

# BELLTEL RETIREEE

The Official Newsletter for Union and Management Retirees and Employees of Bell Atlantic, GTE, Idearc, NYNEX, Verizon and its Subsidiaries. Paid for by contributions from Verizon and Idearc retirees.

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## 13th Annual Membership Meeting Brings Together Verizon Retirees

On April 22<sup>nd</sup>, more than 200 Verizon retirees from ten states and the District of Columbia came out to Valley Forge, PA for the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Association of BellTel Retirees Membership Meeting.

Association members were welcomed by Executive Vice President Michael Kucklinca, who headed the annual meeting committee, followed by Association Chairman John Brennan's opening remarks and Secretary Richard Knapp's report.

Shortly thereafter, Association Treasurer Eileen Lawrence gave the financial report. Ms. Lawrence detailed how the funds donated by members were spent in 2008. She also explained the U.S. Internal Revenue policy that requires non-profit groups to log the total number of hours volunteers donated. For 2008, the tabulation determined that the Association Board time contribution topped 10,000 hours this year due to the effort to protect Verizon and Idearc retiree benefits and pensions.

Bill Jones, President of the Association, then spoke to those gathered about the recent progress and successes of the organization. He discussed the Verizon Pension Fund, which, according to the company annual report, showed losses and underfunding. Mr. Jones also touched upon the current status of Idearc, announcing that the Association has filed an administrative claim against Verizon. He assured everyone that a response from both companies was eminent. The company has since asked for an extension on



*The Board Members of the Association donated 10,000 volunteer hours in 2008.*



*Janet Winsten had a question on the myriad of changes to the Verizon Death Benefit policy for retirees*

their reply until August 3<sup>rd</sup> of this year.

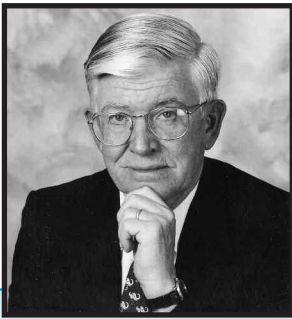
"Many retirees were taken out from under the Verizon umbrella to an undernourished Idearc. We are drawing a line in the sand on this one," said Mr. Jones.

Mr. Jones also discussed the latest Association proxy campaign, seeking a

*(Continued on page 10)*



*Retiree Mike Clinton, who lives in former Congressman Mike Ferguson's district in New Jersey, commented that retirees can effectively put pressure on their elected officials to get behind H.R. 1322. He said former Congressman Ferguson went back on his promise to support pro-retiree legislation, and ended up having to leave office amidst unhappiness with his constituency.*



## President's Message

by C. William Jones

The board and I were energized by an enthusiastic gathering of over 200 members at the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Membership Meeting in Valley Forge, PA on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Members and their guests traveled from 11 different states and the District of Columbia to gather with old friends, listen to updates on Association activities and to ask questions of the Association leaders. The states represented were: Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, Vermont, Connecticut, Delaware, Ohio, Texas and Massachusetts. At least one couple has made it to 10 of the 13 meetings.

This meeting gives us all the opportunity to discuss issues of importance and to receive valuable feedback from our members. We hope you will make the effort to come to the meeting in the future. I promise you will not be disappointed.

The economic crisis appears to be stabilizing and we can all hope for a recovery in the near future. I am sure that our retirees are concerned about their future in these uncertain times. One of the concerns is the health of our pension plan. The following information is drawn from the 2008 Verizon Annual Report which provides

information as of December 31.

It should not come as a surprise to anyone that the pension fund did suffer losses. For the first time since I have tracked results, the plan dropped below fully-funded status. The fund dropped from \$42.7 billion in December 2007 to \$27.8 billion at the end of 2008 – a loss of \$14.9 billion. The major reason for this loss was the negative return on plan assets of \$10.7 billion while benefits paid during the period were \$2.6 billion. The result is that the fund status at the end of 2008 is 8.6% underfunded.

While this is bad news, it is far from critical. The Verizon plan has been very healthy for many years. In 2002, an economic downturn coupled with unusually high retirements caused the plan to drop from a \$12.2 billion surplus to a surplus of only \$768 million. In the following years plan assets continued to grow restoring the funded status to a very healthy condition. I personally believe that, as the economy recovers, our pension trust will bounce back once again.

