

Open Letter To The Community:



143 days. When Hecla and USW Local 5114 meet on August 3rd it will have been 143 days since the Union went on strike and the best miners in the world stopped working for Hecla. During that time the Union has met with the company only once, a month ago, to consider ideas that we offered to share with the Union back in May.

Why do I think after all this time the strike is not resolved and miners are not back to work?

I don't think it is money. Our original proposal in March didn't rollback pay for the total workforce but some would have been paid more and some potentially less. To alleviate the concerns we heard, in early July, we presented ideas to the Union that assure every employee receives a base wage that is at least as high as his or her combined wage and silver premium from the prior contract. For some to keep that wage they will have to improve their skills but most employees will earn much more than they did under the prior contract. In addition, we have offered more vacation, overtime, and holiday compensation to every employee. And all can make even more under the new system compared to the old if they continue to improve their skills.

So, if the strike isn't about money then what is it about? Surprisingly, the strike seems to be about a few senior employees retaining their power over the rest of the workforce. That is because the senior miners determine who gets to work where and with whom. This is not an idle power because unless one of the senior miners chooses an employee to mine with them, a worker is unable to earn the large gypo mining bonuses, regardless of the miner's skill and experience. While I have the greatest respect for these senior employees, they are incredible miners, the Lucky Friday needs to evolve like all the other mines in the country have done to the new system we have proposed.

I know the strike has taken its toll on the community and my fellow workers of Hecla. I think our ideas should allow the workforce to put the old system behind and move to a new system that will help the mine, which is celebrating its 75th year, to enjoy perhaps another 75 years. Thank you for support of Hecla and our employees including those in the union.

More information is available on our web page at www.hecla-mining.com.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "P. S. K.", written over a light blue rectangular background.

President and CEO
Hecla Mining Company