

**CWA 7250**

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**CWA 7250 Union Update - September 2022**Kieran Knutson <kieran.knutson@cwa7250.org>  
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**CWA 7250 Union Update - Sept 2022****Happy Labor Day!**

See below for Notes and/or Links on . . .

**Save WFH at AT&T ACTION this coming Saturday** - AT&T Mobility Orange & DirecTV Contracts Approved - **LISA Operators Union (LOU) at AppFolio Join CWA 7250** - Major Media Attention for CWA 7250 WFH Campaign - **CWA Human Rights Conference** - Local 7250 Iowa Techs Meet-Up - **District 7 Labor School** - QAMN Walk Out - **Class Struggle Unionism Book Talk** - CWA Solidarity - **Labor History: What is "Work to Rule?"** - Vaccine Booster Information - **RIP 7250 members Bruce Steffen (AT&T Retail) & Marcia Peterson (AT&T Call Center)** - September Membership Meeting

**1. Protest Rally: Workers Say: "AT&T - Keep WFH!"****Rally Against AT&T's Reckless & Unnecessary Forced Return to Office Order****Saturday, September 10th 1:00pm 901 AT&T Tower 901 Marquette**<https://www.facebook.com/events/423179919910306>

Please join CWA 7250 members standing up against AT&T's reckless, and dangerous forced Return to Office (RTO) order. Work from Home (WFH) was the choice of 90% of AT&T's employees at the AT&T Tower in downtown Minneapolis. WFH kept us safer from COVID-19, saved us thousands of dollars in commuting costs, and allowed us to spend more time with our families and get more rest. AT&T admits that workers were more productive and had better attendance with WFH. In AT&T centers around the country previously forced into RTO, COVID has run rampant. Earlier this summer our CWA national union and AT&T announced a 6-month extension of the WFH arrangement - only to have all of AT&T's business units opt OUT of the agreement - with no real reason given. AT&T's forced RTO is an attack on our health, safety, income, and quality of life. COVID and other infectious diseases are still a threat; downtown violent crime is up, and inflated gas prices & other commuter costs will be defacto pay cuts! We say "NO!" - Over 8,300 AT&T workers have signed our petition demanding a permanent WFH option. A majority of AT&T workers assigned to AT&T Tower are looking for other work. We shouldn't have to choose between our jobs and our health and safety.

***Our Members that have chosen to remain working at the AT&T Tower are also extremely important to us. We have always fought for both a WFH and an in-office option for our Call Center members. We would like to help address any specific concerns that in-office workers have about the forced RTO with management as soon as possible - please get in touch!***



## 2. AT&T Mobility Orange & DirecTV Contracts Approved

New national contracts have been approved for both AT&T Mobility "Orange" (including Local 7250's Retail, Tech, and VCC workers) and for DirecTV Customer Care (including our Eden Prairie MN Call center members). The new 4-year contracts both include 5% raises this year and 3% raises + a COLA bump in each of the next 3 years; there is some improvement in overtime pay and attendance discipline.

**CWA 7250 Mobility** stewards and officers thought we could get better - especially if we organized a strike threat - and voted overwhelmingly to recommend a No vote on the Orange Tentative Agreement - as Area Vice President **Larry Thompson** said, "The Union should be setting the bar in the industry, not settling for middle of the pack". Our members mostly agreed - 67% of eligible members voted (an excellent turnout) and 62% of the voters voted NO. Our Tech and Retail stewards had worked hard to track down emails for all of our Mobility members (to send them an e-ballot), reminded co-workers to vote - and where we had an active steward presence the vote was especially high. No other Locals called on a NO vote and the agreement was approved in the national vote, announced July 29th.

**The new Orange Mobility contract is on-line here:** <https://www.cwa7250.org/images/Contracts/2022.orange.contract.pdf>

A full list of associated implementation dates will be posted on the Local website soon.

