



LEE V. VERIZON LITIGATION UPDATE

By Curtis L. Kennedy, Esq.

Below is an update written for the members of the Association of BellTel Retirees Inc.

Lee, et., al., v. Verizon Communications Inc. – Now before the Federal Appeals Court.

On August 4, 2014, the opening appellate brief was filed in the New Orleans federal appeals court in the case of *Lee, et., al., v. Verizon Communications Inc.*, which case concerns Verizon's transfer of 41,000 management retirees out of the company's pension plan into a group insurance annuity sponsored by The Prudential Insurance Company of America.

The transfer of the retirees was not in the best interests of the retirees who had no say in the matter. As a result of being transferred out of the pension plan, the retirees have lost all federal protections and federal rights, are now subject to differing and inferior state laws, and they must exclusively depend upon the fortunes of a single insurance company. History has proven that no single insurance company is too big to fail.

Verizon stands out as the lone business entity within this country that neither consulted with its retirees nor allowed them a choice when making a decision to transfer retirees out of a defined benefit pension plan into an insurance annuity. Verizon's expulsion of retirees from an ongoing pension plan is unprecedented.

Not only did Verizon violate the rights of the management-classified retirees when the corporation transferred \$7.5 billion in liabilities to Prudential, the company used an additional almost

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Recalling the Miracle on Second Avenue

The 2nd Avenue disaster was the largest loss of telephone service from fire in the United States history, until the World Trade Center was attacked on September 11, 2001.

What began as a major catastrophe, turned out in the end to be somewhat of a victory for the "get it done attitude" of the Bell System workers.

On February 27, 1975, there was a major 5-Alarm fire at New York Telephone's Second Avenue building in the center of New York City. The building housed the main distribution frame that served customers in lower Manhattan and Brooklyn. With the 40th anniversary of that fire approaching, we thought it would be important to recall the hard work, sacrifice and valiant effort put forth by many thousands of telephone industry employees who managed to get more than 170,000 affected customers phone lines restored in record time. With a herculean effort, a project that would typically require up to two years of work, was accomplished in just three weeks.

We present the "Miracle on Second Avenue:"

It was a disaster that struck customers of the New York Telephone Company, but the disaster response was massive and on a national scale by operating companies and their staff from all across the U.S. It was a nationwide effort on the part of The Bell Company and Western Electric to get the phones across key parts of New York City to buzz again.

The five-alarm fire took 700 New

York City Firefighters and 16 hours to extinguish. Over 235 firefighters were injured as the huge blaze practically shut down the parts of the city with its dark smoke clouds, closing nearby Stuyvesant High School and forcing patients at the New York Ear and Eye Infirmary to be evacuated.

"It's unbelievable. It's like a movie. It's the fire in the phone company down there. It's a very smoky fire. The smoke extends all the way down to Queens," said radio journalist George Meade- who was reporting from a helicopter above the disaster site.

Once the fire was controlled, the true scope of its damage to the New York telephone system was revealed. A 300-block area was left isolated without any phone connections at all. The first two floors of the 2nd Avenue Bell Building were destroyed, ruining the entire main distributing frame, 31,000 switches, and 208 cables in the vault

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President's Message

by C. William Jones

As the year closes, we have a lot to be proud of and some ongoing concerns to be mindful of as well.

Throughout 2013 and 2014 we have made progress through face-to-face and written communications with Prudential, which now oversees the pension assets of 41,000 of our members. In recent weeks several more major U.S. corporations including Motorola and Bristol-Myers Squibb have sold off their retirees' pension assets to Prudential. This is yet another sign that retirees need to continue their vigilance and active advocacy to protect our collective economic futures.

We will see some new documents on Prudential's web site, that will address the concerns of our retirees who were transferred out of the Verizon Pension Plan and into an annuity held by Prudential. These documents were a collaborative effort to provide helpful information to annuitants. The Association web site will have a link to the Prudential web site. At the same time, Prudential has been working with our attorney to help develop model state legislation to replace important retiree economic protections that were lost by the transfer. Our legislative partner, ProtectSeniors.Org, will be working hard to push this new state legislation and you can help when the time is right.

ProtectSeniors.Org has also made progress in federal legislation that will, if passed, add new federal laws giving more protections for retirees' earned healthcare and other benefits. Two new

pieces of federal legislation, one in the U.S. Senate and another in the House of Representatives were recently achieved and this is something you are certain to hear more about in the new year when our pro-retiree legislation will be reintroduced. In fact that legislative advocacy on behalf of retirees was recently recognized in a feature story published in both *The Atlantic* and *National Journal*.

This year your Association was again successful in achieving improved shareowner protections via the Verizon shareowner proxy, as the company agreed to implement the terms of two of our proposals into its bylaws. Over the years your Association has passed three important proxy bylaw changes winning a majority share vote, with eight more proxy changes that the company negotiated off the ballot with us. Because of these efforts, our Association is recognized as the most successful shareowner advocacy group in the nation.

On the litigation side, our attorney, Curtis Kennedy, has filed the final brief in the Federal Appellate Court for the Lee v. Verizon case. This is the final step in this case and we hope that the three-judge panel will find in our favor. It will probably be three or more months before the hearing. We will notify members when that date is fixed.

