



# Teamster Talk



*Members of Teamsters Local 117*

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## LOCAL 117 STRIKES BACK!

**SCS strike; workers honor at US Foods; DOC members fight cuts; Strike Fund passes!**



*Striking Teamsters at SCS stand strong on the picket line in Algona.*

Over the last several months, members across our Union have been fighting valiantly to preserve contracts that guarantee job security and middle class wages.

Workers have stood in solidarity, defended their livelihoods, and in some cases, put their lives on the line in the fight for fairness and economic justice.

### SCS, US FOODS, FRED MEYER AND DOC

- ✓ At SCS Refrigerated Services, 41 courageous cold storage workers went on a week-long Unfair Labor Practice strike in protest of the employer's refusal to bargain in good faith.
- ✓ At US Foods, 109 workers honored a picket line that had been established by their striking Brothers and Sisters, thousands of miles away, in Streator, Illinois.

- ✓ After a three-month battle, 362 Teamsters at Fred Meyer achieved a significant victory by ratifying a contract that brings them up to the standards of other workers in the grocery warehouse industry, but only because they were willing to stand together and fight.
- ✓ At the Department of Corrections, members face devastating budget cuts that would slash jobs and put the safety of our communities and our State's correctional workers at risk. Members are fighting to stop the cuts and are encouraging their legislators to develop a revenue plan that helps fund the DOC. We urge you to join them by calling the Legislative Hotline at 1-800-562-6000.

### WORKING FAMILIES UNDER ATTACK

In every case, the root cause of the fight is the same: opportunistic employers attempting to subvert the collective bargaining process and exact major concessions from workers.

In the case of SCS, the situation was dire: Members had been working without a contract since March 2011. Negotiations were going nowhere because the employer was not bargaining in good faith. The employer had cancelled numerous bargaining sessions and was trying to force members to accept an offer that gutted their health care and slashed wages for some workers by \$7/hr.

On October 21, the group voted unanimously to strike, and picket lines were established the following Monday.

Almost immediately after the strike began, workers were joined by their fellow Teamsters and other supporters on the line. Teamsters from Safeway, Seafreeze, Simon Metals, SuperValu, K-Pac, Huttig, and Fred Meyer walked with their SCS Brothers and Sisters. Many brought hot coffee, food, and wood for burn barrels down to the line.

### PICKETING WORKERS THREATENED

There were tense moments, and on several occasions, peaceful picketers were subjected to violence.

Workers were hit by cars or trucks trying to ram through the line. In one incident, a former manager turned scab, was arrested after threatening picketers with a baseball bat.

## A message from your Secretary-Treasurer



Teamsters Local 117:

With the ever escalating war on the middle class, it seems that this past year has been one long battle. Fighting to ensure that our members work in a safe environment; fighting against greedy corporations who

seek to increase their record profits by taking medical benefits and retirement security away from their workers; fighting to ensure dignity and respect for every worker; fighting to protect the American Dream.

While we have won many battles this year because of Local 117's unity and strength, the truth is if others aren't fighting beside us, we cannot win. It is only by working together with our union brothers and sisters, with our community, environmental and faith partners who share our vision, and by supporting those in other movements, such as Occupy, that we can win the war on workers.

Whatever you think of the Occupy Movement, there is no doubt that the movement has given voice to something that was not being said: Why are the people who brought on our financial crisis allowed to do well? Why aren't we creating jobs? Why is the 1% being valued over the 99%? Their voices have raised important issues, and for that we should be grateful.

There is a wonderful quote by Robert Kennedy, "All great questions must be raised by great voices, and the greatest voice is the voice of the people - speaking out - in prose, or painting or poetry or music; speaking out - in homes and halls, streets and farms, courts and cafes - let that voice speak and the stillness you hear will be the gratitude of mankind."

I wish you all a peaceful holiday season.

In solidarity,

Tracey A. Thompson  
Secretary-Treasurer

## LOCAL 117 STRIKES BACK!

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"He pulled up and started getting lippy with everybody. Next thing you know he was hopping out of his truck with a baseball bat," said SCS worker, Ken Sheaffer.

Despite the violence, the group held strong; not a single member crossed.

On October 30, the strike ended: The intense pressure the workers put on the employer had reignited the bargaining process.

Just three weeks later, the full meaning of the strike became clear. Not only did members ratify a contract, it was a deal that included wage and pension increases, maintained health and welfare benefits, and protected industry standards. The vote in favor was overwhelming.

### LESSONS LEARNED

The strike at SCS, along with the fights at Fred Meyer, US Foods and the DOC, teach us valuable lessons about our Union.

They remind us that working people, whether in the private sector, public sector, or at the Department of Corrections, are under attack like never before.

They remind us how critical it is for your Union to have every weapon at its disposal so that we are ready to take on the fight.

### STRIKE FUND PASSES ON 3-1 VOTE!

Thanks to members who voted to establish a Local 117 Strike Fund for members in the private sector, an additional weapon is now in our arsenal.

A Strike Fund will provide your Union with additional leverage to negotiate stronger contracts for all members of Teamsters Local 117.

### WHEN WE FIGHT, WE WIN!

Most importantly, these battles teach us that when courageous working people take a stand together and fight, we can achieve significant victories.

- Our strike at SCS helped build leverage in bargaining that resulted in a ratified contract in line with industry standards.
- Our fight with Fred Meyer improved the strong contracts in the grocery industry.
- Solidarity actions at US Foods showed an anti-Union employer that Teamsters across the country will not hesitate to support each other.
- The fight for safety-related legislation for correctional workers that began last year continues. With your help, staff safety at the DOC will be a statutory priority.

