



Members Reject Contract Offer, Authorize a Strike

In mid-November, UFCW 951 members working at Kroger turned out in large numbers and overwhelmingly voted to reject Kroger's contract offer and authorize strike action. UFCW 951 and Kroger are scheduled to return to the bargaining table in mid-December. See page two for more information on this situation.

The Voice of 951

Winter 2011

It's Union Time! JBS Workers Elect UFCW 951 Representation

In October, workers at the JBS slaughterhouse and production facility, located just south of Plainwell, overwhelmingly voted for UFCW 951 representation in an effort to improve working conditions at the plant.

The vote ended the workers' two-and-a-half month organizing campaign.

"There was tremendous support for the union among the workers," John Cakmakci, UFCW 951's Secretary/Treasurer and Organizing Director, said. "They view the union as their best option to improve their working conditions and bring a sense of fairness to the workplace."

Among the workers' complaints were unjust terminations, unsafe working conditions and an unfair compensation system where new employees earn more than workers with upwards of 15 years of seniority.

"We have had such a hard time, we wanted to win this union election more than anything else," Biak Awi, a JBS employee, said. "I am so

happy that we won."

The group has shifted their efforts to preparing for bargaining their first union contract. They have completed contract bargaining surveys and chosen a bargaining committee.

"We are confident the union and the company can work together to achieve an agreement that is fair and balanced, and meets the workers' goals," Cakmakci said. "We are looking forward to establishing a productive, long-term relationship with JBS."

With over 1,000 workers at the plant, the JBS win



Chanting, "What Time is it? Union Time!" JBS workers and UFCW organizers celebrate after the successful conclusion to their union organizing campaign. The over 1,000 workers at the Plainwell slaughterhouse and production facility overwhelmingly voted for UFCW 951 representation in October.

represents one of the largest UFCW organizing victories

in Michigan and the third consecutive successful

organizing campaign conducted by UFCW 951.

In Their Own Words -- JBS Workers Comment on the Union Vote



"My dream is that we will soon have a fair, good contract and that our voices will now be heard."

Ngun Awi

"I am happy we can say we won the election after all of our hard work. The working conditions and discrimination will finally be gone and in the future, the conditions will be better. I feel free now."

Li Lin Thang



"This win feels great. I come from a union family and I have worked in a union plant in the past. I have seen, first hand, what a union can do. I have found that you get higher pay and better benefits with a union. I am looking forward to having more job security with UFCW 951."

Troy Schlotterback



"I'm so happy. I can now say that UFCW 951 is our union."

Sum Bik



Volume: 7 Issue: 4
Official publication of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 951, CTW & CLC
3270 Evergreen Drive N.E.; Grand Rapids, MI 49525
Executive Officers • President Marv Russov
Secretary-Treasurer John Cakmakci • Recorder Karin Hopman
Executive Vice Presidents Morna Holt & Shirley Perez
Toll-free: 1.800.999.0951 • Direct: 1.616.361.7683
Fax: 1.616.447.1000
Email: Information@ufcwlocal951.com
Website: www.ufcw951.com

Inside

President's Message.....Page 2
Kroger Contract Update.....Page 2
Meijer Grievance Update.....Page 2
Children's Holiday Party.....Page 2
Members Speak Out.....Page 3
Members Meet with Senators.....Page 3
Contract Quiz.....Page 4
Membership Meetings.....Page 4

2012 Promises to be a Challenging Year for Workers, Unions



Marv Russow

When anti-worker politicians took control of the Michigan legislature and the U.S. House of Representatives following the 2010 elections, we knew 2011 was going to be an extremely challenging year for workers and their unions.

Across the country, we saw Republican governors and state legislatures beginning to attack basic workers' rights, and blaming hard working nurses, teachers, fire fighters, police officers and other public employees for the financial crisis created by Wall Street executives and millionaires.

In many states, including Michigan, Republican legislatures balanced their 2011 budgets on the backs of those who could least afford it -- vulnerable senior citizens, aspiring students, poor families and dedicated workers, while giving tax breaks to wealthy corporations.