We have received many calls and notes from members who want to know when they will get a cost of living increase in their pension. While I can only speculate about that subject, I do have very strong feelings. First, I would be shocked if the company ever would give such an increase when the pension fund was in an underfunded status. Further, as you have seen in the past and as recently as 2007 when the fund had \$10 billion in excess assets, no increase was forthcoming in spite of all of our efforts.

The volatility of the stock market requires that a significant surplus be held in the event that economic conditions like we have seen in the recent and distant past are experienced. So the bottom line is that I would not expect any pension increase in the next few years.

That said, the Association will continue to do everything that we can to keep this issue on the table so that when

the time comes that an increase is possible, we will be in a position to put forth a very strong case for retirees.

Should you desire more information on this subject, please call or write to us and we will be happy to provide more detailed information.

This economic downturn has put added pressure on all of us, including our Association. Many members have responded generously to our annual appeal but unfortunately others have not. Contributions, as of the end of March, are down 16%. For those who have contributed we sincerely thank you for your generosity. For those who have not, we ask that you ask yourself, what would I do if the Association were not here to represent my interests? For those who are unsure if you have sent a contribution this year, please look at the envelope or your contribution card next to your name for a date. This date represents the last payment that we received from you.

I make a special appeal to the Idecare retirees. Of the 3,000 folks who were transferred to Idecare, we have only 1,324 on our data base. More shocking is the fact that only 352 have contributed in 2009. This, at a time when the Association is taking action to try to get those retirees returned to the security of Verizon. A legal process is under way in the form of an Administrative Claim against Verizon which would be expensive if we have to file suit. We need all Idecare retirees to make sure that all retirees who were transferred to Idecare are Association members and that they contribute. With Idecare in Chapter 11 bankruptcy, this could not be more important.

We understand that some members are under great financial distress at this time. For those in that situation, if you are unable to make even a small contribution, please call or write to our office and we will be happy to make you a complimentary member.

A final thought. A contribution to the Association of BellTel Retirees is an investment in one's own financial future.

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# The 2009 Association Proxy Campaign

At the May 7<sup>th</sup> Verizon Annual Shareowner's meeting in Kentucky, the Association of BellTel Retirees urged shareowners to vote against the company's senior executive compensation package (Proxy Item 3) and also vote to separate the offices of Chairman and CEO (Proxy Item 8). Both positions are currently held by Ivan Seidenberg.

In 2007 the retiree group led the movement which successfully passed the company's "say on pay" proxy.

In a letter sent to thousands of shareowners, retiree association president Bill Jones said "shareholders want enhanced accountability and compensation policies better aligned with shareholder interests," and called for more challenging performance hurdles and fewer windfall termination benefits. They also sought to end what Mr. Jones calls, "contradictory practice of the same person serving as CEO and Board Chairman, in effect making someone their own boss."

"A no vote on executive compensation is the only way to nudge the board towards a more realistic pay structure that benefits shareowners," said Mr. Jones. "The compensation structure for the company's senior executives has to be more closely related to how the company is performing for its owner, the stockholders."

A study by the Corporate Library has singled out Verizon for two consecutive years as one of 12 "Pay for Failure Companies" with the worst combination of



Wearing bright red "RESPECT" stickers and holding signs in support of the Employee Free Choice Act, more than a dozen union members and retirees leafleted shareholders before Verizon's annual meeting began.

Participating shareowners, including the Association's Vice President of Union Relations, Pamela Harrison (second from right) traveled from Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York and North Carolina to attend the meeting in Louisville.

Bill Londrigan, President of the Kentucky AFL-CIO, Attica Scott, Director of Kentucky Jobs with Justice and several other area union leaders were also on hand in support of the various proxy resolutions on the ballot that would benefit retirees and shareowners alike.

excessive pay and negative shareholder returns over the most recent five year period. Shareowners ratified the company's executive compensation policy.

The retirees also asked Verizon shareowners to vote for proxy item 8 to separate the roles of Board Chairman and

CEO, and that future board chairmen be selected from independent directors who have not served as an executive officer of the company.

"We believe that separating the roles of Chairman and CEO is fundamental

*(Continued on page 9)*

## GO GREEN

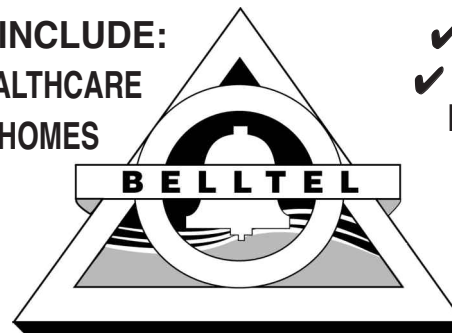
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# Administrative Claim on Idearc Progresses

In 2006, Verizon spun off all of its directory operations to a new corporation named Idearc Media. At that same time all existing retirees that had been associated with directory operations at the time of their retirement from Verizon and its predecessor companies were also transferred to Idearc.

