

Pulp truth

Issue 23 • September 1-16, 2009



Please copy Pulp Truth front and back and distribute it during non-work time using your Contract Action Teams, steward system or Rapid Response network. Be sure to leave copies in lunchrooms, break rooms, etc. We want to hear what's happening in your workplace. Send your news to lbaker@usw.org

Contracts that Reopen in September

If the re-opener date for your local contract is not listed here, please contact Pulp Truth editor Lynne Baker at lbaker@usw.org to have your contract listed. (The re-opener date is not the expiration date.)

MeadWestvaco, Cottonton, AL, 9-1-09
Cellu Tissue Corp., Gouverneur, NY, 9-1-09
Georgia-Pacific (Color Box LLC), Dubuque, IA, 9-1-09
International Paper (WH), Grand Prairie, TX, 9-1-09
Temple-Inland, Kansas City, KS, 9-1-09
Temple-Inland, New Johnsonville, TN, 9-1-09
Hartford City Paper, Hartford City, IN, 9-1-09
Green Bay Packaging, Kalamazoo, MI, 9-1-09
Smurfit-Stone Cont., Mishawaka, IN, 9-1-09

Smurfit-Stone Cont., Adams, WI, 9-1-09
Great Northern Corp., Appleton, WI, 9-1-09
Fraser Papers Ltd, Madawaska, ME, 9-1-09
Georgia-Pacific, Sterling, GA, 9-2-09
International Paper, Wellford, SC, 9-2-09
Graphic Packaging, Jacksonville, AR, 9-2-09
Pekin Paperboard (Graphic Packaging), Pekin, IL, 9-2-09
Little Rapids Corp. (Shawano Papers), Shawano, WI, 9-2-09
Massachusetts Container, Marlboro, MA, 9-16-09
Temple-Inland, Hazelton, PA, 9-17-09
Greif Inc., Rosemount, MN, 9-20-09
Temple-Inland, Buna, TX, 9-24-09

Contracts that Reopened in August

If the re-opener date for your local contract is not listed here, please contact Pulp Truth editor Lynne Baker at lbaker@usw.org to have your contract listed. (The re-opener date is not the expiration date.)

Burton Packaging, New York City, NY, 8-1-09
M.C. Packaging Corp., Melville, NY, 8-1-09
Gift Box Corporation, Carlstadt, NJ, 8-1-09
International Paper, Bay Minette, AL, 8-1-09
Rock-Tenn, Milwaukee, WI, 8-1-09
Georgia-Pacific, Plattsburgh, NY, 8-1-09

Greif Inc., Washington, PA, 8-2-09
Smurfit-Stone Cont., Wash. Ct. House, OH, 8-2-09
Smurfit-Stone Cont., Galesburg, IL, 8-2-09
International Paper, Chicago, IL, 8-2-09
Newark Group, South Gardiner, ME, 8-6-09
Georgia-Pacific, Fort Smith, AR, 8-6-09
International Paper (WH), Pine Hill, AL, 8-6-09
P.C.A., Counce, TN, 8-29-09
Cedar Box Co., Minneapolis, MN, 8-31-09

Pittsburgh Council Meetings Result in Joint Action Plans

The SCA, Graphic Packaging, MeadWestvaco, NewPage, Sappi, Georgia-Pacific and International Paper councils held their individual meetings in Pittsburgh Aug. 4-5 to share bargaining information and to discuss corporate bargainers, management's handling of individual plants, organizing and the status of current negotiations.

International Vice President Jon Geenen and Assistant to the President Leeann Anderson led the joint session. They spoke of how the framework agreements negotiated have given paper workers unprecedented job security during a time of economic uncertainty. Geenen said this is the first time IP management has not gone after hourly workers' wages and benefits during an economic downturn.

Supply Game

Geenen said the paper companies have mistakenly worried almost exclusively about the supply side of the business equation through acquisition and merger while demand was changing rapidly.

"While the values of consolidation are obvious, the idea of controlling price exclusively by controlling and limiting the supply fails every time in a global economy and does not account for manipulation and dumping by China and other countries exporting to the U.S.," he said.

He said it is time that the industry started reinvesting in research and development of new products to create and drive demand for the future.