The **DirecTV** contract was the result of the union's first negotiations with the new managing ownership group, the private equity firm TPG (AT&T still owns 70% of DirecTV, but at the company's insistence we are all supposed to pretend that they are no longer the boss over DTV). CWA 7250 AVP **Ann Jensen** was selected by the Local to serve on the union's bargaining committee along with representatives from CWA Local 2009 (Huntington WV), CWA Local 7750 (Denver CO), and staff representatives **Pat Telesco (District 1)** and **Jeanne Stewart (District 7)**. Ann fought hard for a good deal for her co-workers - and CWA 7250 had her back. Our union organized two actions at the DirecTV Call Center, participated in social media mobilization actions, and a postcard campaign. The DirecTV agreement is very similar to the new Orange mobility contract, but our DTV members reacted very differently. 17 out of 19 DTV members voted (excellent!) - and it was unanimous in our Local in favor of the contract - these votes were added to the national tally which overwhelmingly approved the deal on August 31st. CWA's DirecTV workers have been some of the lowest paid workers in the union, it is very good that they won a decent raise out of this. It would have been interesting to see what would have happened if all the DirecTV workers were under the same CWA contract - instead of splintered up into several different contracts, and also to see what the impact of a strike vote would have been. DirecTV workers are an important part of our Local - and we will continue to build union power there.

**The new DirecTV contract (noting changes from past agreement) can be accessed here:**

[https://cwa-union.org/sites/default/files/final\\_dtv\\_orange\\_customer\\_care\\_ta.pdf](https://cwa-union.org/sites/default/files/final_dtv_orange_customer_care_ta.pdf)



### 3. LISA Operators Union (LOU) at AppFolio Join CWA 7250

In June the WFH human operators behind AppFolio, the property management on-line tools chat-bot "Lisa", organized with support from **CWA-CODE (the union's Campaign to Organize Digital Employees)**, and after talking with CWA District Staff, meeting via zoom with CWA 7250 officers, and attending a full Local membership meeting as guests, the **Lisa Operators Union (LOU)** representing approx 70 operators, voted overwhelmingly to affiliate with CWA 7250. The LOU workers, along with **District 7 organizer Jana Smith-Carr**, are getting ready for bargaining their first contract in October. They are circulating a contract demand survey among their members and starting to set-up a stewards network. **We are honored and excited to have these new members in our Local** and look forward to learning from their organizing experience and also sharing what we've learned with them. We will need to update our Local by-laws to add an area vice-president (AVP) for LOU/Appfolio.

<https://code-cwa.org/stories/chatbot-operators-behind-real-estate-firm>

<https://www.instagram.com/lisaopsunited/>

<https://mobile.twitter.com/lisaopsunited/>



### 4. Major Media Attention for CWA 7250 WFH Campaign

The campaign waged by CWA Local 7250 and a few other solid Locals, union members and activists has been able to garner unprecedented media attention. National, local, labor, alternative, and social media have all carried the story of AT&T workers questioning and standing up to AT&T's forced RTO. If you haven't seen or kept up with all the stories, here they are:

**CBS Sunday Morning (09/04/22):** <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/back-to-the-office-not-so-fast/>

**The Valley Labor Report (08/31/22):** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4HQ17vdbLE&t=72s>

**StarTribune (09/02/22):** <https://www.startribune.com/minneapolis-st-paul-return-to-office-is-still-spotty-will-that-change-after-labor-day/600202982/>

**TakeAction MN videos (09/02/22):** <https://twitter.com/TakeActionMN/status/1565816975099674627>

**KSTP Ch 5 (08/25/22):** <https://kstp.com/kstp-news/local-news/local-att-workers-fight-against-return-to-office-plan/>

**CWA 7250 YouTube (08/25/22):** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UcDPZFMnbDg>

**St. Paul Union Advocate (08/24/22):** <https://advocate.stpaulunions.org/2022/08/24/union-members-push-back-on-atts-return-to-office-plan/>

**Raket (08/23/22):** <https://raketmn.com/big-week-for-whiny-white-men-in-minneapolis-food-and-drink/>

**Fortune (08/18/22):** <https://fortune.com/2022/08/18/att-employees-start-permanent-remote-work-petition/>

**CBS Evening News (08/16/22):** <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/amazon-walkout-nurse-strike-gallup-employee-satisfaction/>

**The Guardian (08/15/22):** <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/aug/15/att-workers-fight-company-return-to-office-push>

Thanks to the AWESOME members of the CWA 7250 WFH Committee for all their hard work - and to our friends at TakeAction MN for promoting a video series of our members (**Sara Fry**, **Daniel Hamilton**, and **Yolanda Olmo** so far) speaking on the issue. If you'd be willing to do a short video about why WFH is so important to you and your family - please get in touch with Sara from the WFH Committee: [sarajfrygirl@gmail.com](mailto:sarajfrygirl@gmail.com)