We saw similar actions in Washington D.C. where the republican-controlled House of Representatives refused to compromise with the democrat-controlled Senate and took the country to the brink of economic collapse to protect the wealth-

iest Americans from paying their fair share of taxes. Washington Republicans repeatedly put Wall Street and the ultra-rich before Main Street and middle class Americans. They blocked legislation that would have provided vital assistance and helped put America back to work because it failed to further their goal of transferring even more wealth and power from low-income and middle class Americans to CEOs and other wealthy individuals.

We also saw these unfair attacks awake a sleeping giant. Workers, students, and retirees from both political parties and all walks of life stood up, sat down and occupied in protest of the idea that 99 percent of Americans should suffer so the most affluent and privileged one percent can grow wealthier.

From state capitols and college campuses to Wall Street and other city centers, Americans said "enough!" Enough of the income inequality. Enough of tax breaks for billionaires and wealthy corporations. Enough attacks on workers' rights. Enough of making everyday Americans pay for Wall Street's greed.

The 99 percent mobilized and fought back against the politicians who put the one percent ahead of the rest of us. They made their voices heard at the ballot box in November, rejecting anti-worker legislation and politicians who believe it is more important to pad the profits of the one percent than to strengthen the middle class.

Despite workers' big win in the November election, 2012

will be an even more challenging year for workers and their unions as workers' rights, health care and pensions will continue to be under attack.

Anti-worker forces led by the Koch brothers and Karl Rove are busy fine-tuning their plan to take control of both the U.S. Senate and White House in 2012. If they are successful, it will be almost impossible to stop them from implementing their extreme policies including stripping workers of their collective bargaining rights, ending Medicare, privatizing Social Security, and giving the top one percent permanent tax cuts while gutting Unemployment and Workers' Compensation and programs aimed at putting Americans back to work.

It is going to be a tough battle, and Michigan will be right in the thick of the fight. Even Repub-

lican presidential hopeful Mitt Romney has identified Michigan as ground zero in the 2012 election, as Michigan voters could very well decide who controls not only the White House but also the U.S. Senate.

Republicans only need to win four seats in the U.S. Senate next year to have total control of Congress, and have targeted the seat of Michigan Senator Debbie Stabenow (D), a long-time advocate of workers and their unions. The Republican party has pledged their full support and millions of dollars to the campaign of Former U.S. Representative Pete Hoekstra (R) who has announced he will challenge Senator Stabenow.

Re-electing President Obama, Senator Stabenow and other pro-worker candidates will be a top priority for UFCW 951 during 2012. While politics isn't

the complete answer to our challenges, it is a big part. We know first hand how devastating it can be when we fail politically and lose important protections for workers such as item pricing and strong Workers' Compensation laws.

As the political campaigns heat up, your union will be asking you to support pro-worker candidates and legislation in a variety of ways. However, right now there is one action we can all take to prepare for the 2012 election -- make sure you are registered to vote. You can register on-line through the UFCW 951 website, www.ufcw951.com, or in person at any Secretary of State office.

Ensuring all workers are registered to vote is the first step to electing pro-worker candidates whose actions will help protect and advance your union contract.

Kroger Members Overwhelmingly Reject Contract Offer, Authorize Strike Action

In mid-November, UFCW 951 members working at Kroger turned out in large numbers and overwhelmingly voted to reject Kroger's contract offer and authorize strike action. The final vote tally was 91 percent rejecting the package, with only nine percent voting in favor of the agreement.

"By soundly rejecting the proposed contract and authorizing a strike, Kroger members sent a strong message to their employer that they are united behind their goal of a fair and just contract," Marv Russow, UFCW 951's president, said. "Kroger members' goal for these negotiations was to secure a contract which puts their wages in line with other Kroger workers in Michigan. By offering no raises for two years, Kroger's offer didn't even come close."

Following the contract vote, UFCW 951 requested the parties return to the bargaining table. Kroger agreed, and mid-December talks are scheduled. In the meantime, the current

contract has been extended.

"The ball is in Kroger's court. The members have spoken; we'll see how the company responds," Russow said. "I am not going to

members at the Kroger stores where UFCW 951 members work, and nearly 12,000 other Michigan Kroger workers.

