



# Solidarity Today!

**Bargaining Information for Members of the USW Local Unions, 237 & 586,  
at the RockTenn Tacoma Mill  
August 31, 2014**

## **Locals Meet in Pittsburgh to Discuss a RockTenn/USW Master Agreement**

150+ Local Union members, USW Leadership, and RockTenn Upper Management involved in discussions.

*Negotiations for a Master Agreement held in Pittsburgh, August 25th-29th.*

*In late July members of the USW RockTenn Council, of which the Tacoma Locals are the newest members, met to discuss the feasibility of moving forward with negotiations toward a master negotiating agreement with RockTenn. After two days of intense discussion, there was unanimous agreement to explore such an agreement with RockTenn.*

*The USW Leadership, led by Jon Geenen, Dan Flippo and Leeann Foster, then had discussions with RockTenn and an agreement was made to engage in negotiations with the aim of putting together a master agreement for all USW locals at all RockTenn mills and box plants. A call in mid-August was then made to all the involved locals asking them to send two members each to Pittsburgh during the week of August 25th to meet with RockTenn officials in an official bargaining session with the aim of coming to an agreement on a master negotiating document.*

*150+ USW members met with RockTenn company officials in a robust negotiating session.*

*President David Van Pevnage and Chuck Whitt represented Local 237, while President Bill Williams and Dave White represented Local 586.*

*The week started off with a preliminary all day meeting at USW headquarters to set an agenda for negotiations. The locals and their USW leadership then meet in full session with a RockTenn committee composed of Dennis O'Brien, Jennifer Graham-Johnson, Karen Poole, and other top executives.*

*An agreement, in general terms, was reached late in the morning (3:30am) of August 28th.*

*The first day was one of RockTenn putting on a description of their business, their challenges and their strategies going forward.*

*The second day, Wednesday, was the beginning of true negotiations, with the back and forth of proposals and counter proposals. During the USW caucuses, the 150 or so members sitting in the audience would express their opinions to the USW Leadership in no uncertain terms, often taking hours to settle the many questions brought up during the negotiations. The week continued like this through Thursday, with the Thursday session lasting until 3:30 in the morning, until most of the issues had been resolved to the general satisfaction of the USW members present. There were still some local issues to be resolved in breakout sessions, many of which took place the following morning, Friday.*

*Tacoma Mill to be excluded from the Master Agreement at this time. Further negotiations to take place in October at Tacoma.*

*The gist of the negotiations for Tacoma essentially come down to this: the contract at the Tacoma mill contains so many provisions that others mills do not have, that adopting the master agreement in its proposed state would be far too great of an economic shock. It was decided at this time to exclude Tacoma from the master agreement until such time that the discrepancies could be resolved.*

*See the attached document for a general description of the terms of the tentative master agreement.*

**Strength in Unity**

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