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The Ongoing Diminishment of the Once Mighty Craft and Services Bargaining Unit

Bell Craft Bargaining History, Issue 1 of 8.

The Craft and Services Bargaining Unit included 20,000 members (15,000 Technicians and 5,000 Operators) in 1988. Where did Bell move the work?

The company consistently and drastically reduces the number of jobs in our unit, here's how. Between 1994 and 1996 with the formation of Expertech (Formerly part of the Bell Construction Department) and the elimination of Residential Service Technicians which had been replaced by Newco/Entourage, as of July 1st 1999, the bargaining unit had shrunk by almost 63% to 7,356 members.

When Bell purchased Entourage outright in 2005 they renamed it Bell Technical Solutions (BTS). Not only has Bell cut a huge volume of employees through spinning off residential technician work to BTS, now they have begun to accelerate the pushing away of business work performed by Bell Craft technicians.

In 2012, the Bell Craft unit had been reduced to 30% (4,546 members) of 1988 staffing levels, a trend that the company committed to stopping and levelling out at 2012 bargaining.

The premise was a new wage scale and more flexible job security would result in more hiring and a stabilization of the membership count. Unfortunately, these commitments were not honoured, and the trend continued into 2016 when we saw levels continue downward to 27% (3,987 members) of 1988 staffing levels. The Craft Bargaining unit currently sat at 3,466 members as of August 31, 2020.

This is a reduction of 83% since 1988, and a stark reminder that for the next generation of craft workers, a good job, with good compensation and benefits will be even harder to find.

Frequent Retirement Incentive Offers helped pave the way for where we are today, but the reality it is the company that has not met their end of the bargain. Jobs have not returned, work is not being replaced and so the time to question our job security is far past due.

Bell, it's time for respect and job security for the Craft and Services Bargaining Unit.

Read all the updates at unifor.org/bellcraft