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Label Letter

Union Label & Service Trades Department, AFL-CIO

Nationwide Strikes Demonstrate Workers Power in Numbers Frito-Lay Workers Ratify New Contract, as Parent Pepsico Faces Separate Strike

After a three-week strike, hundreds of Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco and Grain Millers (BCTGM) members from the Frito-Lay Topeka, Kan., plant will return to work under a new contract, granting them a long-awaited pay raise and a guaranteed day off each week, issues that had driven them to strike back on July 5.

BCTGM Local 218 members at the plant went on strike after talks broke down. Members had rejected what the company called its last, best, and final offer and voted to strike, citing unbearable forced overtime, low wages, and lack of work-life balance. Local 218 members told the press that many workers were forced to work “suicide shifts,” which are two 12-hour shifts in a row with only an eight-hour rest period between shifts.

In a statement by BCTGM International President Anthony Shelton, the union said that it had warned management repeatedly over the last decade that employees were being forced to work too much.

“Current employees are being forced to work seven days a week, up to 12 hours per shift. Many of the more than 800 workers are only getting an eight-hour break between shifts. They are forcing the current workforce to work double and triple shifts. Workers do not have enough time to see their family, do chores around the house, run errands, or even get a healthy night’s sleep. This strike is about working people having a voice in their futures and taking a stand for their families,” the statement read.

In addition to the forced overtime, workers at the plant cited low wages as another reason for striking. One employee, Monk Drapeaux-Stewart said that in the 12 years he has worked at the company,

he only received a 77-cent raise in hourly pay and a couple of lump sum bonuses.

Another employee, 59-year-old palletizer and Local 218 Steward Mark McCarter, who has worked at Frito-Lay for 37 years, told the online magazine Vice that he makes “\$20.50 an hour after 37 years here. Most people make between \$16.50 and \$20.00 an hour. I haven’t gotten a raise in a decade.”

The membership of Local 218 voted on July 23 to accept the newly negotiated contract with the company.

The new two-year agreement includes a four percent wage increase for all job classifications and a guaranteed day off each work week. It also eliminates the company’s forced “suicide shifts.”

President Shelton said the workers in Kansas have “shown the world that union working people can stand up against the largest food companies in the world and claim victory for themselves, their families and their communities.”

Frito-Lay is owned by PepsiCo which has three major divisions in North America: PepsiCo Beverages, which owns brands like Pepsi, Mountain Dew, and Gatorade; Frito-Lay, which covers snacks like Lay’s and Doritos; and Quaker Foods, which has Quaker Oats, Cap ‘n Crunch, and Rice-A-Roni. PepsiCo is a multi-billion-dollar company that saw its revenue surge 20.5 percent year-over-year at \$19.22 billion.

PEPSICO WORKERS WALK OFF

A week into the BCTGM strike in Kansas, workers at the Pepsi bottling plant in Munster, Ind., walked off the job. The more than 100 truck drivers and members of the International Brotherhood



