

## National Beef Workers in Dodge City, Kan., Ramp Up Organizing Drive to Join UFCW Local 2



**Members of the National Beef Committee for a Better Future after their meeting with International Executive Vice President and Organizing Director Pat O'Neill.**

Members of the National Beef Committee for a Better Future, the organizing committee for National Beef workers in Dodge City, Kan., met with UFCW International Executive Vice President and Organizing Director, Pat O'Neill, last week.

Workers explained why it is important for the 2,500 workers at National Beef to have union representation. "We are uniting to form a union because we need respect and dignity," said Alicia Medina, who has worked at the Dodge City plant for nine years.

For 11-year veteran Isidra Herrera, "the fight is about having decent jobs so that our families can have a better future."

"Having a union in our plant will make a huge difference when it comes to safety and line speeds," added National Beef worker Veronica Hernandez.

O'Neill reiterated the support of the UFCW to the workers' organizing efforts. O'Neill spoke about the significance for the entire packing industry of what National Beef workers are trying to accomplish in Dodge City. "What you are doing here is more than

having a voice at work," O'Neill said. "It's about raising the standards for all workers in our industries."

But National Beef workers are facing daunting challenges since they started their organizing drive a few months ago. The company has engaged in aggressive anti-union tactics to prevent the workers from standing together for a better future.

"It's not easy, but I know that if we stand together, there is so much we can accomplish," said plant worker Maria Elena Diaz. "I have no doubt in my mind that we can bring change at National Beef," she added. **OP**

## UFCW Local 227 Members Rally to Save Jobs at JBS-Swift Plant



**UFCW Local 227 President Gary Best spoke at the rally about the need to keep the jobs in the Butchertown neighborhood of Louisville, Ky.**

UFCW Local 227 members at JBS-Swift in Louisville, Ky., gathered this past Sunday in front the Swift plant in the Butchertown neighborhood for a rally to urge the city to keep the plant open and save the jobs of 1,300 employees. The plant has been in operation for over a century.

The workers would lose their jobs if the city's Board of Zoning Adjustment revoked the plant's conditional use permit. The rally this past Sunday was in anticipation of the Board's scheduled meeting yesterday to make a decision.



After hearing pleas of hundreds of workers, the Board decided to let the plant keep its permit and stay open. The neighborhood association, which wants the plant moved out of Butchertown, is contesting the Board's decision in a lawsuit.

Although the fight is not over, 1,300 Swift workers get to keep their jobs for now. **OP**

## Local 99 and Grocery Chains Reach Tentative Agreement

Local 99 in Arizona and grocery companies Fry's and Safeway, last week, reached a tentative agreement on a new three-year contract.

The agreement comes after 13 long months of bargaining between Local 99 and the grocery companies, during which the companies engaged in a campaign to create dissension among workers while avoiding the real issues that workers care about, like keeping affordable health care, improving wages and retirement security.

Members of Local 99 will vote in the coming weeks on their new contract. If approved, the new contract will cover the more than 24,500 Local 99 workers who have been working without a union contract since their latest contract extension expired last October. **OP**

## New Government Accountability Office Report Finds OSHA Must Do Better in Counting Workplace Injuries

A report released yesterday by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) revealed a complete and systemic failure in the way that the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) tracks workplace injuries.

The report, requested from GAO by U.S. Sens. Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Patty Murray (D-WA), and U.S. Reps. George Miller (D-CA) and Lynn Woolsey (D-CA), further finds:

- OSHA overlooks information from workers about injuries and illnesses because it does not routinely interview them as part of its records audits;
- OSHA also does not review the accuracy of injury and illness records for worksites in eight high hazard industries because it has not updated the industry codes used to identify these industries since 2002.

"Thousands of workers in America deal with workplace injuries everyday," said Mark Lauritsen, UFCW International Vice President and Director of the Food Processing, Packing, and Manufacturing Division. "This epidemic of suffering is damaging to the workers, their colleagues, their workplaces, their families and the communities where they live. American companies, especially those in the food processing industries, must stop contributing to this problem by pressuring and intimidating workers to keep silent about these problems."

The full report is available at <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d1010.pdf>. You can also read a summary at <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-10-10>. **OP**

## UFCW Local 1360 Members Overwhelmingly Vote to Authorize Strike at Acme Markets

Local 1360 members, fighting for affordable health care and retirement security at the bargaining table, have voted to authorize a strike against Acme Markets in southern New Jersey.

Acme Markets' refusal to listen to workers and work out a mutually beneficial agreement—while insisting upon demands that will jeopardize the livelihoods of the local's members—left Local 1360 members no choice but to authorize a strike if the company doesn't improve its offer.

Local 1360 Acme Markets members have been working without a contract since last April when their previous contract expired. **OP**