



# Teamsters Local 117

# Teamster Talk

*Fighting for Workers' Rights Since 1936*

Teamsters Local 117: 14675 Interurban Ave. S, Suite 307 • Tukwila, WA 98168 (206) 441-4860 • www.teamsters117.org

## “WHEN WE FIGHT, WE WIN!”

Contract fights at Davis Wire, Waste Management, Sysco, UNFI, FSA and DOC



Workers at Davis Wire went out on an Unfair Labor Practice strike on May 21.

**W**hen members' rights are being trampled on and their livelihoods are at stake, you can be sure that Teamsters Local 117 will not back down from a fight.

Across our Union, in a variety of industries, members of have been banding together and standing up to powerful forces intent on destroying labor.

At **Davis Wire**, Local 117 members displayed incredible courage and determination in a three-month strike with a heartless employer.

Against all odds, they fought and won a victory that will improve working conditions and restore their dignity that had been stripped by billionaire owner, Michael Heisley.

At **Waste Management**, Local 117 members refused to be bullied by a multi-

billion dollar corporation that was trying to undercut industry standards.

Members raised pickets and withheld their labor for seven frenzied days.

Television crews swarmed the picket line, and the fight played out on the nightly news and on the front page of the Seattle Times.

In the end, it became clear that workers had caught the company off guard: Waste Management's so-called "contingency plan" was an abject failure, and the company was forced to negotiate a settlement or face massive fines from municipalities throughout our region.

### FOOD SERVICE & GROCERY NEGOTIATIONS

Meanwhile, with the Davis Wire and Waste Management contracts ratified, the fight turned to the food service industry, where

Local 117 members at **Sysco** and **Food Services of America** voted to authorize a strike over retirement security and health care.

"The vote sent a clear message that we are united and prepared to do what we have to do to get where we need to be," said 18-year FSA warehouseman, Jason Stepner.

In the grocery industry, Local 117 members at **United Natural Foods Inc. (UNFI)**, a highly profitable organic foods distributor with a warehouse in Auburn, followed suit.

On September 9, the group rejected a substandard proposal and demanded changes that address the gross inequities at the company and other questionable business practices.

### DOC CONTRACT FIGHT LOOMING

At the Department of Corrections, where members have been fighting for a safer working environment for the last three years, in the face of pay reductions and budget reductions, the Union is pushing for changes at the bargaining table that will help protect the brave men and women who work in our prisons.

"Unless we see a good faith effort to address the serious safety issues at DOC, we will be calling on all members across our Union to rally in support of our State's correctional workers," said Tracey A. Thompson, Local 117 Secretary-Treasurer.

"Because at Teamsters 117, we are not afraid to take on a fight, no matter how powerful the opposition. *And when we fight, we win!*"

## A message from your Secretary-Treasurer



Brothers and Sisters:

On August 16, after three full months on strike, our Davis Wire members made the extremely difficult choice to ratify a contract and return to work. While the ratified Last, Best and Final offer was a significant improvement from prior LBFs and included annual wage increases that we believe will offset increases in health care costs during the term of the agreement, the Company also included a poison pill – eight replacement workers will continue to work and will displace some of our members for up to six months. The inclusion of such a proposal in the Last, Best and Final demonstrates the total inhumanity of Davis Wire owners and management. The only reason to include such a proposal is to break the spirit of the workers.

Our fight to improve the working conditions and economic security of our Davis Wire members, and to hold this Company accountable for its bad acts, does not end with ratification of a contract. Our fight takes a new direction and moves inside.

Your support has been phenomenal, and I am so grateful for it, but we continue to need your help. Several of our Davis Wire members are on the verge of losing their homes. Several others have lost their cars. Many of them have lost health insurance coverage and will need to pay COBRA premiums in order to continue to treat chronic health conditions. Three months without a meaningful income has had a devastating impact on these 83 families, and they continue to need financial assistance to try to get back to where they were before the strike. Your generosity in this regard is so appreciated.

And we will need your support as we move the fight inside. This employer needs to be held accountable for every unlawful act it commits: wage and hour violations, WISHA/OSHA violations, workplace discrimination. Your help in holding Davis Wire accountable will be critical to our success in transforming this workplace from a sweat shop to a decent place to work.

Many of you attended our Davis Wire rally back in July where I said that the men at Davis Wire are my heroes. Their vote was another heroic act. They looked into their own hearts and those of the brothers with whom they've been standing, they considered the struggles that many of them are facing, they realized that they could continue to fight their employer from the inside, and they made the difficult decision to end their strike. I trust you will see this courageous act for what it is, and continue to honor and support these amazing workers.