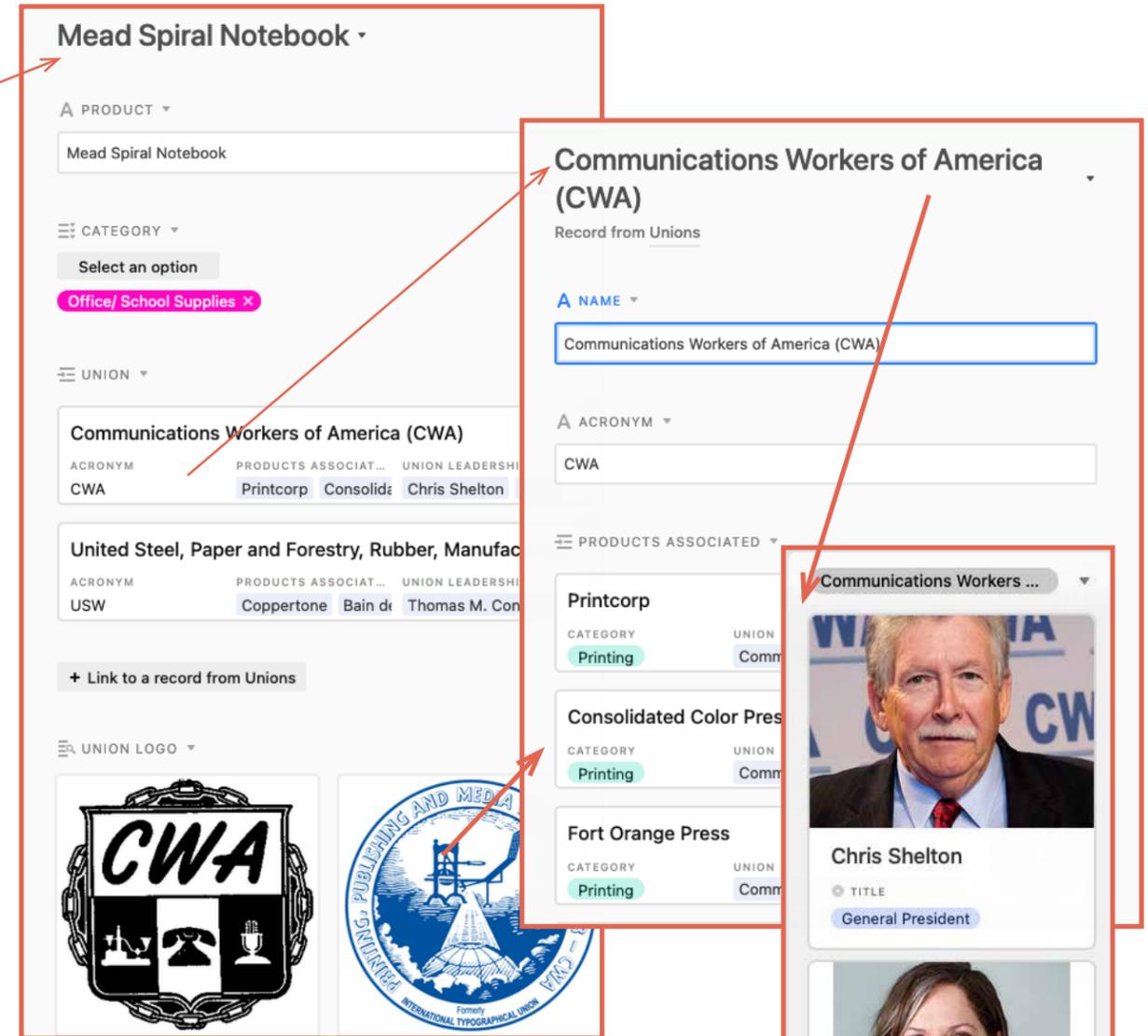
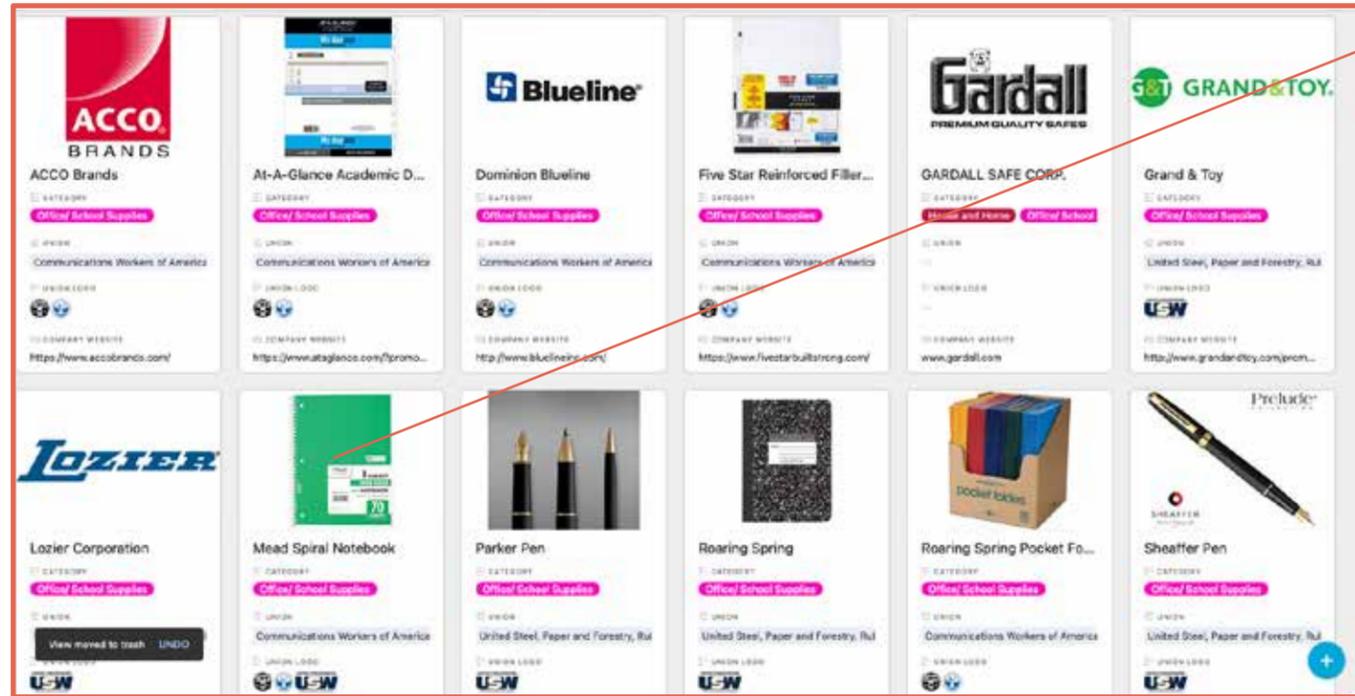
Workers on strike at Kansas Frito-Lay Plant spent 20 days picketing for a fair contract. Photo courtesy of BCTGM Facebook page

