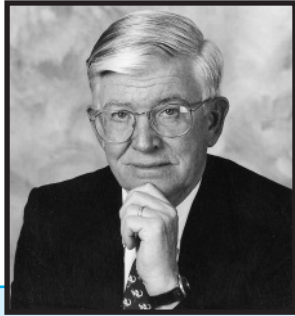


BELLTEL RETIREE

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.

Fall 2009

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President's Message

by C. William Jones

To many of our most fortunate and healthy members, the value of our healthcare benefits is somewhat foggy.

Yes, we all value these benefits and know that it would put a strain on our finances if we or a family member had a serious illness. However, looking at the value of those benefits from the perspective of a person who is living through a multitude of health challenges is a real eye opener.

In late July more than 2,000 Association of BellTel Retirees members responded to a survey that asked about their earned benefits and their feelings on the current debate going on in Washington, DC about a national healthcare overhaul.

To put this issue in further perspective, the following is a true account of the healthcare situation that one member of our Association, a retiree from GTE/Verizon, faces every day. I have taken the liberty of including only excerpts from her letter but I believe that this account will make you better understand the value many of our members place on the benefits that some may simply take for granted.

"As you can see, the company's generous offer of 90% paid medical insurance, (which actually costs us zero for Kaiser

HMO) covering two of us now, but until a year and a half ago it also covered my adult disabled daughter. It was worth it to me to accept the RIF and consequently retirement in 2003 in trade for the benefit. It wasn't an optimal time to retire, but my own damaged spine (from a workplace injury) guaranteed group coverage, with no worry about pre-existing conditions, and continued coverage for my daughter.

She has a genetic disorder, Ehlers Danlos Syndrome, Hypermobility type 3. Her body doesn't make collagen, the stuff that holds your body together, so she suffers from severe dislocations of arms, shoulders, fingers, ribs, hips, ankles, and it could be any joint. It also doesn't make scar tissue properly and since my retirement she has had 5 major surgeries to repair dislocating limbs. The company's group coverage, and the fact she was diagnosed years before she was old enough to have to leave the plan at 21, she was still under my coverage at age 29 when she got Social Security Disability Insurance and then decided to try to live away from home. But it was a godsend to have medical coverage, as a disabled adult dependant when she lived at home.

My husband was diagnosed first with prostate cancer in 2004, had a radical prostatectomy and associated treatments, and was then diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma in November/December 2007. He had been rified from his job at the Oregon Historical Society (OHS), and would have had no coverage except I had always covered him through my group plan at GTE/Verizon. OHS is a nonprofit, and has no benefits or pensions for their employees, except a savings plan, which luckily he contributed to for 20+ years, but he would have been in a world of hurt had I not had my company provided health plan. It's a whole different story when you're UNINSURABLE with previously existing conditions. There are no options, and nothing is available at almost any price.

As a family, we have always been conscientious savers, and thought we had

enough saved for retirement, and have, unless the company discontinued our promised group health plan. My husband has not applied for Social Security Disability Insurance, because he is 60 years old. Because of the nature of nonprofit jobs he always had low wages, so his monthly benefit would only be about six hundred dollars a month, and that wouldn't even cover his co pays if he was on Medicare, where the co pay increases from the fifteen dollars on regular coverage, to forty-five dollars on Medicare, and the drug coverage is limited. My husband's medications and chemo treatments would run about ten thousand dollars per month without our insurance. It is imperative that we have the group plan in force to keep my husband alive. I cannot state strongly enough how important this issue is to us."

— Suzanne L., Portland, Oregon

I appreciate the willingness of Suzanne to share her story with us. Her letter certainly makes the case for our Association and all of our retirees and their spouses to continue fighting with all our strength and resources to preserve these incredibly valuable benefits.

I hope that those of you who have not made a contribution to the Association in 2009 will listen to the message that Suzanne shared with us and respond to this appeal. To those generous members who have already contributed in 2009, please consider an additional gift to support the Association's efforts.

Remember a contribution to the Association of BellTel Retirees is an investment in one's own financial security.