Please consider donating to the Davis Wire Hardship Fund. We are still collecting to help Davis Wire workers in financial need.

In Solidarity,

Tracey A. Thompson  
Secretary-Treasurer

## TEAMSTERS AT UNFI AUTHORIZE STRIKE

### Members overwhelmingly reject substandard proposal

On Sept. 8, Local 117 members, employed at the United Natural Foods Inc. (UNFI) distribution center in Auburn, sent a clear message to their employer when they rejected the company's Last, Best, and Final contract proposal and, in doing so, resoundingly passed a final strike vote.

"This vote demonstrates that these workers are prepared to fight for the respect they deserve," said Tracey A. Thompson, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 117.

The central issues in bargaining have been a tight production standard and UNFI's refusal to bargain about the large compensation gap between the company and its local competitors.

"In the highly-competitive grocery warehouse industry, UNFI is insisting on providing substandard wages and benefits to its employees so that it can continue to maintain an unfair advantage over its competition," Thompson said.

"These workers are simply asking for their fair share from a highly-profitable corporation that is enriching itself on their labor," she said.

UNFI's revenues have increased 83% in the last five years, and the company has maintained an average profit margin of over 18% during that time.

Yet despite soaring profits, UNFI compensates its employees at a rate of 25% less than the compensation provided by other major unionized grocery distributors in the Puget Sound area.

"UNFI is raking in record profits while cheating middle-class workers and their families out of the means to pay their bills and put food on the table," Thompson said.

UNFI supplies organic and specialty foods to major supermarkets throughout the Puget Sound area, including Whole Foods, PCC, and the Metropolitan Market.

# SYSKO COMES AFTER TEAMSTER HEALTH CARE

Members authorize strike in food service negotiations



8-year Teamster warehouseman, Brandon Kerlee

Food service negotiations kicked off this summer, with contracts opening with Food Services of America and Sysco on August 31. Bargaining in both cases has been challenging, and it's coming down to the wire.

At FSA, your Union will be at the table again on September 17 and 18, while at Sysco, the company is still clinging to an economic proposal that would significantly erode health care protections for Teamster members and their families.

"Sysco has failed to put forth an acceptable proposal that protects the economic security of our members," said Tracey A. Thompson, Local 117 Secretary-Treasurer and lead negotiator for the Union.

In response to the company's hard line, Teamsters at Sysco voted overwhelmingly to authorize a strike at a meeting at the Teamsters Hall in Tukwila on August 25.

"We had a great turnout at the meeting.

It puts the company on notice that we are united and are not going to be pushed around," said Will Buff, a night crew Shop Steward, and 11-year Teamster.

"We just want what's fair," Buff said.

## SOLIDARITY STICKERS - HANDS OFF HEALTH CARE!

To send a clear message to the company, Teamsters at Sysco began wearing **Hands off my Health Care!** stickers every Tuesday after it became clear in negotiations that Sysco has not been interested in achieving a fair resolution at the bargaining table.

Members have also been wearing Superman T-Shirts every Thursday in a show of solidarity.

The contract between Teamsters at Sysco and the company expired on August 31, but the parties have signed an extension agreement through midnight of September 11 with bargaining dates scheduled for September 10 and 11.

**For updates on the status of food service negotiations, visit your Local Union's website at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org).**



*"Our biggest priority is maintaining our health and welfare benefits. If you don't have good medical, the doctor's bills will break you."*

LOUIS HOPKINS, 26 years

# DOC MEMBERS WIN BIG IN FURLOUGH CASE

800 members win over \$1 million in arbitration award

For two years, Local 117 members waited patiently for an outcome in the furlough case. Finally, they have some money in their pockets.

Arbitrator Anthony Vivencio's decision directing the DOC to make whole all members impacted under Furlough I (ESSB 6503) "for any economic losses, including lost wages and interest thereupon at the rate of 12% per annum" was a long time in the coming, but the result is sweet.

Under the award, all members impacted under ESSB 6503 were made whole for eight days.

The arbitrator's decision represents a complete victory for Local 117 members whose contract was violated when the State implemented ESSB 6503. It demonstrates the strength of our DOC members' contract with respect to their seniority rights as union members.

Other unions, including WFSE and SEIU fought the furlough, but only Local 117 was able to achieve an arbitrator's make-whole ruling in its members' favor.

