

Local 1208 Holds First Shop Steward Training at Smithfield in Tar Heel, N.C.



UFCW Local 1208 President Carl Green welcomes participants at the first shop steward training

A few months after they ratified their first contract, fifty-one UFCW Local 1208 members interested in becoming shop stewards gathered this past weekend at the local union office in Lumberton, N.C., for their first-ever shop steward training.

The trainees, who all work at Smithfield's Tar Heel facility, came together to learn about the role, rights and responsibilities of a shop steward. "It was very informative and now I know that I am better equipped to represent my co-workers," said Terry Slaughter, who attended the training.

"Attendees were enthusiastic and hungry for knowledge on how to build their union," said UFCW Local 1208 President Carl Green. "Many among them have already taken on informal leadership positions at the plant, talking to their co-workers about their contract."

The training this past weekend, the first in a series, focused on group discussions and conveying information based on the new shop steward training module developed two years ago by the UFCW Organizing Department. **OP**

UFCW Local 2 Members Ratify New Contract with Farmland

An overwhelming majority of UFCW Local 2 members in Kansas City, Mo., last week accepted a new contract with Farmland.

The four-year agreement covers 300 workers and includes:

- average wage increase of \$1.50/hr over the life of the contract;
- base rate increase to \$13.40 by third year of contract;
- significant upgrade of production positions;
- increased tool allowance for maintenance workers from \$5.75 to \$8.25 per week;
- immediate base rate increase for maintenance positions as well as an upgrade of several positions;
- improved vacation and time off policy, and
- improved funeral leave. **OP**

UFCW Calls for Shake Up at U.S. Chemical Safety Board

The UFCW joined last week with several other international unions to criticize the Chemical Safety Board (CSB) and call for immediate change and stricter regulations on dangerous combustible dust hazards.

"The CSB's leadership is a remnant of the Bush administration's dangerous legacy for America's workers," said UFCW Occupational Safety and Health Director Jackie Nowell. "If the Board continues to ignore its obligation to oversee the scope of our safety regulations, it will require new leadership to assure that its mission is accomplished."

It took the CSB over a year to release their findings on the deadly sugar dust explosion at the Imperial Sugar refinery in Port Wentworth, Georgia. Immediately following the Imperial Sugar explosion, the UFCW and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters petitioned the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to immediately issue an Emergency Temporary Standard for combustible dust in general industry.

"We were hoping there would be a little stronger finding and a little stronger emphasis on an emergency standard," said Darrell Hornbeck, Director of Safety and Health for the UFCW Chemical Workers Council.

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The UFCW represents workers in eight sugar manufacturing facilities across the country, and numerous food processing facilities where combustible dust fires and explosions are a worksite hazard. **OP**

UFCW Locals Stand with Ohio Legislators for Corporate Accountability on Health Care and Living Wages



UFCW Ohio members with State Rep. Dan Stewart (D-Columbus) as he discusses the new report

UFCW Locals 75, 880, 1059 and the UFCW Chemical Workers Council joined with Ohio State Representatives Dan Stewart (D-Columbus) and Kenny Yuko (D-Richmond Heights) this morning to release an Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services report.

The new report quantifies, by employer, the number of working men and women who have to rely upon taxpayer-supported programs for their health care and assistance to feed their families instead of employer-provided programs and living wages.

The report reveals that Walmart, despite making \$13.4 billion in profits in 2008, is by far the number one company in Ohio that relies on state health care and food stamps for its workers to make ends meet. Fifteen thousand Walmart workers, nearly percent of the company's workforce in Ohio, rely on public assistance.

Representatives Stewart and Yuko discussed legislative measures, which will be introduced respectively in the Ohio House and Senate by Bob Hagan (D-Youngstown) and Senator Jim Hughes (R-Columbus), to systematize the release of this reporting and highlight the disparities between corporate greed and the struggle of hardworking Ohioans.

The efforts of UFCW locals aim at exposing Ohio corporations with the ability to provide affordable health care coverage and living wages to their workers, but refuse to do so, taking advantage of a broken health care system. **OP**

UFCW Local 99 Members Vote to Authorize Strike at Fry's and Safeway

Members of UFCW Local 99 in Ariz. last week voted overwhelmingly to give their union leaders authority to call a strike against Fry's and Safeway, if a strike were to become unavoidable.

Last week's vote came after members rejected both companies' proposals. "The proposal would have resulted in a loss of earnings for our members at a time when everyone is struggling just to get by," said UFCW Local 99 President Jim McLaughlin.

Local 99 members have been working under an extension of their old contract which expired last October. The extension expires on October 2, 2009. **OP**

Members of UFCW Local 7 Reject Final Contract Proposals from Safeway and King Soopers

Local 7 members at Safeway and King Soopers in the Denver and Colorado Springs areas last week rejected both companies' final contract offers.

Local 7 members have been negotiating new contracts for about 17,000 workers at Kroger Co.'s King Soopers and City Market chains, Safeway and Albertsons. King Soopers, City Market and Safeway workers are voting on contracts through Oct. 6. Albertsons workers haven't scheduled votes yet. **OP**