to have you. I think you would enjoy the fellowship and fun.

On behalf of Hospice of East Texas, we want to say "Thank You Retirees" for your contributions of snack foods and refreshments that you bring to the regular meetings each month. It is greatly appreciated.

If you have questions please contact; Eugene Hulsey 903 566-2383 or Linda Bateman 903 561-6527.

Ladies Auxiliary.

The Ladies Auxiliary will be meeting July 5th, at 10:30 A.M. at The John Nash Activity Center. Bring finger foods and come join us.

S.O.A.R. Club

(Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees)

INVITES "YOU"
TO AN AUCTION

ON

JULY 11, 2005 @ 6:00 P.M.

AT

JOHN NASH ACTIVITY BUILDING

(Across from Kelly-Springfield Tire Plant)

13624 State Hwy. 31 West

Tyler, Texas 75709

\$2.00 Cover Charge

Hotdogs and Drinks will be served

We want to invite everyone to our Auction to make it the biggest and best we've ever had. Also if you have any items you can donate to this auction, the S.O.A.R. Club would appreciate all the help we can get.

Kelly/Tyler's Day Of Prayer Goes Well

Tyler's 2nd Annual, Day of Prayer was held on Monday and Tuesday of this week and by all accounts was a success. This observance served as an opportunity for employees to gather and pray collectively and reflect on the undeniable blessings that Tyler has and continues to see. Several employees had a chance to briefly speak at the flag pole on Monday morning where various members of plant management, union officials and front office staff met to say prayers.

Appreciation was expressed for having plant management that is willing to support activities such as this. The observance was made that this is not the case at many other industries in our area. Plant Manager, Billy Taylor was quick to mention how prayer helps him do his job everyday and also made it clear that the good fortunes that Tyler is experiencing were not simply by chance. Local 746L President, Jim Wansley stated how that the union has begun opening nearly all of the meetings of all kinds with a prayer. Wansley stated that, regardless of an individual's spiritual or religious beliefs, doing this sets a positive tone for whatever takes place afterward. Although this year was different from 2004 where area ministers were invited to the plant, the impact remained just as positive.



Kelly/Tyler's E.I. Coordinator, Jim Clark (second from left) kicks off the flag pole prayer meeting during Monday's Day of Prayer here at the plant.

Summer Help at Kelly/Tyler



May 23rd Group



May 31st Group



June 6th Group



June 13th Group

Watch'em Like Your Own

We currently have a lot of young (summer vacation relief) college students in our plant. The majority of them have never been in an industrial type work place until now.

Please remember that each of these women and men are part of our Kelly family and keeping them safe is the # 1 priority.

Do not ignore any unsafe acts or situations that you may observe which may place the students in harm's way. The parents, grandparents and other family members will also be forever grateful to everyone who watched out for the safety of their young adult children.

Where Are They Working?

Offloader Labeler

DeJuan Brown
Justin Mason
Destiny Bazor
Kayla Caldwell
Candice Bonner
Clint Wyatt

Cure Press Operator

Gabriel Roberson
Kristen Smith
Brandon Robbins
Timothy Magliamot
James Starnes
John Carpenter
Ronald Pullum

Controller Loader

Valerie Jones
Edward Moore
Ashlie Morrison
Jonathan Jackson
Holly Brooks
Dakotah Wyatt
LaTarra Bush
Jared Chilek

Duplex Roll Changer

Travon Brown
Cody Johnson
Garret Wright
Eric Blake

Trucker Tire Handler

Jeremy Tatum
Steven Casebeer
Caleb House
Christopher Harris
Roderikk Stephens
William Stout

Triplex Roll Changer

Shannon Marshall
Erica Hamlet
Jessica Jackson
Rebecca Martin

Liner Repair 410/430

Jasmine Smith
Melissa Skinner
Alicia Miller

R2 Tirebuilder

Stephen Saxon
Aaron Herbert
Fekesha Edwards
John Jones
Shalundra Sessions
Amanda Harris
Nikia Taylor
Eric Dews
Haley Deese
Sean Thompson
LaShara Johnson
Lakendra Record

Fighting for Unions

Some 57 million nonunion workers in the United States say they would form a union tomorrow if given the chance, according to new poll conducted in February by Peter D. Hart and Associates. For many of them, especially women and people of color, having a union is often the difference between living in or out of poverty. Yet the truth is that a sophisticated and systematic effort to deny workers their basic freedom of association is rampant in this country.

