Association Files Administrative Claim on Behalf of Idearc Retirees

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. Idearc is a spin off of the Verizon Directory White and Yellow Pages operations.

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.

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 filing is now posted on the Association web site: www.belltelretirees.org and email news bulletins will be sent to all Idearc retirees. Please be sure we have your current email address.

The Verizon Annual Shareholders Meeting will take place on Thursday, May 7, 2009 at the Hyatt Regency in Louisville, KY.
We are presently living through a remarkable time on this planet. There was a time when we could focus on issues in our family, our community or if we were really expansive, our country. Looking back, given the present climate, things were pretty simple then.

We focused on getting a good job, working hard to advance and make more money, saving to buy a home, to educate our children and, eventually, to retire. Part of this conservative plan was to work for a company that provided pension, healthcare and other benefits that would continue though our working lives and through our retirement years.

Of course, this meant that we would have a lower take-home pay than others but it was worth it to secure the future that we envisioned.

Those of us who did all of the “right things” felt we had taken the conservative route to protect and enhance our future and that of our family. We felt pretty comfortable that we didn’t take any risks that would have jeopardized that dream.

HELLO! WHAT HAPPENED?

We now find ourselves in a scary place were we cannot control our own destiny. Our elected federal representatives are struggling to right the national economy. An economy that is controlled as much by foreign countries of this planet as it is by our own.

Our dream is being dismantled, not because of something we have done, it’s because the greed of individuals, we don’t even know, who took risks that destroyed major corporations and put entire countries in serious jeopardy.

What is a person to do under these circumstances? Well, I do not pretend to have all of the answers but here are some things for your consideration. This is a time, if there ever was one, to make sure we are protecting what we have. Avoid adding to our debt. Spend on what we truly require, not what we desire. Drive that car another 50,000 miles as long as it is not costing a fortune to maintain it. Carefully examine our contributions. What organizations are directly contributing you and your family’s well being?

Each of us is dealing with different circumstances that will place demands on our resources. However, all those that read this newsletter have some things in common. We all are relying on our earned pensions and critical healthcare benefits that provide the greatest component of our financial security. Without them, we all are in serious trouble. Many, if not all of us, have savings that have taken a hit in this economic meltdown making those benefits even more important.

The Verizon retirees who worked in the White and Yellow Pages operation that were transferred to Idearc Media are particularly stressed at this time. They have been moved from a financially strong company to a spin off that is facing serious challenges. Some of their benefits have already been reduced or cancelled.

For that reason our Association has filed a Class-wide Administrative Claim and an ERISA Request for Plan Documents. Our objective is to see those 3,000 people, who were transferred, against their will, returned to Verizon.

I submit that, while tightening our financial belts, we cannot afford to lose sight of the fact that the Association of BellTel Retirees has fought hard for the past 13 years to protect our benefits. So far, we have been successful. Most of us have not suffered the devastating loss of pensions or healthcare benefits that retirees of other companies have experienced. I am certain that the reasons are that: 1) Verizon has remained healthy and 2) our hard work and vigilance has convinced the company to make good on their promises.

For that reason I am certain that there is no more important contribution that you can make, especially in these difficult times, than the one to this organization. As one of our board members says, “A contribution to the Association of BellTel Retirees is an investment in one’s self.”

Protect Seniors.Org is working hard to put the law on our side by passing legislation that will guarantee that your healthcare benefits are not lost. Don’t forget them when deciding which other organizations you will support.

The board joins me in wishing you all the best as we weather the current storm together.
Proxy Proposal 2009
(Continued from page 1)

For example: for 2007 Verizon ranked below the 50th percentile compared to the S&P 500 and industry peers yet the board chose to pay Mr. Seidenberg his award at 104% of target performance.

Last year this proposal was called “Separate the Offices of Chairman and CEO” on the proxy voting card. We urge all shareholders to vote “For” this proposal.

At this point, we do not know what other proposals will be on the ballot. For this reason, and the requirement to give you information for the “Say on Pay” vote we ask that you not vote your shares until you receive written instructions from the Association.

Previous Successes

Our annual proxy proposal campaign has been a very important component of our strategy. Two proposals won by a majority vote, a first in the history of the former Bell System or any of its successors. Further, and equally important, a total of seven proposals were agreed to completely or substantially in part by the company. This is a record that no one can match in American corporate history. We thank our faithful members for their help in this achievement.

