

## Teamsters unite for beverage bargaining

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Teamsters from across the region have joined forces in a united multi-Local campaign to achieve strong collective bargaining agreements for working families in the beverage industry. Since early January, Teamsters from Locals in Everett, Bremerton, Tacoma, Olympia, and Tukwila have filled their respective Union halls to state their priorities in bargaining and map out a coordinated strategy.

“It’s important for all of us to stick together, especially in this economy,” said Local 117 member John Sharp, a 15-year Teamster mechanic at the Coca Cola bottling plant in Bellevue. Said Chris Pringle, a longtime Local 174 Shop Steward at Coke, “The advantage to multi-Local bargaining is that if there is a labor dispute, we have the ability to take out all of Western Washington.”

Sharp and Pringle, along with approximately 240 of their fellow Teamsters from Locals 174 and 117, gathered for a Coke demands meeting on Saturday, January 9. Earlier in the day, Teamsters from Safeway beverage held a similar meeting, while later that afternoon an assembly of another 120 or so Teamsters from the Pepsi Bottling Group outlined their demands.

Members at the meetings were quick to point out that the beverage industry as a whole has performed remarkably well despite the economic downturn. Coke reported “strong profit growth” in 2009 with 3rd quarter profits up in excess of 15% from the same period in 2008 while Pepsi stock soared to a 52-week high in late 2009.

Bargaining is set to kick off on January 26, 2010 with Teamsters Local 117 Secretary-Treasurer Tracey A. Thompson heading up the negotiations. A force of Teamsters executive officers, business agents, and rank-and-file leaders from Locals 38, 117, 174, 252, 313, and 589 will make up the bargaining committee.

Teamsters contracts in Southern California and Northern California are also up for negotiations. Bargaining is being coordinated with the help of the IBT Brewery and Soft Drink Conference to ensure maximum leverage for all Teamsters Locals.

Solidarity, a united front, and a strong Union presence are the keys to a successful bargaining campaign. Talk to your Local Union’s Shop Steward and Business Representative about staying involved. Keep an eye out for upcoming meetings, planning mobilizations, and bargaining updates by checking in at your Local Union’s website. Said Pringle, “Let’s send a strong message to the Company that we’re serious about making our lives better.”