Employers and antiunion consultants have effectively thwarted the intent and efficacy of the law that supposedly guarantees workers the freedom to form unions, a human right protected by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and recognized by the US government thirteen years earlier in the National Labor Relations Act.

To put it in perspective: More than 20,000 US workers were fired or discriminated against for union activities, according to a National Labor Relations Board annual report. That amounts to a worker in this country being fired or discriminated against every twenty-six minutes for exercising the basic human right to form or join a union. Most employers infringe on workers' freedom to make their own decisions—routinely using legal and illegal tactics to thwart their efforts—according to Cornell University researcher Kate Bronfenbrenner. Fully one-quarter of private-sector employers illegally fire workers. And even after workers jump through all the hoops under current law and win recognition for their union, employers refuse to agree to initial collective bargaining contracts nearly half the time. This is a moral outrage.

Simply put: Our labor laws are so weak that employers routinely get away with breaking them, and when they are punished the penalties are insufficient to deter other unscrupulous employees from breaking the law. Right now the only penalty for most violations of the rights of workers to form unions is that the company must post a notice stating that it violated the law. Sometimes it takes several years before that happens, long after the effort to form a union has ended. The delay-prone and contentious NLRB election process is so unfairly skewed in employers' favor that the vast majority of workers decide to opt out of the process and use a majority-sign-up agreement, often called a card check, instead.

In November 2003 lawmakers introduced the Employee Free Choice Act. Under this legislation, when a majority of employees in a workplace sign cards declaring their desire to form a union, their employer is required to recognize their union. The act also toughens the penalties for violations of employee rights during organizing drives and contract disputes. In an effort led by workers, their unions and allies, 210 members of the House of Representatives signed on

to the act (less than eight shy of a majority), as did thirty-eight members of the Senate. The Employee Free Choice Act will be reintroduced as bipartisan legislation this month. Initially, our goal is to re-sign the vast majority of co-sponsors from last session, and by the end of the year we hope to secure majority support in the House and a larger plurality in the Senate.

Building support for the act is a critical battle, and we must show both parties that our effort and outrage will not subside until this bill becomes law. Scores of victimized workers will tell their experience firsthand to their elected leaders. In addition, the labor movement must educate and involve thousands of union activists and staff—and 100,000 rank-and-file union members in strategic areas. Working closely with allies, we must expand our base of support within the religious community and create vehicles for religious groups to include this effect in their work.

The labor movement, while still debating the direction of the AFL-CIO, agrees almost unanimously that the freedom to form unions is the central issue at the heart of our work over the next four years. Progressives outside the labor movement have to own this fight as well. Frankly, I can't think of a single more significant thing we can do together in this climate. Every effort to frustrate workers trying to exercise their fundamental human right to have a union must be addressed and treated as the moral catastrophe it is. The whole community needs to be aware of employer interference in organizing, leading to a groundswell of moral outrage that inspires people to agitate and disrupt business as usual.

