

Local 655 Finds Lobbying Success With Employer Partners

In 2003, more than 10,000 members of Local 655 were forced out on a 24-day strike against major St. Louis, Mo. area grocery stores—Dierberg’s, Schnuck’s and Shop ‘n Save. With the contract that followed, Local 655 built a cooperative relationship with those employers to band together against the devastating impact big box retailers like Walmart are having on St. Louis area communities.

Together, they formed a Joint Labor-Management Committee to lobby the Missouri statehouse on issues that affect grocery workers and communities across the state. The joint effort has resulted in concrete advances to stop the abuse of government subsidies for Walmart development and bring more sunshine to the process by which big box retailers get tax subsidies.

“By working together with our employers, we have been able to lobby on issues that we both care about,” said Local 655 President Jim Dougherty. “We’ve been beating back tax giveaways for community-killing big box stores like Walmart.” **OP**

Filene’s Basement Workers Say “Union Yes” With Local 1102*

More than 1,400 workers at 23 Filene’s Basement stores across New York, N.Y. have joined Local 1102*. Workers chose a union by signing authorization cards and then recently ratified their first contract, marking the end to the most successful organizing campaign in Local 1102*’s history.

Filene’s Basement is a discount clothing retailer that declared bankruptcy in 2009 and was then taken over by the Syms Corporation. Local 1102* has a prior relationship representing Syms’ employees which they developed into a cordial authorization card process.

The improvements in the new two-year contract for Filene’s Basement employees are evident immediately. All full- and part-time employees will receive immediate lump sum bonus payments. No Filene’s employees had

had sick days, now part-timers will have two in a year and full-timers will have five. All workers will have two personal days each year, as well as a complete set of union security provisions, and guaranteed health care and retirement provisions.



New Local 1102* members pose outside their Filene’s Basement store in New York.

“So many of us take for granted the benefits of being members of a union,” said Local 1102* President Frank S. Bail. “But Filene’s workers had a choice and overwhelmingly chose to be represented by Local 1102*. They recognized that their union will make a concrete difference in their lives.” **OP**

Near-Unanimous Strike Vote in Ontario Loblaw Talks

Thousands of workers at Loblaw Companies Ltd. stores across Ontario have voted by over 97 percent to give their UFCW Canada local unions the authority to call a strike if negotiations fail to produce an acceptable settlement.

UFCW Canada Local Unions 1977, 1000A, 175 and 633 conducted the secret ballot strike votes at over 50 locations around the province over the past two weeks, from Windsor to Ottawa and dozens of cities in between. Voting ended on July 11.

The locals collectively represent nearly 30,000 store-level workers at Loblaws, Zehrs, Real Canadian Superstores, Great Food and Fortinos — all subsidiaries of Weston-controlled Loblaw Companies Limited, Canada's largest retailer.

Loblaws has demanded massive wage cuts, an increase the waiting time for access to benefits and reductions in the number of good full-time jobs as part of a race to be the bottom of the Canadian grocery industry that involves adopting Walmart-style stores and Walmart-style labor relations.

As the Ontario locals have their talks overseen by a Ministry of Labour Mediation Officer, workers in neighboring Quebec who are in negotiations with Loblaws in their province are seeing increasingly tense bargaining. Eleven Loblaws-owned stores have already taken strike votes and 19 more are expected to join them if negotiations continue to deteriorate.

“Our relationship with this company has never been so bad”, says Anthony Filato, President of Local 500. “Before, things could get resolved at the bargaining table through discussions. Because the company does not seem to realize how this process worked in the past, we have no other choice than to adopt new strategies and to look at other options.” **OP**

UFCW Local Trustees Impact Historic Tesco Vote

The largest shareholder rebellion seen by a British company this year and the sixth largest in the past decade was assisted by UFCW local union leaders who serve on pension fund boards. The vote on giant international retailer Tesco's executive compensation package narrowly passed on July 2. Displeasure over the compensation focused on the pay for the head of Tesco's troubled U.S. unit, Fresh & Easy's Tim Mason, and led to 47% of shareholders either voting against the compensation package or withholding their support.

UFCW locals across the country reached out to their pension fund managers in anticipation of the vote, encouraging them to study the compensation issue

closely. Coordinated by the UFCW Capital Stewardship Office, Locals 99, 1996, 1776, 227, 881, 1546, 1473, 880, 21, 555, 876, 5, 8GS, 135, 324, 770, 1442, 1167, the RWDSU, among others, led the effort.

"This goes to show the power UFCW locals have when we coordinate and cooperate," said Local 1167 President Bill Lathrop. "The influence of our union is felt globally through efforts like this one." **OP**

UFCW Locals Continue Nationwide Actions in Support of Striking New York Mott's Workers



Members of Local 99 show the handbills they are distributing in Arizona to show support for striking Mott's workers.

UFCW locals across the country are continuing to stand up in support of striking Williamson, N.Y. Mott's workers. The workers, members of Local 220*, have been on strike since their profitable company failed to bargain in good faith and attempted to slash wages and benefits while giving their CEO massive raises.

You can show your support for the striking workers online by visiting www.nobadapples.org and sending a letter to Mott's management. You can also call Mott's at 1-800-426-4891 and tell them you support the Williamson workers. **OP**