



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 1288

4000 CLEARPOOL CIRCLE * MEMPHIS, TN 38118 * TELEPHONE: 901-363-1563 * FAX: 901-363-3289

March 2010

Newsletter

REMEMBER TO GIVE TO THE IBEW-JONNIE DAWSON CHARITABLE FOUNDATION!

Employee Wins Job Back Through Arbitration



Rick Thompson
Business Manager

On January 4, 2010, an Arbitrator handed down a decision that reinstated Jeannine Feilds with full back pay, benefits and seniority at Memphis, Light, Gas and Water Division. Jeannine Feilds was hired at Memphis, Light, Gas and Water Division on March 2008 in the print shop at the Administration Building. She was terminated on March 9, 2009 for violation of Home Rule Ordinance 5063, Personnel Policy #21-19 "Residency Policy" and Personnel Policy #23-24 "Falsification of MLGW Records".

A "whistle blower" reported to MLGW that Jeannine Feilds was not in compliance with the residency requirement. An eleven day surveillance of the employee was initiated,

whereby a stake out was done at the residence that was put on the "Residency Agreement" at the time of employment. During the investigation, a surveillance of the employee's ex-husband residence in Olive Branch, Mississippi was also done. The surveillance observed the employee's car being in the ex-husband's driveway three of seven days of the stake out in Mississippi. Based on the surveillance conducted, MLGW concluded that Jeannine Feilds did not meet the City of Memphis residency policy to satisfy employment.

IBEW's Union Office filed a grievance for Jeannine Feilds and contended that she had met all the documentary requirements for MLGW's residency requirements. The Union provided additional uncontested supporting evidence for the employee. The Union also stated that the employee's explanation for her time spent at her ex-husband's resident in Olive Branch, Mississippi was due to her daughter and grandchildren residing at the residence.

According to Arbitrator, William P Hobgood, the record, through submission of required documents, supports the Union's contention that the employee maintained a residence in the City of Memphis. The arbitrator also stated that MLGW had not advanced any precise standards defining "living in the City of Memphis". **The Arbitrator states "the employer (MLGW) did not meet its burden of proof to terminate Jeannine Fields".**

This case should be an example of why the Union and Management have the responsibility to see that the grievance procedure is working properly and to insure that employees get a fair hearing. This should also be a wake up call for management in that MLGW and IBEW need to work together to settle grievances to achieve a "win win" solution for the employees, the company and our customers/rate payers. There needs to be better communication and an extra effort put forth to settle grievances before they get to arbitration.

When you take a panorama view of the grievance process at MLGW, it is a real dilemma and a nightmare, to put it vaguely. It appears to most employees that management at all levels at MLGW do not take the grievance procedure or grievances serious; but seems to only go through the motions when we have a hearing. If the process worked properly, then very few grievances would make it past the third step of the grievance procedure, which would result in most grievances being settled in house.

In conclusion, I want to take this opportunity to say personally, as Business Manager of IBEW Local 1288 Union; "I want to extend my hand to MLGW's Leadership to work with the Union to rid MLGW of this broken grievance process and to get more grievances settled to help the company's image, to help improve employees morale and help get us off the bottom of the J.D Power Survey in the best interest of our customers/rate payers in the final analysis".



Jeannine Feilds

Officers

Rick Thompson
Business Manager

Trent Ward
Assistant Business Manager

Bill Hawkins
Assistant Business Manager

J.D. Cox
President

Paul Lundy
Vice President
Chairman of Board

Ruth Taylor
Recording Secretary

Jacqueline Tabor
Financial Secretary

Marie Shotwell
Treasurer

Executive Board

Electric:

Brian Cook
Tony Carter

Gas:

Greg Vailes
John Jones

Water:

Corey Hester
Phillip Richmond

General Services:

Tammy Brown
Michael Jones

IBEW Leadership Visits MLGW Customer Care Center

MLGW's Customer Care Center (CCC) is a vital part of MLGW's work force. They are some of the front line employees that have to make a good first impression with our customer/rate payers. They work long hours, talk to thousands of customers a day, in spite of morale problems and other issues, yet they are still a group of positive employees that are grateful for their jobs and love helping customers. (See Union website for all the pictures and the quotes from the employees in the Customer Care Center next week at www.ibewlocal1288.com) *The Union will be visiting various departments to profile the positive things that employees are doing in their perspective areas on a monthly basis in the Union Newsletter and on the Union Website.*



Sandra Benson gives Business Manager, Rick Thompson a birds eye view of her job.

"I love serving the customers and I have been doing it for the past twenty one years in the Customer Care Center. I really appreciate serving the customers that I talk to each and every day".



Cathy Harvey expresses to Business Manager, Rick Thompson that MLGW is a good company to work for.

"I really enjoy working in the Customer Care Center because I have a good working relationship with my co-workers. I have developed good communication skills that allow me to be able to give good customer service to the customers that I talk to. Plus, I use the same communication skills when needed outside the work place.



Carmen Peronto expresses to Assistant Business Manager, Trent Ward how much she loves her job.

"I really appreciate the opportunity I have been given as a bi-lingual employee to be able to help the Spanish speaking customers who cannot speak English. I just love being able to help all the customers that come through on my extension.



Corey Walker expresses to Business Manager, Rick Thompson that he loves working with the group of co-workers in the Call Center.

"I want to let all my co-workers in the Call Center know that I love working with such a great group of employees. I just like being in a position of knowing that at the end of the day, I have done a good job of trying to help all the customers that I talk to."



LaQuinta Johnson expresses to Business Manager, Rick Thompson that it takes skills to do this job and she has it.