The Association has a solid reputation for proposing successful corporate governance measures at the Annual Verizon Shareholder meetings that benefit those with a stake in the company. These proxy proposals have also served as a way to ensure that retiree pensions and benefits remain intact and secure.

Proxy proposal victories include:

2003: The Association’s first proxy victory was in an Executive Severance Agreement proposal to limit overly-generous executive compensation packages and golden parachutes winning 59 percent of the shareholders’ votes. Our win was considered the first time Verizon and its predecessor companies had experienced a proxy loss in the history of the Bell System.

2003: Another victory came that same year, as the company agreed to exclude pension credits from executive compensation calculations, a proposal that had received 43 percent of the shareholder vote in 2002.

2004: Verizon finally agreed to implement the Executive Severance Agreement, which sought the approval of shareholders for future Executive Severance Agreements that were more than 2.99 times an executive’s base salary and bonus package.

2005: Before the company’s proxy ballot went out to shareowners, Verizon agreed to the Association’s proxy demand to reduce Supplemental Executive Retirement Plan (SERP) income for senior executives. Prior to the proxy proposal, executives received SERP contributions equal to 32 percent of their combined base salary plus bonus for every dollar above $210,000 during their first 20 years in the plan. The agreement negotiated by retiree leaders reduced these excessive amounts to a maximum of 4% to 7%.

2007: While only garnering 12% of the shareholder vote, one proposal calling for the limit of service on outside boards by Verizon directors, was partially adopted by the company.

2007: The much lauded and discussed say-on-executive-pay proposal garnered 50.18 percent of shareholder votes. It states that the Verizon board must allow shareholders to approve or disapprove of senior executive compensation packages, via non-binding vote.

2008: Verizon agrees to implement “Say on Pay” measure as of January, which will be made available for this first time at the 2009 shareholder meeting.

LONG TERM CARE INSURANCE
Exclusive Discounts for BellTel Retirees & their Spouse

Policies include:
- Home Healthcare
- Nursing Homes
- Assisted Living

✔ Free Comparisons
✔ Company Plans Are Not the Best Value!
✔ Family Plans Are Available
✔ Protect Your Assets

Call Us Now - Free Information
800-644-3422 24 Hrs.
or 1-800-701-9545 (Steve) Ext. 22

This newsletter is available to you on-line. If you wish to receive ONLY an on-line copy, please email us at association@belltelretirees.org and put in the Subject line of the email –GO GREEN. Please give us your name, mailing address and email address so we can make the change.
On December 23rd, former President George W. Bush signed into law the Worker, Retiree, and Employer Recovery Act of 2008, pension legislation which would provide relief to retirees who have lost much of their retirement savings from companies that have had difficulties funding their pension plans during a recession.

Specifically, this legislation would place a moratorium on current law requiring retirees older than 70 to withdraw some money from their 401(k) accounts and other defined contribution plans by the end of 2009 or face a tax penalty.

The bill also specifies that the Required Minimum Distributions (RMD)- monies that are supposed to be withdrawn from retirement accounts for those 70 ½ years or older- for 2008 are not affected by this new legislation. Retirees with RMD for 2008 need to withdraw that money by April 1, 2009 or face a 50 percent tax penalty on the amount that should have been withdrawn.

According to an overview by the Pension Rights Center, key provisions of the Worker, Retiree, and Employer Recovery Act of 2008 include:

- Relief from Required Minimum Distributions.
  The legislation temporarily suspends the penalty faced by individuals age 70½ and older if they do not make required distributions from their Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) and 401(k)-style plans in 2009. This provision does not apply to “required minimum distributions” taken in 2008.

  Retirees are encouraged to check with their financial consultants on how this new bill affects their pension payment disbursements in 2009.

  A detailed summary of provisions in the Worker, Retiree, and Employer Recovery Act of 2008 is available online at www.govtrack.us.
SAVE THE DATE! APRIL 22, 2009:
Don’t Miss the 2009 Annual Retiree Meeting in King of Prussia, PA

The 13th Annual Association of BellTel Retiree (ABTR) annual meeting will take place this year on April 22nd at the Radisson Valley Forge Convention Plaza located in the Radisson Hotel in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, just about 30 minutes from Philadelphia. Easy to reach by car, the site is accessible to the Pennsylvania Turnpike, I-76, I-476 and I-95.