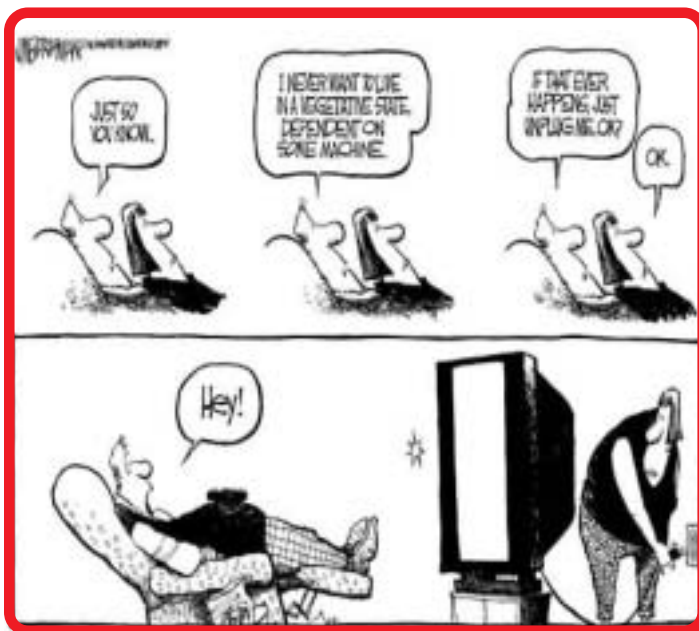
In addition, the labor movement needs to provide leadership that allows and fosters the mass movement of workers to change the climate for organizing. The fact is that ultimately, rank-and-file workers' willingness-or unwillingness to fight for this issue will determine what happens to us. That is why it is critical that anything we do to reform the AFL-CIO must include an expansion of the role of mobilizing workers as its central component.

This is a fight that goes on until we win, because allowing workers to freely form unions is an essential step toward restoring balance to our economic system, lifting people from poverty, strengthening democratic participation and insuring corporate 'accountability. We must wage this fight because it is the right thing to do and because history will judge our action at this incredibly decisive moment. STEWART ACUFF

Stewart Acuff is the AFL-CIO national organizing director. This article is adapted from remarks delivered in Wisconsin on February 11.

DEPENDENT AUDIT COMING

Starting some time in July you will be receiving information from Goodyear about a dependent audit. This audit will be conducted by Budco a company Goodyear has contracted with to conduct the audit. Goodyear believes there are ineligible dependents on our members and retirees benefits that should not be there. Most of the ineligible dependents occur when someone forgets to contact Goodyear when the dependent become ineligible. There will be an amnesty period in which these dependents will be allowed to be reported to Goodyear and all incurred benefits by the dependents will be forgiven. After the Amnesty period Goodyear employees and retirees may be held liable for all benefits incurred. While the Policy Committee agrees the benefits should only be for eligible dependents we do disagree with the procedures and remedies Goodyear plans to take. We will issue a letter of protest and take all measures available to us to insure our members and retirees are protected by the terms of our contracts. All information and forms will be coming to your mailbox so be on the lookout. When responding to Budco this must be done by hard mail only. Goodyear will provide the postage for regular mail. If you are one of the members that has to respond to Budco you may want to send it certified mail return receipt requested just to be on the safe side.



Obituary



Ronnie Richardson passed away in June. His last job was in Dept 911. Ronnie retired on April 1st 1999.



Paul McDow, 65, passed away on June 19th, 2005. He retired on December 1st, 2001 from Dept. 705.

China Tire Producers Oppose Tire Tax Idea

A new tire tax being proposed in China will affect many tire producers including Goodyear, according to news reports.

China plans to levy a 3 percent consolidated consumption tax on all tires produced in the country, according to that country's Ministry of Finance.

Radial tire producers have reacted strongly. They contend China's tax-free policy allowed radial tire production and technology to advance rapidly in the nation. The added cost of the tax, producers maintain, will sap funds used to develop new tires and fund new technology.

One argument against the tax is that China already collects a consumption tax on cars. A consumption tax on tires would mean double taxation.

Formally, radial tires were not taxed in China, while bias tires were taxed at a 10 percent rate.

401K CHANGE OVER

Everyone in the 401K plan should have received a welcome packet explaining the change over. Basically the record keeper of our 401k will be changing to JPMorgan as of August 1, 2005. I just wanted to remind you of some of the important dates to remember about this changer over. There will be a blackout period in which the change over will actually take place. During this blackout period which will last for ten days you will not be able to access your account. The dates for the blackout are July 27th to August 7th. You will have to have a Personal Access Code (PAC) to call in by phone or use the web site. This code will be mailed to your home, be on the lookout for this and do not throw it away. The web address will be changing to www.savingtoretire.com.

GM to close plants, cut 25,000 jobs

General Motors Corp. on June 8th unveiled plans to reduce its North American manufacturing work force by about 25,000 workers by 2008 as part of a broader restructuring.