SPECIAL REPORT:

**The Association Addresses
2009 Member Participation.
Coverage begins
on page 5.**



BUSINESS NEWS

Second Quarter Earnings are Up

Despite the hard economic recession, Verizon reported financial growth in their second fiscal quarter in 2009. Verizon's total operating revenues grew from last quarter's \$26.6 billion to \$26.9 billion mostly from Verizon FiOS and wireless data. Cash flows from operations totaled \$14.1 billion for the first half of the year.

"Verizon's posted continued strong wireless revenue growth and new levels of sales success with FiOS in the second quarter," said Ivan Seidenberg, Verizon Chairman and CEO. "This resilience in consumer demand for our wireless, broadband and video products has again produced overall revenue growth despite cyclical impacts, especially in business markets. Verizon's continued strong cash flow reflects the exceptional focus and disciplined execution across our business."

Verizon reported a net income of \$3.16 billion and a basic earnings per share of 52 cents. Verizon has increased its customer base with a total of 2.5 million FiOS TV customers, 3.1 million FiOS Internet customers and 87.8 million total wireless customers.

Verizon Named Among Best Employer for Health Benefits Offered

National Business Group on Health has named Verizon as one of the best employers for healthy lifestyles in 2009, citing preventative care and health care benefits the company furnishes to over 830,000 of their employees, retirees and dependants, costing the company \$3.7 billion in 2008.

The group points out that Verizon provides their employees access to the 44 health and wellness centers that Verizon manages on their work sites. The company also promotes health and wellness to employees that do not have health facilities at work by providing them with discounted memberships to other health centers at more than 2,000 locations.

Verizon Investigated for Market Power Abuse

The United States Justice Department is in the early stages of investigating Verizon and AT&T to see if they are in violation of any anti-trust policies related to agreements with handset makers and phone makers and the cost of text messaging. Verizon and AT&T said they have not been given

notice of the investigation.

U.S. Senator John Kerry said, "As the future of communications continues to move out of the ground and into the airwaves it is important that we ensure the wireless market remains competitive and consumers are protected."

Verizon FiOS Raises its Prices

Verizon Communications recently decided to begin charging higher prices for their new FIOS services, marketing their higher Internet speed capacity against cable providers.

The new price hike shows Verizon's confidence with their place in the market and their brand position. Mike Ritter, Chief Marketing Officer for FIOS stated, "You will not see us advertising prices any more. You will see more about what the experience will be."

The Verizon Triple Play bundle service (TV, phone and Internet) is being increased by \$10 from \$99 to \$109. The step up bundle is also being increased by \$10 to \$119. The service offers faster Internet speed and more television channels. The most expensive bundles range between \$129 and \$139.

Verizon is focusing on other projects to make them more competitive. "Verizon is working on other features that will bring Internet services like social networks onto television sets and also take pay-per-view movies, purchases on the set-top boxes, onto computers and cellphones" said Mr. Ritter.

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What's Next for Verizon Landlines in 14 States?

As reported in the Association's summer 2009 newsletter, Frontier Communications, the company purchasing landlines that Verizon is spinning off across 14 states, has agreed to a \$5.3 billion deal for the 7 million access lines in question. The spin-off will triple the size of the company, making Frontier the largest rural landline company in the U.S.

Territories involved in the spin-off are within the states of Arizona, California, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin. These 14 states are part of the GTE territory.

Following the transaction, Verizon shareholders are to receive one share of Frontier stock for every 4.2 shares of Verizon stock, giving them a total of nearly 68 percent of the company. Frontier will also give Verizon three seats on their Board of Directors.

In promoting its capability to swallow this large transaction and integrate the new landlines with their existing system, Frontier points to its successful takeover and integration in recent years of companies including Rochester Telephone, Commonwealth Telephone and Global Valley Networks.

Frontier says that the transaction, vastly expanding its territories will help it compete with cable companies and offer more broadband services for customers in these rural territories. Veri-



zation is divesting these assets as being non-core to the future direction of its service offering. Frontier sees these geographic areas as core assets and expects to roll out new revenue generating products to grow per customer revenue.