The day will begin at 8:30am with a continental breakfast and a chance for everyone to mingle, catch up with old friends and meet the members of the Board.

The business portion of the meeting will take place at 10am, followed by an open forum, which will give you the opportunity to ask questions of the Board members. The meeting will conclude around noon.

For those wishing to attend, reservations are required so don’t delay making yours. As of January 30th, over 60 retirees have already pre-registered.

Complete the RSVP form below. Advanced registration is $5 per person. Please make your check payable to: Association of BellTel Retirees Inc and return the check and form by April 13th to: J. McCann, Meeting Coordinator, ABTR, PO Box 33, Cold Spring Harbor, New York 11724.

Major local area attractions include the Historic Valley Forge Park, where you can learn about the history of the Revolutionary War (10 minutes away), the Philadelphia Museum of Art (about 15 miles away), the Liberty Bell (20 miles away) and many other interesting tourist spots.

For additional information on places to visit and things to see, visit www.kingofprussia.com or call 610.768.0497

In these unsettling times, make it a PRIORITY to attend to hear the latest information concerning your benefits and what the Association is doing to protect them!

RSVP for Association of BellTel Retirees 13th Annual Meeting
April 22, 2009 at The Radisson Valley Forge Convention Plaza
King of Prussia, Pennsylvania

☐ I will attend the meeting in King of Prussia, PA

# in my party ________________________

Name:________________________________________________________

Address:______________________________________________________

Phone Number:____________________   Email:______________________

Enclosed is a check for $ _____ ($5 per person)

For other members/guest names and addresses in your party, attach a separate sheet of paper.

Please return this registration form and fee by April 13th to:

J. McCann, Annual Meeting Coordinator
Association of BellTel Retirees
P.O. Box 33, Cold Spring Harbor, New York 11724.

Please make checks payable to: Association of BellTel Retirees
Four years ago, Rocco L. Flaminio, Vice Chairman and Chief Technology Officer of Tollgrade Communications, Inc., died from complications due to a chronic illness. The following, spotlighting his career and dedication to his beliefs, is something with which many fellow retirees can identify.

For more than five decades, Flaminio worked tirelessly to repair, improve and invent telecommunications devices that would protect and enhance network integrity for telephone systems in the U.S. and around the world. His tenacity and technical ability led him to become one of the country’s leading experts on telecommunications systems.

In addition to a stellar 38-year career with Bell of Pennsylvania, he wrote technical manuals for the Defense Department, he briefed high-ranking officials including Generals Ridgeway and Westmoreland, as well as Department of Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, and he was a co-inventor with Fredrick Kiko of the patented Metallic Channel Unit (MCU) technology that helped lead to the 1988 growth of Tollgrade Communications, Inc., that he co-founded with businessman, the late R. Craig Allison of Erie, Pennsylvania.

A generous and humble man, his family and friends called him “Rocky.” He served in World War II fighting in combat missions in Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and the Philippines. In the Korean War and the Vietnam War over the course of three decades – the first two as a Marine, the latter as a civilian engineer on loan to assist the Defense Department with telecommunications technology. He rose to the rank of Master Gunnery Sergeant in the United States Marine Corps Reserve. In Korea he received a battlefield commission to 2nd Lieutenant.

For his service and valor, including coming to the aid of injured fellow countrymen overseas, he was the recipient of the Purple Heart, Silver Star and Korean Service Medals. Rocky was also the recipient of the Defense Department Meritorious Service Medal. After Korea the Corps wanted him to attend OCS and spend more time away from his family. He declined and reverted back to the permanent rank of Master Gunnery Sergeant.

Born in 1924, the son of Italian immigrants, Rocky came from modest means and worked hard to earn a piece of the American dream for his family and for others. He entered the first grade only able to speak Italian. His zest for learning and science ultimately led him to graduate valedictorian of his class at Saltsburg High School near Vandergrift, Pennsylvania where he raised his family.

After serving in World War II, in 1946, Rocky took a job with Bell of Pennsylvania as a PBX repairman. A few years later, his technical aptitude, interest in radio transmissions and stellar academic performance earned him an assignment in the South Pacific.