Naturally, these retirees were extremely upset and worried about the safety of their pensions and benefits. They were assured by both Verizon and Idearc that sufficient funds were transferred to cover all pensions and that other benefits would remain as they were before the transfer.

The first hint of trouble came when concession telephone service, previously provided by Verizon, was terminated for these retirees. Later some experienced reductions in healthcare benefits. The Association of BellTel Retirees responded to calls for help and retained legal counsel to investigate options for those who were transferred against their will.

It was decided that an Administrative Claim and demand for documents would be our first step in an attempt to return existing retirees to Verizon.

On February 4, 2009, a comprehensive Class-Wide Administrative



Claim was filed with both Verizon and Idearc. This is the first step in the ERISA procedure that also includes requests for 13 Plan Documents. This filing was made possible by six claimants, three former management and three former union retirees who were transferred to Idearc from Verizon. The claimants are acting on behalf of all 3,000 retirees that were transferred against their will. The pending administrative claim is both a fact gathering mission and a prelude to a possible court challenge under Federal law ERISA.

Association of BellTel Retirees President, Bill Jones, said of the filing: "It is absolutely unconscionable that Verizon would transfer existing retirees, against their will, from a financially solid company to a weak

spin off with a questionable future. Those who were transferred have already experienced losses and reductions in their promised and earned benefits. The Association will fight for wronged retirees and, hopefully, will help them to be returned to the Verizon umbrella."

The first phase of the Administrative Claim was supposed to be responded to by Verizon and Idearc in 60 days from the filing, however, Verizon's inside corporate counsel states that the company wants additional time and will send a response on August 3, 2009.

Idearc has retained outside counsel who has strongly hinted that Idearc has no intention of responding to the pending administrative claim. The administrative claim letter is now posted on the Association web site: [www.belltelretirees.org](http://www.belltelretirees.org) and email news bulletins will be sent to all Idearc retirees.

Our retained counsel, Curtis L. Kennedy of Denver, Colorado who has much experience with Bell System ERISA related claims by retirees, cautions that to date, there has been no situation where companies have willingly undone an involuntary transfer of retirees from one company into a spinoff company, and there are no court cases where the end result was a success for the retirees.

Finally, we appeal to all Idearc retirees to make sure that the Association has **all such retirees** on file and that contributions are made by them. As of March 20, 2009, we had only 1338 Idearc retirees on our data base and only 363 have made a contribution in 2009. Please be sure we have your current email address on file with the Association so that we can provide updates as they become available.



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HR 1322

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## Idearc Files for Bankruptcy

At the end of March, Idearc filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy reorganization in Texas. Idearc also said it had reached an agreement with some of its principle lenders on payback options to allow the company to continue operations.

Idearc expects that its new reorganization plan will enable a significant debt reduction to a more manageable level. Idearc reports that it still generates a positive cash flow and maintains a hefty cash balance, and therefore expects to operate business as usual during the legal proceedings.

"Today we take an important step forward as we continue to transform Idearc. Essentially we have a company with good potential being held back by a terminally ill balance sheet," said Scott W. Klein, chief executive officer of Idearc Inc. "We are not only open for business and serving our clients as usual, we are also continuing our focus on transforming Idearc for the future based on a bold strategy, including all of the new programs launched earlier this month."

According to the agreement, the Company's total debt will be reduced from approximately \$9 billion to \$3 billion of secured bank debt with a 12 percent interest rate and a six-year term.

Said Klein of the plan, "One of our most important priorities is to put in place an appropriate capital structure to support our strategic business plans and



objectives. A new capital structure that can give all of our partners the confidence they need in us to be there for them in the years ahead provides us with the greatest chance for success."

Idearc has also filed various other motions, including one providing for employees to continue to receive compensation and benefits as usual and to maintain customer programs and guarantees.

"The reorganization process will enable Idearc to quickly finalize and implement a debt restructuring plan that will strengthen our financial condition and position us to compete more effectively in a challenging and rapidly evolving economic environment," Klein said.

