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Resources

- [Safety](#)
- [Pressroom](#) (web)
- [Ask the CEO](#)
- [CEO Forum](#)
- [Employee Recognition](#)
- [Employee Activities](#)
- [Metro Projects](#)
- [Facts at a Glance](#) (web)
- [Archives](#)
- [Events Calendar](#)
- [Research Center/Library](#)
- [Metro Classifieds](#)
- [Bazaar](#)

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- [30/10 Initiative](#)
- [Policies](#)
- [Training](#)
- [Help Desk](#)
- [Intranet Policy](#)

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Metro Staffers Attend ‘Interest-based’ Bargaining Workshop

- Metro and labor union bargaining teams attending similar sessions

(Feb. 24, 2006) Staff members who will support Metro’s bargaining team in this year’s labor negotiations participated in a day-long workshop, Feb. 21, to learn about “interest-based” negotiating.

More than 20 staff members attended the orientation at the Regional Rebuild Center. They included sector general managers; administrative, personnel and benefits managers; division transportation and maintenance staff; safety and risk management staff.

“The orientation session contrasts interest-based bargaining with position bargaining, which is more about posturing,” said Rhonda Hilyer, an independent neutral facilitator, who conducted the workshop. “It’s important to build positive relationships when you’re bargaining.”

The workshop included examples of techniques for effective communications during negotiations, different communication styles and how to translate “messages” accurately during bargaining. Role-playing was used to demonstrate positional and interest-based bargaining.

“People literally communicate in different languages,” Hilyer said. “Even though we all may be speaking English, we may be saying very different things. If we understand that...we can translate the messages accurately.”

Photos: Bill Heard



Deputy CEO John Catoe said adversarial labor negotiations in previous years had impacted customers and employees. He expects interest-based negotiations to produce more positive results during this year’s contract bargaining.

Facilitator
Rhonda
Hilyer leads
a
discussion
during the
interest-
based
negotiations
orientation
session for
Metro staff



Hilyer also is conducting interest-based negotiating workshops for the Metro bargaining team and teams from the ATU, TCU and UTU. The ATU workshop was held Feb. 16-17; the TCU workshop was conducted Feb. 22-23 and the UTU workshop is set for Feb. 27-28.

Asked about the workshop with ATU, Deputy CEO John Catoe said, "It was a very good beginning to the process. Not only did we communicate, we established a high-level respect for each member of the negotiating teams."

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