



# St. Paul Bargaining Update

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## **Gerdau Management still wants to "gut" our Contract.**

After 18 negotiation meetings between your bargaining committee and Gerdau, they still have not got the message! Your long standing contract rights will not be set aside. As we detailed to you in previous newsletters, Gerdau wants to make significant changes to our seniority rights, hours of work, overtime entitlement and pay, and they want to be able to force you to work the holidays. Gerdau is demanding more flexibility. Your Union understands that flexibility is important. BUT, so that all of you are protected from abuse, our collective agreement must have clear terms on flexibility on hours of work. So far, Gerdau has not listened to your Committee that you must have rights in the contract governing shift schedules and hours of work. We understand that you must be able to manage your life!!! Your Committee continues to insist that trying to accommodate Gerdau's proposed language changes to your contract **will not mean** giving up those rights and benefits you have in place.

### **Update from negotiation.**

Over the past two weeks we met for 7 more days (18 days total since July 20th). Critically important rights issues affecting ALL of you have been discussed at these sessions. Here is a review of the status of these matters.

**The Four Remaining Issues from the sale:** Profit sharing, Health care (mirror plan), Supplementary Unemployment Benefit fund, and Deferred Pension. The company lawyer has responded that these issues are being considered by people in Tampa.

**Hours of Work :** Gerdau wants the absolute ability to move you in and out of any work schedule they see fit. There is no way we can agree to this. On this critical issue, there must be mutual agreement between the Company and the Union. As a result, we have not settled this provision.

**Seniority:** There are extensive seniority rights in your current contract that you Committee is defending. We have made significant progress toward agreement on this important matter. There are still a couple of issues to be resolved.

**Grievance Procedure and Arbitration :** We have had to fight far too much about this provision of your contract. We've told Gerdau clearly that if there have never been any problems with our current language there is no reason to change it. Some progress was made toward resolution of this important provision.

**Training and testing:** Negotiation on these matters continues. Gerdau has made it clear that their program is the only one they want to implement and that it will not be detailed in our contract. Under their program, you can be forced to be at work extra hours. Under the current agreement you can not be forced to work more than 4 hours overtime per week. It is time for you to tell management that anything more than that is unacceptable.

**Health and Safety** language remains unresolved because Gerdau continues to tell us they want to remove the contract provision that requires a nurse or LPN. We say NO.

**Management Rights and Contracting Out:** Believe this !!! We are having a war with Gerdau over these very important matters. We will never agree to a contract that simply allows our employer to contract out any and all operations. You deserve better. Your hard work should count toward security, not unemployment. Stand up and tell them No Way!!

Although the pace of these talks remains very slow, your solidarity and support will help get us moving more quickly toward settlement. Further dates set are Oct. 3,4,5,10,11,12.

**Gerdau has NOT learned yet. These are Your Jobs - This is Your Contract**

**This is a copy of the latest newsletter from the Iowa negotiating Committee. YOUR Committee in St. Paul agrees with this sentiment 100%**

**OPPORTUNITY LOST -- TIME TO "TAKE OFF THE GLOVES"**

It is common knowledge that we fear what we do not understand. Gerdau has little experience with the United Steel Workers Union and fears we will "interfere" with their plans to re-deploy the work force according to their business plan. The companies cry for "flexibility" is nothing more than the right to respond to conditions in whatever irrational way they see fit. The same irrational way they have dealt with our contract negotiations. By letting an outside attorney push his anti-union agenda, the company is losing the opportunity for cooperation that would assure success and profitability for us all.

The local Wilton management will long regret, if they are unable to sell "The Wilton Way" of **cooperative effort** to Tampa Corporate, and instead allow an outside "rainmaker" to cloud the future for all of us. The numbers back us up. We are wildly successful considering our outdated equipment. Gerdau has said, "We didn't want the equipment, we wanted the workforce." The **UNION** workforce, so what is the problem one wonderful year later? The committee is not willing to let the ship sink, but Carl Czarnik, Ray Brisker, Brett Jackson, and Bob Barrett better start bailing for all they are worth!

Remember gentlemen, in Kingman (the great non-union utopia) there was **no raising Arizona!**

We estimate that a combined tab for the company to stonewall progress in negotiations at the three divisions is close to \$10,000 a day. That is a big price to pay for preconceived notions, or plantation owner mentality. Management in Wilton, Iowa, has always been allowed to direct the workforce, and together, we have worked at solving the most vexing problems, and surviving the toughest times.

The companies attitude toward our proposals, can only be categorized as "surface bargaining," because they will not seriously consider even the Union proposals, that **agree** with **their** plans and principles.

We got a counter proposal on successorship. They would inform us 24 hours after the company is sold.

The all encompassing management rights clause is still on the table. This operates at all levels, a few inadequate salaried employees, promoted by cronyism, will run wild with it, (mismanagement rights).

The company thinks **we** will give up our right gonad, just to work 12 hour shifts. They want to make it another, "trial" because formalizing it would limit their flexibility; "flexibility" like, "on call" lists.

The company is afraid that if Iowa legalized a "closed" or "agency shop," some of you would quit your job rather than be "forced" to pay union dues. This is just more of the company's unrealistic paranoia!

We had an incident reported where **INDG** employees used their automobile in a threatening manner toward members of your negotiating committee. Until they apologize, **they do not need your input.**

**This is YOUR CONTRACT, Time to TAKE OFF THE GLOVES and FIGHT!  
ISSUED BY THE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE OF USW LOCAL 8581**