### Idearc Proof of Claim

The Association office has recently received calls from Idearc retirees asking what, if anything, they should do about the Proof of Claim Form that they received in the mail from Idearc CEO, Scott Klein.

Please note that retirees should only fill out the form **if they have unpaid outstanding vouchers, or other reimbursements, that were submitted to or were incurred within 180 days of the date of bankruptcy (March 31, 2009)**. These forms must be received in the offices of Kurtzman Carson Consultants LLC by August 10, 2009.

It is not necessary to fill out forms for pension payments unless they are unpaid and represent payments for work up to and including the bankruptcy date.

If there is any further confusion, please direct questions to the Bankruptcy Clerk's Office in Dallas, TX at **214-753-2000**.

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# OPEN LETTER TO AARP PRESIDENT

*Jack Cohen, Association Director of Member Development, recently contacted the new president of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), A. Barry Rand regarding the organization's stance on the Emergency Retiree Health Benefits Protection Act (H.R. 1322). Below are excerpts from that letter.*

Dear Mr. Rand,

*"AARP and I have long shared the belief that health care and long-term financial security should be the goals of this nation, goals we all have an obligation to help achieve—from government to corporate America to the individual," Rand says.*



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What I cannot reconcile in my mind is the common perception that AARP is the champion of health care, especially for seniors. This contrasts with the reality that should the 18.6 million retirees still receiving employer provided health benefits actually lose those "earned" benefits; AARP stands to benefit the most in terms of increased revenues. It would be AARP rushing in to fill the vacuum. This happened with the introduction of Medicare Part D, which would not have successfully become law without the avid support of AARP.

In a December 4<sup>th</sup> report appearing in Bloomberg.com was the following:

***"After the Medicare bill was signed into law by Bush in December 2003, AARP was able to expand its contract with Minnetonka, Minnesota-based UnitedHealth Group Inc., which underwrites AARP's Medicare supplemental insurance plan. AARP increased its annual revenue from royalties by \$197 million to \$497.6 million from 2003 to 2007."***

Back in 2002, I wrote to your predecessor William D. Novelli about legislation proposed in Congress that would prevent the erosion of health benefits to retirees subsequent to their retirement.

The response I received from Mr. Novelli was that AARP would not support that legislation for fear that passing the bill would accelerate the stampede of corporations away from providing health care to active employees. That posture remained a mystery to me since it was apparent to me that AARP was fearful of what was already a hemorrhaging reality! Health benefits and pensions were earned and have always been inducements substituting for higher wages and vacations. It is a national disgrace that our national response to financial disaster is to throw our seniors under the proverbial bus. Since my 2002 interaction with Mr. Novelli, another **three million ACTIVE** employees have lost their employer pro-

vided health benefits according to a non-partisan Kaiser Family Foundation study. ***What Mr. Novelli claimed to have feared has already become a reality WITHOUT THE LEGISLATION, and still AARP does not support HR1322, (The Emergency Retiree Health Benefits Protection Act).***

**Here is where the Bloomberg.com report comes into play. I am beginning to get a distinct impression that although AARP on the surface presents a posture sympathetic to seniors (including retirees), the harsh apparent reality is that legislation such as HR1322 would work counter to the AARP business plan for revenue stimulation.**

There are 18.6 million retirees (coast-to-coast) who are still receiving employer provided health benefits. That number is decreasing as you are reading this note for one main reason. The same employers of those who, throughout their active careers, had continuously promised that they would have that coverage until death are dropping those retirees from health benefit coverage. Within that number of 18.6 million people, I suspect at least half are AARP members. If they all lose their retiree health benefits, who would they turn to for coverage? Naturally, they would turn to AARP. Personally, I cannot think of a more relevant piece of legislation for AARP to pursue and support ***if you are sincere in professing continued concern for the benefit of seniors.***

Last September 25<sup>th</sup> there was a Committee Hearing, and in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress it had become a bi-partisan issue. It now has legs and would have "wings" if AARP got behind the bill. Assurances have been given by Rep. John Tierney that Chairman George Miller and Chairman Andrews do plan to move this bill in the new Congress. The legislation has also received a warm reception on the Senate side and

*(Continued on next page)*



# Retirement USA – A New Look In Pensions

In March of 2009, the Association of BellTel Retirees was invited to participate in a conference at the National Press Club in Washington, DC to launch Retirement USA, an attempt to address the short comings of both the Defined Benefit Plan and the 401 (k) Retirement Plan.