### 5. CWA Human Rights Conference

**Angela Bates** and **Michelle Richardson** (both long-time union stewards for the AT&T Call Center) represented Local 7250 at the CWA Human Rights Conference held over 4 days last month in Phoenix AZ. The conference was themed "Where There is Injustice, You Will Find Us!", focused on CWA's efforts to fight against racism, sexism, religious intolerance, nationalism, and other biases that have systematically held communities back. Michelle and Angela will be re-starting our Local's Human Rights Committee - get in touch if you'd like to participate: [union@cwa7250.org](mailto:union@cwa7250.org)

**Michelle Richardson's Conference Report** (members-only access of the CWA Local 7250 website):

<https://www.cwa7250.org/index.php/member-section/reports/194-2022-human-rights-conference>

National **CWA Conference Report** "CWA Members Fight Against Injustice at the 2022 Human Rights Conference":

<https://cwa-union.org/news/cwa-members-fight-against-injustice-2022-human-rights-conference>



# CWA 7250

## 6. Local 7250 Iowa Techs Meet-Up

On August 31st, CWA 7250 AVP **Sean McCawley** and Local President **Kieran Knutson** traveled down to Grimes, Iowa (outside of Des Moines) for a wide-ranging conversation with five Network Techs **Steve Wilson, Ron Deskins, Hicham Knaine, Marcel Patyk**, and new member **Marc McMurry** including the new contract extension, AT&T's locate ticket outside vetting, job assignments, and the future of the Network Tech position. We have a couple items to follow-up on and are happy that Steve (a former Local VP in Arkansas) has stepped forward to be a new steward. We look forward to meeting up with our Tech members in Nebraska, the Dakotas and Northern MN soon.

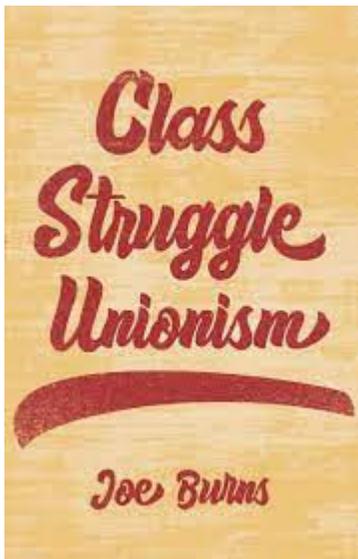
## 7. District 7 Labor School

At the end of September, we will be sending five Local members down to the University of Iowa campus in Iowa City for the week-long CWA District 7 Union Leadership School run by the University of Iowa Labor Center. The Leadership school is a series of workshops, lectures and training activities designed to spread knowledge and develop skills among the union's most active members. Many of CWA 7250 officers and stewards have gone through the training and given it excellent reviews. This year **Joyce Sims** (AT&T Call Center) will be going for her 2nd (and final) year of classes. She'll be joined by first year students **Traci Doll** (AT&T Retail St. Cloud), **Yolanda Olmo** (AT&T Call Center), **Dylan Neubauer** (AT&T Retail St. Paul), and **Nick Stryker** (AT&T Retail Osseo). We'll be interested to hear how this session goes and look forward to future Local participation in the Leadership School.



## 8. QAMN Walk Out

CWA 7250 is highly interested in supporting workers in the video-gaming industry to organize. In July members of CWA 7250 attended a walk out of employees at ActivisionBlizzard's Quality Assurance group in Eden Prairie, MN (tho many of the workers are remote and participated virtually). We look forward to working and organizing with workers across this industry. For more info, see: <https://abkwatch.org/>



### 9. *Class Struggle Unionism* Book Talk

At the end of July, CWA 7250 co-sponsored a talk by AFA-CWA Director of Collective Bargaining (and long-time labor activist) **Joe Burns** on his new book *Class Struggle Unionism*. Joe has written a couple other excellent books on Labor strategy and tactics (*Reviving the Strike*; and *Strike Back*) and he has previously spoken at one of our Local meetings and also at a meeting of the AT&T Tower stewards. *Class Struggle Unionism* is essential reading for union activists. Joe doesn't pull any punches when it comes to the weakness of the bureaucratic business unionism that dominates so much of the labor movement. But he also criticizes the newer trend of "labor liberalism" that still revolves around coalition building and organizing techniques. Joe argues that the strength of the labor movement has always been to understand that we are in a class war with the billionaire owning class and that our strongest weapon is the strike which immediately threatens the bosses profits. Joe argues that we need a movement that knows who our enemies are, is willing to fight by any means necessary, and has the backs of all the working-class against racism and sexism. Hopefully the Local will be getting some copies of the book soon, but if you're interested in ordering one now - you can do so here: <https://www.haymarketbooks.org/books/1767-class-struggle-unionism>