At the end of this year, I will be retiring from the position as President & Executive Director of our Association. The growth and achievement of this organization has meant so much to my fellow retirees and me. It is why I am delighted to inform you that following an election by the board, our Association's longtime Chairman Jack Brennan will step into the position as President and Executive Director and our longtime Executive Vice President Jack Cohen will assume the Chairmanship of the board, resulting in a seamless organizational transition. The three of us have been working closely with the board on strategy and priorities for 2015.



BellTel leaders Jack Cohen and Jack Brennan.

I am also thankful to say that I will stay on as President Emeritus and continue serving as the ProtectSeniors.Org Chairman of the Board. It has been a very exciting and fulfilling eighteen years leading this organization. Your support over these years has been wonderful.

Speaking of support, I cannot let this opportunity pass without thanking the tens-of-thousands of retirees that have entrusted us with your hard-earned money and faith. As the year 2014 comes to a close, I will make one more plea for contributions.

We, presently, are trailing 2013 in terms of contributions. I know that many of our members like to make that tax-deductible contribution in December. So I call out to those great, generous contributors to make your donations to our Association as generous as possible. I am also reaching out to everyone else to consider an additional contribution. As a professional fundraiser once told me when I was Chairman of a YMCA in Maryland, "give until you are proud!"

Thank you all for your support and friendship and here's to an even stronger 2015 for our Association and our membership.

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80% Medicare Eligible Management Retirees Give Healthcare Feedback

By Jack Cohen

The Association of BellTel Retirees recently conducted a survey about the many problems our management retirees have experienced with the new United Healthcare Medicare (UHC) Advantage Group Plan PPO.

Beginning in 2014, eighty percent of our management Medicare-eligible retirees were placed into this healthcare plan with no other viable option offered. Since then we have compiled

than one-third of respondents still have at least one medical provider that will not accept the plan. Providers that are not accepting the United Healthcare Group Medicare Advantage PPO generally had no issue accepting the plan prior to Jan 1, 2014.

The Association has appealed to Verizon to meet and discuss these concerns but the company has refused.

In the fall of 2013, UHC announced their plan to drop thousands of doctors as well as many hospitals from their Medicare Advantage Plans. Regardless, Verizon still chose to roll out the United Healthcare Group Medicare Advantage PPO, claiming an easy transition. At least one-third of those in the plan are still encountering problems.

Why did Verizon roll out this plan for Medicare eligible retirees when it had so much negative notoriety

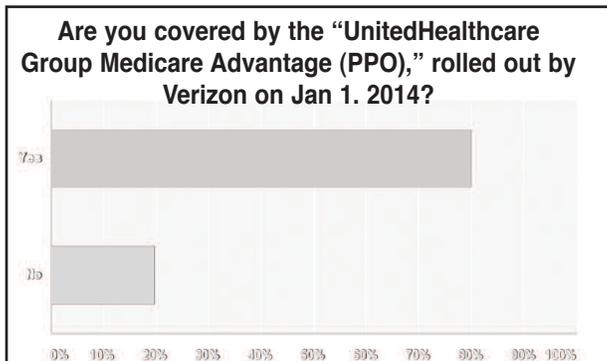
in the press months before it was rolled out? What was Verizon's motivation knowing that so many retirees would be forced to change providers that had been treating them for many years? I leave it to you to speculate on Verizon's reasoning behind continuing to support this Group Medicare Advantage PPO in the face of such adversity.

Verizon's posture is: "When we receive issues, we review them carefully and then take appropriate action with UHC." They encourage our retirees to report issues to the Verizon H.R. office.

They acknowledge that they have run into provider issues. However, they insist that there is: "nothing in the design of the plan that prevents a member from seeing any doctor that accepts Medicare." Essentially, if a doctor accepts Medicare there is no reason for the doctor or hospital to deny this PPO. Verizon anticipates less problems in 2015.

- Verizon has been very cooperative in handling complaints forwarded to them from our office and have been attentive to problems brought up. Examples include: negotiations

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an abundance of "horror stories," sent to our office including those of our own Board Members, including Association President Bill Jones. Many reported problems have since been resolved through our intervention and cooperation from Verizon H.R. and UHC. This survey helped provide a clearer picture on the volume and complexity of problems.

The online only survey, resulted in nearly three thousand responses showing that some 80% of our management retirees are part of this new plan. More

Members Share Experience with UnitedHealthcare Medicare Advantage

The Association of BellTel Retirees recently conducted an online member survey about the United-Healthcare Group Medicare Advantage PPO rolled out by Verizon in January 2014.

Here is what member's had to say:

- 80.17% of the management retiree respondents said they are covered by the UnitedHealthcare Group Medicare Advantage PPO;
- 19.83% are not;
- 94.77% have used their insurance card with doctors & providers that they previously patronized;
- 5.23% have not;
- 31.72% say that their provider, whom they used in the past, rejected the plan at least 1-3 times;
- 6.03% say that this plan was rejected more than 3 times;
- 62.25% say that there was no problem when they presented their new insurance plan;
- As of today, 76.69% say their medical providers accept the plan;
- 23.31% say their medical providers still refuse to accept the plan;

The survey had 2,767 members participating.

