



THE NEW INFORMER

A Stronger, Wiser, Democratic, and Focused Local Union

**Covington USW
Local 8-675**

Volume 1, Issue 2 I

October 4, 2008

Friendship, Support and Brotherhood offered by Evadale

On September 30, some very special people came to town bringing friendship, support and brotherhood. The Executive Board from Evadale, Texas, in the midst of their own trials from Hurricane Ike, came to help the members of the USW and the CPU understand what can be obtained with the USW International's help and how having all three mills with a common expiration date could benefit us. They were at the hall to answer questions about contract negotiations or anything else.

The members of this elite group were Ben Johnson-President Local 801; Scott Broussard-Vice President Local 801; Dennis Pattarozzi-Vice President Local 801; Jerry Smith-Vice President Local 801; Riley Johnson-President Local 825; D.A. Walters-Vice President Local 825; Lee Odom-Chief Steward Local 825; Bruce Willis-Trustee Local 825; Duane Willis-IBEW; and Eddie Smith-IBEW.

We noticed how the brotherhood and the CPU were unified — from the workers in production to maintenance to the electricians. They are the perfect example of what true unity and brotherhood are all about.

The group informed us of their progress with negotiations and spoke of what they were looking forward to accomplishing in future negotiations. They truly believed that having a common expiration date would benefit all of us. The members of the Evadale Executive Board, the USW International and the USW supporters feel that the opportunity is now, and if we don't act upon it soon, we will miss it

and may never get the chance again. We finally could have the power over the Company that has only been a dream of the past! The future is now and we should take advantage of this opportunity.

The concern that they showed for our membership is very much appreciated. The division that we have in Covington is only good for the Company. Hopefully in the near future, a middle ground can be found and wounds healed to unite us as a single unit fighting the Company and not each other. With this division, our true enemy has been forgotten — the Company. If we had not forgotten what a Union stands for, then the brother-to-brother and sister-to-sister discontent would not exist. We need to find the path back to **SOLIDARITY!**

We would like to thank the members of the Evadale E-Board for not only giving us this opportunity to learn from them, but to also make new friends. We commend their efforts and wish them the best of luck in their endeavors with the Company. We hope to see them soon at negotiations.

In solidarity,

The USW Local 8-675 Executive Board



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Did you know....

- Evadale was named after a teacher, Miss Eva Dale, at Jasper County's Southeast Texas Male and Female College.
- The population of Evadale is 1,430 according to the 2000 Census.
- In the Great Depression, the armadillo was called the "Hoover Hog" and was, and still is, eaten.
- An armadillo tastes like pork!
- The milk from a female armadillo carries the bacteria that causes leprosy.



Wisconsin Paper Mill Workers Rallying at State Capitol to Save Kimberly Mill Jobs

Kimberly, Wis. – A mass rally took place on the steps of the Wisconsin state capitol building Thursday, Oct. 2, organized by the United Steelworkers (USW) urging elected officials to get on board the campaign to save paper mill jobs and the communities they sustain in Wisconsin.

USW members, led by recently laid-off employees of NewPage Corp. in Kimberly, organized the rally because they want lawmakers to convene a special session of the Wisconsin Assembly to pass a resolution by Representative Tom Nelson (5th Dist.) urging NewPage Corp. to run or sell the 600-worker Kimberly Mill.

Union workers say the mill shutdown is devastating to people who live in the region. The USW wants official support to pressure Miamisburg, Ohio-based NewPage, to reconsider corporate plans for the Kimberly mill, which they contend has been profitable and will continue to be if given a fighting chance.

“This is a modern, state-of-the-art facility, which is one of NewPage’s most productive, if not the most productive, paper mill,” said Andy Nirschl, president, USW Local 2-9.

“The people of Wisconsin should get behind this campaign because shutdowns like this can have a ripple effect on all of us. We’re already seeing this here, where some businesses are reporting up to 75% loss of business since the shutdown.”

The “Rally to Save Wisconsin Jobs” took place on the south steps of the state capitol on Thursday, Oct. 2, at noon. Bus loads of Kimberly workers and community residents joined allies in Madison at the capitol steps.

Speakers included USW Local 2-9 President Nirschl; Michael Bolton, director USW District 2; Jim Cavanaugh, president, South Central Federation of Labor (Madison); Rep. Tom Nelson, (5th Dist.-Appleton); Rep. Spencer Black (77th Dist.-Madison); and Phil Neuenfeldt, secretary-treasurer, Wisconsin AFL-CIO.

Kimberly workers and community supporters left the USW Local 2-9 union hall, 216 N Main St., at 9 a.m. and were available for comments beforehand.

Contact: Don Collins, USW, 608-481-0206
Andy Nirschl, USW Local 2-9, 920-788-6022
Howard Scott, USW, 412-580-6980

Making our Local Stronger with Education and Communication

From September 16-18, five of our members participated in a comprehensive communications training program at the USW International headquarters in order to bring back to our members and the community enhanced communication skills.

Although the focus of our training was communications, we also spent time getting familiar with members of the International staff and the various departments at the headquarters. We visited the Media Center and the Health & Safety department, the Strategic Campaigns department, the Communications department and the Legal department. In meeting with several USW lawyers, we now realize the broad base of attorneys available to our union. While meeting with representatives from the Health & Safety department, we also learned that the grants, scholarships and training that were previously offered to us, were never accepted. However, we look forward to being able to take advantage of these opportunities during the reorganization of our union. We also met with Leo Gerard and discussed bargaining strategies and membership concerns in Covington.