Unions must defend new hires and their living standards

and halt companies that mistakenly try to stop defined benefit pension plans in favor of savings plan that cannot provide the kind of security essential for a comfortable life after a career of hard work.

Involvement with health and safety in each plant is essential, Geenen said. He said we need safety programs and do not need management's permission to own the health and safety process at work.

Geenen also spoke about the USW being proactive in bankruptcy cases by getting on the creditors' committee and becoming involved in the bankruptcy process to keep members working.

Public Option Needed

USW International President Leo W. Gerard congratulated the council chairs and members on the "great work" they have done the last few years. "You ought to be proud of the strategic decision-making you have made," he said.

He pointed out how health care is a fight for every negotiation. Sixteen percent of GDP is spent on health care, and workers are paying \$12,000 to \$20,000 a year for their families' health care. He talked about how the public option will introduce competition into the insurance industry.

Gerard discussed how the auto industry underpins the U.S. manufacturing economy and said the second highest user of coated paper is the auto industry. "Think of how much the paper industry would be destroyed if there was no manufacturing base," he said.

Much praise was given to the members for lobbying Congress to maintain the black liquor tax credit for the paper industry. Gerard said the biofuel tax credit would have been out the window if member lobbying had not occurred.

Council members heard presentations on the preliminary paper safety survey results and the Union Sportsmen Alliance. They got an update on the current economic climate in the US paper industry. They also heard Flambeau River deliver a presentation on biofuel and green technology.

International Ties

Ties were strengthened between paper workers in our union and those from Unite, our union's merger partner in Workers Uniting. Members of Unite spoke to the GP, SCA and MeadWestvaco councils about what was happening with workers from those companies in the UK.

Gerald Fernandez, director of the Strategic Campaigns department, talked about Workers Uniting and the need for a labor movement that acts internationally. Unite Assistant General Secretary Tony Burke said we need to make sure multinational companies do not play one group of workers against another, and he said we can prevent that from happening by strengthening our unions' multinational ties.

In the past, councils used their meetings to report out on events and issues happening at each local. For the first time, they developed priorities for council building and created joint action plans that included recommendations from regional meetings.

Appreciation Expressed to Covington Workers

During the general session, the council members expressed widespread appreciation to MeadWestvaco Local 8-675 for its setting of standards for negotiations in the recent contract.

Despite the economic downturn, the new contract includes \$2,600 in cash bonuses and over 16 percent in general wage increases over the six-year term. The \$58 per month, per year

of service pension multiplier sets a high bar for the industry. The union-created health care plan and clinic will help control health care costs, just like a similar plan and clinic the Evadale locals established.

Below is a short recap of some of the council meetings and the action plan for each council:

International Paper Council

Discussion centered on IP's health and safety programs and the importance of the USW having a significant voice. Local 314 from Edinburg, Texas, presented its hazard mapping plan as an example of worker involvement.

Other topics discussed included the Retiree Medical Savings Plan and organizing efforts at non-union facilities such as in Mansfield, La., option for retiree medical coverage, education programs, bargaining support between locals, improved visibility, and strengthening the communication programs.

The IP council agreed to continue its conference calls with a more detailed agenda sent out beforehand and to maintain a monthly newsletter, with more effort devoted to getting it out on the shop floor. The council's action plan also included developing guidelines for the next master agreement and identifying targets that are problematic and confronting them on a system-wide basis, such as the company's varying interpretations of the Family and Medical Leave Act.

For more information about the council and its issues and activities, go to www.SolidarityatIP.org.

Georgia-Pacific Council

Local union representatives discussed recent bargaining activity, corporate personnel and company bargaining strategies. Delegates reviewed the latest economic information about the company and industry and talked about health and safety issues at the plant, including the union's duty to safeguard workers during work time. Some discussion was on the challenge to unify the GP group because of the locals' various sizes and the different industries within the company.

Paper mill locals voiced their frustration on GP's handling of P-Pay (performance pay) and spot pay. The company handles it differently among locations and individuals.

The locals also discussed conference building—making sure each local gets what it needs to strengthen and build support—and the framework agreement negotiations. Delegates acknowledged how the current bargaining framework has stabilized wages and benefits during this time of economic uncertainty.