This concept is designed to provide for a Universal, Secure and Adequate retirement system that when combined with Social Security will provide more reliable income to future retirees.

The groups that are leading the charge for this system are: the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, the Pension Rights Center, the Economic Policy Institute, and the Service Employees International Union. Over the past eighteen months these organizations have met with pension experts and representatives of worker and retiree organizations, such as the Association, to examine plans from around the world and determine the principles that should guide the design of a new visionary retirement

## AARP OPEN LETTER

*(Continued from page 6)*

confidence is high that a companion bill will be introduced in the Senate early in the 111th Congress.

Mr. Rand, as a member of AARP for many years I congratulate you on your new position. Also, as a long-standing member, I hope that you and AARP will support this legislation and help make it law. Even without AARP support, this law has the momentum behind it to make it to the President's desk. When it does, how will you answer other members who will ask the question: "Where was AARP?"

Sincerely,  
Jack K. Cohen

system.

At this time no specific plan has been designed but the basic principles have been established. More research and work must be done before this new concept is put in place. It is important to note that there will be no attempt to diminish the efforts to shore up the existing plans. However, it is critical for future retirees that a new comprehensive system be put in place to provide true retirement security for all Americans.

It has become clear that the movement away from the Defined Benefit Plan to a 401(k) Plan has been a disaster. To that end the Association fully supports the efforts of this coalition. Back in December 2008, Plan Sponsor magazine, a publication for Human Resources Executives, published an article by Association President, Bill Jones, rebutting an article titled, "Two Cheers for 401 (k)s." Below is an excerpt:

*How can [we] say that 401(k) plans are better? The migration from Defined Benefit Plans to 401 (k) Plans is a disaster for millions of employees and retirees.*

*I agree that there is a problem with Defined Benefit Plans and that is their lack of portability. Employees are no longer spending their entire working careers in one company. That is a prob-*

*lem that must be addressed.*

*[There] are much more serious problems with 401 (k)s. The three major problems are: 1) they do not make contributions mandatory; 2) pre-retirement access to the funds is too easy; 3) the average worker is not competent to manage their own retirement plan.*

*The result of these three problems is that employees are not saving enough, if at all, many of those who do save "borrow" from their plan and fail to pay the loan back, and finally too many people who manage their own investments will lose their nest egg because of poor investment strategy.*

*[An] entire generation of workers is marching toward retirement totally financially unprepared. According to Fidelity Investments, a 65 year old couple retiring in 2007 will need \$215,000 of savings just to pay for healthcare in retirement. That is up 7.5% from the previous year. About 40 percent of those people will be relying on Social Security for most of their retirement income.*

*Rather than cheer for 401(k)s we should be working on developing new kinds of Defined Benefit Plans that will assure workers that they will have a dependable secure pension that can be transported to another work place when the need arises.*

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# 2008 FINANCIAL REPORT

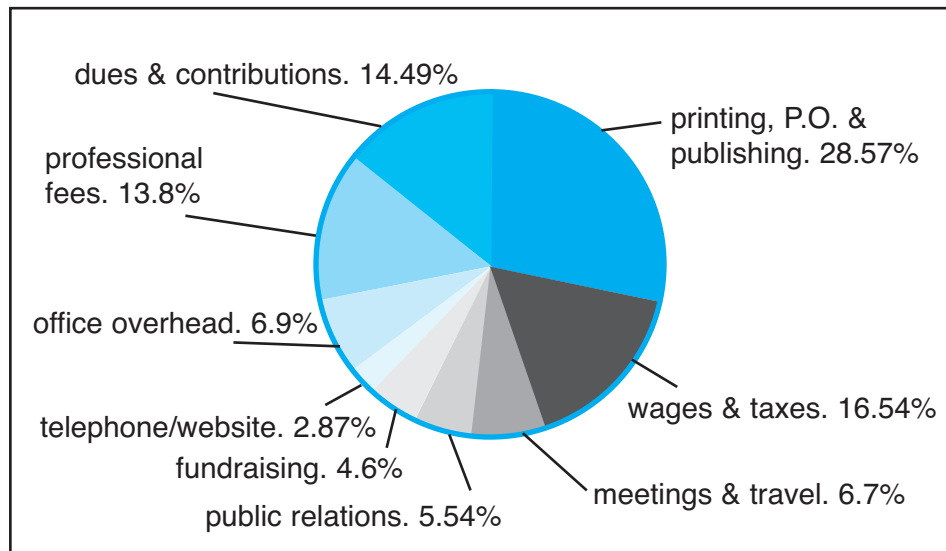
The 2008 financial report was presented at the thirteenth annual membership meeting in Valley Forge, PA on April 22, 2009.