OUR MISSION:

The Association of BellTel Retirees Inc. is dedicated to promoting 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/SuperMedia/DexMedia 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.

2015 Retiree Meeting April 21 in Dover Downs, Delaware



Dover Downs will be the location of the 2015 Association member meeting.

The Association of BellTel Retirees will hold its 2015 member meeting in Dover, Delaware. We ask you to save the date and plan to attend and participate. The meeting will take place at Dover Downs Hotel and Casino on Tuesday, April 21.

Reservations are needed if you want to attend the 2015 Association of BellTel Retirees meeting.

To reserve a seat for the meeting, please complete and send the early RSVP form below. Be sure to include the names of all those attending and return it with your \$5 per person registration fee to Susan Donegan, c/o the Association of BellTel Retirees, P.O. Box 33, Cold Spring Harbor, NY 11724.

Please make all checks payable to The

Association of BellTel Retirees. Entrance tickets and directions will be mailed to you closer to the event date.

Please note that hotel reservations and event reservations are separate, and a reservation to one is not to another.

All members must register with the Association to guarantee a spot at the meeting.

Members wishing for overnight accommodations can reserve hotel reservations at a special rate of \$129 plus taxes and fees per night.

Please give the reservation desk the code GBTEL15 when booking. You can also visit their website at www.dover-downs.com. The hotel reservation cut-off date is March 20.

We look forward to seeing you in Delaware on April 21, 2015.

Association Stands United With FairPoint Union Workers

Contracts for members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and Communication Workers of America working for FairPoint expired on August 2, 2014. Approximately 2,000 workers walked off the job on October 19, and as of news deadline no negotiations have been held since.

The Association of BellTel Retirees has a long history of standing united with all workers, union and management.

At this time the Association of BellTel Retirees member population is about 50% former union workers and 50% former management. We have said from the very beginning in 1996, that we represent all retirees regardless of their affiliation.

Association President and Executive Director C. William Jones said, "We hope that negotiations will commence and an agreement can be hammered out soon. However, the Association asks its members to honor picket lines and decline requests to work should FairPoint ask for your help."

RSVP for The Association of BellTel Retirees Annual Meeting Tuesday, April 21, 2015 at Dover Downs Resort & Casino, Dover, DE.

A Ticket Is Required To Attend

I will attend the meeting in Dover, DE- # in party _____

Name: _____ Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Enclosed is a Check for \$ _____ (**\$5.00 per person**)

Please list your guest's names and addresses: _____

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

(You can list invitees names on a separate piece of paper if more than 2 are attending)

A ticket will be mailed to each member and guest for admission.

Please return this registration form and fee ASAP to: **Association of BellTel Retirees Inc.**
c/o Susan Donegan / P.O. Box 33, Cold Spring Harbor, NY 11724

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\$1 billion of pension funding to pay expenses to carry-out the transaction, expenses that should have been charged to corporate operating revenues, not charged to the pension plan.

Since the switch involved a retirement plan, the only applicable law and basis for any legal challenge is the federal law, Employee Retirement Income Security Act ("ERISA").

The ERISA claims asserted in the *Lee* case are novel. Never before has any group of retirees pursued any similar type of legal challenge. Therefore, when leaders of the Association of BellTel Retirees Inc. decided to support the legal challenge against Verizon and Prudential, it was readily known that the federal court case of first impression would not be resolved at the lower court level, but was destined for the federal appeals court and, perhaps, the United States Supreme Court.

The 78 total page informative appellate brief, is posted at the Association's website: http://www.belltelretirees.org/images/August_4_2014.pdf

The appellate brief gives a summary of the proceedings before the trial court, reports the essential facts and contains the arguments on the merits of the four separate claims asserted in the case. Verizon's team of lawyers filed



Curtis Kennedy, Esq. addresses Association of BellTel Retirees members.

their own appellate brief on September 22, 2014. Afterwards, the Association filed an appellate's reply brief on October 6, 2014. Now both sides await notice from the Appellate Court on when the case will be scheduled for an oral argument hearing before a 3-judge panel to decide the case. This could be several months from now.

At press time of the newsletter, no decision had been made. Once received, a hearing date will be posted on the Association's website.

The *Lee* case is being closely monitored by corporate pension sponsors, pension fund managers, the annuity insurance industry and ERISA legal professionals throughout the nation. Indeed, the case will develop federal

ERISA law that will have repercussions on retiree pensioners throughout the nation.

The Association will continue to provide updates and announcements about the *Lee* case, as well as other legal proceedings for the benefit of retirees, which matters are being championed by the Association.



Association of BellTel Retirees Inc.