Skeptics of the deal point to troubles with past Verizon land line spin-offs negatively affecting shares. In 2008 Verizon spun-off 1.5 million land lines in 3 states including Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire to FairPoint Communications. At the time FairPoint hovered around \$9.75/ share at the time of the spin-off and today sits at \$0.52/ share (as of news deadline).

Maggie Wilderotter, Chairman, CEO and President of Frontier of Stamford, CT said the company plans to maintain a shareowner dividend post-transaction while it accelerates investment in rolling out high speed

services that will compete with suburban cable television operators.

In answering skeptics, Ms. Wilderotter points out that Frontier is a much bigger company than FairPoint was when they took over Verizon landlines and that existing technology will provide a smooth switchover in 13 states. Only the West Virginia territories will require systems conversion.

Frontier states that it has no major debt obligations maturing until 2011, when \$1.1 billion dollars will be due to creditors. The tax-free spin-off still requires the approval of the Internal Revenue Service, Frontier's shareholders, the Federal Communications Commission and various state regulators.

In the 2008 FairPoint spin-off, more than 3,000 employees but no retirees were moved from under the Verizon Umbrella to the company. As of the BellTel newsletter news deadline, no information has been disclosed regarding just how the transfer from Frontier may affect retirees from these 14 state service areas.

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Delphi Dumps Its Pensioneers

The Federal government has recently agreed to bailout the pension plans for the Delphi Corporation, a leading global supplier of mobile electronics and transportation systems and in-car entertainment technologies. The government's Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp (PBGC) has assumed financial responsibility of the \$6.2 billion debt, covering 70,000 Delphi workers and retirees.

This bailout will affect Delphi Corporation retirees and workers differently. Current employees and retirees covered under the United Auto Workers (UWA) union will not be dramatically impacted since General Motors is going to honor the agreements previously made by General Motors (GM). However, salaried workers may face significant reductions since government pen-

DELPHI

sion insurance is capped.

Due to the discrepancy in how UWA members and salaried workers are being affected, salaried workers are set to meet with President Obama's automotive task force head Ron Bloom. Den Black, leader of the Delphi Salaried Retiree Association states, "We're not looking for a bailout. We are looking for what we earned."

GM relies on Delphi, which it spun-off in 1999 as one of its main parts suppliers. Chief Executive Frederick Henderson said, "Our biggest challenge from a supply base continues to be sup-

porting Delphi Corporation in their emergence from bankruptcy".

General Motors agreed to pay \$70 million to the insurer because they assumed Delphi's unfunded obligations.

The pension guarantor placed liens on Delphi's offshore affiliates that are not in bankruptcy and warned Delphi

that it would use these assets to recover the costs of the company's pension obligation if it tried to dump financial obligations on the federal government.

Delphi Corporation filed for bankruptcy in 2005. An estimated 135 other companies have filed for bankruptcy this year, which could add to the PBGC's debt.

"We're not looking for a bailout. We are looking for what we earned."

— Den Black

Delphi Salaried Retiree Association



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2009 Special Report:
The Association Addresses Membership Participation



"You don't want the Association of BellTel Retirees to close also, do you?"
 They are still working hard on your behalf! A contribution will help!"

Verizon Retirees Need to Increase Support

76.4% Say Continuation of ABTR is Vital

Due to the current economic climate many thousands of retirees have not made a contribution to the Association of BellTel Retirees in 2009. This adversely affects our ability to operate and continue advocating for all Verizon retirees. For many years now too many retirees have stood on the sidelines neither contributing nor volunteering their time to protect their own and others benefits.

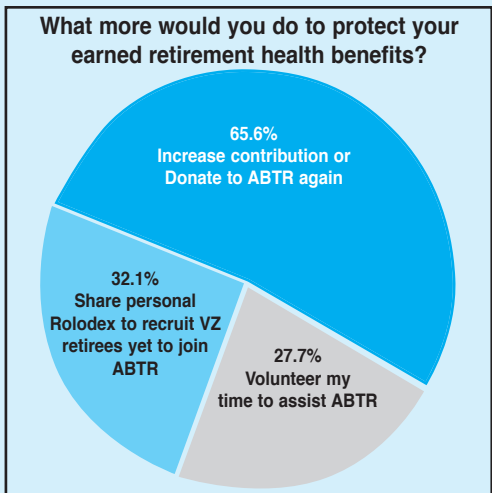
In late July, 2,241 Association members responded to an Association of BellTel Retirees survey and nearly 96% of Verizon retirees selected the continued operation of the Association to advocate for the protection of retiree pension and benefits. This comes in the wake of a steep drop-off in contributions to the Association.