Revenue and expense data is documented daily by our office staff as they track contributions and pay invoices through the QuickBooks® system of accounts. Data is reported monthly to the board. This gives us a snap shot of how we are doing and what to expect by year-end. We are grateful to our office staff for their constant attention to detail, insuring that data is correct and that proper paperwork is on file. This is critically important to the audit process each year.

## 2007

As required by the New York State Attorney General's Charities Bureau, BDO Seidman, LLP conducted an audit of our 2007 financial statements in June 2008. The audit included examining, on a test basis, records, receipts, methods and internal controls as supporting evidence of the amounts disclosed in our financial statements.

The auditors found that our financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Association of BellTel Retirees Inc. at December 31, 2007 and the results of its activities and its cash flows for the year then ended, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. The



audit's statement of financial position as of December 31, 2007 reflected total assets of \$495,590. Audit results were presented to and approved by the Association board and a copy has been filed with the New York State Attorney General.

## 2008

Following are brief highlights of our financial transactions for fiscal year 2008. Our financial records will be audited in the second quarter of 2009 prior to filing our IRS Form 990 and the NY State CHAR 500, "Annual Filing for Charitable Organizations."

## REVENUE

Our total revenue for 2008 was **\$758,849**, an increase of 2% for the year.

Contributions are our main source of revenue, and averaged **\$25.78**.

## EXPENSE

Total operating expense for the year (pre-audit) was **\$753,246**, **Publication of our newsletter**, including printing, postage and advertising, continues to be our largest expense, representing 28% of overall expense. We continue to look for ways to reduce these costs, but our newsletter remains our most impor-

*(Continued on next page)*

## OUR MISSION:

The Association of BellTel Retirees Inc. is dedicated to promote the protection and enhancement of the pensions and benefits for all retirees and beneficiaries of the companies and subsidiaries that make up the Verizon and Idearc Corporations.

The Association will convince the company to properly care for its thousands of dedicated former union and management employees.

The Association will conduct activities designed to educate elected federal, state and local representatives and promote the passage of legislation which will protect and guarantee, rather than invade our hard-earned pension and benefits fund.

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## Financial Report

(Continued from page 8)

tant vehicle for fundraising and for keeping our membership informed.

In 2008 the Association was able to successfully utilize the news media to tell segments of the American population of our retirees' economic and health care concerns. This investment in PR helped us achieve new coverage we could never afford to buy as advertisements alone.

The results include coverage in nearly 1,000 news web sites and over 285 publications such as the Baltimore Sun, New York Times, Denver Post, Newark Star Ledger, Detroit Free Press, Richmond Times Dispatch, Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles Times, Chicago Tribune, the Associated Press national news wire and many more. Clearly, the fact that in 2008, ABTR has the capability to tell its story in newspapers with a total circulation well exceeding 6.5 million readers makes a difference.

## Proxy Campaign

(Continued from page 3)

to sound corporate governance," said Mr. Jones. "When the CEO is also the Chairman of the Board the lines of accountability get blurred, compensation is less tightly aligned with shareholder returns and the decision to replace a poorly performing CEO can be skirted or delayed."

Numerous studies have found that shareholder returns are higher on average at firms with non-executive chairmen. A Booz Allen Hamilton study of the world's 2,500 largest public companies (CEO Succession 2005: The Crest of the Wave) found that in North America over the preceding three years, non-chairman

**Wages and taxes** accounted for **16.5%** of our expense. This includes an increase in paid hours for our part time office staff due to work volume, in particular the additional time required to research and respond to the inquiries of IDEARC retirees. This expense is at a bare minimum and it is offset by the unpaid hours of work by your board.

**Professional fees**, at **13.8%** of total, include Legal fees for **pension and proxy issues**, as well as accounting costs to cover our bookkeeping and **annual IRS and N.Y. State filings**,

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the amount of lobbying we can do is restricted by IRS guidelines. **Protect-Seniors.Org** continues to be our designated lobbying organization in our critically important goal of **passing HR 1322**. We are pleased with their grassroots efforts during 2008, and we will continue to support them in 2009. HR 1322 was reintroduced in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, and your grassroots and financial support continue to be

vital to this effort.

We ended 2008 with **total cash assets of \$473,265**.

