



UNITED STEELWORKERS



LOCAL UNION 12-591

The Voice

Anacortes, WA

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JOBS in DANGER

Refineries on the east coast are closing at an alarming rate. With imported gasoline and new regulatory taxes on the rise will the west coast be next? As of January there has been 2 refineries closed Sunoco's Eagle Point refinery in New Jersey and the Valero refinery in Delaware City. The latest refinery closure has been Shell's Montreal East refinery. Is this just the start of nationwide reduction of petroleum products produced in the U.S.? According to *Oil Daily*, "refiners with operations on the East Coast are seen as more vulnerable to closures due to the age and location of the facilities as well as easy access to competing products from European refineries." This by no means lets the west coast off the hook. With more refineries being built in Asian counties the possibility is there on the horizon for more import gasoline. Is there hope in the future of oil refining in the U.S.? *Oil Daily* reported a study done by Hart Energy Consulting that says the global refining sector should see a recovery over the next decade, driven by the low-sulfur diesel and gasoline markets. The firm said that strong global GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth in 2010 and beyond means global demand for refined petroleum products will increase 1.7% per year during the next decade. The Asia-Pacific region will account for about half of this increase. Environmental regulations will create a demand for low-sulfur products and refiners that can provide these low-sulfur fuels will be the ones that will be most profitable in the short term. However the local has been dealing with some legislation being proposed by the State of Washington that could affect the jobs at Tesoro, Shell & General Chemical. They have proposed 2 bills (1 House Bill & 1 Senate Bill) these are on a hazardous substance tax that is in place at this time. The legislature was trying to take the current tax .7% to 2%. This would have had a huge impact on the refineries and could possibly cause Tesoro to shut down. Joe Solomon, Butch Cleve & Steve Garey made multiple trips to Olympia to testify in front of the Ways and Means Committee, the Finance Committee & the House Budget Committee and talked with multiple Representatives and Senators. We also met with the Speaker of the House and had a real good discussion about our concerns. The Senate bill has stalled in the Ways and Means committee. The House Bill was amended and adopted by the Finance committee and is being moved to the Rules Committee. The amended version is 1 tenth of 1% for the next 4 years. This amounts to .7% to 1.1%. There is also an exemption written in for any products that are exported out of the state. This is a big improvement from the original bill. We will be monitoring these bills closely until the session ends on March 11th.

Local 12-591
President
Joe Solomon



Members,

I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. 2009 was a challenging year for the local bargaining units. Tesoro Anacortes refinery, Tesoro Hawaii refinery, Shell refinery & General Chemical all settled their contracts. Even though they were all settled, I would not call them a victory for our members. Our bargaining committees did a great job trying to secure the best contract we could get. The company's had everything in their favor and they pulled their wild card (the economy). I also believe we could have been better prepared for contract time. I take full responsibility for this. As a Local we need to start prepping for negotiations a minimum of 6 months in advance. We have learned that and will not make the same mistake again. Our members also need to start prepping by saving money in the event there is a labor dispute. Now is the time to start preparing for 2012 negotiations. The stronger we are as a union, the more power we have at the bargaining table. We are also in the process of putting an activist committee together. We have a few members that are interested in serving on this committee, but could use more members to step up and help out. This will also be crucial for preparing for negotiations.

Our International continues to work on Health and Safety issues at the refineries and chemical plants. There was strong H&S language at National Oil Bargaining that got dropped at the bargaining table. Being this happened the International has begun a campaign to gather data on incidents at the plants. They are trying to make our plants safer. If you are aware of releases, fires, major upsets or unit trips, please document these and get them to a committee member or whoever has been designated as a focal point from your bargaining unit. This information needs to be forwarded to Kim Nibarger at the International's H&S dept. If you have questions about reporting incidents or are interested in serving or helping out with the activist committee, please contact me.

In Solidarity

Joe Solomon

President USW Local 12-591

The Voice is back

The VOICE is back. We are hoping to bring you more information and articles that will keep you interested in our local and international union. Hopefully this will just be the start, and we can develop this into a newsletter you will be proud of reading. Of course this can only be done with the help of you. Please if you have any ideas or suggestions for articles, stories, people you would like to hear from please let us know by writing us. While we will be only posting this on the local web site feel free to print a copy off and post it in your work areas. I hope we can make this newsletter a place that will keep you informed bring clarity in a confusing and uncertain world. This will be the last newsletter mailed out. You will be able to find us on the web at www.usw12-591.org

Changes to Local Unit Meetings

Beginning in March, the monthly Shell Unit meeting will be held at 4:30pm upstairs at Our Union Hall. Tesoro's Unit meeting will continue to start at 5:00pm and will be held downstairs at the Hall.