### 10. CWA SOLIDARITY:

- **Minnesota Nurses:** MNA has voted to strike 15 hospitals in the Twin Cities and Twin Ports starting September 12th. This will be the biggest nurses strike in the county's history with 15,000 union members affected. Sign up to picket here: [https://mna.formstack.com/forms/strike\\_picket\\_line\\_signup](https://mna.formstack.com/forms/strike_picket_line_signup)
- **IUE-CWA 1140:** Workers at Electric Machinery in NE Minneapolis are in a contract fight. Three members of our Local + **Shari Wojtowicz** from CWA State Council joined their rally last week on Central Ave.
- **Starbucks Workers United:** Over 200 Starbucks coffee shops across the U.S. have now unionized - including in Minnesota, Nebraska, and Wisconsin. When workers at the 47th & Cedar Ave store in south Minneapolis went on strike twice in August, CWA 7250 members joined their picket lines which completely shut down the store during the strikes.
- **BCTGM Local 100G:** Workers at Ingredion in Cedar Rapids, IA have been on strike now for over a month. The food processing corporation is trying to raise the cost of health benefits by hundreds of dollars. To help, follow the union on social media: [facebook.com/BCTGM](https://www.facebook.com/BCTGM); [instagram.com/bctgm/](https://www.instagram.com/bctgm/) and **donate here:** <https://www.gofundme.com/f/bctgm-100g-strike-assistance>
- United Mine Workers:** union members on strike against Warrior Met Coal in Alabama have been ordered by Federal authorities to pay the company (!) more than \$13 million in damages and lost profits - so much for "the most pro-worker

president in our life times". The coal company is also attempting to fire 40 local leaders of the miners union - including a disproportionate number of African-American local officers. to follow the strike or donate to the strike fund, go to: <http://umwa.org/>



### 11. Labor History: What is "Work to Rule?"

Many of our members have been asking about the concept of "Work to Rule" - so, what is it? Per Wikipedia: "*Work-to-rule is a job action in which employees do no more than the minimum required by the rules of their contract, and precisely follow all safety or other regulations, which may cause a slowdown or decrease in productivity . . . Such an action is considered less disruptive than a strike or lockout, and obeying the rules is less susceptible to disciplinary action.*" For more information see ***Work-to-rule: A short guide to working to rule - taking industrial action without losing pay by following your work's rules so strictly that nothing gets done:*** <https://libcom.org/article/work-rule-guide>

\*This information is provided for purely historical reasons

**COVID-19 Booster Doses**

The best way to protect yourself from COVID-19, including Omicron is to get vaccinated and boosted.

**Who?** Everyone ages 5 and older should get a booster.

**When?** At least 5 months after your second Pfizer or Moderna shot, or 2 months after Johnson & Johnson.

As of 8/18/2022

### 12. COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Access Information

Updated COVID-19 boosters add Omicron BA.4 and BA.5 spike protein components to the current vaccine composition, helping to restore protection that has waned since previous vaccination by targeting variants that are more transmissible and immune-evading. Many employers including AT&T are offering paid time to get boosted. To find a vaccine booster near you: <https://www.vaccines.gov/>



### 13. Rest in Peace Bruce - Rest in Peace Marcia

We give our love and solidarity to the families of two co-workers and union members who we lost in recent weeks. Bruce Steffen, 58, was the longest serving AT&T retail worker in Minnesota, died in a motorcycle accident on his way to Sturgis SD.

Marcia Peterson, 53, was a long-time worker at the AT&T call center, passed away after a courageous year and a half battle with cancer.

Both Bruce and Marcia were loved by their co-workers and will be so missed. May our memories keep their spirits alive among us

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/twincities/name/bruce-steffen-obituary?id=36281747>

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/marcia-peterson-obituary?id=36319852>



#### 14. September General Membership Meeting

Please join us at 7:00pm on Wednesday, September 21st 2022 via zoom for our bi-monthly General Membership meeting - the highest body of our Local Union. Among the agenda items will be next year's budget, by-laws updates, upcoming union actions and activities. Links for the meeting will be sent out on the morning of the 2st.

**Your Dues - Your Decisions - Your Union**

**CWA 7250 UNION UPDATE** is sent out every month to all Local members and contacts, other CWA locals and other unions, and friends and allies in the labor movement and the community. The **UPDATE** is edited and produced by CWA 7250 Local 7250 President Kieran F. Knutson.

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