

Huhtamaki Council News

July 2014



USW Huhtamaki Members Ratify Agreements in Pennsylvania, New York

Local 333 members in Malvern, Pa., and Local 4-54 members in Fulton, NY, ratified three-year agreements in July that offered wage and benefit improvements as well as back pay.

At Malvern, the membership of Local 333 ratified the contract July 11, 2014 and it expires on May 1, 2017. Besides wage increases, workers will receive retroactive pay to May 4, 2014. Senior operators will receive a higher pay rate each year of the contract.

The company will provide health insurance coverage under the Huhtamaki Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) or Hybrid HRA. Dental coverage will be provided under the Delta Dental plan. Core vision coverage is included in the HRA.

Under the Hybrid HRA, most of our members will be saving between \$6,000 and \$10,000 annually in premium contributions. Instead of paying 40 percent of the HMO premiums they will pay 25 percent of the premiums under the new Hybrid HRA plan.

Solidarity Needed for Waterville, Sacramento Contracts

Attend the solidarity action on Wednesday, July 23 at each of the USW Huhtamaki sites. Wear the new Huhtamaki Council t-shirts and show your signs of support!

Local 449 from Huhtamaki's Waterville, Maine, facility is back to the negotiating table this Wed., July 23 and Thur., July 24. Joining Local 449 negotiators are staff rep. Duane Lugdon and District 4 Director John Shinn.

All the language issues are pretty much settled, except for obtaining a successorship clause. Successorship is job protection language and it means that if the Waterville site is sold, the new owner will have to accept the union and abide by the contract through its termination date. It also means workers would get to keep their jobs.

The union and the company have not reached a settlement yet on wages, retroactive pay and health insurance. **Sacramento, Calif.**

Local 819 from Huhtamaki's Sacramento, Calif., plant

Local 4-54 members in Fulton, NY, ratified their new three-year agreement on July 17, 2014. They received wage increases and a \$500 signing bonus that covers the back pay issue and offers extra money on top of the back pay.

The current HMO plan is retained with copay and deductible modifications to the plan in years two and three.

The union obtained some good language changes regarding vacation and the addition of an unpaid personal day that members never had before.

The contract also provides increases in short-term disability and life insurance, and workers will have a Flexible Spending Account option as of Jan. 1, 2015.

Congratulations to the Local 333 and 4-54 negotiating teams for a job well done!

last met with management on June 26. The company offered a five-year contract with wage increases of 2 percent in years four and five and retroactive pay going back 120 days. The local countered with a four-year term with a 3 percent raise in year four and full retroactive pay. The company rejected the union's proposal.

Under National Paper Bargaining guidelines, contracts should be three years in length unless the union is able to make a strategic gain. The local would have to get approval from International Vice President Jon Geenen and Director Shinn to alter the pattern.

During bargaining the local took a caucus and drafted an information request for the cost of full retroactive pay versus the company's offer of retroactive pay for 120 days. Director Shinn agreed to hold off on the information request until after he meets with Huhtamaki management on July 23.

Huhtamaki Workers at California Plant Persevere in Organizing Drive

Organizers from the AFL-CIO and the USW are working together to organize the non-union Huhtamaki facilities. One of these sites is in Commerce, Calif., where there are about 165 employees.

