Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Your bargaining committee for the negotiations of Wyoming Area Master Agreement, which expired May 31, 2020, has met consistently over the course of the last few months in an effort to prepare for bargaining. That committee was tasked with surveying the membership, compiling local data to use in the bargaining process, and to help put together a strategy to assure that we are getting our membership the best contract we can.

In light of the current situation and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, your committee has concluded that this is not the best time to negotiate a successor agreement on your behalf and has agreed with the contractors to a six (6) month extension that will last through November 30, 2021. In addition, with this extension, the employer has agreed to an additional $0.15 as maintenance of benefits to the Health & Welfare contribution.

The general reasons that the committee has elected to agree to an extension are as follows:

- Economic impacts from the Non-COVID-19 and COVID-19 epidemic, which have resulted in an economic depression equal or greater in scope to the Great Depression—thus, it is not negotiations as usual.
- Unemployment is currently at 13.3% and is predicted to be higher than the Great Depression, well above 20%.
- We owe it to our co-workers/members to sacrifice/delay a wage increase into 2021 so that they will not be unemployed during this economic nightmare.
- We are not in a strong negotiating position right now and potentially will end up with little or no wage increase.

Advantages to an extension that can leverage a better increase are:

- Multiple Industrial sector agreements will be in the bargaining process
- Let’s be bold, strategic, and creative by proposing settlements that build unprecedented respect for Labor and preserves jobs.
- The alignment of these Area Master Agreement expirations will affect bargaining, and we will be in the bargaining process for Collective Bargaining Agreements that effect 17,000 working members.
- With this, we will get better agreements due to the ability to leverage our strength and solidarity throughout the three states. This leverage will assist us in getting a better long-term agreement that will include better increases than we could negotiate on your behalf today.

In Solidarity,

Jeff Thorson, Contract Administration