As the deep recession carries on and as leaders in Washington D.C. vigorously debate a national healthcare overhaul, the Association wanted to take the pulse of its membership and gauge their priorities on the issues. During the four

day survey (July 17-21), a resounding 76.4% said the continuation of the Association of BellTel Retirees is vital to protect our economic future. Another 19.3% of retirees said BellTel is somewhat significant to the protection of their Verizon retiree pensions and benefits.

In the survey nearly 56 percent of our retirees reported that they have had their healthcare reduced or diminished since retirement. Additionally, others sadly reported that they were fully terminated from coverage.

Given the recent cancellations of health coverage in other industries and aggressive talk by most on Wall Street and Corporate America to zero out



(Continued on page 6)

Verizon Retirees Need to Increase Support

(Continued from page 5)

“Legacy Costs” (meaning pensions and benefits) from the bottom line, what are retirees to do?

When we asked Verizon retirees “if you lose your healthcare, will you buy equivalent insurance if cost is reasonable?” More than 28% said NO!

Some 90% say they are NOT willing to pay more in federal taxes or health care premiums to provide for their health care protection, with a resounding 75% saying that they ALREADY PAID for their health care protection in their working years.

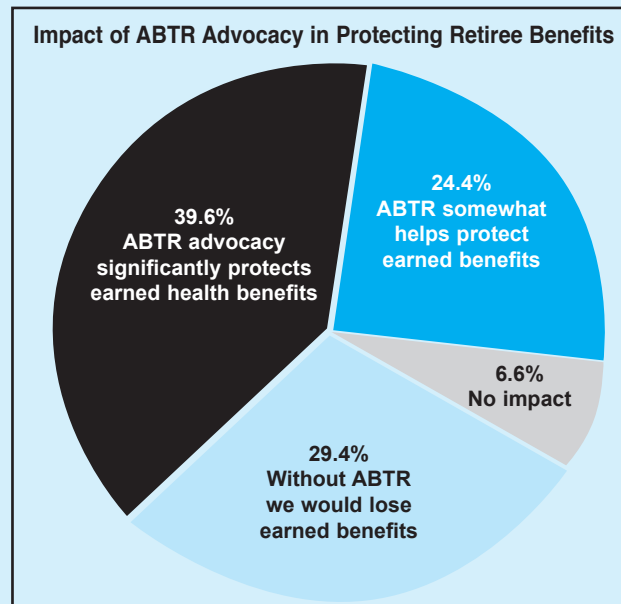
When asked if they had no choice but to pay for their own healthcare coverage for themselves and their family, 94.6% selected the lowest cost option of \$300-\$500 per month. Note: This amount might buy healthcare for a single, healthy male in his 20's but likely won't go too far for a retiree.

63.4% of members told us that the Association of BellTel Retirees and its campaigns to protect retiree have been vital in protecting your retiree health benefits, with 29.5% saying without BellTel, we'd likely have lost our earned health benefits and 39.3%

65.2% said they would increase their annual contribution and/or give a second time so we can continue the fight.

saying that BellTel has significantly helped protect the health benefit.

We asked retirees what more are they willing to do to protect their earned retirement health benefits:



65.2% said they would increase their annual contribution and/or give a second time so we can continue the fight. If the 1,000 survey respondents who offered can do so, that would help significantly but it is still not enough. We need 65% of the full membership to step up to the plate!

27.1% offered to volunteer their time to assist BellTel in its mission to protect retiree benefits. To those 400 volunteers we are anxious to hear from you.

32.1% offered to share with us their personal phone book and Rolodex of contacts from their friends and former colleagues at the company. You can send that info to us by email or snail mail.