In 1953, AT&T and the Defense Department asked Rocky to help engineer and install the Distant Early Warning Line, known as the “DEW Line,” along the coast of northern Alaska and Canada. The DEW Line was designed to provide Strategic Air Command with a six-hour warning in the event of an enemy missile or air attack.

During his work on the DEW Line Rocky was a passenger on many flights to remote areas of Alaska and Canada in all kinds of weather. He survived three plane crashes during the engineering and building of this defense system.

During the Vietnam War, AT&T and the Defense Department asked Rocky to help engineer and install the Distant Early Warning Line, known as the “DEW Line,” along the coast of northern Alaska and Canada. The DEW Line was designed to provide Strategic Air Command with a six-hour warning in the event of an enemy missile or air attack.

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Retiree Spotlight:
(Continued from page 6)

and the U.S. Department of Defense, once again, called on Rocky for his expertise—this time, to make military communications systems operational in Vietnam and Thailand. From 1966 to 1969 Rocky made three six-month tours to Vietnam, visiting every military base there and in Thailand.

During one flight to perform trunk testing between bases, Rocky’s helicopter was shot down. The Sergeant traveling with him was wounded. Rocky is credited with saving the Sergeant’s life. After earning several letters of commendation for his service in Vietnam, Rocky returned to his job at Bell to complete an impressive and successful career with the company.

His telecommunications expertise was sought by many companies following his career at Bell. He was particularly proud of being instrumental in designing the telecommunications system for the new Pittsburgh International Airport. In more recent years at Tollgrade, Rocky traveled the globe as a technological ambassador to industry and as an active member of various trade associations, including ANSI T1E1.4 and the ADSL Forum among others.

All of us that knew and worked with Rocky will never forget him. He truly was a gentle giant of a man; a patriot and caring friend who was always there when you needed him. For fellow Bell System retirees, Rocky’s story has great meaning, mirroring many of our own lives.

CALLING ALL IDEARC RETIREEs!

The Association of BellTel Retirees has commenced some legal actions to try to return to Verizon previous retirees of Verizon that were transferred to Idearc. This action will not be easy and will be expensive. The only way we can be successful is if we can identify those individuals and gain their support.

In addition to their financial support, we will need documents and will want some to testify when the time comes.

I am sure that many of these people are already members of the Association but are not identified as Idearc retirees. It is necessary for those retirees to contact us to let us know so that we can note our records and we can contact them when we need them.

There are also thousands of other people who have been transferred to Idearc that we do not have as members. It is vitally important that we find those people so that they can join us in this fight. Please, if you know of any such people we need you to forward their contact information to us.

We know that there are 3,000 such retirees out there and we need every single one to step up and help us to help them.

You can call the office with information: 1-800-261-9222
You can mail us names, telephone numbers, addresses and email addresses to:
P.O. Box 33, Cold Spring Harbor, NY 11724
You can email information to: association@belltelretirees.org
Thank you for your help. It is imperative that we do all we can to protect these retirees’ pensions and benefits.

Marco Island, Fla. Beautiful Townhouse for Rent.
2beds/2baths, lanai just steps to gorgeous pool and hot tub.
One mile to the beach.
No Smoking/No pets. Avail $3,000/ month - year round.
Please call (781)264-3106.
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 Corporations.

Mr. McFadden, a retiree of the IBEW union, briefed Mr. Hoffa on the advocacy actions of the Association and ProtectSeniors.org, bringing both union and management retirees together to fight for the protection of earned pensions and benefits.

General President Hoffa commended the retiree groups saying, “I’m happy that someone is doing what you’re doing [for retirees].”

The Association and ProtectSeniors.Org will hold a Retiree Legislative Summit on March 4, 2009 at 9:00 am in The Villages, Florida. For more information, call Jim Stickel on 614.565.4013.

The Association and ProtectSeniors.Org are non-profit organizations. Contributions are not tax-deductible.

HELP US HELP YOU!

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

CONTRIBUTE TODAY!

BE A GRASSROOTS VOLUNTEER!