Unite member Craig Foster from GP's Lancashire, UK mill gave a presentation which fostered closer bonds with our brothers and sisters in Workers Uniting.

A working group took what was said in the regional GP council meetings and at the Pittsburgh meeting to draft a set of objectives for the bargaining council: establish a membership education program; build/restore a culture of solidarity within the Koch/GP locals; increase bargaining coordination, solidarity and support for USW members in sectors not presently covered by a framework agreement; and develop a communication system for the Koch/GP conference.

Over the next several months a communications structure will be rolled out that includes a database of local unions and officers in the Koch/GP conference; updated email distribution lists; a new GP directory; a survey of communications functions; a letter explaining SharePoint to local union presidents; a SharePoint instruction manual for authorized users; a letter, including a job description, to local union presidents requesting the appointment of a CAT (Communication

Action Team) coordinator; and training for new CAT coordinators.

A letter to Koch on what a good P-Pay plan should look like will be drafted and circulated to members of the conference. All locals will be asked to sign on. Other international unions at GP will be asked to sign on or send their own similar letter.

SCA Council

Unite member Clive Bell, who is the trade union representative on the SCA Supervisory Board, talked about the European Works Councils and the model used to strengthen workers' organizations in SCA. Tony Burke, assistant general secretary of Unite, also spoke.

In its joint action plan, the council will follow up on organizing the last unorganized mill, focus on the safety program—five of the six organized mills have the USW's Triangle of Prevention program and the sixth facility has the OSHA VPP (Voluntary Protection Program)—and work to settle the framework agreement by next year.

Graphic Packaging Council

There was a plant by plant review of bargaining and union building activities. Locals discussed upcoming negotiations, including the Allegheny multiple which began Aug. 6, and what has and has not worked in strengthening solidarity.

In the meeting there was a growing feeling that the council needs to get more aggressive in its actions and a sense that the company is not responding to efforts to treat the union as equals. Other ways need to be reviewed to get management off its concessionary demands, said local union delegates. A concern was expressed that management is trying to change various conditions of employment in the middle of contracts. The union is challenging this.

Discussion also centered on local union resources and a strategic plan to strengthen the council.

The Kalamazoo, Mich., local talked about its work to improve its community profile by conducting a diaper drive for poorer families. Last year \$5,000 was raised, and the drive will happen again this year.

The council plans to improve communications during negotiations and wants an organizer assigned to the council to help get the CAT teams in gear and organize non-union Graphic Packaging facilities.

Sappi

The council said it wanted to improve communication between the locals and build solidarity. The locals are seeking common expiration dates. At the Cloquet, Minn., mill the local is trying to get the Service Employees Intl. union local to speak as one voice with the USW. The Cloquet contract has expired and negotiations continue. A master agreement is being developed with Sappi. There was discussion of the health care matrix cap.

Joint Paper Sector Projects in play for Workers Uniting

The day after the council meetings ended, officers and staff from the USW and Unite met to establish a better relationship between the two merger partners and create joint projects to work on. International Vice President Jon Geenen chaired the meeting.

A joint health and safety strategy will be developed. One task force will examine each union's health and safety program, the lessons learned and what approach should be modeled.

The council plans to improve communication by using SharePoint, sharing newsletters and having monthly conference calls. The locals agreed to speak as one voice. A communications network is being developed with Sappi employees from around the world.

MeadWestvaco

The council is working to re-unite the mills and the converters. There have been divisions between them. Discussion centered on management's practices and styles at different locations, job posting and bidding procedures, attendance policies, floating holidays and management intimidation at various plants. It was suggested that the locals conduct parking lot meetings on local and company-wide issues. Talk also focused on the black liquor tax credit and how it should go toward strengthening job security and improving equipment.

The local union members expressed overwhelming support for the Covington workers who stood together and advanced paper bargaining in negotiations with MeadWestvaco. Their contract gains included wage and pension increases and provisions for a union-created health care plan and health care clinic to help control medical costs. They will vote Sept. 30 on whether to retain the USW or go with the independent Covington Paperworkers union, which committed labor law violations during the last representation election.