As members of Teamsters Local 117, we must stand together as one Union and fight, whenever we are under attack.

***Because when we fight, we win!***

# MEMBERS STAND STRONG AT US FOODS

107 members honor picket lines in solidarity with striking workers in Illinois



*Teamsters at US Foods in Fife honor the line.*

On November 4, 107 members of Local 117 at US Foods in Fife honored a picket line that was established earlier in the week by striking Teamsters, thousands of miles away, in Streator Illinois.

Maintenance workers in Illinois were on a ULP strike in response to the company's retaliation against workers and its refusal to bargain in good faith.

"I've worked at US Foods for 28 years,"

said Mike Vagasky of Streator, Ill. "I don't want to strike, but after KKR and CD&R purchased the company, they have done nothing but bully, harass and intimidate us."

Private equity giants, KKR and CD&R, purchased the company in 2007.

## LOCAL 117 MEMBERS STAND STRONG

At the Fife facility, drivers and warehouse workers informed their employer of their intent to honor the picket line when they arrived to work on November 4.

"We are standing strong in solidarity with our Brothers and Sisters in Illinois," said Shop Steward and Steward Advisory Council member, John Peterson.

Extended picket lines were established across the country at US Foods facilities in Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Indiana, Minnesota, Colorado and a number of other locations.

# 33 TEAMSTERS AT HERTZ FILE EEOC COMPLAINTS

New policy targets Muslim work group, violates workers' contractual rights



*Hertz Shuttlers hold an action at Sea-Tac Airport to demand fair treatment.*

On Tuesday, October 25, 33 members of Teamsters Local 117 filed religious discrimination complaints with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) after the group was targeted by

Hertz with a unilaterally implemented break policy.

Hertz implemented the policy without notifying or bargaining with the Union.

The policy requires the workers to clock out for intermittent prayer breaks, which violates the workers' contractual rights.

"Hertz has violated our contract, violated labor laws, and even violated their own internal policy by not adhering to the principle of progressive discipline when workers were suspended without warning," said Tracey A. Thompson, Local 117 Secretary-Treasurer.

"Hertz then fired 25 of these workers

after giving them an unconscionable ultimatum: choose between your livelihood and your dignity."

## FIGHTING UNLAWFUL TERMINATIONS

Your Local Union is challenging the terminations through the contractual grievance and arbitration process.

The Union also has filed several Unfair Labor Practice charges with the National Labor Relations Board.

## Holiday Bash!

**Holiday Membership Meeting  
December 15, 2011**



Maxine Riegel sports a new power drill.

Throughout the month of December at our DOC facilities and domicile locations, and on December 15 at 7 PM at the Union hall, Local 117

members are gathering together by the hundreds for cookies, coffee, and solidarity.

Every member who attends a holiday membership meeting receives a \$25 Safeway gift card and is placed in the drawing for one of three flat screen televisions. Last year, 64 prizes were awarded, including several iPods, Wiis, power tools, bottles of wine, gift cards and the televisions sets. All of the gifts are purchased from companies with whom Local 117 has a bargaining relationship.

"This is our way of showing our gratitude to our members for their extraordinary contribution to this Union," said Secretary-Treasurer Tracey A. Thompson.

If last year's numbers are any indication, the hall's main auditorium will be packed, so plan to arrive early. For more information, visit your Union's website at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org).

## DOC TRUMPETS SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS - REAL CONCERNS REMAIN

### Statewide safety report tells only half of the story

On November 3, the Department of Corrections hosted a media event out at the Monroe Correctional Complex, which included a briefing for more than a dozen reporters at the Washington State Reformatory.

A statewide report on safety conditions had been released just two days earlier and DOC was eager to highlight changes made since the tragic murder of Officer Jayme Biendl on January 29.

#### DOC EAGER TO TRUMPET CHANGE

A reporter from a major news outlet had this to say about the event: "It was essentially a dog and pony show," she confided.

Your Local Union's Director of Corrections and Law Enforcement, Jim Smith, agreed. "While it's true that some improvements have been made, we've still got a long way to go to insure a safe working environment for corrections' staff," he said.

Smith, along with Lawrence Adamire of CBCC, Ronny Matsen of SCCC, and Dan Wistie of WCC, among others, participated for the Union in the statewide safety committee meetings that were legislated under ESB 5907.

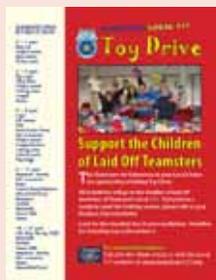
Although some concerns have been addressed by the local and statewide committees, Adamire noted, "It is still very much a work in progress."

A few of the safety concerns the Union team outlined that have yet to be adequately addressed, include:

- staffing levels stretched too thin
- continued single-person posts
- no OC for single-person posts
- lack of cameras in key areas
- no rest breaks on 8-hour shifts
- inmate classification overrides/reviews

You can view the safety committee's full report on your Local Union's website at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org).

## Teamsters for Tomorrow Toy Drive Support the children of laid off Teamsters!



The Teamsters for Tomorrow at your Local Union are sponsoring a holiday Toy Drive.

All donations will go to the families of laid off members of Teamsters Local 117.

If you know a family in need this holiday season, please talk to your Business Representative.

#### LOCAL 117 EVENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**December 15** - Holiday membership meeting

**January 16** - MLK Jr. March and Rally

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