Staff photo by Chuck Mueller

Protesting railroad machinists Joe Esquibel, Ray Patty, Mike Hernandez and Terry Reynolds.

Railway machinists protest layoffs

By CHUCK MUELLER
Sun Staff Writer

BARSTOW — In a peaceful demonstration Tuesday, Santa Fe Railway machinists protested alleged unfair labor practices in the layoff of 39 fellow machinists and overtime call back of about 30 others daily.

However, no strike is planned, said Mark Filipovic, chairman of Local 706 of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.

"This was a peaceful demonstration for informational purposes, and everyone came to work today (Tuesday)," he said.

He said the machinists are protesting the layoff of 39 machinists since last June 10, and the call back of 25 to 35 employees for overtime work in a 24-hour period.

"Between June 2 and Aug. 31, Santa Fe laid off 25 machinists and called back 20 to 25 for overtime," Filipovic said. "That's almost a 1-to-1 ratio."

Filipovic said 235 machinists work here seven days a week.

He said the union voted to boycott overtime work Saturday, and not fulfill company requests for it.

"Santa Fe said it would use electricians, supervisors or other do machinists work Saturday," he said.

Chuck Halnan, of Santa Fe's public relations staff in Los Angeles, said the railroad has reduced shop positions since last May "to a level which corresponds to the work load at the shops.

"Because of economic conditions on a national and local level, some positions involving members of all crafts were eliminated," he said.

"We had intended to make further reductions at the end of September, but because of recent forecast which indicate an increase in business, we have decided against reductions at this time," Halnan added.

Filipovic said Santa Fe informed him Tuesday that 13 machinists that were expected to be laid off Sept. 30 will be retained.

On the overtime issue, Halnan said Santa Fe "is treating that no differently than in the past.

"We have never hired new people to fill what could be labeled relief positions, that is, for vacations, sickness, etc."

Informational pickets walked at two points along Main Street Tuesday, near the railroad shops and classification yards.

One machinist, Ray Patty, said: "Nobody seems to know why we're being laid off."

The wife of one laid off machinist, Mario Koceski, asked: "If there aren't enough funds, why are they asking people to work overtime?

"And if there's not enough work, why are they asking for overtime work?"

Pioneertown well contract awarded

SAN BERNARDINO — Attempting to ensure a supply for the proposed Pioneertown community water system, county supervisors have awarded a $43,805 contract to Howard Pump, Inc., of Barstow for drilling and test pumping of a well.

Assuming an adequate supply can be developed, the county board plans to proceed with design of distribution lines that initially would serve about 100 homes and businesses and replace an old undersized system that has some 40 connections.

The well drilling is being financed by $100 fees the board levied this year on property owners in the desert community north of Yucca Valley. To pay costs of constructing the system, an assessment program would be implemented to retire bonds or a long-term, low-interest loan from the state or federal government.

In other actions Monday, the supervisors:

✓ Granted a permit allowing Saturday's first annual Mojave River Raft Race to cross Flood Control District rights-of-way along a five-mile stretch of the river between Lenwood and Barstow. The event is being sponsored by Barstow and Lenwood merchants.

✓ Voted initial approval of ordinances that will formally implement the new community land use plans for Yucca Valley, Joshua Tree and Morongo Valley that were previously endorsed by resolution. The ordinances will go into effect 30 days after final adoption, expected next Monday.

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Workers urge more talks

By SYBEL ALGER
Sun Staff Writer

HINKLEY — Nearly 200 placard-carrying employees packed the Hinkley School gymnasium Tuesday night to hear their representatives ask Barstow Unified School District trustees to return to the negotiating table.

Board members did not respond to the requests.

Spud Shelton, vice president of the California School Employees Assocation Local 306, and Bob Ringwald, president of the Barstow Education Association, both asked that negotiations resume.

"We desire to meet with you any time and at any place starting tonight in marathon sessions so we can get this thing settled," Ringwald said.

Seven representatives of the Barstow Area Council of Parents and Teachers Association voiced concern about children's safety if a strike occurs.

"(If there is a strike), we strongly urge the school board to close school down until an agreement is reached or at least consider closing the secondary schools (Barstow High, Barstow Junior High and Kennedy Ninth Grade)," President Bonnie Randolph said.

After a 25-minute closed door session, Board Chairman Kirtland Mahlum said, "One of the things that I feel is that the people, right or wrong, feel that we're not listening. If nothing else, to assure you that I read the letter and because I think it expresses many people's feelings well, I'm going to read a letter from Jack Conver, president of the non-teaching employees association."

The letter said, in part, "We have subsidized the district year after year in our time and by taking less money than other districts. Barstow always has special circumstances that mean we get less money . . . we ask that you consider our position."

Man, woman bound over for trial in "murder for hire" case. Metro.

Lahontan may join in lawsuit

BARSTOW — The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board may join Mojave Water Agency in litigation to prevent dairies from locating on the Las Flores Ranch in Summit Valley.

Water agency attorney Edward F. Taylor informed agency directors here Tuesday that Lahontan's board has authorized its legal staff to go forward with possible litigation.

He said the state attorney general is expected to receive a report this week recommending he represent Lahontan in the proceedings.

"If the attorney general proceeds on the behalf of the state (and Lahontan), it would be wise for us to join the state and ask the Superior Court for a preliminary injunction," Taylor said.

The agency's suit attempts to stay a decision of the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors, who voted Aug. 26 to change zoning of Las Flores' 3,000 acres from residential to heavy agricultural.

The change was requested to allow eight Chino Valley dairies to move to Summit Valley.

Barstow action group

BARSTOW — The Barstow Area Action Group will meet Sept. 25 to review its project report on helping youth, and to make plans for the year, president Edith Rodriguez said.

The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. in the Disabled American Veterans building.

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