



SYSTEM COUNCIL NO. 6

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS

Tom Owens
General Chairman

Shannon Spotswood
Vice Chairman

Mike Stacks
Secretary-Treasurer

General Chairman's Report – January, 2021

Brothers and Sisters:

Abolishments: The Communication Maintainers are still undergoing abolishments and territory rearrangements. One major issue to arise is the difference between “abolishment” and “furlough” under the Communications Agreement. Under an abolishment, the affected member must exercise his/her seniority displacement, even if the choice involving a relocation is necessary. If no choice is available, the member is then in a furlough state. Members have been choosing to not exercise their seniority and expect to be “furloughed” due to their voluntary choice to not go to the position afforded by their seniority. The Carrier has discovered their internal issue which allowed the members status to be shown incorrectly as furloughed. It should be anticipated that members not relocating to a position to which they are entitled to hold by seniority may be forced to decide between the relocation and resignation. I will continue to try to assist in obtaining a lessor remedy to each individual situation where I can due to the distances involved in such relocations. Members should note that the RRB benefit requirements for unemployment in such cases are much less restrictive. A member who chooses not to exercise seniority or resign may still be eligible with the RRB for unemployment. In such a scenario, the ultimate end game move by the Carrier would be to charge the member for a failure to perform duties with an investigation resulting in dismissal.

Furlough: There is an effort to obtain Rule 24 furlough relief workers at a few various points. We were successful in obtaining a placement opportunity for a senior member needing two months of qualification for retirement.

New PLB 5332: Our cases have been listed for our next round of arbitration. We have approximately 18 cases to be listed with the board. 189 Conway – sleeping; 190 Conway – improper performance rail camera; 191 Decatur – blue flag; 192 Decatur – false statements in investigation; 193 Atlanta – sleeping; 194 Juniata – felony charges off duty for theft, controlled substance; 195 Juniata – excessive absenteeism; 196 Juniata – felony charges unlawful restraint, threats; 197 Atlanta – failure to protect assignment; 198 Norfolk – derail, failure to follow instructions; 199 Juniata – cell phone; 200 Bellevue – abandoning assignment, falsifying payroll; 201 Chicago – abandoning assignment; 202 Bellevue – failure to run departure test, falsifying document; 203 Bellevue – failure to complete camera modification, falsifying document; 204 Decatur – absenteeism, false statements; 205 Chattanooga – repetitive disregard PPE, fall protection; 206 Kansas City – improper performance of duty

Covid-19: January has seen a notable increase of cases across the system and departments. It has been attributed to off work exposures centered around the holiday season. Two meetings with Labor Relations and Mechanical were held this month for Covid handling.

Medical Delays: We are experiencing ever increasing delays in returning members to work in non-COVID related cases. I have attempted to intervene in multiple cases with a few successes. However, the majority of delays seem to stem from a carrier delay in reviewing the submitted information ALONG WITH incomplete information from the member/doctor. The missing information give the carrier an “out” in the argument. I have conducting in-depth reviews with members when working on the cases. It is not uncommon to find several weeks of paperwork delay that can be pointed to being the member’s responsibility. Please stress to membership the need to be diligent in their personal record keeping and responses.

National Negotiations: The next meeting is set for February 23, 2021.

Active Claims: In addition to normal calls and information requests, the Council opened 13 trackable cases. Any issue that involves disciplines/claims advanced to the Council, letter responses, medical delay documentation, RRB benefit issues, health insurance issues, etc., generate a case file with the Council.

Travel: Chattanooga to represent member in investigation for failure to follow instructions regarding drug test; Charlotte to represent member in investigation for fraudulent credit card issues

Rosters: Processed and challenged seniority roster issues. Presently, there are approximately 35 disputes at various points, predominately communication rosters.

Juniata: Worked in depth with LU President Dorsch and supervision regarding acquiring in-house production of motors that supervision had planned to purchase from vendor. We were successful in obtaining a portion of the work for our membership.

In Your Service,

Tom Owens
General Chairman