of Teamsters Local 142 (IBT), rejected the company’s final offer and began their work stoppage on July 12. The Local says they are fighting the company’s increase to workers’ share of healthcare premiums. Pepsi transport driver Tom Albano said the increase would cost workers about \$20 a week over each year of the four-year contract.

“We shouldn’t be paying for it in the first place. This is a multibillion-dollar company,” Albano said. “And the raises the company is offering are not going to cover, or barely cover what the increase is going to be in your health insurance.

Albano said that the current employee share of healthcare premium is \$14 per week, the company proposal would have increase that share to \$81 per week by 2025. ■

Union Label Department Unveils New Do Buy Database



In its most comprehensive redesign ever, the Union Label and Service Trades Department, AFL-CIO, has built a new “Do Buy” database of union-made products and services.

“We set out to clean up and update our database of products currently housed on our website,” explains ULSTD President Rich Kline. “As we worked on the update, it became clear that we had an opportunity to create something more special, more user friendly, and information-packed than we have ever had before.”

The database not only contains union-made products and services, it also links to information about each of the national and international unions, houses collective bargaining agreements, and as it continues to evolve, will hold information about each of the local unions that make the union-made products.

The project, which has taken more than a year to put together, was built by the Department’s union communications firm, Kenefick Communications. Kenefick employees are members of the Columbia Typographical Union 101-12.

This new iteration of the Department’s database is a relational database that links information throughout each listing. When a product is linked to a union,

the union, or unions, linked show other products made by that union. As well, it shows the associated collective bargaining agreements negotiated by the union and information on union leadership. As the database becomes more granular, information about the local unions representing the workers will also be added.

MULTI-INFORMATIONAL RELATIONAL DATABASE

“A relational database is a collection of data items with pre-defined relationships between them. We took the information the Department had sourced over the years and began linking records to additional information,” explained Kenefick Communications Principal Tara Landis who primarily worked on the project. “Over the years, the Department has sourced information about union-made products from various places including a multi-year university research project conducted over a decade ago. It was past time the information was updated. As we delved into the data, we found that in some cases the researchers had used local numbers but hadn’t identified the actual union that made the products. That was just one of the issues we had to sort out in this rebuild,” Ms. Landis explained.

“We are still working on confirming the unions for certain products.”

The database is available on the Department’s website at unionlabel.org and union members are encouraged to add their employers’ union-made products and services using the provided form. As well, the Department will be communicating directly with its affiliated unions to set up access for each union to add or edit their associated product listings.

“The mission of the ULSTD is to promote buying union-made products and services. This database will make it easier to find union-made products and services, learn more about the unions that make them, and, we hope, become a clearing house of information for anyone looking for information about unions,” said Kline. “This project doesn’t end with the launch of the database; it will be ever-evolving, growing to include more products and information including current and past CBAs that can be used to help union negotiators as they prepare to bargain new contracts.”