UNITED, TO PROTECT OUR FUTURE

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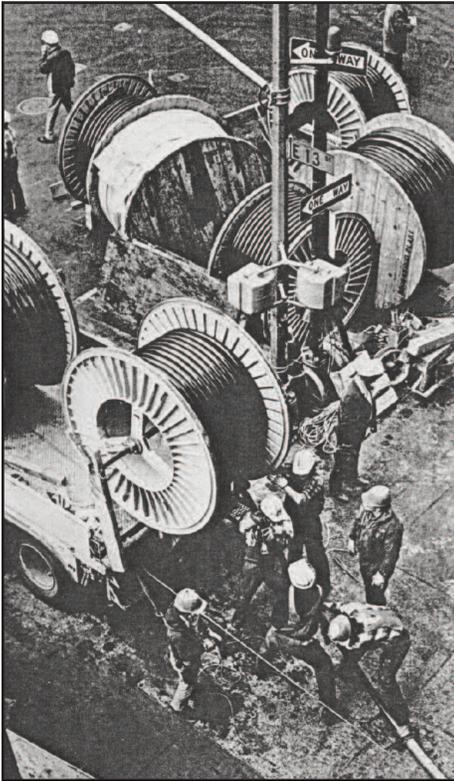
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Recalling the Miracle

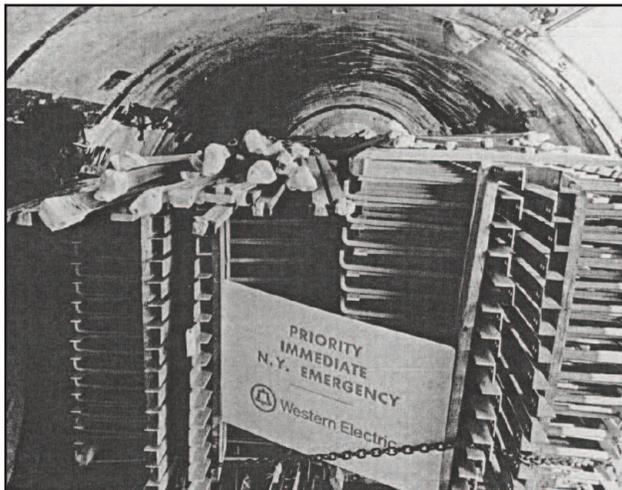


All photos courtesy of the New York Telephone Company

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were charred and melted. Four panel offices were left in ruins, the power plant was gone, and the carrier center was destroyed.

Then New York Telephone Vice President Lee Oberst made the bold promise to restore the 170,000 lines within three weeks. This was an



unthinkable feat, since during that time a project of that size could take up to two years.

The first order of business was to send a team of Bell Lab scientists in to assess damage and offer solutions as to how to salvage and clean equipment, fix structural damage, switch transmission power, and reroute calls.

After an action plan was quickly made, it was a nationwide effort between The Bell System and Western Electric to repair the damage. Within hours of the fire, 4,000 workers were brought in from across the state and from operating companies throughout the country to repair the 2nd Avenue building. New York Telephone splicers, linemen, building engineers, and supervisors worked hand and hand with Western Electric installers, Bell Lab technicians, and the Empire City Subway Company and so many more industry professionals.

The clean up effort demanded thousands of gallons of water be removed from the building. Torches were used to cut away unsalvageable equipment, 16 million switch contacts and relays were cleaned with cotton swabs dipped in a chemical recommended by the Bell scientists, and over the course of six days, millions of feet of cable were removed from the vault. Within days, water, heat, lights and electric were restored to the building, resulting in a chorus of cheers from the workers.

The workers served in 12-hour shifts, 24 hours a day to repair the damage, with as many as 2,000 workers at a time working in the building. The vault in particular saw harsh, overcrowded

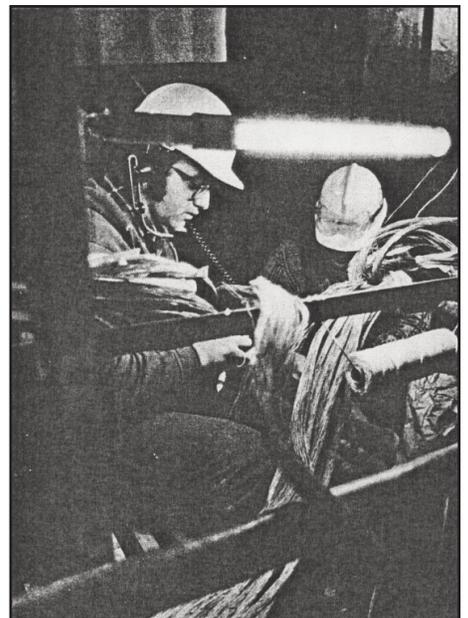
working conditions, with hundreds of men crammed elbow to elbow in the tight space. However, they pressed on to get their jobs done.

"It's so crowded down there that if you get up for a minute, everybody takes one more inch of elbow room and the space you were working in closes up like a trap door," reported splicer John Bliefernich.