It is clear that you value the effort of the Association and the more than 10,000 volunteer hours its core group of board members gave last year to fight for you. However, the falloff of member financial support is very alarming. We need more members willing to play a role and do their part!

Please respond to this membership appeal TODAY!

Idearc Retirees and BellTel Seek Administrative Claim

As previously reported, the Association of BellTel Retirees filed an Administrative Claim and Demand for Documents on both Verizon and Idearc on February 4, 2009. In essence, the object of this action is to have Verizon retirees that were transferred, against their will, to Idearc returned to the Verizon umbrella.

The Association also made an appeal, in person, at the Annual Shareholder Meetings of both Verizon and Idearc stating that these retirees were transferred from the security of Verizon to an undernourished spin off with a questionable

future. That charge was born out when Idearc voluntarily filed petitions for reorganization under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code on March 31, 2009. Verizon has notified us that they will respond to the claim on August 3, 2009.

Updated information will be provided to Idearc retirees in a supplemental bulletin. Also included will be a form that all Idearc retirees must fill out.

At present, the Association has a total of 1,323 members identified as Idearc retirees. Of those, only 531 have made a financial contribution to the Association to partially offset the costs of the legal

actions that are underway and planned. It is critical that all 3,000 Idearc retirees be identified as such on our records so that we can update them on breaking news. Further, it is essential that those retirees make a contribution to the Association to help defray the cost of this action. A payment card is enclosed for your convenience. Please respond today to this appeal.

The Association of BellTel Retirees Inc. is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, totally funded by the donations of its members. Contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

DONATIONS ARE SLOW – WE NEED YOUR HELP

Report From Your Treasurer

Dear friends,

Not surprisingly in this economy, our donations are greatly lagging 2008. In January, our expense forecast for 2009 was \$767,000, and this was after making as many cuts as we could and having the knowledge that our Board would put in some 10,000 volunteer man-hours this year. At that time, we estimated that contributions would cover our expenses, even with the economic turndown. **BUT** – unfortunately, that is not the case.

In January, we sent our annual appeal letter to you. Your responses started coming in and picked up through March (good news), but unfortunately they trailed 2008 at the end of the first quarter by 15%. This was somewhat disappointing. However, we were not the only nonprofit hit by the financial news that was impacting the nation – and people’s ability, **and desire**, to donate. The nation as a whole seemed to be withdrawing into some cobwebbed corner fearful of the next shoe to drop.

Eventually, the news started to feel a bit better – especially after the judge put “Bernie” in jail for 142 years.

In March, we sent a contribution reminder with your quarterly newsletter, and again contributions picked up. But they are still **lagging last year by 17%** as of mid-July. Part of the decrease regrettably reflects the number of long time contributors who have passed away. That tells us that we need a larger number of members to step forward and assume a more significant role in protecting our economic futures. We are moving ahead and closely, and cautiously, monitoring expenses. But the fact remains: **we cannot continue to manage the Association**

without your consistent and generous financial support.

In case you’re wondering – your Board members are really exactly like you. We have families we love, we have dreams, and we understand your fears and needs. We, too, are retirees – looking at our investments, figuring out ... will we be OK? Can we relax a bit, and send our grandchild a nice gift for his/her college graduation? **Our belief is that as one united voice, we can continue to protect our pensions and benefits. This is what keeps us contributing thousands of volunteer hours annually, while contributing our money as well to support the Association of BellTel Retirees.**

We are diligently pursuing the financial health of the Association because we believe we can continue to make a difference. **We cannot do that without you** – and quite frankly, **without your contribution.**

Will our fight matter in the future? I happen to think so, and it is one of the big reasons I’m in this battle. If we can fight – and win – it sends a great message to the younger generations. They, too will be able to make a difference. The ground rules will change because of a bunch of seniors – **we fought for that.**

Please – send a message to us that you want us to continue. Send in whatever you can afford right now.

We greatly appreciate the support we have received, even more so knowing these are stretched and stressful times at home. Thank you, always, for being part of the BellTel family.

God bless you and your families!