### IMPORTANT 2009

*As this report is written, we are reviewing the results of our 2009 annual fundraising efforts, kicked off in January. Unfortunately, as of April 27, 2009 we are lagging 2008 by 16%. Without your contributions, we will fall behind in our goal to protect your pension and health care earned benefits. **Please consider a donation today to help us continue our work. You may choose a small monthly stipend charged to your credit card if that works better for you. We do understand the financial crisis in the country today, but your contribution is vital to our ability to get the newsletter to you. It keeps you advised of the latest information on issues important to you, such as our proxy campaign, and it unites Verizon retirees. Please ... support our work.***

Thank you.

Eileen Lawrence, Treasurer

CEO's produced shareholder returns three times as high as those of CEO/chairmen.

Financier Carl C. Icahn has also called for splitting the role of Chairman and CEO, to eliminate an "inherent conflict," saying many directors are "too cozy with management." Mr. Icahn says, "Non-executive board members are fiduciaries to shareholders who choose and oversee management, and the chairman is the main shareholder representative.

How can the chairman oversee the CEO if the job is one and the same, as it is at a majority of Fortune 500 companies?"

At the meeting, shareowners also voted to allow Mr. Seidenberg to continue to hold both offices. Since beginning their shareowner proxy campaigns at Verizon and its predecessor companies 12 years ago, the non-profit retiree association has caused numerous corporate governance changes.

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### RECOUP LOST ASSETS

DeVita & Associates, an experienced law firm with a practice limited to Brokerage, Fiduciary Abuses, and Financial Tort cases, represents telecommunications employees and retirees across the nation, all on a contingency basis, regaining their irreplaceable funds.

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# 13th Annual Membership Meeting

*(Continued from page 1)*

separation between the position of CEO and Board Chairman at Verizon, and further recounted the history of past successes which led to positive corporate governance changes at the company.

“If retirees are being asked to ‘suck it up’ for the good of the company, then we expect executives to do the same,” said Mr. Jones.

Following Mr. Jones was a legislative

report from Paul Miller, executive director & chief lobbyist of ProtectSeniors.Org. He advised the gathering of progress made on the group’s retiree legislation, the Emergency Retiree Health Benefits Protection Act (H.R. 1322) and the new co-sponsors it has garnered since it was first introduced.

Afterwards, Mr. Jones took questions from the floor (see side bar) on a range of topics, from H.R. 1322 to dealings with and concerns about the Verizon Benefits Center staff.



*This year’s annual membership meeting attracted more than 200 retirees to Valley Forge, PA.*

## NEWS AND NOTES

### New Jersey AFL-CIO Endorses H.R. 1322

H.R.1322 has recently earned the endorsement of the New Jersey State AFL-CIO, which dispels any rumors about this bill not being supported by the unions.

Mike McFadden of the Association board has been speaking at a series of IBEW retiree meetings in New Jersey, where he informed the multiple gatherings about the Emergency Retiree Health Benefits Protection Act (H.R. 1322).

In two of the six meetings alone, Mr. McFadden was able to gain 180 more retiree supporters of the proposed legislation and had those new supporters sign letters to their Members of Congress saying so.

### Association President to Speak at Retiree Meeting

Bill Jones, Association president, will be a guest speaker for the members of the Fraternity of Retired Telephone Workers (Philadelphia) at their meeting on July 30, 2009.

It will be held at the Cottage Green Restaurant in Philadelphia.

Contact Al Smith at 215-674-3636 for more information.

Members of the Association board are available to speak at your retiree meetings about our mission, work and volunteer options. If you’d like a member of the Association board to speak at your event, please call the office at: 800-261-9222.

## ASSOCIATION OF BELLTEL RETIREES INC.

PO BOX 61, Glen Head, NY 11545-0061

Yes! I want to support the Association of BellTel Retirees Inc. in our fight to protect the pension and benefit rights of all retirees and active employees. Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution of:

\$75    \$50    \$36.50‡    \$25   or   Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_   Check Enclosed  or Charge contribution to my

Visa    MasterCard   Credit Card Acct.# \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Craft    Management   I retired or expect to retire in (year) \_\_\_\_\_ from (Co.) \_\_\_\_\_

\* All names are kept strictly confidential   ‡ Only 10¢ a day

The Association of BellTel Retirees is a 501 (c) (3) IRS • Tax-Exempt Corporation representing retirees and active employees of Verizon, all of its subsidiaries, Idearc, and all of the companies that were combined to form Verizon.