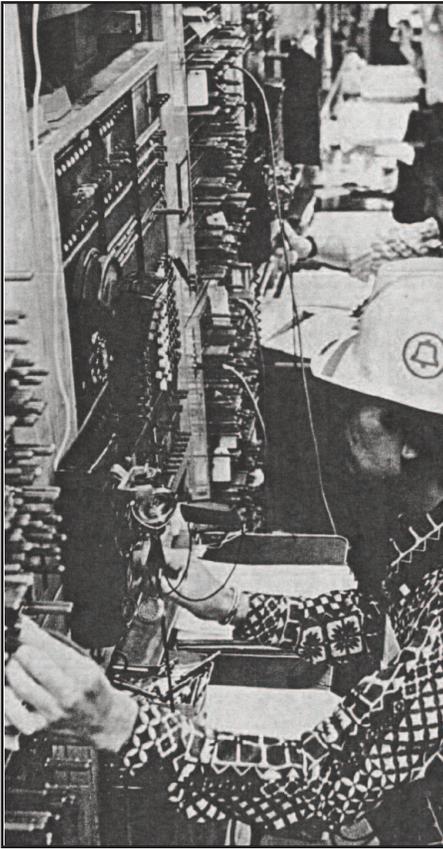
Another major project was securing a main frame, which would typically take six months to build. However, one was found and rerouted from California to Manhattan. The 32,000-pound machine was shipped on three charter flights to New York. Though it typically took weeks to secure a frame, the massive and driven workforce installed it within a day.

Throughout the upcoming weeks, Western Electric would ship 3,000 tons of equipment and material. This included 525,000 linear feet of exchange cable and 380 million conductor feet of cable and wire.

"It is astounding. It boggles the mind to think the work that goes on here," said switchman Ed McCallum.



e on Second Avenue



The effort caused telephone company workers all over the nation to stop their own projects to send their vital equipment and materials to the 13 Street and 2nd Avenue emergency. These workers deserve credit for the assistance.

Besides the massive effort to fix the phone system, there was also an effort on The Bell Company to support those who had lost phone lines. 400 mobile pay phone units were rolled out onto city streets and situated around emergency phones – portable store fronts and sidewalk units- scattered throughout 32 locations in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. An emergency message center delivered 8,000 messages a week to those customers left without phone service. The Bell Pioneers visited the elderly and infirmed who were otherwise isolated and unable to leave their homes.

By the end of the three weeks, the

amount of work done was astounding:

- 6,000 tons of debris was removed after the fire;
- 1.2 billion feet of new wire was placed underground;
- More than 350 cables with up to 2,400 wires each were placed and spliced in the vault;
- More than five million wires were spliced;
- 6 million switch contacts and 10 million relays were cleaned;
- 8.6 million feet of cross-connect frame wire was run.

Also 10,000 truck lines needed to be rerouted, which required the cooperation of virtually every central office in New York City.

Former Bell Company President William Ellinghaus summed up the three weeks perfectly, saying “The whole Second Avenue effort represents a magnificent example of the Bell System ingenuity and know-how. We had help from coast to coast. Western Electric and Bell Labs specialists were on the scene before the fire was out. This job would normally take 18 months or longer. We did it in three weeks.”

The three-week project was so massive in size and scope that upon its completion, it was dubbed “The Miracle of 2nd Avenue.” However, the true miracle



moment for the 170,000 customers left without service was the moment their phone rang for the first time in weeks, reconnecting them to the world they were previously isolated from.

To view a video of this historic project, visit
<http://tinyurl.com/n23gqjy>

Were you one of the thousands serving during the Miracle on Second Avenue? We want to hear from you. Please share your photos and memories. Write to us at association@belltelretirees.com and at our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/associationofbelltelretirees>

PBGC Wake Up Call Follows BellTel Meeting

By Jack K. Cohen

During what seems like a hundred years ago, yours truly was the Staff Manager of Expense Budget Development and Implementation, working for the various renditions, which became Verizon. Then, as a matter of routine in preparation for “next year’s” view of the budget, we would identify what we called: “Upward Pressures.” Essentially we started with a base line and identified specific initiatives and projects that could have an upward pressure on our proposed budget for the Corporation to provide funding, (e.g. for hosting a Democratic or Republican Convention). It always seemed to me, and other Telco trained “budgeteers” that this was a sensible way of making sure that surprises did not become nightmares during the following year.

Back in October of 2013, Bill Jones, Jack Brennan, Eileen Lawrence, Jim Casey, Special Legal Counsel Eddie Stone and I participated in a high level



conference call with some key members of the Pension Benefits Guaranty Corporation and the subject was “Pension De-Risking.”

One question this old “budgeteer” had concerns the transfer of 41,000 management retirees that would result in a loss of \$1.7M each month in PBGC revenue from Verizon.

Wouldn’t this have a traumatic impact on their income projections relative to their budget for the coming year? At this time the PBGC felt “this did not constitute a ‘reportable event’ and advance notice to the PBGC was not required.”

Yet one year later in a Sept. 29, 2014 article in PLANSPONSOR.com it was noted: “The PBGC intends to revise

the 2015 filing procedures and instructions to, among other things, require reporting of certain undertakings to cash out or annuitize benefits for a specified group of former employees.”

It took them a whole year to act based upon our guidance. Evidently, they have since had a wake-up call in view of current events showing that there is a major stampede to “de-risking.” This is becoming a worldwide epidemic including GM, Verizon, Rolls Royce, BMW, British Airways, Akzo Nobel, Aviva and most recently Motorola.

