

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 715, AFL-CIO
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The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 715, AFL-CIO, is incredibly disappointed in what it perceives as Journal Communications' blatant attempts to discourage employees from supporting its duly elected Union through unilateral changes to terms and conditions of employment at a time that good faith negotiations are required by federal labor law.

IBEW Local 715 is currently negotiating a successor collective bargaining agreement on behalf of the Union's Engineering bargaining unit, which includes 44 broadcast engineers who are currently employed at Journal Broadcast Group's WTMJ-TV, WTMJ-DT, WTMJ-AM and WKTI-FM stations. Prior to this year, the IBEW has successfully negotiated contract agreements with WTMJ Radio then with WTMJ-TV for more than **70** years.

On May 23, 2008, in a union-busting tactic unprecedented in the experience of IBEW Local 715, Journal Communications—faced with continued solidarity of its employees behind their Union's efforts to negotiate a collective bargaining agreement—decided to unlawfully suspend bargaining and instead to announce what it termed the “merger” of IBEW Local 715 with employees of a different Union. The goals of Journal Communications in forcing this “merger” among two entirely different unions are to divide its workforce, to unlawfully implement its proposals to reduce the workforce, and to eliminate seniority.

The Union filed an unfair labor practice charge against Journal Communications on August 6, requesting that the Board seek injunctive relief in Court to stop the unlawful conduct. The NLRB Regional office in Milwaukee is already investigating earlier unfair labor practice allegations against Journal Communications based on charges filed by the Union in May.

Christopher Albrecht, Business Manager of Local 715, indicated, “The Company's tactics can only be described as underhanded and dishonest. Instead of trying to accomplish its goals legally, at the bargaining table, the Company has unilaterally implemented a merger of two distinct bargaining units. Its goals of driving down wages and the solidarity of its employees are very transparent. The Union and its membership will reject this stunt by Journal Communications.”

The reaction of the Milwaukee Metropolitan area is expected to mirror the steadfast reaction from the workers of the Journal Company. Community leaders and workers are taking a stand because they know that union jobs are good, middle-class jobs that support workers and their families. Workers are taking a stand because they are concerned about their jobs, their hard-earned benefits, and the Company's apparent willingness to sacrifice the quality of the product to achieve its “business objectives”.

The employees at the Journal need not tolerate bad faith bargaining and unfair labor practices from the Journal. The Union has successfully negotiated contracts with Journal Communications for seven decades. Whether through the simple step of voluntary settlement of the collective bargaining agreement, or by NLRB or Court order, the employees' voice will not be silenced.

More information and copies of the unfair labor practice charges are available from IBEW Local 715, AFL-CIO, 633 S. Hawley Rd., Suite 107, Milwaukee, WI 53214-1948.