

UFCW Local 1776 Grocery Workers in Greater Philadelphia Approve Contract with Acme



UFCW Local 1776 members meet at an arena in downtown Philadelphia, Pa., after overwhelmingly voting to approve a new four-year agreement with Acme.

UFCW Local 1776 members ratified a new four-year contract with Acme on July 15, 2009, that covers about 4,000 grocery workers in 40 Acme Markets in Greater Philadelphia.

By a 99 percent vote, members approved the new pact that provides pay increases, protects health care benefits, and stabilizes their pension fund.

Walt O'Connor, a bargaining committee member and longtime Acme employee, said, "This is one of the proudest moments I've had as a union member. I saw our union members come together more closely than they ever had in the past, and that's what made the difference."

UFCW Local 1776 President and UFCW International Vice President Wendell Young, IV, agreed that workers' solidarity was the key to securing the new contract.

"Our members were fantastic here. They really demonstrated what being part of a union is all about. They stuck together rock solid," Young said.

Members approved the contract after more than 18 months of negotiations. They had been working under an extension of their previous contract that expired in February 2008.

"It's a fair contract, especially when you consider that these negotiations took place in the midst of the most severe economic downturn of our lifetime," Young said. "Thanks to the patience of our members and the hard work by negotiators from the union and the company, we were able to arrive at our goal without having to make the harsh concessions that employers have proposed around the country." **OP**

JBS-Swift Workers in Hyrum, Utah, Ratify First Union Contract

JBS-Swift workers in Hyrum, Utah, voted overwhelmingly to approve their first-ever union contract with UFCW Local 711 on July 15. More than 1,100 plant workers join the 10,000 JBS-Swift workers nationwide who are represented by the UFCW.

"Now that we have a contract, we have a real voice," said Robert Young, who has worked at the plant for two years and also serves as an ordained minister. "That means better benefits, active stewards, leadership in the plant and a better a way to deal with problems before they become big issues."

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UFCW Local 711 members ratify their first ever agreement with the JBS-Swift plant in Hyrum, Utah.

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Meatpacking workers ratified a three-year agreement with JBS-Swift that includes:

- regular wage increases, with many plant workers receiving a 4.6 percent or greater increase at ratification and a dollar an hour increase over the life of the contract;
- weekly hour guarantees that protect full-time, family supporting jobs in the community;
- affordable family health coverage;
- job advancement opportunities;
- workers no longer have to pay out-of-pocket for their work equipment, tools and work clothes;
- improved vacation benefits and funeral pay; and
- a Joint Worker-Management Safety Committee and improved safety training for workers.

The UFCW represents workers at all six JBS-Swift plants in the United States. Max Aldama, a UFCW Local 1149 member and an employee at JBS-Swift's plant in Marshalltown, Iowa, said, "With the economy the way it is and the state of the industry, this contract is a testament to the UFCW's good working relationship with JBS-Swift." **OP**



Michigan UFCW Locals 876 and 951 and the UFCW RWDSU State Council met with U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack at a town hall meeting in Charlotte, Mich., on July 13, 2009. UFCW members and staff made their presence felt in a meeting where Vilsack talked to the rural community on issues ranging from food safety to commodity purchasing to farming.

UFCW Local 74D Members Approve New Five-Year Agreement with MGP Ingredients, Inc., in Kansas

UFCW Local 74D ratified a new five-year collective bargaining agreement with MGP Ingredients (MGPI), Inc., in Atchison, Kansas.

The previous contract between Local 74D members and MGPI expired almost a year ago in August 2008. Workers went on strike for about three weeks during tough negotiations last fall, but returned to work when the company agreed to extend the previous contract through August 2009 while bargaining. **OP**

UC Berkeley Study Shows Unions Make for a Much More Family-Friendly Workplace

A new University of California-Berkeley report further proves the "union advantage" is significant. The report found that companies with more unionized workers are more likely to pay for family health insurance premiums, embrace paid leave, and allow the use of personal leave to care for a sick child.

During our current economic times, the report underscores the urgency to pass the Employee Free Choice Act and give more working families the benefits of unionization that lifts wages, ensures affordable health care, and secures the family-friendly benefits that help build a strong middle class.

The report shows:

- unions promote compliance with FMLA;
- parents who are union members are 50 percent more likely than non-union members to have paid personal leave that can be used to stay home with a sick child; and
- companies with 30 percent or more unionized workers are five times as likely to have their entire family health insurance premium paid for compared to companies with no union workers.

To download the report, go to www.working-families.org. **OP**