If you have a union-made product or service you would like to add, please complete the form on the Union Label website at unionlabel.org. ■

How to Use the New Database:

In the example shown, we searched for “school supplies.” Our results returned several different union-made school supply options. We then clicked on the “Mead Spiral Notebooks” result. Within that result we can see that the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and the United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial & Service Workers International Union (USW) represent workers at the Mead Spiral Notebooks plant. We then clicked on the CWA link and can see information about CWA, including other products its members make. Within the CWA record, we can see its union leadership. If you click on the various leadership, you can see more information about that individual. Also shown under the union information, are any collective bargaining agreements we have on file associated with that union. ■

Organizing Round-up

Editorial Workers at the Insider Join the News Guild of New York-CWA

Editorial workers at the Insider, formerly Business Insider, announced in June that they had voted 241-14 to be represented by The News Guild of New York-CWA Local 31003 in a National Labor Relations Board Election.

The bargaining unit includes reporters, web editors, producers, video editors, social media producers, animators, photographers, designers, and copy editors.

In April, the Insider Union announced its intent to unionize after more than 80 percent of the eligible staff signed author-

ization cards requesting voluntary recognition from management. The company refused to recognize the union, prompting the News Guild to file for an election with the NLRB.

"We have an incredibly strong, dedicated union of journalists at Insider, and we've worked hard to reach this day," said Rebecca Ungarino, a senior reporter at Insider.

The Insider staff is the latest newsroom to unionize, joining dozens of other media outlets across the country where the employees have chosen to organize. ■

Change.org Wins Recognition, Joins CWA Local 9410

The Communications Workers of America's Campaign to Organize Digital Employees (CODE-CWA) added another tech company to its ranks in July. Workers at Change.org, a well-known San Francisco-based petition website company, sought unionization to address issues including wages and benefits, and diversity, equity, and inclusion programs.

Tom Smith, the union's organizing director, said "the workers at Change.org are part of a growing movement in the tech sector. Workers want a voice in decisions that their employers are making."

Erni Poche took a temporary job with Change.org last year. Her position had her searching the internet for grassroots campaigns that had the best chances of going viral and then tapping the company's resources to boost their reach.

Poche, who has since become a full-time employee at Change.org, became the lead union organizer in part because said she was bothered that she kept getting assigned to online petitions about race. Poche is a Black Latina.

"Hiring BIPOC staff, we are not diversity, equity and inclusion specialists," she said.

In addition to her frustrations surrounding her job assignments, Poche and her co-workers are paid significantly less than their peers across the industry.

Radha Nath, a product designer at the company said she makes about \$16,000 less than she made at her previous employer.

CODE-CWA says it intends to bring wages across the company to the industry standard.

To the company's credit, Change.org agreed to voluntarily recognize the union if the majority eligible employees signed cards indicating they wanted the union.

"We were committed from the beginning to support a union if a majority of relevant and eligible staff did, and they did," said Bec Wilson, acting chief operating officer at Change.org.

The union and the company are expected to begin contract negotiations in the Fall. ■

MSNBC Employees Announce Intent to Unionize

In June, employees at 24-hour cable news giant MSNBC announced that they planned to form a union representing about 315 workers including producers, bookers, writers, and fact checkers.

The MSNBC bargaining unit would be represented by the Writers Guild of America, East, which said a clear majority of the network's employees had signed a letter seeking voluntary recognition of the union. The company responded saying it would not recognize the union effort until a majority of workers vote in a secret ballot election.

Ballots were sent to the 315 eligible employees on July 20, to be returned by August 17.

After the union's announcement, MSNBC anchors publicly expressed their support for the union, tweeting well wishes for their co-workers.

Joy-Ann Reid wrote, "Proud of my @msnbc fam who are turning organizing into action. Now everyone, do your part and vote!"

Ali Velshi also tweeted, "Congratulations to my colleagues who are following a noble and exciting tradition of a vote that will give voice to workers' needs and aspirations. We at MSNBC will all be better and stronger for this effort."

MSNBC hosts Jonathan Capehart, Julian Castro, and Chris Hayes also tweeted messages of support. ■

Alabama Coal Miners on Strike at Warrior Met Coal

In April, over one thousand coal miners at Warrior Met Coal in Brookwood, Alabama, walked off the job. The workers, members of District 20 of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), are the first miners in Alabama to go on strike in 40 years.

