

The End Of An Era

President's Report by Greg Golembiewski

I sat down several times to write this report, not knowing what would be the right thing to say or how you would react. After careful consideration, I decided to deviate from my regular president's report and talk to you about the plant closing.

Words cannot express how sorry I am to you that our plant is closing. Nobody worked harder than our chairman and shop committee trying to keep our plant open. They got their butts kicked for negotiating the Competitive Operating Agreement (COA) that we all thought would keep us open. They had your best interest in mind at all times, and I commend them for that.

I will never forget the shock and numbness I felt after hearing the news and just thinking - this can't be happening. I was in such shock while in the plant manager's conference room, I was unable to take notes. Recalling the walk from the conference room to the media center seemed like it took forever to get there. The plant that was bustling with the sounds of large presses, racks moving, crane horns, and the sounds of the andon boards just a half hour before, had gone silent except for the sound of people whispering.

As I walked with our Servicing Rep Harvey Woodard toward the media center, we made eye contact with several people, and without saying a word they knew this wasn't good. Once everyone assembled for the announcement, I started looking around at my coworkers, both hourly and salary, seeing the disbelief and pain in their eyes. All I could think about was their wellbeing, their families, our retirees who paved the road for us, our clerical staff, the community that depends on us and has been there for us during our good and bad times.

Even though we did nothing here at this plant to warrant our closing, I felt that I let them down. Steve and I spent a good part of the evening conducting interviews with the news media. By the time I left the plant and was on my way home, I remembered that today was my 29th wedding anniversary. It would be one that I would just as soon forget.

On what was supposed to be just another day at work and then home to my family, had turned out very differently than I had ever anticipated early that morning.

Since the announcement, Steve and I have been very busy working with the International, the shop committee, and several agencies to make sure that our members' needs are going to be met. Meetings are ongoing every day dealing with the plant closure, on top of running our day-to-day operations within our organization.

By the time you read this report, a Communications Task Force will have been implemented and will consist of all elected, appointed, and standing committee chairs. Steve Rop and I will convey information to the group and in-turn they will be your contacts out on the shop floor for information. We will also communicate thru target vision, newsletters, the web site, Focus on Labor, et cetera.

It is my hope that you will take advantage and utilize the communication tools that are being made available to you as we proceed thru these un-chartered waters.

In closing, I would ask everyone to please stay focused, work safely, and be patient with the leadership, the task force, and especially each other. Remember - no one here is to blame for what happened. We did everything that was asked of us, and then some. I am proud to stand with all of you and represent our local. I am committed to each and every one of you to see that your needs are met, and to make sure every effort is put forth to ensure you get to where you need to be.

In solidarity,

Greg Golembiewski
President