



WashTech Plans and Goals for 2007: Building Upon 2006

By Marcus Courtney
President

Unity, Democracy and Justice are some of the key values that will be guiding the WashTech leadership in 2007. In the union's January retreat, at a beautiful turn of the century lodge on Lake Sawyer with stunning views of Mt. Rainier, the WashTech leadership team planned an ambitious agenda to move the union forward in the areas of representation, organizing, legislative and political action.

2006 brought tremendous success for the local: building a Cingular Action and Steward Team; electing three new Vice Presidents and a Chief Steward; filing and winning grievances; working with management on the attrition task force as well as creating a union-management working relations committee to highlight just a few. Everyone should be proud of the work we accomplished, but we are not resting on this success but using the momentum gained to aim higher and achieve even more in the future.

Here are some of the goals the leadership of the local wants to achieve in 2007:

Building the Local:

- Recruit communications and legislative committee chairs
- Expand the committee structure so each committee has members and regular meetings guided by goals.

Building the Stewards Army:

- Recruit 50 new CATs and 20 new stewards
- Vice Presidents and Chief Steward be trained up in handling first and second step grievances

Representation:

- Establish Clear grievance reporting procedures
- Strengthen and refine the new hire orientation process through the power point presentation

Organizing:

- Organize Cingular IT and Network Operations department which would add more than 250 members to the local.
- Increase our at large membership by 25%

Legislative Political Action:

- Conduct two Cope drives during the year to increase to 20% or more the number of members signed up for political action.
- Introduce legislation in Washington that would support business's in the call center industry that are union neutral and do not export jobs overseas.
- At the Federal level support legislative efforts at expanding Trade Act Adjustment Assistance and H-1B visa reform.

For success in 2007, we need more member involvement. I am asking for you to get involved as a CAT, Steward or a member of a committee. It will mean a chance for you to put the values of unity, democracy and justice into action.

Join the Cingular Action Team!

A union is only as strong and effective as it's members make it. We've put out the call for more Cingular Action Team members, so that we can have an organized structure in which to enforce our contract and build our union.

Our structure cannot be effective without members who are willing to stand up and become part of that structure. So if you would like to see the union "do more", then become a CAT member.

If you are interested in becoming a CAT member or Shop Steward, please contact a shop steward or Craig Gamble at the WashTech office.

A list of shop stewards may be found on the union bulletin boards in the various call center break rooms and in both the Bothell 1 and Bothell 5 lunch rooms.

You may also go to www.washtech.org to see a list of shop stewards and WashTech officials.

The Steward's Corner

By Rich Atheron
Chief Shop Steward, BEUC

I'm Rich Atheron, the newly-elected Chief Shop Steward here at Cingular Wireless, the new AT&T.

Just a little background, I have been working here for a little over five years now and have been through one divestiture, and two mergers, so I have become accustomed to the ever changing environment we work within here at the Bothell facility. One of those major changes was the unionization of the workforce here.

This was the first union shop I have worked in. I have always been a fairly vocal worker, which means that if I saw a way to do something better I made it known to the management, or if I saw something that didn't work, I would also tell them that. It's always been my opinion that if I don't ask, I'll never know, and if I don't raise an issue, no one will. That's always worked fine at the other companies I have worked for over my 31 years in the working world...except here.

No one would listen, and it seemed no one cared what experience I or that others had. We all felt very stifled here. Then we had the merger with Cingular, which was a union organized shop, and we all wondered if that would happen here. When the union organizers arrived here a little over a year ago, I had a lot of questions for them.

I knew that being a shop steward was a way to make the company listen, and as chief steward, a way to make some changes here to make things better for everyone. This was my goal from the very onset of the union here. Now that I am the chief shop steward, I can help to make things better.

The first task I took on was the new hire training orientation segment that stewards teach to the new hires. It was unorganized so I created a standardized method using a powerpoint presentation to make sure each class was given all of the material the new hires need to know about. More in next month's Unity on our other projects.

Always remember your rights. If you are asked into a meeting, ask if it could be disciplinary in any way for you, if it is, you should request a steward to be there with you.

We are here to protect **YOUR RIGHTS!!**

"Locals...Start Your Engines!" CWA District 7 COPE Contest to Begin

By Craig Gamble
Staff Representative

CWA District 7 is having a COPE drive from February 12, 2007 through March 23, 2007. This will be the first of two COPE contests in 2007. The second will be in the fall.

Participation in CWA's Committee on Political Education (COPE) program is crucial to make sure the gains we secure at the bargaining table are not undermined by unfavorable legislation. We use COPE money to educate our members on the importance of the union being involved in the political process at the local, state and federal level. We also use COPE dollars, to help elect politicians who will be friendly to passing favorable legislation which affects, not only union members, but working Americans in general.

This COPE drive's theme is "Locals Start Your Engines". Each state within CWA District 7 (15 states total) will have a race car, a driver, a pit crew and a car number. Our "cars" will race twice each week. Laps will be earned by raising additional COPE dollars. The more COPE dollars we raise, the more laps we earn.

You, the members of WashTech have made our local one of the best locals in the state when it comes to member participation in the CWA/COPE program. Let's lead the rest of the WA CWA Locals in this effort, to gear up for the 2008 political season, which is underway now.

CWA Delivers Higher Pay Scale

As you may be aware, earlier this month CWA and Cingular Wireless reached an agreement on wage scale slotting issues regarding certain specialty groups in the bargaining unit.

These changes went into effect on January 14, 2007.

Representatives in the following specialty groups will be moving to the newly negotiated BCSS 2 pay scale:

- EVHD
- EDHD
- ANS – ASR
- NBS – Product Support
- NBS – Database Exceptions
- Business Receivables Management – WIN CD

Representatives in the above groups will be transitioned into the new BCSS 2 pay scale in accordance with Article 19, Section 1(b) of the CWA/Cingular 2005 Labor Agreement.

Any representatives moving to the new pay scale, the move will be considered a step increase, as per Article 19 of the contract. Any representatives who move to the BCSS 2 pay scale and are over the top step will not receive an additional increase in pay as a result.

The annual February increase will proceed as scheduled, as per the contract and pay scale.

We all recognize that this win is just a first step towards our goal of creating a career path for call center workers at Cingular, the new AT&T, but we still have work to do. We will continue with our mobilization efforts in the call center. This victory by no means we can relax and not continue to strengthen our organization.

If you have further questions or experience any problems, please contact Craig Gamble at 206-726-8580 or craig@washtech.org.