Send contributions to:
ProtectSeniors.Org, P.O. Box 476, Cold Spring Harbor, NY 11724

ProtectSeniors.Org is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization. Contributions are not tax-deductible.
As this article is written, we can report the following preliminary financials for 2008:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Revenues</td>
<td>$759,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expense</td>
<td>$653,216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Contribution</td>
<td>$25.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 27,877 contributions received in 2008 reflected a 2% increase compared with 2007, thanks to your continued loyal support and efforts to recruit new members. A detailed Financial Report will be published in the June newsletter following our certified audit.

The Association’s 2009 annual appeal was mailed to you in January, and we are hopeful for an excellent response. We anticipate increased expenses this year because of our pursuit of the IDEARC pension and benefit issues and our proxy work. We made headway in 2008 in reducing printing and postage costs, and we will continue to frugally monitor all costs. Thank you in advance for your 2009 contribution, and remember that the important efforts of your board are accomplished through unpaid volunteer work.

Some members have noted that they are confused by the number of appeals, and the relationship between these appeals. We’d like to clarify that for you at this time.

The Association of BellTel Retirees has only one annual appeal each January. A follow up reminder is sent with the June newsletter and again in September, but only to those members who have not yet contributed.

Our sister organization, ProtectSeniors.Org, will be launching their annual appeal in April. We have chosen ProtectSeniors.Org as the single group to champion our legislation and lobbying efforts – something we cannot do to the extent required within the Association of BellTel Retirees, because of IRS rules. Two of our board members have board positions with ProtectSeniors.Org, and Bill Jones is the chairman of this group. We need you to support them – and their Political Action group – as well as our Association.

ProtectSeniors.Org also limits its appeals to one per year, with follow up requests to those who have not responded. We thank you for your past and future support to ProtectSeniors.Org. You are helping all of us to reach our goals.

Where Your Money Goes
A recent report titled Pennies for Charity by the New York Attorney General’s office found that many non-profits and charities which used telemarketers or mail solicitors for fundraising receive only a small percentage of the monies intended by donors. The remaining funds, and in a few cases all of the funds, went to the solicitation groups.

Please note: The Association of BellTel Retirees does not employ the use of solicitors or telemarketers. Every one of your hard-earned dollars that is contributed goes directly to operating the organization and advocating for retiree economic protections.

* * *

Separate newsletters are sent to you by each organization. We hope that this answers your questions. Please feel free to call or write our office if you have additional questions.

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You CAN sue your broker...

who invests YOUR savings, pension or buy-out inappropriately.

**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.

For a FREE consultation, contact Richard DeVita, Esq. personally at 201-714-7623 or rddevita@optonline.net.
The Association is pleased that many retirees like Jim Barry of Pennsylvania (see his letter below), took it upon themselves to let Members of Congress know about their disappointment in their lack of support for the Emergency Retiree Health Benefits Protection Act in the last congressional session. Retirees are encouraged to continue to communicate with elected officials until they are on board with this crucial legislation.

House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman,
While I am happy that there will be a big change on Capitol Hill and the future definitely looks brighter because of it, I am disappointed that you still have not co-sponsored HR 1322.

Before the election, I wrote you to ask for your support for this bill. At that time, I told you that I have the utmost confidence in you as a person and legislator and as such your lack of support for HR 1322 would not cause me to vote against you.
However, I have since recently received my latest health benefit cut as a Verizon Retiree and they keep chipping away at retiree benefits and as such, if the election were to happen tomorrow, I would have to vote against you as I can no longer afford to overlook this area.
Verizon (and corporate America) has systematically destroyed the retiree legacy in this country and the [previous Administration has] largely been to blame. What is really frustrating is that the executives of the same companies have been rewarding themselves with mega million dollar bonuses for doing so, even in light of their poor business plans and failing corporate revenues. It’s greed, plain and simple.
The Bush doctrine was always “trickle down economics.” It’s time for the economics to bubble up from the ground up.
I urge you to please, please get on board with HR 1322 and do it now.
Respectfully Yours,
Jim Barry,
North Wales, PA

Verizon’s 4th Quarter Financials Prove Strong in Tough Economy

Despite the hard economic climate, Verizon ended the 2008 fiscal year showing growth in its broadband, wireless and strategic business services with net profits of $24.6 billion. This amount is up 4.3 percent from the 4th quarter earnings in 2007.

“Verizon has shown that it is able to compete effectively in this economic environment,” said CEO Ivan Seidenberg. “We grew profits and maintained strong cash flows throughout 2008.”

