

UFCW Local 1529 Scores Organizing Win at Koch Foods in Morton, Miss.

UFCW Local 1529 in Cordova, Tenn., scored an organizing win last week with an overwhelming majority of the workers at Koch Foods Distribution Center in Morton, Miss., voting for union representation by Local 1529.

Koch Foods, a supplier of fresh and frozen poultry products for food service and retail operators across the nation and around the world, has several facilities in the area where workers enjoy UFCW contracts. However, the company's Morton-based Distribution Center remained one of the few Koch Foods facilities where workers did not have a voice at work.

Fed up with being treated poorly by the company and also with the unilateral change of rules by Koch Foods, workers at the Distribution Center contacted UFCW Local 1529 two months ago for union representation.

Within four days of contacting Local 1529, the organizing committee successfully garnered support from the majority of the Distribution Center workers, with over 80 percent of the approximately 100 workers signing cards.

The determination of the organizing committee resulted in the landslide victory this past Tuesday, with over 95 percent of workers voting to be represented by Local 1529.

The victory last week was a clear message to Koch Foods that workers in the Distribution Center have problems that they want fixed and they took the appropriate steps to do just that by forming a union. **OP**

Michigan Governor Appoints President of UFCW Local 876 to State Investment Advisory Committee

Michigan Governor Jennifer M. Granholm has announced the appointment of Roger Robinson, President of UFCW Local 876, to the State of Michigan Investment Advisory Committee (IAC).



The Michigan IAC oversees the \$55 billion Michigan Pension Fund, and advises the Michigan State Treasurer on investment strategies and policies.

Robinson's appointment to the IAC is a testament

to the dynamism of UFCW locals in Michigan and the strength of the coalition of labor unions in the state.

Robinson, before his appointment takes effect, must be confirmed by the Michigan State Legislature. **OP**

WakeUpWalmart.com Rolls Out Holiday Campaign; Raises Safety Concerns about Company Practices



WakeUpWalmart.com launched its 2009 holiday campaign last week.

In light of last year's misfortune at a Valley Stream, N.Y., store, where Walmart worker Jdimytai Damour was trampled to death on Black Friday after an ill-prepared Walmart opened its doors on the busiest shopping day of the year, WakeUpWalmart.com is focusing this holiday season on safety issues engendered by the retailer's business practices.

A call to action went out to the 485,000 supporters that UFCW locals across the country have signed up to the WakeUpWalmart.com campaign.

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The company, despite a policy change to prevent another tragedy like the one at Valley Stream, still feared unfavorable news reports and went so far as to ban reporters from covering Friday's shopping frenzy.

As part of the holiday campaign, WakeUpWalmart.com asked supporters to keep an eye on what happened in the stores during Black Friday and to send pictures, videos and stories of what happened at the stores.

The call to action on Black Friday was the first in a series of holiday actions that will be followed by a product safety campaign in the weeks leading up to the holidays. **OP**

UFCW and Tyson Mark Two Decades of Workplace Safety Progress

Last week marked the 20th anniversary of the groundbreaking workplace ergonomics program initiated by the UFCW and Tyson.

At a teleconference this past Tuesday, which convened UFCW and Tyson leaders, participants gave an overview of the key components of the program and also reviewed the successes of the joint undertaking.

Thanks to the program, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recordable injury and illness rate at Tyson's Dakota City, Neb., plant is currently 67 percent below the rate recorded in 1991.

"The UFCW and Tyson have worked together to make this ergonomics program what it is today and I think we're way ahead of the industry with our program," said Marvin Harrington, President of UFCW Local 222, which represents workers at the Dakota City plant. "Having both Tyson management and UFCW members engaged on detecting hazards makes for an efficient process."

Launched in 1989 at Tyson's Dakota City plant as a pilot, the program quickly expanded to all of the company's beef and pork plants. Some of the key elements of the program include: ongoing ergonomics training for production workers; the involvement of hourly workers as 'ergonomic monitors'; worksite

analysis and the redesign of work stations and equipment; and a medical management program focused on early detection and treatment of workplace injuries and illnesses. **OP**

New Report Slams Walmart for its Suppliers' Abuses

A report released last week by New York-based human rights group China Labor Watch (CLW) reveals a systematic pattern of violations in Walmart's supply chain.

The report, *Walmart Standards Fail, Workers Suffer*, further finds:

- Workers at several of Walmart's suppliers faced long and illegal overtime hours and other abuses ranging from wage theft to poor living and working conditions;
- Walmart leverages its huge orders to convince factories to sell goods at low prices that are not sustainable;
- Walmart's audits systematically fail to identify all labor violations; and
- Walmart has done little to change its practices, focuses instead on refurbishing its image.

The complete report is available at <http://www.chinalaborwatch.org/1109walmartstandardsfail.pdf>. **OP**

Nominations Now Open for Jobs With Justice "Scrooge of the Year" Contest



Each year, Jobs with Justice gives an "award" to the greediest, most cold-hearted company or person of the year. Past winners of this dubious honor include Walmart, George W. Bush, and Goodyear Tire & Rubber.

Jobs with Justice is now accepting nominations for the 2009 "Scrooge of the Year" contest. Nominations are being collected this week and the voting will begin December 7. To submit your nomination, go to <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/9JZWGC5>. **OP**