*Eileen Lawrence
Treasurer*

On behalf of your Board of Directors

ASSOCIATION OF BELLTEL RETIREES INC.

PO BOX 61, Glen Head, NY 11545-0061

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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.

Retiree Spotlight: Mike McFadden, Vice President of Union Relations

Mike McFadden may have retired as a Bell Atlantic communications technician in 1995, but he has not been idle with his time.

As an active member of the Association of BellTel Retirees, Mr. McFadden, a resident of Atco, New Jersey, serves on the board as Vice President of Union Relations. He also chairs the Union Membership and Grassroots Congressional Contact Committees of sister organization, ProtectSeniors.Org.

"I like being an activist and working with people who like to work hard toward a common goal," says Mr. McFadden of his volunteer work. "Especially this type of goal since it has the possibility of helping so many people including a lot of my friends."

Born in Philadelphia, Mr. McFadden served in the Air Force for four years as an administrative specialist in a communication's center. He became a New Jersey Bell lineman in 1961.

When he joined New Jersey Bell in 1961, the company offered only a group medical plan which cost about \$30 a month for both McFadden and his wife, Rita. At the time, his take home pay was less than \$40 a week.

He would eventually join and serve in a key position with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). In 1968, McFadden along with other union employees went on strike for seven weeks without pay to demand a wage increase.

But instead of increasing employees' wage in accordance with the union's demands, the company opted to offer full medical benefits, which cost the company much less than the proposed wage increase.

"I didn't think what the company was offering was a huge deal," recalled McFadden who took part in the strike and walked the picket line. "As time went on, however, we all know what happened to medical plan costs. They soared over the next two decades and in 1989 the company wanted 'give backs' and



Mike McFadden, along with wife, Rita, received the Volunteer of the Year Award from ProtectSeniors.Org this spring at the 2009 ABTR member meeting.

caps along with employee and retiree contributions toward medical benefits so we went on strike again."

"People should realize we were never 'given' benefits. Both unions and management employees' benefit packages

"People should realize we were never 'given' benefits.... benefit packages were either directly or indirectly a result of bargaining."

—Mike McFadden

were either directly or indirectly a result of bargaining."

Throughout the years, Mr. McFadden took an active part in other rallies for various good causes. For example, he has led various blood drives throughout New Jersey after the September 11, 2001 attacks on our nation. He managed to solicit donors through the IBEW Local #827 and the Association to date has collected 500+ pints of blood for the American Red Cross.

His work as an advocate for his fellow retirees also found Mr. McFadden seeking support for H.R. 1322, the retiree

legislation originally drafted by the Association for the protection of retiree healthcare benefits.

It should be noted that Mr. McFadden is able to do all of these wonderful deeds for the betterment of the retiree community because he has the strong support of his wife, Rita, who is often seen volunteering at the Association annual meetings, helping to greet members and register attendees.

According to Rita, "When Mike feels strongly about a cause he works hard for it, especially one that will protect retirees' health care benefits. And he is able to do this through the Association and with the support of IBEW Local #827 and the AFL-CIO."

"I am happy to do whatever and go wherever it does the most good," said Mr. McFadden. "I don't really consider it to be much of a sacrifice to do what I am doing since I will also benefit by a positive outcome."

As a volunteer, Mr. McFadden met with union retiree and active members groups who were interested in hearing more about HR1322. In 2008 alone, he attended more than 50 retiree and union meetings and signed up hundreds of new members and got thousands of form letters signed and sent to Members of Congress.

Mike McFadden secured the New Jersey State AFL-CIO's support for H.R. 1322 when some Members of Congress claimed the bill would not be able to get union support. "Thanks to Mike," says ProtectSeniors.Org president Jim Casey, "now we do."

Mr. McFadden was recently presented with the Volunteer of the Year Award at the Association membership meeting in April for his tireless efforts towards garnering support for H.R. 1322.

"I feel truly blessed at my age to still be able to help and I have learned a lot," said Mr. McFadden of his work with the Association. "I am real happy to have such purpose in my life and especially since that purpose may ultimately help so many people."