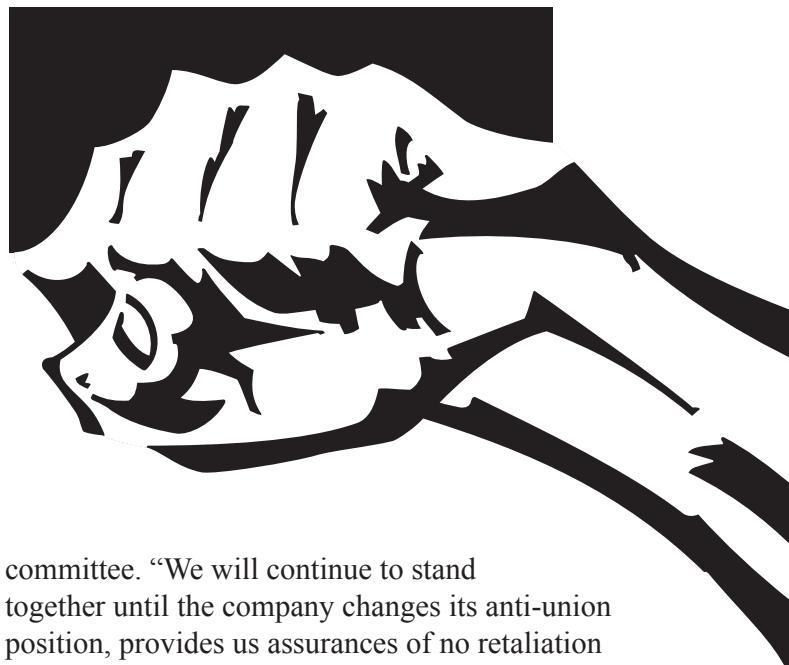
Huhtamaki has 21 plants and warehouses in the U.S. and only six of them are organized. The USW represents workers at five sites. Over 3,500 people work for Huhtamaki in the U.S. The USW represents 1,087 of these people. Most of the company's overseas plants are unionized.

There are a number of issues that the non-union plants face day to day. In response to these issues, the workers have decided to take collective action. Workers at the Commerce plant are using their collective power to form and act like a union. They presented a letter to management on June 13, 2014, requesting the managers "engage in a good faith dialogue" about working conditions in the plant where temperatures can reach 100 degrees or more and where they say management uses a disciplinary system to punish workers. Management refused to meet with the workers.

Although the company said no one would be retaliated against for speaking about workplace problems, managers repeatedly spied on workers who advocated for change. They forced their workforce to sit in captive audience meetings where they tried to convince the employees not to unionize and showed an anti-union film; posted a policy prohibiting conversation during work time and the passing out of materials at the worksite about the need for change at Huhtamaki; and passed out to workers and mailed to their homes anti-union literature. The company also hired a union-buster to convince workers not to form a union.

That same week Commerce employees delivered another letter to management. In this letter employees again requested a meeting with management to discuss mutually beneficial solutions to the extreme heat problem in the plant and the unfair enforcement of the discipline issue. They also asked for a written statement from management that there would be no retaliation against workers who speak out about workplace issues and that the company stops its anti-union campaign.

The employees also elected a committee of worker representatives that first week of July to meet with management during non-work time. "We came together to respectfully discuss problems that affect us as workers and, instead of meeting with us, the company has made every effort to try to convince us not to form a union," said Arnold Moreno, an elected member of the worker representatives



committee. "We will continue to stand together until the company changes its anti-union position, provides us assurances of no retaliation and meets with us to address our legitimate concerns."

While Commerce management attempted to resolve the heat issue by bringing in mega fans, misters, and water stations and providing water breaks, it refused to meet with the committee members as a group. The company said it would only meet with the committee members individually.

For the past month, Huhtamaki locals across the U.S. and world delivered letters to their plant management requesting respect for Commerce workers' right to organize and express their concerns. Not only did these solidarity actions come from the USW-represented plants in the U.S., but also from unions in Finland, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, U.K., Turkey and South Africa. (Photos of some of these actions can be seen at <http://www.usw.org/union/mission/industries/paper-and-forestry> and on Facebook at USW Paperworkers, USW Huhtamaki Council, and USW Huhtamaki Council News.)

Finish union Paperlitto also is trying to talk with executive management at Huhtamaki in Finland.

AFL-CIO and USW researchers investigated Huhtamaki and discovered it is expanding its U.S. operations by using temporary workers and paying them low wages. In May they issued a report, "Huhtamaki's U.S. Expansion Model: A Low-Wage, Low-Cost, Low Responsibility Model of Employment" that showed how the company's strategy is threatening unionized workers' job security, standard of living, and working conditions. The report can be seen at: <http://www.usw.org/workplaces/paper/Huhtamaki-Group-report-FINAL-2.pdf>