



Solidarity Today!

Bargaining Information for Members of the Local Unions at Simpson-Tacoma Kraft
August 17, 2009

Negotiations are Heating Up

The USW Locals met with the Company representatives on August 4th and 7th, then again on August 14th and 15th. The meetings took place at the La Quinta Hotel on Portland Avenue in Tacoma.

Company unveils their economic proposal.

As previously noted, the representatives for the Company were: Lawyer representative/Negotiator, Lynn Ellsworth, John Conkle, Kent Morrill, Larry Larson, Jim Burg, Bettye Hartwell and Greg Ballard of Simpson HR.

“Six year agreement”

Union language issues have largely been the topic of discussion as the committees worked their way through the language changes sought by the two local unions represented by the USW through their Representative/Negotiator Jim Woodward.

“Minimal wage adjustments”

Progress is being made as the Unions and the Company have come to agreement on a multitude of items (tentatively approved, or “TA'd” as is said in the meetings). Among these are agreements to move the Fourth of July holiday to the 4th and 5th; defining a shift-to-shift vacation as days-off to days-off; preserving grandfathering rights; probationary period changes; meal ticket expirations; vacation sign-up period changes; and PIUMPF numbers on our pay stubs, among many other issues settled and open.

“Increases to A&S”

The big ticket item on the Company's language agenda is the easing of jurisdictional restrictions contained in Section 4 of the USW Labor Agreement. Section 4 currently contains a clause wherein the Company and the Union agreed (in 1992, when the language was adopted) to meet to “...enhance the use of this section...”. The Unions have asked why the Company feels a need to change this language now when they have not attempted to meet to “enhance” the language in the preceding 17 years. To date the Unions have not received a satisfactory answer to that question. The parties will continue to discuss this issue and try to find a way to accommodate the Company's concerns while protecting the jurisdictional rights of the Union's members. Stay tuned...

“Changes in medical plan”

“Increases to AD&D Insurance”

“Increases to pension”

“Increased shoe allowance”

Wear a Red Shirt and show your solidarity! Fridays for Day Workers and the second day shift for Shift Workers.

On August 14th the Company finally unveiled their economic proposal. It calls for a six year agreement. Included are minimal wage adjustments, as well as adjustments to the A&S benefit, the life insurance policy, the shoe allowance and the pension plan. Significant monetary changes to the medical plan are also included in their economic agenda.

Clearly this is only an opening proposal. With the wide discrepancy between the Union's position and the Company's, more discussion is obviously called for in order to come to a satisfactory agreement.

The Company next meets with the Trades representatives on August 25th, then again with the USW Locals on the 26th and 28th of August.

Watch for CAT newsletter updates as the negotiations progress.

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