Our communications training started on Tuesday with basic writing, journalistic writing, basic layout and design to

enhance our future newsletters and handbills. We also discussed public and media relations and how the use of the media can help win the support of our community.

Finally the communications training included a thorough discussion of how to use new technology to keep our membership informed and up to date on the events in our community and in our plant.

We now have a better understanding of the magnitude of resources available to our union and the impact the USW organization has on labor and politics. We would like to thank all USW representatives that trained us and listened to our concerns. Their understanding was greatly appreciated.

In Solidarity,
Bobby Harrison
Alicia Gordon
Eddie Toombs
Margaret Morris Smith



Negotiating 101: Texas Style by Eddie Toombs

Several members of the Local 8-675 E-Board took a trip to Evadale, Texas, September 7-10. We were fortunate enough to be invited to Texas by the Evadale Bargaining Committee for joint discussions on bargaining and sat in on their negotiations.

On the first day, we took a tour of the Evadale Mill, and we met a diverse group of individuals. The Evadale Bargaining Committee told us that their members are firmly behind their Covington brothers and sisters.

On the second day, we talked about the commonalities and differences between the two mills and what was going on inside the two different locations. The discussions revolved around the common issues in bargaining at both mills, (i.e., contracting out of bargaining unit work, raises and healthcare.) We learned through preliminary discussions what an economic package for Evadale may consist of. The Evadale Bargaining Committee asked for our input on their economic package because they did not want to accept something that the brothers and sisters at our mill could not live with. Everyone knows that the first group to settle a deal will set the tone for what the other mills will get.

We also toured the Evadale Clinic and Greentree, their third party administrator. During the tour of the administrator's office, we spoke with several employees and learned what their role was with the administrator and how they interacted with the clinic and the patients covered by the Evadale healthcare plan. The groundwork was put in place for Greentree to become Covington's third party administrator, if we choose to try and develop a clinic in Covington.



On day three, we participated in negotiations between the Evadale Bargaining Committee and the company. We introduced ourselves to the company committee and watched as the two groups discussed several items on their respective agendas. One of the

items discussed during the morning session was Dual Crafts. The lead negotiator for the company said they believed they could do Dual Crafts without negotiating the issue. The Evadale Bargaining Committee disagreed with that position but said they were willing to work on an agreement on crafts that would be mutually beneficial. The two parties covered five or six agenda items and agreed or disagreed on each item. After covering the agenda items, they agreed to discuss the issues separately and reconvene after lunch.

Before the afternoon session, the union approached the company about having a side bar discussion about Dual Crafts with two local company negotiators. After sitting down at the table for the afternoon session, the company said they would agree to the side bar session to discuss Dual Crafts. The two parties covered the agenda items they had scheduled for the afternoon in an efficient manner and adjourned for the day.

It was a privilege to watch a diverse and experienced group of negotiators work together for the common good of all employees and listen to the discussion of the various issues that affect the Evadale mill.



Photo on the left: Ben Johnson gives the tour of the Evadale Medical Clinic.

Above photo: Evadale negotiating team on the left,

The Lone Star came to be when in 1821 Governor of the Mexican Providence of Texas, Henry Smith was reading some important papers. He signed them and then declared that Texas needed a seal. His overcoat had large brass buttons with the impression of a five-pointed star on them. The Governor cut one of the buttons from his overcoat, and stamped it in sealing wax on the documents.

**Covington USW
Local 8-675**

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Unification meetings:
2nd and 4th Thursday of the month
11 a.m., 2:30 p.m., and 4 p.m.

Regular business meetings:
1st and 3rd Thursday of the month
11 a.m., 2:30 p.m., and 4 p.m.

Got a story for the New Informer?
Suggestions? Email the editor at
giro622@yahoo.com!

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LOCAL 8-675
USW

When Will We Get a Decision from the Judge? by Clark Kent

All of us would like to know when we may see a decision from Judge Fine on the NLRB objections to the Covington election. The NLRB has not commented on when the Judge may release a decision. However, the NLRB did just release a decision by Judge Fine in another case that was heard back in 2007. The case, *Quickway Transportation*, had hearings before Judge Fine from October 3-5, 2007; November 26-30, 2007; and December 3-5, 2007. The case has no legal bearing on our issues, but the fact that Judge Fine is just now issuing the 116-page decision in that case may give us some indication of the time factors and backlog involved in getting our answer from him.

The Alleghany County and Covington Annual Democratic Breakfast will be held at Western Sizzlin on Saturday, October 25, 2008 at 8:30 a.m.

Tickets: \$7 in advance
\$8 at the door

For more information, call the Hall (540) 962-4971



Health Insurance Rates Are Increasing!



Effective January 1, 2009, health insurance premiums will increase 6.3%.

Flu Shots for Retirees



The mill will be providing flu shots for all MeadWestvaco retirees. The tentative date is October 27 in the training center at the mill.

Virginia Cooperative Extension Presents



COYOTE CONTROL WORKSHOP

With
Joel Donaldson, USDA, Wildlife Specialist

Wednesday, October 22nd, 7:00 p.m. till 9:00 p.m.
At The Homestead Preserve Dairy Barn
Rt. 220, Sam Snead Highway
Warm Springs, Virginia



Bath County and surrounding areas continue to be affected by Coyote Predator Problems on livestock, wildlife and domestic plants.

This workshop is for Livestock Producers, Hunters, and Landowners to better understand the coyote, it's habits and to explore ways to minimize coyote predator damage.

This is a free workshop.

Please contact the Bath County Extension Office at 839-7261 for more information or to register by October 21st.