Your Association has been actively pursuing federal legislation to preserve some of the ERISA protections lost during the metamorphosis of our earned pensions into group annuities. We need YOU to make sure that your State and Federal elected officials hear from you in support of our efforts. Stay tuned and your financial support will be most appreciated.

Motorola & Bristol Myers Squibb Sell Pensions to Prudential

Prudential has reached new pension obligation agreements with both Motorola and Bristol Myers Squibb. This means Motorola will transfer \$3 billion worth of pensions over to Prudential, which will affect 30,000 salaried retirees. Bristol Myers Squibb Co., a biopharmaceutical company plans to transfer \$1.4 billion in pensions which affects 8,000 retirees and their beneficiaries.

Retirees from both companies will see the same monthly payments but will no longer be protected under the federal Pension Benefits Guaranty Corporation or ERISA, the federal law.

In addition to the Prudential annuity option, Motorola plans to allow 32,000 pension plan participants to apply for a lump sum payment for their accrued vested pension benefits. Eligible retirees must have left the company before June



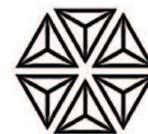
2014 but have not started receiving benefit payments. Total lump sum payments will be capped at \$1 billion.

The Prudential deal and lump sum buyout is expected to reduce Motorola’s ongoing pension obligations by \$4.2 billion. The company also plans to contribute \$1.1 billion to its U.S. pension plans in 2014.

Bristol Myers Squibb is not required to add additional cash contributions. They say Prudential “better manages the ongoing variations in cost associated with its maintenance, while entrusting current retirees and their beneficiaries pensions to a financial institution with expertise in the

long-term management of retirement benefits.”

“Pension liabilities have become an increasing concern for corporations around the world,” said Phil Waldeck, senior vice president and head of Pensions and Structured Solutions for Prudential Retirement. “Over the past few years, Prudential has been very focused



Bristol-Myers Squibb

on working with plan sponsors—like Motorola Solutions—to help them reduce pension risk while also providing retirement security to their retirees.”

In recent years Prudential also took on 41,000 Verizon management retirees and 76,000 General Motors retirees pension obligations in this widening pension stripping trend.

Insights for Maintaining a Strong & Effective Protector of Retirees

By David Simmonds

The Association of BellTel Retirees Inc. has been around since 1996. Not all the board members have been here that long. But as each board member leaves and another one joins, we learn something. The board is made up of both retired management and craft. This gives us a unique look at what we've experienced and learned.

It has been our good fortune to have a membership that believes completely in what we do. That has shown in the donations that are so vital to our very existence. We've been able to fight for all Verizon retirees whenever the call arises.

We learned a very important thing in 1996 that has been paying dividends for our eighteen years. We were trying to come up with ways to build membership since the company would not share the names and addresses of retirees. We were very fortunate to be able to hire a public relations firm to get our messages seen and heard. Of course, we could not afford his monthly fee but he saw the huge future of our Association and accepted one-half of his fee.

Butler Associates has helped us to

build membership and attract public recognition of our various campaigns by getting our story in the newspapers and numerous national magazines, radio and TV.

Because of that lesson we have hired numerous professional specialists to help us with legislation, both federal and state, litigation, proxy proposals and nonprofit accounting law, resulting in considerable positive results. We could not have had the successes that we have achieved without our professionals.

The money you donate has made all



Dave Simmonds

unjustly transferred to a failing company. We've been very vocal in the transfer of 41,000 retirees to a Prudential annuity. We've introduced state legislation to provide some sorely needed rights in the event of a pension transfer and more.

Powerful companies like Verizon, AT&T, Alcatel-Lucent, GM, will do what they want with little regard for the wishes of the retiree. We've seen pen-

sions moved, healthcare erode, and benefits diminish. Looking to the future, it's not IF it will happen, but WHEN! It seems no one is immune to reduced benefits. Just because these companies are big and powerful, does not mean we should just roll over.

Please give what you can and then give a little more. If you have donated this year we thank you but ask, if it is possible, to make an

additional donation. Legal and legislative work is very expensive. We can't do it without you.

I don't think you want to look back and say "I wish I did more." Make sure we have the resources to continue to fight for what is right.

OUR 2014 YEAR END GOAL	\$1M
Generous Contributions to date	\$770,423
Additional funds needed by year-end	\$230,000
Any amount you can give will help us ... and	
THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR VOLUNTEER WORK	

that possible. But we have reached the point where your donations will not sustain our level of expenditures that must increase in future years. As retirees you are aware that expenses never go down and that includes our fight for your rights.

In the past we've fought for retirees



ASSOCIATION OF BELLTEL RETIREES INC. P.O. Box 61, Glen Head, NY 11545-0061

Yes, I want to support the Association of BellTel Retirees Inc. in our fight to protect the pensions and benefits of all retirees and active employees. Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation:

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I am a: Management retiree _____ Union retiree _____ Other _____ Company Retired from: _____

You can also donate online by going to our web-site www.belltelretirees.org and click on the DONATE NOW button. Consider a recurring donation—which is an easy and safe way to budget your contribution.