"We believe our brothers and

"Kroger members' goal for these negotiations was to secure a contract which puts their wages in line with other Kroger workers in Michigan. By offering no raises for two years, Kroger's offer didn't even come close."
Marv Russow, UFCW 951 President

speculate about what Kroger will say when we meet again. However, I am familiar with situations where members have received a contract offer from Kroger that they accepted following their rejection of the company's initial contract offer. We also have seen prolonged strikes by UFCW Kroger members."

At their November meeting, the UFCW Local 876 Executive Board unanimously voted to support UFCW 951 Kroger members' efforts to achieve a fair and just contract. Local 876 represents the meat department

sisters at UFCW 951 deserve the same type of wages and benefits we worked so hard to achieve at Local 876," Roger Robinson, Local 876's president, said. "I am proud to say that the Local 876 Executive Board has authorized our local union to do whatever it takes to help Local 951 members achieve a fair contract. Naturally, we would honor a Local 951 picket line should it come to that."

Kroger members will receive updates regarding their contract negotiations from the local as information becomes available.

All Aboard

UFCW Michigan's 4th Annual Children's Holiday Party

Hop aboard the *Polar Express* and celebrate winter and the holidays with some family fun featuring children's crafts and activities, pictures with Santa, and food.

Thursday, December 15
4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

UFCW 876 Union Hall, Madison Heights

Tickets are \$2 and are available from your union representative. Call 1.800.999.0951 ext. 101 for more information.

UFCW 951 Secures Agreements on Two Outstanding Meijer Grievances

UFCW 951 and Meijer recently reached agreement on two outstanding grievances impacting many members.

Cashier Productivity Performance

During the recent Meijer contract negotiations, UFCW 951 and the company reached agreement on the cashier productivity performance standards grievance which was headed for final binding arbitration.

"We are pleased with the settlement," Marv Russow, UFCW 951's president, said. "It achieves our primary goal of

protecting cashiers from being disciplined under the current performance program solely for productivity, and gives us the opportunity to meet with Meijer prior to the implementation of a revised program."

The agreement means Meijer cannot use current productivity standards or percentage as the only reason for disciplining a cashier. Retail members should challenge any discipline issued to them solely on the basis of productivity standards.

Point of Service Punching

The 2008 grievance regarding Point of Service (POS)punch-

ing was recently settled with a Letter of Understanding (LOU) between UFCW 951 and Meijer.

The POS system required cashiers and deli department workers to punch in and out at a time clock installed on cash registers. Cashiers were required to punch in after getting their lane assignment.

The LOU addresses the problems UFCW 951 and the affected members had with the system as detailed below.

POS Problem: Inaccurate time.

LOU Correction: Meijer reprogrammed the system to reflect the correct time and visually display the time to the member.

POS Problem: Unavailable register.

LOU Correction: Bakery and Deli workers will punch in at time clocks. Service department employees will be allowed to punch in at any register, or at a time clock when all the registers are in use.

Anytime a service department employee uses a time clock to punch in, the clock will register a rejected punch. Management, however, will accept the punch as valid.

POS Problem: Working off the clock.

LOU Correction: UFCW 951 maintained that requiring cashiers to punch in after receiving their lane assignment constituted

off-the-clock work. The LOU requires members to punch in prior to receiving their lane assignment.

POS Problem: Index finger not registering.

LOU Correction: Members can punch in at a time clock.

"We feel this is a fair settlement," Russow said. "Members will no longer be forced to work off the clock or face discipline because of flaws in the original POS system. Members will also know the exact time they clock in and out, and will no longer have any doubt as to whether the system identified them late for work."

Members Meet with Senators

Several dedicated UFCW members spent their day off at the state capitol meeting with their senators to explain why right-to-work is wrong for Michigan.

The goal of this special "Lobby Day" was for members to meet with their individual senator and his or her staff in the formal setting of their office chamber, as opposed to UFCW Michigan's annual Lobby Day where meetings take place right outside of a session meeting. The more private format allowed members to speak directly with decision makers on why they oppose all right-to-work legislation. Emphasis was also put on the fact that UFCW 951 does not

support any recall efforts.

In a meeting with the staff of Senator Hume, UFCW 951 steward Chester Ward explained how right-to-work would affect his household.

"Right-to-work would mean a reduction in wages for me," Ward said. "That would mean I would no longer be able to afford my mortgage."

