

BULLETIN

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United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 876

The *UFCW 876 Bulletin* is a bi-monthly publication of UFCW Local 876 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.ufcw876.org. If you would like to receive an email copy of future *Bulletins* during the first week of publication, call the Local 876 Public Relations Department at 1-800-321-6406.

LOCAL 876 STEWARDS, MEMBERS ATTEND KROGER UNITY SEMINAR

Over 200 Local 876 stewards and members were among the more than 1,000 UFCW members from five states attending the first-ever Region 4 Kroger Stewards Unity Seminar held in Dayton, Ohio in early March.

The seminar was developed under the leadership of Local 876 president, Roger Robinson, and fellow presidents from Locals 75, 227, 700, 951, and 1059. Meeting in 2009, the group determined a more unified approach was necessary in negotiating with Kroger, the nation's largest traditional retail grocer. Their overall plan includes: an ongoing quarterly newsletter; contract application and interpretation information exchanges; the sharing of bargaining data, ideas, strategies; and joint membership training sessions.

"We know we are stronger and more powerful when we stand together and speak with one voice," Robinson said. "Therefore, we decided the best way for each local to achieve its goal of leaving negotiations with a fair and just contract, was to take a unified approach to contract bargaining with Kroger over the next two years."

Participants at the Unity Seminar heard from UFCW top officers and staff, who didn't spend time bashing Kroger, but focused on educating stewards on the importance of banding together to build worker power to achieve their contract bargaining goals and make their union stronger.

"When Kroger comes to the bargaining table, they come as a whole company with all of their resources, Pat O'Neil, UFCW International Executive Vice President and Director of Organizing, said. "Kroger may have the power of money on their side, but the union has people power on its side. When Local 876 comes to the bargaining table, it comes as 876 united, with hundreds of thousands of Kroger members across the country, and 1.3 million UFCW members on their side.

(OVER)

Banding together makes us stronger, and if we are stronger at the bargaining table, our members will have better lives."

The solidarity displayed at the Unity Seminar, along with the support of Local 876 members for their union's efforts to achieve a fair and just contract, have boosted the local's confidence as it enters preliminary contract negotiations with Kroger.

"As soon as we put word out about the seminar, we had well over 500 members say they wanted to make the trip. We could have easily filled twice as many buses," Robinson said. "With negotiations right around the corner, this display of commitment from Local 876 Kroger members increases my confidence that a fair and just contracts can and will be achieved for all Kroger members in 2010."

The Local is also heartened by the large number of Kroger members who returned their collective bargaining survey.

"The membership participation rate in our Kroger contract bargaining survey has well exceeded our expectations," Robinson said. "Based on their experience surveying union members, the researchers from Wayne State University who are conducting the survey told us how many returned surveys to expect. Local 876 Kroger members very quickly surpassed this number, and the surveys are still coming in at a very good rate. We are thrilled. This high participation rate is an excellent indication Local 876 members are engaged and interested in their upcoming negotiations."

CONTRACT BARGAINING UPDATE

Adhesive Systems: Local 876 members working at this adhesive manufacturing plant located in Detroit recently ratified a new two-year contract including annual wage increases, increases in paid time off, and stronger vacation language.

Medstar Ambulance: A new three-year contract was recently ratified by members at this ambulance service located in Clinton Township. The new contract includes wage increases retroactive to December 31, 2009, strengthened and improved over-time language, increased attendance bonus, and maintenance of the current health and welfare benefits with the addition of a third plan option offering lower weekly employee contributions.

Provincial House: Contract bargaining is underway for members working in both the LPN and Support Divisions of this skilled nursing home located in Adrian. The current LPN contract expired March 31, 2010 and the Support Division agreement expires June 30, 2010.

Polly's Meat: Contract proposal questionnaires will be mailed in mid-April to members working in the meat departments of five Polly's grocery stores in Jackson. The current contract expires June 19, 2010. Members are encouraged to complete these questionnaires to have a voice in setting the union's bargaining goals for the negotiations.

 **1-800-321-6406**

Roger Robinson

President

Rick Blocker
Secretary-Treasurer

George Misko
Recorder