

UFCW 951 BULLETIN

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United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 951

The *UFCW 951 Bulletin* is a regular publication of UFCW Local 951, designed to give members a quick update of union news and notice of upcoming events. The flyer is distributed at the workplace by union representatives and is also available on-line at www.ufcw951.com. To receive e-mail copies of the *Bulletin* during the first week of publication, call the UFCW 951 Communications Department at 1.800.999.0951.

Kroger Members Overwhelmingly Ratify a New Contract

In late December, UFCW 951 members working at Kroger turned out in large numbers to ratify a new three-year contract by a vote of 84 percent “yes” to 16 percent “no.”

“The proposal had the full recommendation of the bargaining committee as it preserved members’ health benefits and pension and provided top rate wage increases, which was a significant accomplishment given Michigan’s challenging economy and high unemployment rate,” Marv Russow, UFCW Local 951’s president, said. “The committee felt this was the best contract possible under these circumstances. By their overwhelming ratification of the contract, I would say the membership agreed.”

The ratification follows members’ November rejection of Kroger’s earlier contract offer. “I want to thank the bargaining committee for all their hard work,” Russow said. “They did a great job when we met with the company and in educating their coworkers about the tentative agreement and the importance of voting.”



Election 2012: Before You Can Vote, You Must be Registered!

The 2012 election will be critical for workers, but in order to cast your ballot in November, you must be registered to vote.

Individuals can register to vote in person at their county, city, or township clerk’s office, or by visiting any Secretary of State branch office. Individuals can also register to vote by mail. Forms for mail-in registration are available at www.ufcw951.com. Look for the “register to vote” link on the home page.

When you move to a new city or township, you must re-register to vote. If you move within a city or township, you must update your address.

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If you have never voted in Michigan and register by mail, you may be required to vote in person the first time you vote and subject to new identification requirements.

2012 Membership Events Planning Underway

During 2012, UFCW 951 will continue to sponsor low-cost membership events including holiday parties, trips to sporting events, UFCW Michigan Day at Michigan’s Adventure and the Detroit Zoo. Special events are also being planned for UFCW Michigan’s young workers.

UFCW 951 will also be expanding its Community Action/Volunteer Days, giving members the opportunity to give back to their communities by volunteering at local food banks and other nonprofit agencies.

Beginning this year, UFCW 951 will hold recognition luncheons across the state for members with 25 or more years of UFCW 951 membership.

Suggestions for membership events are welcome, and should be directed to Jackie Daugherty at 1.800.999.0951 extension 101.



Bargaining Continues on First Contracts

Last year, workers at Valley City Linen and JBS were successful in completing the first step in securing a union at their workplaces -- they voted for UFCW 951 representation in union elections. This year, their goal is to complete the final steps needed to become UFCW 951 members -- negotiating and ratifying their first union contracts -- which can prove to be very difficult.

Nationally, only 38 percent of unions are able to negotiate a first contract one year after the union election, and only 56 percent ever achieve a first contract. Local 951 is working hard to beat these odds and is currently in negotiations with both employers.

“Our goal is to have a first contract at both employers this year,” John Cakmakci, UFCW 951’s secretary-treasurer and organizing director, said. “Initially, Valley City Linen was stalling and delaying contract negotiations. However, they began to bargain in earnest after we filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board and alerted the public and some of their customers about the company’s anti-worker and potentially illegal practices.”

While negotiations have just begun with JBS, it is anticipated that these talks will go more smoothly since JBS has contracts with UFCW locals in other parts of the country.

Help Secure a Victory for Workers in the 2012 Election

As the anti-worker agenda continues to take a heavy toll on workers in Michigan and across the country, a top priority for UFCW 951 will be electing pro-worker candidates in 2012. Achieving this goal will involve dedicated volunteers to staff phone banks, distribute literature, attend rallies, and register voters. If you would like to be contacted regarding upcoming volunteer opportunities in your community, contact UFCW 951’s political director, Chris Michalakakis, at 1.800.321.6406 extension 8644.



Marv Russow, President
John Cakmakci, Secretary/Treasurer

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