

# TEAMSTERS NEWS

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## **ALASKA TEAMSTERS VOTE TO AUTHORIZE STRIKE AT AT&T**

### ***Frontline Workers Say AT&T Violates Federal Labor Law, Fails to Adequately Staff Critical Telecommunications Infrastructure in Alaska***

(ANCHORAGE, Alaska) – AT&T Alascom workers represented by Teamsters Local 959 have voted overwhelmingly to authorize a strike. The 175 tower climbers, technicians and other frontline workers who build, maintain and monitor Alaska’s telecommunications infrastructure are taking a stand against AT&T’s labor law violations and neglect of Alaskan communities.

Recent surveys of AT&T customers and frontline workers in Alaska show that AT&T executives are failing to invest in staff and in its critical telecom network and facilities throughout the state. Sixty-four percent of Alaska AT&T customers who responded to the survey rated AT&T’s services as “low” or “very low” quality.

Additionally, about 70 percent of AT&T Alascom workers who participated in the survey “agree” or “strongly agree” that AT&T is failing to invest necessary resources in its communications system in Alaska.

“AT&T pockets billions of dollars but refuses to invest in workers or communities,” said Sean M. O’Brien, Teamsters General President. “Our Alascom members risk their lives in the worst Alaskan weather to repair equipment and keep phone and internet services running. They represent the finest of the Teamsters – taking on yet another corporate bully to protect their families and demand the respect they deserve.”

In Alaska, AT&T [NYSE: T] owns and operates the Alascom network, which serves as the primary backbone for all critical services throughout the state. This infrastructure includes more than 200 radio system facilities, the Anchorage-Prudhoe Bay fiber optic cable, and numerous transmitter/repeater sites. Alascom and its workers also provide services to the Alyeska Pipeline, numerous national security and defense systems, and major cities such as Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau.

Local 959’s Alascom members have been trying for months to bargain a new contract with AT&T’s out-of-state corporate negotiators. Alascom workers have been forced to file over a half dozen unfair labor practice charges against AT&T for violating federal labor law during bargaining,

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including making unilateral changes to working conditions, bad faith bargaining, and refusing to supply requested information needed for negotiations.

“Right now, AT&T corporate is demanding that we accept annual pay increases as low as half of one percent and pay over \$1,100 every month for family health care,” said Kurt Foley, a 16-year technician. “That’s just not sustainable and it’s ridiculous, especially after AT&T paid its CEO \$25 million last year and gave him an 18 percent raise. This strike vote is a wake-up call to AT&T, which continues to violate our rights and put critical telecom services at risk. Alaska towns and national security systems depend on these services, as do our own families.”

“AT&T corporate executives in the lower 48 are treating our communities like a personal piggybank and exploiting Alaska’s working families,” said Gary Dixon, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 959. “In Alaska, AT&T has over \$2 billion in federal contracts alone. This company seems dead set on pulling every last penny out of the state, even if it means exploiting its own workers and sticking our communities with outdated, inadequate infrastructure.”

Founded in 1903, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters represents 1.2 million hardworking men and women throughout the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. Visit [www.teamster.org](http://www.teamster.org) for more information. Follow us on Twitter @Teamsters and “like” us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/teamsters](http://www.facebook.com/teamsters).