

# Unity **CWA & IBEW • Coast-to-Coast** @Verizon

July 27, 2007 – Please post and share

On August 2, members will show Verizon...

## **“We’re Ready to Fight for Good Jobs!”**

The Verizon East contract expires on August 2, 2008—but no one is waiting until then to get ready. One of the biggest challenges members face is management’s continuous effort to shrink union work. For example, Verizon may try to spin off more parts of its business—like it did with Yellow Pages to Idearc—or try to sell its less profitable

landlines to shaky outfits like FairPoint. Thousands of union jobs with good pay and benefits could be lost.

Stopping management’s low-road strategy will take unprecedented membership involvement. If you’ve never attended a union rally, now is the time!

On August 2, IBEW and CWA members will rally in Upland, CA, Richmond, VA, Baltimore, MD, and Morgantown, WV, and at Verizon’s New England headquarters in Boston. Members will also gather at garages and workplaces throughout Verizon’s footprint.

*Be sure to send reports and pictures of August 2 events to Rand Wilson by email to [rand@mindspring.com](mailto:rand@mindspring.com) or by fax to IBEW Local 2222 at (617) 929-6099.*



**Erika Torres, daughter of a Long Beach, CA, Verizon tech, attended a union rally in June. She told the Long Beach Press Telegram, "I barely get to see him, and it makes me really sad because I really want to spend time with him."**

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## **Union Protests Telephone Deregulation**

In an ongoing campaign, about 15 members of CWA Local 2201 protested Verizon’s bid to deregulate pricing controls in Virginia. Verizon has asked the State Corporation Commission to remove pricing controls for retail services, which include lines into homes and businesses.

Union leaders believe Verizon is putting its resources and money in the wrong areas. High-speed internet service, phone and television provided through FiOS is only available in more urban parts of the state, while rural areas and lower-income neighborhoods still rely on the slower copper communications network.

“We see the company funneling all its resources into FiOS and letting the copper network deteriorate,” said Carol Summerlyn, a staff rep. in CWA District 2. The union supports Verizon’s FiOS deployment, “but not at the detriment of other customers.”

## Verizon profiled at U.S. Social Forum

1,800 pledge to switch to union wireless service

Thousands of activists from a broad spectrum of community, environmental, civil rights and labor groups gathered in Atlanta in late June to share experiences and renew their inspiration to continue organizing for social justice. Few people left without hearing about Verizon!

Chris Lane, Bre Armbrust and a crew of volunteers from CWA Local 2201 in Richmond, VA, worked tirelessly at the conference to talk about Verizon's anti-union actions. They were joined by 22 Jobs with Justice volunteers, including fellow CWA members from locals 1168 and 1104. Almost everyone wore bright red "Stop Union-Busting at Verizon" t-shirts draw attention to the campaign.

Organizers gathered 1,800 cards from conference participants who pledged to switch from Verizon to a union wireless company. Many participants agreed to take additional switch cards back home to promote union service.

Verizon union members and a former Verizon Wireless worker who was fired for organizing spoke at workshops hosted by the AFL-CIO and Jobs with Justice. Verizon's interference in the freedom of Wireless employees and the VZB techs to organize was often used as an illustration of why we need the Employee Free Choice Act.

For more info about the U.S. Social Forum visit: [www.ussf2007.org](http://www.ussf2007.org) (If you haven't already done so, be sure to check out the website where you can pledge to switch from Verizon Wireless to a union carrier. Go to [www.cingularswitch.com](http://www.cingularswitch.com).)



Jobs with Justice organizers DJ Cronin and Huy Ong (in cell phone costume) promoted "switch to union wireless" and gathered pledge cards at the U.S. Social Forum

## Members in Northern New England Expand "Stop the Sale" Effort

Lawn signs and postcards the latest tools in grassroots campaign

Union members, interns from the AFL-CIO's Union Summer program and canvassers for Working America are reaching out to get more public support to stop the proposed sale of Verizon's landlines to FairPoint Communications.

They are going door-to-door to gather thousands of postcards from ordinary citizens telling the governors of the three northern New England states to "take a strong stand" against allowing Verizon to sell off its assets.

Union members are also increasing the campaign's visibility by displaying bright red "Stop the Sale" lawn signs. About 2,000 signs are now scattered across the three states.



Illustration used for the new postcard campaign.



The CWA and IBEW have also jointly published a new four-page fact sheet documenting the major reasons why the proposed sale would put consumers, workers, and communities at risk.

In other "Stop the Sale"-related news the IBEW's T-6 Council charged that the agreement between Verizon and FairPoint on the proposed sale of the landline operations violates provisions of its current union contract with Verizon. The alleged contract violations concern the proposed transfer and termination of jobs as spelled out in the Verizon-FairPoint merger agreement. The case is now pending before a neutral arbitrator whose decision will be binding on both parties.

Download the new fact sheet and read more about the campaign at [www.stop-the-sale.org](http://www.stop-the-sale.org) and [www.no-deal.org](http://www.no-deal.org)

## Unions Blast Vodacom Abuses in South Africa

CWA and telecom unions around the world are condemning the latest outrages being committed by Vodacom, Vodafone's subsidiary in South Africa, against striking South African workers. Vodafone co-owns Verizon Wireless.

CWA, the AFL-CIO's Solidarity Center and the global Union Network International are supporting the fight of Vodacom workers seeking recognition of their union. More than 1,000 members of the Communications Workers Union (CWU) have been on strike since July 2.

When the strike began, Vodacom locked out its workers and demanded they sign a "loyalty pledge" before returning to work.

"Vodacom has chosen to wage war against its employees and has attacked their right to a union voice," said CWA President Larry Cohen. "All of us in the global union movement stand with our brothers and sisters in CWU. CWU will prevail, even against a company that is employing the worst union-busting tactics imaginable. It is no surprise to us since they also own 45 percent of Verizon Wireless and, like Verizon, will do anything to stop recognition and bargaining rights."



Vodacom workers marching in Johannesburg on July 18

In South Africa, employers are required to recognize the union when 30 percent of the workforce indicates support for union representation. At Vodacom, more than 1,300 of the company's 4,000 already have joined the CWU. Vodacom, instead of following the law, imported an American union-buster, Claire Lapham, to attack workers' rights.

CWU is asking that letters of support for the Vodacom workers be sent to the South African Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Communications and Vodacom Group chief executive officer Alan Knott-Craig.

For more information, go to [www.cwuvodacom.blogspot.com](http://www.cwuvodacom.blogspot.com)

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What's happening in your area? Send information and photos to [unityatverizon@cwa-union.org](mailto:unityatverizon@cwa-union.org) and we'll publish them here.



## Tear Down the Wall at Verizon!

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