"I try to be kind to the customers on the other end of the phone, because you may never know who you are talking to. My job as a Service Advisor give me a chance to be a hero in the community and an opportunity to work with a group of loving and caring employees.



Constance Terry-Morris expresses how she loves her job.

"I truly and honestly love the job I do. It affords me the opportunity to serve in what I am called to do and that is to be a servant of people. I get a chance to help people from all walks of life and from different social economic backgrounds."

MLGW's Chairman of the Board Attends IBEW's Executive Board Meeting

Darrell Cobbins, Chairman of the MLGW's Board of Commissioners attended IBEW's Executive Board Meeting on Monday, March 1, 2010. The invitation was extended to the newly elected Chairman of MLGW Board of Commissioners by IBEW's Business Manager, Rick Thompson with the approval of Chairman of the Executive Board, Paul Lundy. All the Officers of the Union were present and several of the Chief Stewards also attended the Executive Board Meeting with great anticipation of conversing with Commissioner, Cobbins.

Commissioner Cobbins gave a brief highlight to what his goals were as the new Chairman of the Board of Commissioners with regards to facilitating better communication between management and the Union and between the Union and the Board of Commissioners. He also spoke candid about the role of IBEW in relationship to MLGW when asked his opinion by the Union's Business Manager, Rick Thompson. **Several Officers also shared with Commissioner Cobbins their thoughts and concerns regarding issues that affected employees across the division and offered suggestions on how these issues could possibly be corrected.** Commissioner Cobbins listened tentatively, gave feed back and vowed to look into a number of issues. It was agreed by everyone that the biggest breakdown between the union and management is communication and until that hurdle is crossed, the JD Power's survey rating for MLGW may be difficult to improve upon. Commissioner Cobbins extended to IBEW Business Manager and his staff an invitation to meet with him monthly to establish open communication with him as Board Chairman.

Councilwoman Janis Fullilove, Chairman of MLGW City Council Committee also attended this meeting just to observe.

IBEW Union is looking forward to establishing a better communication and fostering a relationship with the entire Board of Commissioners. IBEW Union is looking at inviting each of the Board of Commissioner Members to a monthly **Executive Board Meeting, Membership Meeting** and/or a **Steward Meeting** at some later date in the near future.



Chairman of MLGW Board of Commissioners, Darrell Cobbins explaining to Union Officers his goals as Chairman of the Board.



Commissioner Cobbins listens as Union Officers expressed their concerns and the concerns of the employees they represent in the various departments at MLGW.



Business Manager, Rick Thompson expressing additional concerns of the employees and how the Union and the employees can play an important role in MLGW moving from the bottom of the JD Power Survey.



Councilwoman, Janis Fullilove (Chairperson of the City Council/MLGW Committee) took notes and stated that she was only there to observe. She did express after the meeting to Union Officers that she is concerned about the employees, MLGW customers, the elderly, the children and the poor of the City of Memphis. She also stated that fairness for the employees at MLGW is one of her greatest concerns.

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS

LOCAL UNION 1288
4000 CLEARPOOL CIRCLE
MEMPHIS, TN 38118

Page 4

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1288

March 2010

FOR YOUR INFORMATION (FYI)

NEW MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) BOOKS

The New MOU books should be out and available in approximately ninety (90) days. The new negotiated language is being proofread and edited for accuracy.

MEDIATION OF GRIEVANCES

Mediation was held for two grievances that had been appealed to arbitration on Thursday, February 25, 2010 between IBEW and MLGW. A settlement was reached for James Bolden, however no settlement could be reached for Chris Proctor.

FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA)

The Union have **numerous complaints** from employees that management is harassing them about FMLA, the Union invited Nettie Lewis from the Department of Labor to be at our next Stewards Meeting, Thursday, March 18, 2010 at 5:30pm at the Union Hall to discuss FMLA Leave issues. **All attendees are requested to be on time.**

IBEW'S CUSTOMER SERVICE TEAM

The IBEW's Customer Service Team met Friday, February 12, 2010 to discuss a number of Customer Service Policies, including the MLGW Winter Moratorium and its impact on the customers, employees and the rate payers. Another meeting will be held in the near future to discuss ways that a number of policies, including the Winter Moratorium can be fine tune and better utilized for the good of all concerned.

IBEW-JONNIE DAWSON CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

IRS and the State of Tennessee has approved the IBEW-Jonnie Dawson Foundation and all requirements have been met by IBEW Union. MLGW has also signed off on the state and federal requirements and is implementing the payroll slot on the paycheck for the deductions. **The deduction cards are available and will be given out at the Union Office and by the Union Officers and Stewards.**

JD POWER SURVEY RATING FOR MLGW

MLGW is still in last place on the JD Power Survey in the South Region. IBEW wants to help get MLGW from last place, back to **first** place, as we once held. It is going to take IBEW, the employees and MLGW working together in a partnership deal with equal ownership and responsibility to begin moving from the bottom to the top of the survey. Charity starts at home, as the old cliché goes and until the morale problem and other issues with the employees at MLGW has been acknowledged and corrected, we may continue to see our great company at the bottom of the JD Powers Survey for some time to come.



Rick Thompson
Business Manager
ibewrick@bellsouth.net
(901) 870-3340



Bill Hawkins
Assistant Business Manager
ibewbill@bellsouth.net
(901) 870-3339



Trent Ward
Assistant Business Manager
ibewtrent@bellsouth.net
(901) 870-3338

Food for Thought

The Ultimate Challenge of a Man

The ultimate challenge of a man is not where he stands in time of comfort and convenience, but where he stands in time of controversy.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Please Note: When a member's **home** address changes, Union Members **MUST TURN THE CORRECT ADDRESS IN** to the Union Office. MLGW **DOES NOT** provide us with Address Changes.