Dear Association,

Enclosed is my check representing my 2009 dues contribution. Hopefully more retired Union members will partner with your organization for the good of all retirees. As I have stated at [IBEW] Local 827 retiree meetings, "Strength is in numbers" and together we can get H.R. 1322 passed in 2009 for the good of all retirees in the United States.

It is a pleasure to work with all the people I have met from [the Association] and I look forward to a successful year in 2009 for the good of all retirees.

With kind regards,

David F. Exner

Retired Treasurer, IBEW, Local 827

## Member Mailbag



Dear Association,

Please accept this small contribution for the Association -it is not much at this time but I hope I can contribute more in the future. I am so grateful you are there and to receive your newsletter – it is my only link to the best years of my life with New York –Tel-Bronx.

Thank you sincerely for all you have done for us- retirees.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Carneseccchi

Bayside, NY

Dear Association,

A thank you to all the volunteers of the Association; You are to be commended for the help and assistance you have obtained for the retirees, since 1997.

Sincerely,

Isabel Murray

New England, Tel

Boston, Mass.

\* \* \*

Dear Association,

I am one of the retirees who were transferred from Verizon to Idearc.

I am very grateful for all the hard work you people do to run the Association of Belltel Retirees.

You are truly dedicated!

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Margaret Gordon Hickey

Weymouth, MA.

## SPOTTING THE SYMPTOMS OF A STROKE

Time is of the essence when someone is the victim of a stroke. According to top neurologists, if a stroke victim gets medical help within three hours of the onset, the effects can be completely reversed.

However, the symptoms of a stroke can be difficult to identify. To better identify the symptoms of a stroke, follow these 3 steps: **STR**

**Ask the person to:**

**S: SMILE**

**T: TALK** and speak a simple sentence coherently

**R: RAISE BOTH ARMS**

In addition to these three tasks, you can also ask the person to **stick out his or her tongue**; if it curves to one side it is an indication that the person has suffered a stroke.

If the victim has trouble with any of these requests, emergency medical attention should be sought immediately. It can make all the difference.

## Isn't It Time You Got A Second Opinion About Your Wealth?



Recent events have sent shockwaves around the globe, causing stock markets to plummet and throwing the financial world into turmoil. Consumers are being urged not to panic, but with commentators talking of the biggest crisis since the Great Depression, many of us are wondering what the effect will be on our finances.

Are you worried about the safety of your savings? Concerned about the impact the global financial crisis is having on your investments and pension or not sure what to do about your mortgage? If you feel like your own personal finances are in a meltdown of their own, it's probably time you got that vital second opinion.

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**Joseph C. Watson**  
Executive Vice President/Investments





## Verizon's First Quarter Earnings Show Growth

Despite current economic hardships, Verizon reported financial growth in the first quarter of 2009.

Verizon's total operating revenues grew 11.6 percent to \$26.6 billion, compared with last year, as the company added revenues from its acquisition of Alltel Corporation in early January 2009.

Cash flows from total operations totaled \$6.4 billion, an increase of \$1.0 billion, or 19.1 percent, over the same period last year.

"Our business groups executed with excellence in the first quarter," said Verizon Chairman and CEO Ivan Seidenberg. "Our operational and financial discipline produced continued revenue and earnings growth, as well as an expansion of our already strong operating cash flows."



## BUSINESS NEWS

### Verizon FiOS Up, Landlines Down

Verizon also reported a total of 2.2 million FiOS TV customers and 2.8 million FiOS Internet customers, an increase of nearly 300,000 (up 84 percent and 55.5 percent, respectively) from the first quarter of 2008.

Meanwhile, there was an overall decline in Verizon's wireline customers. Business was down 12.5 percent with operating income down 33.6 percent in comparison with last year.

Verizon increased the availability of the FiOS triple-play to 9.7 million

homes at end of March, up from 6.5 million a year ago, with launches planned in Washington, DC and Philadelphia later this year.

### Top Lawyer Retires with a \$10 Million Golden Parachute

Verizon general counsel William P. Barr, who joined Verizon in the G.T.E. merger in 2000, announced his retirement effective at the end 2008. The former G.T.E. lawyer is now set to receive a retirement package worth \$10.38 million in July under the terms of his employment agreement—nearly 12 times his annual salary.

In total, Mr. Barr received in excess of \$15 million dollars in 2008 for his work at Verizon, which included serving as an executive vice president.

## Attention Verizon Employees



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