Wireless services grew by 1.4 million customers and FiOS customers totaled 1.9 million- an increase of nearly 1 million customers compared to the previous year.

“The Verizon story in 2008 was one of customer growth and product innovation, based on the strategic technology and broadband infrastructure investments we have made year after year,” said Mr. Seidenberg. “We have built a solid foundation to continue to create value for our customers and shareholders in 2009 and beyond.”

Technicians Recognized in Unions

Effective December 28, 2008, former MCI technicians working for Verizon Business have a new labor agreement that allows them to benefit from the new contracts reached between unions and the company.
The technicians were initiated at local union meetings throughout January after a two-year journey of looking for union representation.
The new contract agreement covers more than 600 technicians between Virginia and Maine.
Last August, the technicians gained union recognition once Verizon and the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) reached an agreement.
50,000 Verizon workers are represented by CWA while more than 15,000 Verizon workers in the northeast are represented by IBEW throughout the northeast.
Jennie Chin Hansen is the President of AARP and has a column in the AARP Magazine called “Q & A to President Jennie Chin Hansen.” I was delighted to read her response to the question concerning the next steps for the “Divided We Fail” campaign. Especially inspiring was her statement:

“That’s why AARP is leading Divided We Fail - a national effort to make sure every American has access to quality, affordable healthcare and lifelong financial security.”

She closed with words I have been waiting to read/hear from AARP since mid-2002.

“Together we can make it happen. There is so much at stake.”

The key word here is: “together.” At a recent AARP workshop I attended the question was raised as to why AARP does not join with “other groups in an effort to provide greater strength to our causes?”

Six years ago I wrote to Mr. William Novelli, current CEO of AARP. Since the early 1990’s, up to the year of my letter (2002), over seven million retirees across the nation had lost health benefits earned by them by foregoing pay increases and accepting fewer vacation days. There was legislation pending in Congress at that time (2002) which would have prevented that from happening. I asked Mr. Novelli why AARP did not support that legislation.

The response that I received from Mr. Novelli’s staff informed me that AARP would not support the legislation because AARP feared that such legislation would expedite the flight of the private sector away from health benefits for both active and retired employees.

That posture remained a mystery to me since it had appeared to me that AARP was fearful of what was already a hemorrhaging reality! The flight away from health benefits continues today. 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 the response from Mr. Novelli in 2002, another three million ACTIVE employees have lost health coverage from their employer, even WITHOUT the legislation.

HR1322 is still alive and kicking. Through the tireless efforts of the leadership of ProtectSeniors.Org the legislation got a full hearing of the House Committee on Education and Labor on September 25, 2008.

Conspicuous by their absence at the September 25th Congressional Hearing was that organization professing to be the great advocate of 40 million seniors.

That is why I am so encouraged now, by Jennie Chin Hansen’s words in the Jan/Feb AARP Magazine.

Set to go before the 111th Congress, The Emergency Retiree Health Benefits Protection Act would prohibit employers from making post-retirement cancellations or reductions of health benefits to which retirees were entitled in accordance with the promises made to them and it was because of those promises that life decisions were made.

I also agree that: “Together we can make this happen. There is so much at stake.”

Joining with ProtectSeniors.Org in a coalition of strength to ultimately bring HR1322 to law, is the very leadership behavior, at least this AARP member, hopes to see become a reality.
The Association of BellTel Retirees has renewed its commitment to providing up-to-date, useful information to its members and those interested in retiree issues by redesigning its website. The new site features an easy-to-navigate, user-friendly design.

When you visit the website you will be able to find our most current newsletter as well as archives of past newsletters, details on all the Association’s activities, information on our Annual Meeting, links to other organizations of interest, and much more. And for those users who need larger text, a font size selector is available in the upper right-hand corner of each page.

Another new feature is the Share Our Story page. Here we encourage you to tell us your retirement story: What issues are most important to you as a retiree? How has the reduction or cancellation of your earned retiree health benefits impacted your retirement? We need to collect your stories to make our case for action on Capitol Hill and in the media on behalf of all retirees.

Please visit www.belltelretirees.org today to read up on our activities or donate to our organization by credit card through a secure online system. Be sure to check back often to get the latest information about your Association and our efforts on your behalf.

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