The unfair labor practice strike against Warrior Met stems from what the union says was the company's conduct during negotiations.

About a week into the strike, the company and UMWA leadership presented a tentative agreement to the membership that was overwhelmingly rejected.

The striking workers say that Warrior Met, which purchased the company from previous owner Jim Walter Resources after it filed for bankruptcy, promised to rehire the bulk of the workforce that had been laid off. That promise, made five years ago, led to the membership accepting a subpar contract that slashed pay and benefits.

According to The Nation, "Pay was slashed by \$6 per hour to an average of \$22; workers lost many of their paid holidays, some of their time off, and their ability to earn overtime pay; and their health insurance costs went way up while safety standards and working condi-



tions went way down. A severe policy for absences from work that eliminated any flexibility whatsoever in case of unexpected sickness or emergencies was also enacted."

"What Warrior Met has offered up is just a tiny fraction of what the workers gave up five years ago," UMWA General President Cecil Roberts said after the April no vote. "But these workers are tired of being mistreated on the job. They are tired of being forced to work on holidays and missing time with their families. They are tired of being tired after working 12-hour shifts six- and sometimes

seven-days-a-week. Warrior Met knows it is exploiting these workers, and it's time for it to stop."

At a rally in late June, Roberts said the union had distributed \$4.3 million to the strikers during the three months of the strike, with \$3.1 million in direct strike benefits, almost \$700,000 in health care costs from the UMWA Selective Strike Fund, and \$500,000 to members from donations to the Strike Aid Fund.

The union has also received contributions from other unions, such as \$200,000 from the United Food and Commercial Workers. ■

Two Week ULP Strike at Arnold Air Force Base Brings Best Primary Base Contract in 70-year History

Members of the Air Engineering Metal Trades Council (AEMTC) ended their recent work stoppage after winning a contract they call the "best primary base contract in our 70-year history." The members had gone on an unfair labor practice strike against the Bechtel-majority-owned company, National Aeronautic Solutions/ Chugash, LLC, in early July. They ended their work stoppage at the Arnold Air Force Base in Tullahoma, Tenn., just two weeks later.

AEMTC representatives had cited bad faith bargaining practices, during negotiations and contempt by the company for the Council in its pursuit for fair wages, maintenance and control over health care premiums, benefits, and dignity in the workplace for its highly skilled workforce

as the motivation for the strike.

The company NAS/Chugash had sought to cut employee disability coverage from 18 months to 12 months, which workers deemed to be a non-starter for them.

Metal Trades Department President Jimmy Hart said, "Strikers specifically took issue with proposed management cuts to employer/employee cost sharing plans and benefits to long-term disability insurance plans that workers and their families depend upon. These are some of the most dangerous jobs in the country and after two-weeks, I am pleased to report that the work stoppage at Arnold Air Force Base has been settled."

"The new contract, ratified by a three-to-one majority of the council members on Friday, July 16, represents the best-

ever collective bargaining agreement on a prime base contract at Arnold Air Force Base," said Hart. ■



Democrats Push Parts of PRO Act in Reconciliation Bill

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, speaking at a press conference on July 15, told reporters that “parts of the PRO Act are part of reconciliation.”

Trumka was referring to Senate Democrats’ \$3.5 trillion reconciliation bill which is slated to be passed with a simple majority vote in the Chamber.

Democrats agreed to add part of the PRO Act to the reconciliation bill. The

monetary penalties proposal would financially penalize companies for violating workers’ rights. The proposal would use the National Labor Relations Board to levy penalties where appropriate. The monetary penalties would give unions much more leverage at the bargaining table with employers, who frequently only face the penalty of potential backpay.

Also included in reconciliation are

plans for expanded Medicare coverage to include glasses, dental care, hearing aids, and lower prescription drug costs. The bill would also reverse Trump’s 2017 tax cuts for corporations and the rich. Reconciliation is filibuster-proof and only requires a simple majority to pass.



Senate Confirms Labor Lawyer Abruzzo as NLRB General Counsel

On July 21, the Senate confirmed Jennifer Abruzzo as the next General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). Abruzzo was sworn in the following day by NLRB Chair Lauren McFerran.