In a meeting with Senator Jansen's staff, UFCW 951 steward Mark Timmerman made his position on right-to-work clear.

"Right-to-work would affect me in a negative way, both in my pay and my benefits," Timmerman stated. "Our members are very concerned and so am I."

Several members from the

Monroe area had a successful meeting with their Senator, Randy Richardville, who agreed that right-to-work would be a bad thing for Michigan and would have a negative impact on the state as a whole.

"I commend members who fight for what's right for UFCW members and all working families," said Marv Russow, UFCW 951's president. "It's important for our senators to speak with the very people who would be affected by the disastrous right-to-work legislation, and for senators to hear a first-hand account of what would happen to them personally should that legislation go into effect."



UFCW 951 Members Speak Out

"Why is Being Active in UFCW 951 Important to You?"

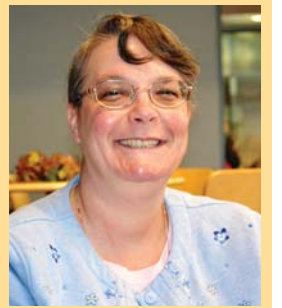


"It's important for me to be active for our members' sake. Many of them don't understand the contract, and I can help by assisting them with that any way I can."

Laura Long, Rite Aid #4240

"I stay active with UFCW 951 to make sure the benefits our union works hard to achieve get out to the membership."

Rosemary Kunkel, Rite Aid #4239



"Defending our members is important to me. Members need to know their rights, and as a steward I am able to help them with that."

Debbie Reynolds, Rite Aid #1519

"I choose to be active to fight for our members and do what is right for them. I enjoy being able to help fix their problems."

Gloria Hall, Kroger #884



Show Your Union Pride & Win a Prize



Steve Mayes, Kroger #889
Union Pride winner.

We're proud of our union and want you to be, too!

That's why UFCW 951 recognizes members who wear their UFCW 951 buttons, badge holders, or pins.

Union representatives and officers visit two units every month in each of the local's three regions and award the first member they see wearing one of these items a Union Pride prize package.

Winners receive a UFCW 951 t-shirt and a \$25 gift card. They also have their photograph displayed on the union bulletin board.

If you don't have one, UFCW 951 buttons, badge holders and pins are available from union representatives.

UFCW 951 Foundation Luncheon Winners Feast

Helping Working Families



Members at Meijer #251 in Stevensville and Rite Aid #4239 in Coloma enjoy the free lunch they won in the 2011 UFCW 951 Foundation Sign-Up Drive. Both units had the highest sign-up in their region.

Members at nine units, three in each of the UFCW's geographic regions, are being recognized at special luncheons for their outstanding participation in the UFCW 951 Foundation's membership sign-up drive.

The sign-up drive, which began in the early part of the summer, was started as a way to boost membership participation in the Foundation in order for the local and its members to continue to assist members in need during difficult times.

"Through the financial assistance it provides, the Foundation makes a major difference in the lives of members who may be struggling," Marv Russow, UFCW 951's president and Foundation president, said. "The Foundation has enabled some to put food on the table and keep the lights turned on, and helped others rebuild their lives after a family tragedy."

Thanks to members' generous donations, the Foundation is well on its way to reaching its goal of having 15 percent of the membership participate in the Foundation.

"We know times are tough and every penny counts," Russow said. "So it says a lot that our members have continued to increase donations in order to help their fellow members in times of need."

UFCW Members Have Spook-tacular Halloween



For UFCW Michigan's annual Trick or Treat event, the Local 876 Union Hall was transformed into a Halloween haven complete with eerie trick or treat stations, kid's crafts, and cider and donuts. More than 370 members, their children and family attended the Halloween party which was especially designed for children 12 and under.

"It has become a really nice tradition for families and friends to spend the time together at UFCW Michigan holiday events," Marv Russow, UFCW 951's president, said. "The Halloween party is especially fun with all the kids dressed in costumes."

During 2012, UFCW Michigan will host a variety of membership events including children's parties, casino bus trips, a UFCW Day at Michigan's Adventure and the Detroit Zoo, bus trips to sporting events, and a pre-holiday shopping trip.