Update on Retiree Legislation in Washington

During August, the House and Senate were in recess and is usually a time where members host town hall meetings for their constituents. This summer however, many of those meetings were cancelled due to the large grassroots push against the current healthcare reform legislation. However, our members used this time to contact them anyway. Here's the health care status as the recess began:

The House of Representatives: (HR 3200) Healthcare falls under the jurisdiction of three committees in the House: Ways & Means, Education & Labor, and Energy & Commerce. Before the adjournment, each Committee reported out a version of their own healthcare legislation. The staff will now work to meld the three versions together so that the full House can vote on a final healthcare reform bill sometime in the early Fall.

The United States Senate: Healthcare falls under the jurisdiction of two committees: Finance, and Health Education, Labor & Pension Committees.

The Senate adjourned with the HELP Committee reporting their version of healthcare reform out of Committee, but the Finance Committee left without doing so. Therefore when the Senate reconvenes in September, the Finance Committee will have its work cut out for them. Staff will spend the month of August continuing to craft a bi-partisan plan they can report out sometime in September.

Because of the strong push in Washington by the leadership of our sister organization, ProtectSeniors.Org, senior Republican and Democratic leaders drafting the healthcare legislation indicate that provisions contained in HR 1322, the Emergency Retiree Health Benefits Protection Act, have a good chance of being included in the final package. However, there are no guarantees: the process is constantly changing.

Every major interest group in our nation — doctors, hospitals, drug makers, insurance companies and more — are fighting to have their needs included in an eventual compromise bill. Retirees must speak out in order to legally maintain the earned company-sponsored health benefits — or be overlooked and have that decision left to the corporations.

We must continue to keep the pressure on Congress to insure that ALL retirees are protected and allowed to keep the benefits they have earned. Please take the month of September to flood your elected officials with contacts — **we need their support for our provision.** Let them know you matter — and you vote. Don't accept a non-answer. Often it takes three letters before you get a definitive reply. **Don't let retirees be left behind!**


PLEASE HELP!

We need all retirees, your families and friends to bombard Members of Congress between now and the end of September with your plea: do not ignore retiree healthcare. If Congress passes health care reform legislation- **we cannot afford to have America's retirees overlooked.** Demand that HR1322 be included in all provisions of any national health care changes enacted.

Everyone's help is needed: write, fax, email, visit your members of Congress and strongly convey the need for retirees **earned healthcare** to be part of the final healthcare proposal.

Find the help you need at www.protectseniors.org; call 1-800-398-3044; email us at info@protectseniors.org

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Financial support is needed to help pass our law: The Emergency Retiree Health Benefits Protection Act HR 1322

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ProtectSeniors.Org

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ProtectSeniors.Org is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization. Contributions are not tax-deductible

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Planned Giving: Legacy Gifts Support

In 1826, James Smithson, a British scientist, drew up his last will and testament, naming his nephew as beneficiary. Smithson stipulated that, should the nephew die without heirs (as he would in 1835), the estate should go "to the United States of America, to found at Washington, under the name of the Smithsonian Institution, an establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men."

To this day, Smithson's generosity which at the time amounted to \$515,169 has created a legacy that has touched the lives of tens-of-millions of Americans and documented, like few others, the history of our great nation. From this has grown the Smithsonian Institution, which in the

year 2009 is a museum and research complex of 19 museums and galleries and the National Zoological Park, as well as major scientific research facilities.

Being Remembered by Verizon Retirees:

Recently the Association of BellTel Retirees Inc. found that it too had been remembered by several retirees and surviving spouses who had joined the Association in order to protect the pensions and benefits they or their spouses worked a lifetime to earn.

In their passing, these Verizon retirees and spouses made a final request that provides a continuance of their support for the economic protection of fellow retirees.

"Much in the way that people remember their church, hospital or local charitable organization in their will or even via a living bequeath, it has been truly awe-inspiring to see that our retirees and their families have considered the Association of BellTel Retirees and its mission of protecting Verizon retiree pensions and earned benefits as so significant in their final years," said Jack Brennan.

In one instance the Association was contacted by the family of a member who said that among the bequeaths his father had made in his will, one was to send a final contribution in his memory to the Association of BellTel Retirees to enable

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Association of BellTel Retirees Inc.

