



Power Workers' Union Members on Strike at Erie Thames

Effective the evening of Sunday June 21, 2009, after 48 hours' notice to the company, the 50 members of the Power Workers' Union (PWU) who work at CRU Solutions Inc., Erie Thames Powerlines Corp, Ecaliber and Coulter Water Meter Service Inc. (formerly Erie Thames Power) went on strike.

The existing collective agreement expired on December 31, 2008 and there have been several rounds of meetings between the PWU and employer representatives. The most recent meeting, with a Ministry of Labour Mediator in attendance, concluded on Friday June 19, 2009.

"We are disappointed with management's reluctance to back away from their demands for take-aways" said Mel Hyatt, Vice President of the Power Workers' Union. "Strikes are very rare in our industry and I would like to assure all affected that we want to get back to the table as soon as possible with the goal of establishing a settlement that is fair for employees, the employer and the customer."

Erie Thames had its revenue requests adjusted downward in a recent rate hearing at the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) resulting in the following 3 cuts to revenue totalling \$234,950.

- Increase in cost of Erie Thames Directors' - \$35,512

The OEB denied the increased cost of adding 4 Directors to its Board increasing the total to 11 Directors.

- Allocation of Erie Thames' parent company's corporate costs to Erie Thames - \$104,438

The OEB disallowed Erie Thames' application to include Erie Thames parent company's Board of Directors costs in the amount of \$104,438

stating that the costs of the parent company are shareholder costs to be paid for with parent company revenues.

- Increase in Executive Costs - \$95,000

Erie Thames added 3 positions at the executive level in 2007 resulting in increased cost of \$200,000. The OEB disallowed \$95,000 of the \$200,000 increase in cost sought.

Despite the OEB decision not to approve the above noted requests for revenue from the customer rate base, the company went ahead with their plans and expenditures. In fact the company has continued to expand at the top and now has 29 managers for 50 employees.

Messages of support for the strikers are coming in from all over Ontario and already PWU members from other bargaining units are showing their support in a tangible way – on the picket lines.