

June 7, 2019

Hafa Adai sisters and brothers!

Assistant Business Manger Andie Kahakui and I went to Saipan to meet with IT&E leadership for contract negotiations. We were successful in getting a tentative agreement and the members of Unit 10 voted to accept it at their unit meeting on May 15<sup>th</sup>. The new 5 year deal expires at the end of September 2023 and will provide a 10% wage increase that gives incremental increases every 6 months for the members. The new wage increase will be retroactive back to March, so our members will start seeing the benefits of the new agreement on the next pay period. With the sluggish economy in the CNMI, the new 5 year contract will secure steady wage increases, and preserve the benefits that they currently have.

The Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas continues to recover from Super Typhoon Yutu and their main industry - tourism, is noticeably down since the natural disaster last October. Many of the homes and businesses in the CNMI that were destroyed by the storm are rebuilding, however IT&E's landline loss continues to put a stress on revenue and IT&E's wireless network has to make up for the decline in landline customers. IT&E's fiber network has remained reliable during the storm and throughout the recovery because it underground and our technicians are dedicated to the community that they live in. During the recovery period IT&E has been continuing their plan of migrating all its customers from the obsolete DMS central offices to the new soft-switches. Rota and Tinian have already finished the migration and the last CO on Saipan is scheduled to be fully migrated by the end of May. These new changes have brought new opportunities for our members to learn new technologies and Executive Director Rob Harrell and General Manager Rose Soledad has committed to train our members on the new software for provisioning and dispatching orders and tickets.

IT&E has also migrated away from its current payroll system to ADP, something that the members at Hawaiian Telcom already experienced. IT&E is making the transition in a more methodical way than HT did, running the two payroll systems side by side working out the bugs to make sure the final cutover doesn't impact its employees so drastically. Andie and I did share some of the issues HT had during its "flash cut" to help during the testing period.

In an attempt to increase call volumes in its call center, IT&E is looking at new ways of utilizing its operators. Executive Director Rob Harrell has been exploring new ways of

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boosting its call volumes by answering Alarm Company dispatching calls, online chat abilities, and taking survey calls for other companies. Having out of the box ideas is a critical part of making telcos successful in this changing time within the telecommunication industry and I thank Rose and Rob for including the IBEW with this change.

Hawaiian Telcom's Human Resource Director Kira Higa and I signed an agreement that outlines a Universal Contact Center Pilot Program. Director Higa and I thought it would be best to have a pilot program to see how a UCC would work instead of rushing into a drastic change for our call center members. We also believe that having a pilot program with a group of CARE reps would be best to see if the concept of a UCC could work at HT. Volunteers will be solicited for the 12 week long program and at any time during the pilot a volunteer decides they no longer want to participate, they can elect to opt out. HT understands that by permitting the Pilot Program to proceed, the IBEW has not agreed to the Universal Contact Center concept at this time. Please continue to share feedback and questions with your stewards or by calling the union office.

Senator Brian Schatz invited various labor leaders for lunch at his Honolulu office last month to discuss the various challenges surrounding labor here in the islands. Senator Schatz is the ranking member on the United States Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation and the Internet and he has always been a supporter of the labor movement. Local 1186 Business Manager Damien Kim and I shared our concerns about Spectrum, Hawaiian Telcom and Cincinnati Bell and the challenge of keeping jobs here in Hawaii. Senator Schatz said that he does meet with our IBEW leadership in Washington, D.C. regularly and told Business Manager Kim and I that he would be glad to assist us when needed.

Congratulations to Brother Sean Marsh's daughter Shawnee for winning first place in our local's Scholarship Awards! Shawnee was awarded \$2,000.00 for her future education at Chaminade where she will be studying for a degree in Nursing. Second place was Brother Ned Purdy's daughter Shannon who was awarded \$800.00 to pursue her degree as a Teacher. Congratulations to the winners and thank you for participating!

Thanks to all the members that participated at this year's National Association of Letter Carriers Food Drive. This year the food drive brought in 705,702 pounds of food for all of

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the islands - almost double that of last year's total. Save the date for the next year's NALC Food Drive which will be held on May 9, 2020.

June 1<sup>st</sup> is the start of hurricane season and having your family prepared for it is important. The Central Pacific Hurricane Center is predicting another above normal season this year so please make sure you have your hurricane kits ready for you and your family's safety. Sunday June 16<sup>th</sup> is Father's Day. Thank you to all of our hard working fathers out there and I hope you take time on that day to enjoy yourself and your family. Happy Father's Day!

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Troy Benevides', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Troy Benevides

Business Manager/Financial Secretary