Speaking at GM's annual shareholders' meeting, Chairman and CEO Rick Wagoner said that the automaker will close more plants "to get to 100 percent capacity utilization, or better" in North America, compared with about 85 percent in 2004.

GM's North American operations, which posted a loss of \$1.3 billion for the first quarter of 2005, have been eliminating about 8,000 jobs a year through attrition and retirement programs since 2002. GM's employs about 181,000 people in North America.

Wagoner said the reductions would require "an acceleration" of normal attrition. "We can take advantage of attrition to get a lot of those numbers, but it is highly likely that we will need to accelerate attrition," he said.

GM said the capacity and employment cuts would save about \$2.5 billion a year, or about \$530 on average for every vehicle it sells in the United States. GM has said it spends about \$1,500 per vehicle on health care costs for its workers and retirees.

The company said it is also working on plans to save money in areas such as purchasing, productivity improvements and health care.

Wagoner said GM management hasn't reached an agreement in talks with its major unions about ways to reduce the company's \$5.6-billion-a-year U.S. health-care bill.

Goodyear, a major supplier of tires and engineered products to GM, has been working to increase production of replacement market tires, such as the Assurance brand, to offset reduced orders from the automaker.

Goodyear, Tiremakers Sue to Change New Tire Pressure Rule in the United States

Goodyear joined with three other tire companies June 6th to file a lawsuit to change the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's rule regarding tire pressure monitoring regulation for cars and light trucks, stating that NHTSA's rule is fundamentally flawed.

The suit was filed in U.S. Court of Appeals by Goodyear, Bridgestone/Firestone, Cooper Tire, Pirelli, the Tire Industry Association and Public Citizen.

The rule was issued by the NHTSA in April to require automakers to install tire pressure monitoring systems by the 2008 model year.

"Safety is our highest priority," the tire companies said in a joint statement. "We have taken this significant step – along with Public Citizen and the Tire Industry Association – against NHTSA because we strongly believe the current TPMS rule is fundamentally flawed and as such does not fulfill the spirit of the TREAD Act.

"While we support tire pressure monitoring systems as a way to increase safety, the current NHTSA rule does not go far enough. There is technology available to provide faster, more accurate information to motorists and it should be required by this rule rather than settling for systems which are less accurate."

The tire industry has been united in its assertions that NHTSA's current rule may give motorists a false sense of security and actually may result in less safety rather than more as the rule intended.

"No tire pressure monitoring systems should replace regular tire maintenance and inflation checks," the companies said. "With this rule, motorists may mistakenly feel safe, and not believe they need to check their tires. We do not share that belief and by filing this action, we are taking an aggressive step to get the rule right. We believe this step is necessary."

In the new monitoring standard, a dashboard light will warn motorists if tires are underinflated by more than 25 percent. Goodyear and the others oppose the standard for a variety of reasons; they argue that a 25 percent drop in recommended pressure may leave some tires so underinflated they cannot safely support a fully loaded vehicle. Additionally, the current rule does not require TPMS to measure tire pressure until a motorist has been driving between 30 and 60 miles per hour continuously for 20 minutes. Other factors that could effect underinflated tires, such as heat and road conditions, are not considered in the NHTSA ruling.

Regulators estimate the new rule will cost the auto industry between \$800 million and \$1.1 billion to phase in the technology on all new vehicles through 2007. The more precise technology favored by tire manufacturers would cost more money.

Tire monitoring systems are already installed on 2 million to 4 million vehicles, mainly luxury models. Most pressure monitoring systems use sensors that are tied into anti-lock brakes.

Published monthly by
USWA Local 746L
13624 State Hwy. 31W,
Tyler, Texas 75709
(Phone) 903-595-3469
Joe Wyatt
Editor
joewyatt@cox-internet.com
The Stretch staff or publisher
does not assume responsibility
for views expressed in signed
articles published in this publi-
cation.



THE STRETCH
Local 746L

United Steel Workers Of America
Local Union 746L
State Hwy. 31 West
Tyler, Texas 75709
AFF-CIO-CLC
UNION USWA LABEL
746L

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S Postage
PAID
Tyler, Texas
Permit No. 884

BUY AMERICAN