This time change will better coincide with the Maintenance 9/80 schedule.

Having the Unit meeting prior to the Local meeting will help expedite motions or funding needing approval from the Local.

All Stewards were polled regarding this change and feedback received supported this move.

Local Meetings will go as followed:

In Solidarity,

Scott Johnston

Local 12-591

PSR Bargaining Unit chair

Has Tesoro Struck Oil in Montana?

Renewable fuel (Bio-Fuel) is a possibility. Seattle-based AltAir Fuels says that camelina oil from Bozeman, Mont.; based Sustainable Oils will be blended with petroleum-based jet fuel and diesel at the Tesoro refinery at Anacortes, Washington. AltAir says it could replace about 10 percent of the petroleum fuel used each year at Sea-Tac, reducing carbon emissions.

AltAir Fuels officials are continuing to work with a number of different related parties. Discussions and negotiations continue with the airlines to move from the MOU to purchase agreements. They have also applied for state funding to help with costs for the facility, and they are working with the appropriate regulatory and permitting agencies needed to proceed. While the original hope was to break ground in late 2010, it now appears more likely that that will happen in early 2011.

AltAir Fuels says it has agreements from 14 airlines to buy fuel derived from the oil of camelina plant seeds. Participating airlines include United and Alaska Airlines. Boeing is leading a taskforce to win approval of bio-fuels for aviation. It will be transported to Sea-Tac Airport through an existing pipeline.

AltAir Fuels expects to begin production at Anacortes in 2012.

I Have Great Healthcare . . . Why Would I Want Reform?

It's true that many USW members enjoy some of the best healthcare insurance around. For years, many of us have made it a top priority at the bargaining table. Now that the national debate is focused on reforming healthcare, many members are wondering: Why would I want reform?

Here's Why:

- Healthcare is often the most difficult issue in our negotiations. Premium costs have risen 138 percent in the last decade. Employers try to pass off those costs to us. Throughout our union, we're seeing plan changes with higher deductibles, co-pays, etc. We're also seeing fewer wage and benefit increases as trade-offs for maintaining coverage. Many employers are even trying to dump health insurance altogether both for us and especially retirees. And, it's only going to get worse. . .
- Rising costs will continue to make negotiations harder. Within 10 years, the average family plan will cost more than \$30,000 per year. We can expect more strikes, disputes and bargaining trade-offs if nothing changes as we struggle to keep our coverage in place.
- Rising healthcare costs continue to be a driving force in companies shifting production overseas. Easing the healthcare burden gives employers one less incentive to abandon U.S. workers.
- We're paying twice for the uninsured. As taxpayers, we know we pay for things like Medicare, Medicaid and VA benefits. But, did you know that through our insurance premiums, we also pay for the 46.3 million who are uninsured? When the uninsured get medical care they can't pay for, those of us with insurance foot the bill. Right now the premium cost for family coverage includes about \$1,100 due to this cost-shifting. With a reformed system, the burden won't be so heavy on a few.
- We might not always have the jobs we have right now. Many Steelworkers are employed in industries that are under constant attack from foreign competition and the economic crisis. While our union continues to fight on nearly every front to protect jobs, what happens if your job ends? What happens if you get sick and can't work? What happens when you retire? Without healthcare reform, our ability to get healthcare and remain financially secure are always uncertain.
- It's our friends, family members and neighbors who are the uninsured. One of them dies every 12 minutes because they lack insurance. It's just wrong.

The Call Goes Out for All Rapid Response Activists

The National Rapid Response Conference will be held during the first week of May at the Hilton Washington in Washington, D.C. A Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference will occur simultaneously with our Conference, beginning on Tuesday, May 4 at 8:30 a.m. Rapid Response Conference attendees are encouraged to join USW International President Leo Gerard to kick off the Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference and participate in a series of USW-specific sessions throughout the day on Tuesday. The Rapid Response Conference will then begin at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, May 5 and will end at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 6.