The council plans to revise the methods and usage of Sharepoint, devise a letter from the entire council to the rank-and-file to tell them about the council and the work that it can do, vigilantly confront the company's attempts to undermine contracts and file a consolidated labor charge against the company.

NewPage

The council plans to continue to work toward common expiration dates. Some mills are working far beyond their contract expiration, and by next summer it is possible to have open contracts at seven mills.

Technical problems with the conference calls will be worked out. The "We Support This Union in their Fight for a Better Contract" signs that the Escanaba, Mich., local has been using will be taken to every NewPage mill in the country. A sub-committee is looking at sending officers to each other's bargaining tables. Local union representatives requested the chair of the council develop a clear definition of the role of the council chair.

Boise-Cascade

Local union members met Aug. 3 in Pittsburgh to discuss the retention of their defined benefit program. The company wants to end it and go to a 401k only. The members put together an action plan that includes doing a leaflet and sending a support letter to the AWPPW (Association of Western Pulp & Paper Workers).

Another task force will create a Workers Uniting commitment statement that will be based on five major principles that need to be drafted. Management would be held accountable to these principles.

Communication will be improved between the two unions by giving Unite reps access to the USW's Sharepoint system to share information with their American and Canadian counterparts. An electronic and printed newsletter will be published

quarterly for Unite and USW members in the paper, packaging and pulp sectors. The Workers Uniting website—www.workeruniting.org—will have a paper section. Our joint union also

has a Facebook page and is on Twitter.

Both unions also agreed to develop a joint organizing strategy targeting common employers.

Rock-Tenn Council Initiates Organizing Plan

Local leaders from the USW and Teamster-represented Rock-Tenn locations met July 21-22 in Iowa City, Iowa, to plan strategy for upcoming contract bargaining and kick off implementation of the first paper council organizing plan.

The council reviewed recent bargaining results; discussed strategic leverage on Rock-Tenn, including key creditors; developed leverage targets and a mobilization plan for 2010; received legal “Know Your Rights” education; finalized the council organizing plan; and refined council bargaining priorities.

The council’s bargaining policies include reasonable wage

increases each year, no lump sums; quality, affordable health care, including reasonable spousal surcharge and resistance to increases in out-of-pocket maximums; resistance to two-tier wages, benefits and vacation; and a contract protection clause for longer term agreements.

The council put its organizing plan into action by leafletting Rock-Tenn’s new Alliance and Access facilities in Iowa City. The non-union employees overwhelmingly responded to the council’s invitation to attend its meetings.

Rock-Tenn Engages in Anti-union Attacks

Rock-Tenn intimidated workers and used captive audience meetings to win a recent decertification election at the company’s Conway, Ark., facility.

Workers with 22 years at the plant said they never saw Rock-Tenn Chairman and CEO Jim Rubright until he visited three times within the past two months. Organizer Tommy Pipes said Rubright was not being truthful when he told workers that the union’s permission was not needed if the company wanted to close the facility. It would be illegal for the company to close the facility in order to avoid the union. Even if the company was closing the plant legally it would have to negotiate a severance package with the union.

The CEO also claimed that he talked to a guy at Rock-Tenn who used to work at a union facility and who said it was much better working at a non-union plant.

Another tactic used was putting into a notarized certificate the company’s guarantee that it would not cut pay and that it would retain what was negotiated under the union contract. This gave the appearance of legality when it was not a legal document, Pipes said.

He said Rock-Tenn held over 100 mandatory captive audience meetings with groups of five to six workers at a time in the weeks before the decertification election. Anyone who expressed support for the union was taken out and put in a group with other union supporters to isolate them. Captive audience meetings are where a company forces workers to attend and listen to anti-union rhetoric.

Pipes said Rock-Tenn accused the union of sabotage and made misrepresentations. Long-term disability was available through the union and the company said everyone would now have it. The company said the union-negotiated health insurance plan would stay the same. Pipes said that since Rock-Tenn does not allow its management at the Conway facility and workers at other locations to have this plan it probably would not renew it when the policy expires Dec. 31, 2009. He said workers were told that the non-union plants got bigger raises, yet the company did not tell the wage rates for those facilities.