Look for announcements of member events at www.ufcw951.com/events, in the local's publications, and on the UFCW Local 876 Facebook page. You can also sign-up to receive email updates of member events on the UFCW 951 website.



Helping Union Members Attend College

The Union Plus scholarships help support union members achieve their higher education goals. Over the past 19 years, union members and their children have received over \$3.2 million in Union Plus scholarships.

Eligible members and their dependents may apply online for the 2012 Union Plus Scholarship at www.unionplus.org/scholarships. Scholarship award amounts range from \$500 to \$4,000. These one-time cash awards are for study beginning in the fall of 2012. Students may re-apply each year.

A completed application must be received on or before 11:59 p.m. (Eastern Time) on Tuesday, January 31, 2012. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

For more information visit: UnionPlus.org/Scholarships

Contract Quiz: Take a Break and Test Your Knowledge!

True or False?

All employers are required by law to give all employees a meal or break period.

False: There are **no** requirements for breaks, meal or rest periods for employees 18 years of age or older in Michigan.

Employers are mandated by law to provide workers under 18 years of age with a 30 minute uninterrupted, rest period if

scheduled to work more than five continuous hours.

If you are over the age of 18, the only reason you receive a break at work is because your union fought for these rights at the bargaining table. There is no law requiring your employer to provide you with any type of break, regardless of how many hours you work in a given day.

Thanks to your union contract, you can insist you receive the appropriate breaks each workday, regardless of how busy or

short staffed your employer is on that day. If you are denied the breaks called for in your contract, you can use your contract's grievance procedure to correct management's error.

Without your union contract, there is no guarantee that your employer would provide a break for employees.

If you have questions regarding your right to breaks, or any other contractual guarantee, contact your union representative at 1.800.999.0951.

UFCW 951 Quarterly Membership Meetings

Meetings occur on different days for each region. Regions will rotate the day of the week they hold Quarterly Meetings. Membership meetings are one way you can ask questions, get involved and hear what's going on with your employer, your industry, and your Union! **All meetings begin at 7:00 p.m.**

North

All Seasons Resort
760 S. Cedar Street
Kalkaska, MI 49646
January 23, 2012

Central

UFCW 951 Office
3490 Belle Chase Way (lower level)
Lansing, MI 48911
January 24, 2012

East

UFCW 951 Office
30150 Telegraph Rd., 3rd floor
Bingham Farms, MI 48025
January 25, 2012

West

UFCW 951 Office
3270 Evergreen Dr. NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525
January 26, 2012

Reporting Meetings Follow up on Quarterly Meetings

At Reporting Meetings, you will hear reports on the topics discussed at the Quarterly Membership Meetings. **All meetings begin at 7:00 p.m.**

Kalamazoo

Holiday Inn West
2747 South I1th St.
January 31, 2012

Brighton

Homewood Suites
8060 Challis Rd.
January 31, 2012

Birch Run

Best Western
9087 East Birch Run Rd.
February 1, 2012

Woodhaven

Holiday Inn Express
21500 West Rd.
February 1, 2012

For directions and more information, go to www.ufcw951.com

Free Legal Consult for UFCW 951 Military Families

To protect the rights of UFCW 951 military families, the union has arranged for members who have served on active duty in the U.S. military in the last four years, or have a family member who has done so, to receive a **free** legal consultation regarding the federal Servicemembers Civil Relief Act from the union's attorney, Jonathan Karmel.

The Act provides military families with specific protections pertaining to home mortgages, credit cards, and installment contracts on personal property. As the economy has struggled, foreclosures and repossessions have increased and these rights have become increasingly important.

Military family members who have taken out a home loan (including equity lines) or executed installment contracts on personal property (including lease agreements) prior to being called to active duty, you may possess the following rights pertaining to those loans or contracts:

- A maximum interest rate of 6 percent on home mortgages, credit cards, and/or installment contracts while on active duty.
- Protection from home foreclosure while on active duty and for up to nine months thereafter.
- Protection from repossession of personal property secured by an installment contract or lease while on active duty.

It is important for you to understand your rights under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. If you feel that your rights may have been violated - or if you would like further information about your rights - you are encouraged to contact Jonathan Karmel at 312.641.2910 for your free consultation.