I am interested in learning more about Planned Giving. Please contact me.

The Association of BellTel Retirees Inc. is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization representing retirees and active employees of Verizon, its subsidiaries and retirees who were transferred to Idearc/SuperMedia/DexMedia.

Frontier Communications Purchases AT&T's Connecticut Wireline Operations

Frontier Communications purchase of AT&T's Connecticut wireline operations was approved by the State of Connecticut's Public Utilities Regulatory Authority for \$2 billion.



estimated \$1.25 billion in revenue.

The State regulatory agency determined the deal would be in the public interest and that Frontier has "the financial, technological and managerial suitability required to provide safe and reliable service."

In 2009, Frontier purchased Verizon landlines across 14 states. The deal with Verizon made Frontier the largest rural landline company in the U.S.

Frontier's deal with AT&T expands Frontier's reach from 27 states to 28 and increases its staff from 13,900 employees to 17,000.

After the deal closes, approximately 2,600 AT&T employees of the former Southern New England Telephone territory will become Frontier employees. According to the *Hartford Courant*, the acquisition includes 900,000 wired telephone connections, 415,000 internet connections and 190,000 video subscribers — operations that have an

80% Medicare Eligible

(Continued from page 3)

between the Main Line Hospitals outside of Philadelphia and UHC. That hospital group is now taking our plan. The same is reported with Meridian Hospital Group in N.J. If anyone has information to the contrary, please notify our office.

- There has been an informational packet prepared to give to providers who refuse to take the plan and this has been successful in many of the cases, including one of our Board Members.
- Two-thirds of our management retirees in the Plan have had no problems, please note some retirees did change doctors to be within network.

If you still have major problems as a result of this plan realize that you are not alone. One in three management retirees are also experiencing issues but you also have your Association as an advocate.

Your Association, by agreement with Verizon must be there as an appeal vehicle, NOT as a "First Responder." You have to first appeal directly to UHC or Verizon. They will

not take a referral from the Association unless they have been given a first shot at resolving your issue.

If the issue cannot be resolved, please provide our office with a detailed synopsis of your problem and we will do our best to get it resolved with Verizon and UHC.

We want to make sure all our members know that we are aware of the issues and we intend to keep you up-to-date with developments, while also continuing to be an advocate on your behalf.

Dignity Memorial Offering BellTel Members 10% Discount

At one time or another we've all had to be involved in



the planning of a funeral, generally not a happy event and usually far too complicated. Dignity Memorial has ownership of funeral homes all across the United States, and they have made a special offer to our members and their families. For the use of their services they offer our members a 10% discount and promise to alert all retiree families to contact Verizon to see if they are eligible for the Sickness/death benefit.

Your Association as always encourages our members to judiciously make their own choices whether to use the advertiser's services and whether those services will be beneficial in their particular situation. Our purpose in mentioning this is to make sure that you are aware of this as a potential benefit. More information about Dignity Memorial can be found at: www.dignitymemorial.com



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**Voices of
Our Members**



Dear Association,

Verizon is treating its retirees and current employees as mere “commodities.”

Thank you for treating us as real human beings in your never ending effort for justice and fairness.

Enclosed is a “wee” contribution. Hopefully more members will, at least, give their “wee” bit and those who can afford it will step up to the plate!

Sincerely,
E.R.S.

Dear Association,

A thank you for all your work on behalf of retirees including myself! I dread to think where all my Verizon friends would now be without the Association.

Enclosed is my check to help you get closer to your 2014 goal. I hope all members will be financially able to contribute this year and many years ahead.

It’s a sad situation that we who worked so many years, now have to fight to keep the promised benefits we earned.

I wish you continued success in representing us, and hope many wins are in our future.

Best Regards,
M.M.

Congratulations on your great progress in advocating for pensioners as seen by the Wyden/Harkin letter to the various federal agencies. You may certainly continue to count on my financial support to both of your organizations and whatever local support you deem appropriate here in Massachusetts. – W.B.

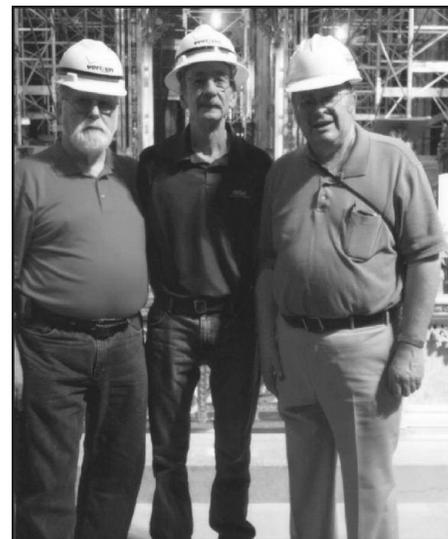
RETIREES NEWS AND NOTES

The Association of BellTel Retirees volunteers seem to have a penchant for looking out for the needs of seniors. Board Member Don Kaufmann, and his wife Hannah recently lost their beloved pet Sugar, a West Highland Terrier, to cancer.

