

Live Bait & Ammo # 77

I finally got an answer from the UAW.

I had asked repeatedly, "What happens if Delphi stops paying the pension after the Benefit Guarantee from GM expires on October 18, 2007?"

I was informed in writing that "all my questions were answered at the information meeting."

Since my UAW International rep won't put it in writing, I will. Here's what I asked and here's what I heard him say.

Q: Has the Benefit Guarantee been triggered by the bankruptcy?

A: "No, Chapter 11 does not automatically trigger the Benefit Guarantee."

Q: It states in the SAP that if we check the box we will get a Delphi pension. If we check the box will we get a GM pension?

A: "No. It says you will get a Delphi pension."

Q: Does checking the box trigger the Benefit Guarantee?

A: "No, checking the box does not trigger the Benefit Guarantee. It only means that you will be treated as if you had transferred to GM for the purpose of health care and life insurance. Health care and life insurance will be provided by GM, but not pension."

Q: In other words, if we take the SAP, we will get a pension from a company that is bankrupt. Is that correct?

He didn't answer. He called on somebody else, somebody who looked stoned on \$ signs.

In all fairness, it doesn't matter what Koscinski or anyone else said because the SAP does not mention the Benefit Guarantee. The document states unequivocally: "I acknowledge the options available to me are determined solely by the written provisions of the UAW-GM-Delphi Special Attrition Program, The Delphi Hourly-Rate Employees Pension Plan, and other applicable benefit plans and programs. I acknowledge no prior representations, promises, or agreements relating to my employment, redeployment, separation from service, or retirement have been made by Delphi or the UAW which are contrary to this document and the Special

Attrition Program. I further acknowledge that my selections are voluntarily made and irrevocable.”

Pretty much covers their butts.

At the Bargaining Convention in March 1999 I asked Shoemaker, “Tell us the truth now. End the silence. Give us the information we need to make the best decision for ourselves and our families.”

Shoemaker didn’t respond. Whose interests was he looking out for when he allowed GM to transfer all our pension credits from GM to Delphi? Why didn't he inform us? We didn’t learn that all the pension credits we earned with GM were transferred to Delphi until after ratification.

If we transfer back to GM, our pension credits remain with Delphi. Miller claims he wants to keep funding the pension, but who believes him? The Delphi pension is underfunded now and there is no reason to believe it will be fully funded in the future. If everyone jumps ship, Delphi will have six times as many retirees as active workers. Both GM and Delphi complain that legacy costs are killing them. They insist the ratio of active and retired workers is unsustainable. So how does adding to the legacy burden magically become a solution? The equation doesn’t equate.

How can we protect ourselves now?

We must demand that the Benefit Guarantee be extended indefinitely. Both GM and the UAW owe that to us. But what leverage will we have if we wait until 2007 when the Guarantee expires and most everyone at Delphi has jumped ship? What would motivate GM to pick up the tab? They didn’t spin us off to take us back. If we don’t get that guarantee now, next year will be too late. Verbal promises are worth a cup full of hot air in a steam bath.

The SAP is not a comprehensive collective bargaining solution. The SAP is not a union solution, it’s the bosses solution. The SAP helps GM-Delphi accomplish the downsizing, outsourcing, and downward spiral commonly known as whipsawing with a minimum of resistance. The SAP decimates solidarity, isolates the embattled, and mitigates expense to the companies.

The SAP is not only cheaper than the Jobs Bank, it has a hole in the bottom.

In order to further undermine resistance to the wholesale outsourcing of our jobs and the threat to our communities, the Concession Caucus is permitting GM-Delphi to hire temps who will be eligible to vote once they pay their dues.

As a caveat Delphi-UAW members recently had “an eight cents diversion from the cost-of-living allowance with six cents allocated to the Retiree Health Care VEBA.....”. We weren’t given the opportunity to vote on that concession. Is taxation without representation a union solution?

We weren’t allowed to vote on the two tier supplement that extends four years beyond the contract we did ratify. Do you see a pattern developing?

sos, shotwell