Pipes said this campaign was illustrative of the need for passage of the Employee Free Choice Act. Eliminating the mandatory meetings would make a difference, he said.

Domtar Council Meets in Nashville to Build Power

Eleven Domtar local unions met in Nashville Sept. 1-3 to continue their work together and build power through unity. They reviewed strategies and tactics for building power in preparation for the April 2012 expiration of the master agreement with Domtar.

To this end, the locals reviewed their Communication and Action Team (CAT) structures; identified council and bargaining goals; looked at the company’s and the council’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; reviewed and set an agenda to improve communication among the locals by using conference calls, a council newsletter, a council directory and common use of technology; revisited legal rights on the job and as union members; and developed a cal-

endar of action for the next 12 months.


They also shared information through local union reports; discussed the USW Paper Mill Safety Survey results and prioritized action; listened to a presentation from the Union Sportsmen Association; set organizing goals and a plan for action; learned about Domtar’s innovative biomass energy project with We Energies at the Rothschild, Wisc., mill that will result in 150 more permanent USW jobs; and discovered a project is being considered at the Plymouth, N.C., mill to develop an alternative product. The council is committed to helping Domtar with similar alternative energy projects and in obtaining matching funds from the state of North Carolina for the Plymouth project.

News Briefs from *around the Industry*

New Biomass-fueled Power Plant for Domtar's Rothschild, Wisc., Mill: We Energies is proposing to construct a \$250 million biomass power plant that will provide thermal energy (energy required to make steam) for the mill and 50 megawatts of electricity. Wood, waste wood and sawdust will be used to produce the energy. Four hundred construction jobs are expected to be created along with 150 permanent jobs, including independent wood suppliers and haulers from northern and central Wisconsin who will obtain the waste wood for the project. This plant will virtually eliminate the site's use of fossil fuels.

Clearwater Workers Ratify Contract: Maintenance workers, who are members of Local 13-1533, and production workers who are members of Local 13-1532, ratified a new, three-year agreement Aug. 6-7 at the Clearwater Paper Corp. bleached paperboard mill at Cypress Bend, Ark. Workers were able to keep their defined benefit plan in a time when companies are abandoning such plans. The pension plan includes new hires and allows workers' years of service to continue to accrue. Wage increases were obtained for each year of the contract. Contract issues of concern were work hours, overtime, wages and the pension plan.

Unemployment Rises in UK: Unite Assistant General Secretary Tony Burke said 5,000 workers have lost their jobs in the print, paper and packaging sectors since April. He said he expects the unemployment rate to rise because there have been a number of companies in consultation with staff that have given layoff notices and workers who have yet to sign up for unemployment. Manufacturing pay increases in the UK have averaged 1.1 percent. Burke said about 50 percent of manufacturers have either secured or imposed a pay freeze on their workers.



Jobs Move to Union Plant: Albany International Corp. is closing its non-union plant in Portland, Tenn., and moving the bulk of the production work to its two Wisconsin facilities in Menasha and Kaukauna. Local 2-857 represents 53 workers at the Menasha plant. The company said it was a matter of aligning its capacity in the most efficient way. The Menasha facility makes the forms paper makers use to fashion sheets of paper, toilet tissue and heavy containerboard.

Nonwoven Fabric from Renewable Wood Fiber: Weyerhaeuser and Lenzing have a pilot plant in Lenzing, Austria, to explore the commercial potential of TencelWeb—a new technology to produce nonwoven fabrics directly from lyocell. The fabric would be used in industrial and personal care products. TencelWebb is an alternative to petroleum-based nonwovens.

Please Send Material for next issue of *Pulp Truth*

Pulp Truth covers news across the entire pulp and paper industry. Please help the newsletter improve its coverage by sending in a write-up about the issues, mobilization activities and contract negotiations involving your local. You can email these stories to *Pulp Truth* editor Lynne Baker at lbaker@usw.org or you can mail them to Lynne Baker, USW, 3340 Perimeter Hill Drive, Nashville, TN 37211.

How to Get *Pulp Truth*

If you would like to get your own copy of *Pulp Truth*, please email Joyce Russotto, administrative assistant for International Vice President Jon Geenen, at jrussotto@usw.org and give her your home email address.