At first they were not going to look to adopt another pet. Their daughter, however, pointed out they had pets in the household for 41 years, prompting Hannah to search pet shelters for a small dog that could be adopted. What they found was a small, white Maltese mix that needed a home. It was 12 years old and had been put into a shelter after its master passed away. Well, one does not usually look to adopt an older dog, but it seems like a match was made in heaven. Friskie has been with Don and Hannah for 4 months now and based on all reports he is getting them trained very well.

On October 17, board member John Hyland spoke to members of NJ Local 827 about the new federal legislation that was introduced in both the U.S. Senate and House to protect our earned retiree healthcare benefits.

On September 3, board members Jack Cohen, John Hyland and Tom Steed were invited to represent the Association at the New York City St. Patrick’s Cathedral Labor Day Mass.



If you have news to share or an upcoming retiree gathering and would like to invite a member of the Association of BellTel Retirees Board to speak, please contact the office at 1-800-261-9222 or via email at association@belltelretirees.org.

When Donating Please Consider Going Online

Did you know that we made our online giving feature a lot easier? If you have never used our online donations feature, we encourage you to do so today. Donating online is a safe, fast and easy way for you to give, and less expensive for our organization to process. Go to www.belltelretirees.org and click on:

DONATE NOW

We are always very appreciative of your support and contributions. Donations are our only source of revenue. When combined with the volunteer hours of your board, they make this a very significant and personal commitment to protecting all Verizon retirees’ retirement income security.



Don Kaufmann’s dog Friskie.



Verizon Reports Strong 3rd Quarter

Verizon Communications released its third quarter fiscal results for 2014. Verizon reported \$31.6 billion in total operating revenues, a 4.3% increase from third quarter 2013, because of an increase in data usage.

For Verizon Wireless, the company reported total revenues of \$21.8 billion. Verizon Wireless added 1.53 retail net connections. The company added 457,000 post-paid phones and 1.1 million post-paid tablets.

Total revenue for Verizon's Wireline division was \$9.6 billion in the third quarter 2014, down .8%. Total FiOS revenues grew to \$3.2 billion or 13.4%. This quarter, Verizon added 162,000 FiOS Internet Connections and 114,000 new FiOS Video connections. During this quarter Verizon moved 55,000 customers to fiber.

Lowell McAdam, Chairman and CEO said, "We have great confidence heading into the fourth quarter, as Verizon continues to deliver consistently strong operating and finance results. We see continued, healthy customer demand for wireless and broadband services and we are encouraged by the growth we are

starting to see in the area of video delivery and machine to machine. Our cash generation remains strong and last month we were pleased to announce board approval of a quarterly dividend increase for the eighth consecutive year."

Verizon reported a dividend of 89 cents per share, an increase of 15.6% compared with the same period in 2013.

Verizon And AT&T Are Looking To Unbundle Cable Packages

In September, at an investor's conference, Lowell McAdam discussed Verizon's forthcoming internet TV based service that could feature a la carte channels.

According to Nielsen, today, 5 million households get their television solely from the Internet, up from 2 million in 2007.

Mr. McAdam explained that the days of the bundle tv-packages are coming to an end. "No one wants to have 300 channels on your wireless. Everyone understands it will go to a la carte. The question is what does that transition look like." He added that he thinks that the ones who want to keep TV as it is now will be "the ones who'll be left behind."

He also believes that 20 customized channels available on the internet "would be terrific."

Verizon Drops "Throttling" Its Unlimited Data Users

In our last newsletter, we reported that Verizon planned to "throttle" data for its users with the highest level of wireless broadband consumption because of "network optimization."

Verizon Wireless has been using "network optimization" since 2011 for 3G data users, slowing down data speeds for the heaviest users when they are connected to cell sites experiencing high demand.

Customers were not happy about this and neither was FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler. He said in a letter to Verizon that he is "troubled" by the announcement.

Mr. Wheeler called it "disturbing" that Verizon would base its network management "on distinctions among its customers' data plans, rather than on network architecture or technology."

He also says "I know of no past Commission statement that would treat as "reasonable network management" a decision to slow traffic to a user who has paid, after all, for unlimited service."

He asked that Verizon explain their rationale in treating their customers differently, why Verizon Wireless was extending speed reductions from its 3G network to its more efficient 4G network and how Verizon Wireless could justify the policy with its continuing obligations under 700 MHz C Block open platform rules and under the Commission's 2010 open internet rules.

The plan was supposed to begin in October but after this note from Chairman Wheeler, Verizon decided against it.

Verizon said in a statement, "We've greatly valued the ongoing dialogue over the past several months concerning network optimization and we've decided not to move forward with the planned implementation of network optimization for 4G LTE customers on unlimited plans."



ProtectSeniors.Org

www.protectseniors.org

We are fighting to keep our earned retirement benefits secure:
HEALTHCARE PENSIONS SOCIAL SECURITY MEDICARE

HELP US BY:

- ◆ *Become a Grassroots Leader*
- ◆ *Signing on and contributing at www.protectseniors.org*
- ◆ *Respond to "write to Congress" requests.*
- ◆ *Receive timely updates*
- ◆ *Take part in our surveys*

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