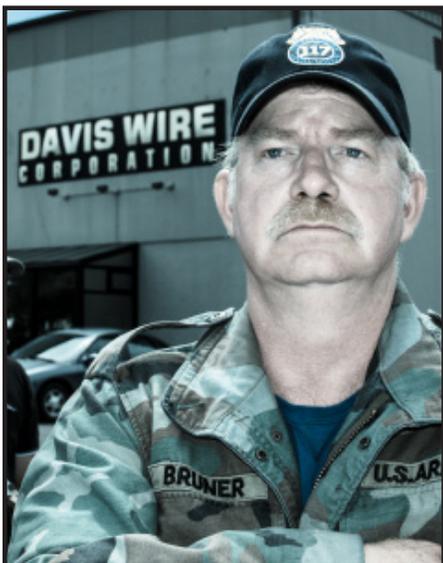
The money from furlough was not insignificant - over \$1 million for 800 correctional employees. It helped many members and their families through rough patches.

*In one case, it helped a grateful member from Washington Corrections Center for Women (WCCW) update her household appliances with a new washer, dryer, and stove!*



# ELECTION 2012

Stand with Sgt. Robert Bruner and the American Middle Class



Local 117 member, Robert Bruner

Working families and middle class jobs are under attack all across the country. From the attack on collective bargaining rights in Wisconsin to the squeeze on correctional employees, recycle drivers, and workers at Davis Wire right here in Washington State.

One of the most important ways to stand up and confront these attacks is through the ballot box.

"If we let Wall Street banks and private insurance companies rig the system, how will the next generation of Americans pay their mortgages and take care of their families?" asks former Army Sergeant Robert Bruner.

For 15 years Sgt. Bruner put up with dangerous working conditions at his job at Davis Wire in Kent.

"No lunch breaks, 10-12 hour shifts without stopping for weeks in a row, fingers cut off, arms twisted like twizzle sticks."

So Sgt Bruner and 83 of his coworkers went on strike, taking on Davis Wire's owner, billionaire Michael Heisley.

"My future, the future of America's middle class, is on the line. That's why I'm voting for candidates who stand up for hard working middle class folks like us."

Stand with Robert Bruner and cast your vote for candidates who have pledged to defend the middle class and make the wealthiest 1% pay their fair change.

### NOT REGISTERED? REGISTER ONLINE!

To register to vote online, go to Washington's Secretary of State's website at <http://www.sos.wa.gov/>.

Visit your Local Union's website at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org) and learn about who your Local Union is endorsing to stand with Sgt Bruner and defend the middle class.

To volunteer for voter registration drives, phonebanking, or get-out-the-vote activities, contact Local 117's Legislative Affairs Department at 206-441-4860.

### Important Dates - 2012 Election

**October 8** - Last day to register to vote

**October 19** - Ballots mailed to voters

**November 6** - Election Day

*Don't forget to mail in your ballot. Your vote makes a difference!*

## Let the boss know... THE TEAMSTERS ARE IN THE HOUSE!



Local 117 Office Staff, Jeannie Hoyt

Boss got you down? Put it back in his face with a **Teamsters Til I Die** T-Shirt!

Your Local Union offers an assortment of Teamsters' apparel that you can

wear at work, home, membership meetings, Local 117 events, and during contract campaigns.

### LOCAL 117 ONLINE STORE

With your Local Union's new online store at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org), ordering your Teamster gear is now easier than ever. You can find:

- ✓ **Beanies**
- ✓ **Baseball caps**
- ✓ **Assorted T-Shirts**
- ✓ **Canvas jackets**
- ✓ **Vests**
- ✓ **Sweatshirts**
- ✓ **Do rags**
- ✓ **Lapel pins**
- ✓ **More!**

### FIRST-CLASS DELIVERY SERVICE!

Once you make an order, your Business Rep. will deliver the item(s) to you in person at your shop!

So show your Union colors and let the boss know: **The Teamsters are in the house!**

### LOCAL 117 EVENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**Sept. 20, 2012** - General Membership Meeting

**Sept. 22, 2012** - Local 117 Soccer Tournament

**Nov. 17, 2012** - Local 117 Blood Drive

### FOLLOW YOUR LOCAL UNION ON THE WEB!



Join your Union's Facebook page, follow us on Twitter at @teamsters117 and watch Local 117 videos on YouTube!

Sign up online to receive an electronic copy of Teamster Talk at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org).