UNITED, TO PROTECT OUR FUTURE

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the Future of BellTel's Mission

it to carry on its good work to fight for the protection of fellow retirees.

Another example of an Association member remembering fellow retirees in their passing was an obituary published in a Florida newspaper. In this final tribute the departed's family asked that in lieu of flowers, mourners make a memorial contribution to the Association of BellTel Retirees, providing the address of the Association.

Very recently, we received a contribution from the surviving spouse of a member who asked that her contribution be accepted by the Association in memory of her departed spouse.

"When the Association was founded by NYNEX retirees in 1996 our mission was to advocate for the protection of the pensions and benefits that we and fellow telephone company retirees had earned

and that had been promised over decades of loyal service. When our membership soared beyond 100,000 members and surviving spouses, it crystallized that the needs of retirees to have someone to turn to and advocate for them was greater than we ever could have anticipated," said C. William Jones, President of the Association of BellTel Retirees.

"We are grateful that over the years ABTR volunteers have been able to make a difference in so many retirees' and surviving spouses' lives, helping to gain three increases in the minimum pension amount in 1999, 2000 and 2001 and a special lump sum pension payout for 91,000 retirees in 2000, while authoring and fighting for federal legislation to limit the reduction and in some cases threatened termination of health care protections for retirees."

In the wake of these generous bequests, the Association has formed a Planned Giving Committee to explore how these and further financial contributions or donations in the form of cash, property or stock from the estates of members might be maximized to support the continued effort to protect economic futures of the nearly 225,000 retirees of Verizon.

While we are keenly aware that there are many groups, from colleges to the Smithsonian to the Nature Conservancy and public radio and television that solicit for inclusion in individuals' estates, the Association of BellTel Retirees welcomes the suggestions and ideas of our members on this topic. We also want to extend our gratitude to our recently departed members and their families who remembered the Association.

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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RETIREE NEWS & NOTES

On Thursday July 30, 2009, Association president Bill Jones spoke at the Fraternity of Retired Telephone Workers retiree club in Philadelphia to 75 attendees, among them retirees from Lucent, AT&T and other Bell companies.

The question and answer session covered material including healthcare

reform, ProtectSeniors.Org, Idearc, COLA, proxies, etc. By a show of hands about 75 percent of those in attendance were Association members, with 60 percent acknowledging membership to sister organization ProtectSeniors.Org.

The retiree group, chaired by Mary Jane Barber, was very attentive, and was appreciative of what the Association is doing to protect retiree benefits.

Next Up:

Association President Bill Jones will

be speaking to The Hindquarters Group in West Norriton, PA on October 21 at 11:15 am.

For more information, call Glen Landis on 610-728-5369.

Do you have an upcoming gathering of fellow verizon retirees? If you would like a member of the Association board to speak at your event please contact the office at: 800-261-9222 or by email at association@belltelretirees.org.

Dear Association,

I'm sorry I do not have much to send. I just wanted you to know I appreciate your dedication. I am one of the poor spun-off-from-Verizon to Idearc employees. Thank you for a ray of hope.

Dolores J. Thomas
Loxahatchee, FL

Dear Association,

Enclosed is my 2009 contribution. Hopefully more will do this to help keep up the good work you are doing.

I am so grateful that you are there and I get a newsletter to know what is going

MEMBERS SPEAK

on especially with this economy the way it is. Thank you again for all the good work that you are doing.

Sincerely,
Elma Wells, Vestal, NY

The following is a July 15th letter written to the president of the AARP from an Association member:

Mr. Rand,
As a long-term member of AARP and

a member of the Association of BellTel Retirees with 35 years service with a Bell Company, I am compelled to question your failure to support the BellTel Retirees' effort to get H.R. 1322 through Congress.

It appears to me that your stated concern for the welfare of seniors' retirement and health benefits stand second to AARP's business interests. Therefore, I will no longer contribute to AARP's "Annual" fundraisers and numerous other requests for donations.

Sincerely yours,
Boyd Bowden, Presque Isle, ME

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