

Some economic factors improve in JC3; wages still a problem

From an unemployment standpoint, five of the seven states in Teamsters Joint Council 3 have fully recovered from the Great Recession of 2008, and the two others are almost to that point, according to data compiled recently by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

But, despite the improving economy, median wages remain stagnant, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. And, while unemployment rates in 25 states have returned to their pre-recession levels, the economy failed to deliver much growth to many households.

That seems to cause much consternation among the politicians, but not much in the way of solutions.

Unfortunately, wages for most workers grew exceptionally slowly between 1979 and 2012, despite productivity — which essentially measures the economy's potential for providing rising living standards for all — rising 64 percent.

In other words, most Americans, even those with college degrees, are treading water — despite working more productively (and being better educated) than ever — pol-

icy decisions have eroded the bargaining power of low- and middle-wage workers.

Other economic factors, such as unemployment and job growth offer a degree of optimism, even in Joint Council 3.

Arizona and New Mexico are the only two of seven Joint Council 3 states that are not in the 25 states that have not reached their pre-recession unemployment rates. Fortunately, unemployment in those states showed considerable improvement, although they still show high number of jobless workers. Arizona still has a 6.1 unemployment rate, but that is 1.9 percent lower than it was in 2008. New Mexico's current rate is 6.8 percent, which is 2.6 percent lower than it was in 2008. Both states have higher numbers of Hispanic unemployed workers than the other council states.

Unemployment statistics in Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, New Mexico and Utah are now lower than they were before the recession started in 2008. Montana and Wyoming have slightly higher — one tenth of one percent — jobless rates than they had on December 31, 2007.

VAIRMA: Workers not sharing . . . , *cont.*

not so forthright, and some suddenly had problems with legislation they formerly supported.

And with the election of a solidly Republican House of Representatives in 2012, legislation such the Employees Free Choice Act (EFCA), which would do more to narrow the wage gap than anything else, was completely abandoned.

The only way to narrow the wage gap and to give American workers a real raise—not simply a pittance increase in the mini-

mum wage—is to allow unions to organize workers who want to be organized by forbidding employers from engaging in acts of intimidation and delay to thwart unionization.

Accomplishing this will be a huge task. Since the 2010 census anti-labor lawmakers won their huge majority in the U.S. House of Representatives and have taken control of most of the country's state legislatures.

We have our work cut out for us.

Utah has the lowest unemployment rate among the seven council states at 3.7 percent of the workforce. Wyoming has a four percent rate, while Montana is slightly higher at 4.1; Colorado and Idaho both have 4.2 percent rates.

Statistics on job growth in Joint Council 3 mostly coincide with unemployment statistics. Four states — Colorado, Idaho, Montana and Utah — have experienced healthy job growth totaling more than

300,000 jobs, while Arizona, New Mexico and Wyoming have lost jobs, although growth is now trending upward. Arizona is the loss leader with about 48,000 jobs lost since 2007; New Mexico has lost 1,000 and Wyoming 3,700.

Colorado leads in job growth, creating almost 175,000 jobs since 2007; Utah is next with 120,000; Idaho has created about 20,000 and Montana 10,000.

Teamster pulls accident victim from fiery crash

DENVER — Keith Frisbee, a member of Colorado Teamsters Local 455 who drives for Transervice, was commended by the company recently for stopping his rig after midnight and pulling an injured driver out of another truck moments before it burst into flames.

Frisbee was traveling south on Interstate 25, about eight miles north of Berthoud, CO, on September 14 when he saw two 18-wheelers parked in an emergency lane with their hazard lights on in the midst of debris and broken glass.

"I pulled in front of the trucks, jumped out and approached the first CR England truck with a WalMart trailer," Frisbee said.

The driver was okay, but the driver of the other truck was in trouble. Smoke was

billowing out of the truck. The driver was hanging halfway out the window, trapped in his seat belt.

"His right leg appeared to be broken and had a large gash in it," Frisbee said. "He was still conscious but not able to exit his vehicle on his own."

Frisbee worked to free the injured leg and managed to get the driver out of the truck, and, with the other driver, carried the injured driver away from the truck as it burst into flames.

Frisbee was praised by Transervice in its company publication, TransNews.

"Transervice is not only proud but also very fortunate to have Keith Frisbee as part of our company."

Union rips tactics . . . , *cont.*

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National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

The lack of progress in negotiations caused the union to file for a proffer to seek self-help (strike) with the NMB. The dispute could move through more stages and eventually could go before a Presidential Emergency Board.

The union is also engaged in frustrating negotiations on three other Frontier contracts—material specialists (stock clerks), which also is in NMB mediation, the aircraft appearance agents (aircraft cleaners), and for a first time contract with the maintenance controllers.

The company recently hired outside attorneys to handle negotiations for the four contracts. One of the proposals included elimination of the union's right to file grievances on certain subjects.

Negotiations for the aircraft appearance agents' contract have commenced but the union is not optimistic that the company's

"anti-union bias" will change.

United Airlines maintenance negotiations

The Teamsters National Contract Negotiating Team met with optimism in Fort Lauderdale, FL, last month in the final negotiation stages for a contract for maintenance workers at United Airlines, according to Don Ramsey, Local 455 business agent.

After waiting for more than three years, the company had promised serious negotiations.

"Good strides were made initially but slowed to the point where United presented the union with a "Close Out" proposal, a term similar to the "Last Best Final Offer" phrase used in other contracts. The union will present the proposal to the membership for a vote. Like Frontier Airlines, United Airlines is one of the top profit makers in the airline industry.



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