In a statement announcing Abruzzo’s swearing in, the NLRB noted that “this is the first time in NLRB history that women are serving as both Chairman and General Counsel” of the agency.

Abruzzo most recently served as Special Counsel for Strategic Initiatives for the Communications Workers of America (CWA). Prior to her work at CWA, Abruzzo was Acting General Counsel and Deputy General Counsel at the NLRB. She spent more than two decades working for the NLRB in various capacities, including as Field Attorney, Supervisory Field Attorney and Deputy Regional Attorney in the Miami office, as well as Deputy Assistant General Counsel in the Division of Operations-Management in Washington, DC, where she oversaw Regional operations in the Northeast and Midwest.

“I am thrilled to rejoin the Agency and once again work with its talented board agents, who are committed to fully protecting the rights of workers to freely associate and act collectively to improve their wages and working conditions. I am looking forward to partnering with them, as well as colleagues at other agencies to engage with and educate the public and to promote better enforcement of labor and employment laws,” Abruzzo said in a statement issued by the NLRB. “I believe that vigorous enforcement of the Act will

help level the playing field for workers and their freely chosen representatives, bring much needed equity to the historically underserved members of our communities, engender safe and productive workplaces, which is particularly critical right now as we fight a pandemic, and build a better economy for workers, families, and communities in this country.”

Abruzzo had the full endorsement of the labor community, with AFL-CIO Government Affairs Director William Samuel calling her “eminently qualified for the important role.”

CWA President Chris Shelton said in a statement issued following Biden’s nomination of Abruzzo, “there is no one who has a more thorough grasp of the National Labor Relations Board and the purpose of the National Labor Relations Act than Jennifer Abruzzo. She is a brilliant attorney who understands how the actions of the NLRB impact the daily lives of people at their workplaces.”

AFSCME President Lee Saunders said, “Jennifer Abruzzo’s long and exemplary career at the National Labor Relations Board makes her the perfect choice to lead efforts to restore this vital agency, which in recent years has been used to attack working people and weaken their rights. Her knowledge and experience will allow her to hit the ground running on day one – holding employers accountable, protecting the right to organize in a union and bargain collectively, and guaranteeing that workers are treated with dignity and respect.” ■

Senate Confirms Su as DOL Deputy Secretary

In July, the U.S. Senate confirmed Julie Su as the next deputy secretary of labor in a 50-47 vote.

Su, formerly the secretary of the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, is recognized as an expert on workers’ and civil rights.

Employers nationwide can expect Su to continue enforcement efforts on behalf of vulnerable workers.

Su was widely supported by union and worker advocacy groups. She joins former union leader and Boston Mayor Marty Walsh in the number 2 position at the Department of Labor.

Upon her confirmation, AFSCME President Lee Saunders said, “Julie Su and Marty Walsh will make a tremendous team. On behalf of 1.4 million AFSCME members, I congratulate Deputy Secretary Su and look forward to working with her in the years ahead.”

AFL-CIO NATIONAL BOYCOTTS JUL-AUG



HOSPITALITY, TRANSPORTATION & TRAVEL

SUBMITTED BY UNITE HERE!

Please support the workers in these hotels by continuing to boycott the following properties:

→ CALIFORNIA: Hyatt Regency Santa Clara, Hyatt Regency Sacramento, Hyatt Fisherman’s Wharf San Francisco, Hilton Long Beach, Le Meridien San Diego, Hilton LAX—*This includes the Crowne Plaza Hotel LAX, Yokoso Sushi Bar, the Landing Restaurant, Century Taproom, and the Boulevard Market Cafe.*

→ SEATTLE: Grand Hyatt Seattle and Hyatt at Olive 8 Seattle

OTHER

SUBMITTED BY Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC)

→ Reynolds American, Inc., Vuse e-cigarettes

FOOD

SUBMITTED BY Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM)

→ Mondelez International Snack Foods (those made in Mexico)

LEGAL

SUBMITTED BY American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees

→ Gleason, Dunn, Walsh & O’Shea

→ McDonald, Lamond, Canzoneri and Hickernell

When some labor disputes with businesses cannot be resolved, the AFL-CIO supports its affiliates by endorsing their boycotts. A boycott is an act of solidarity by voluntarily abstaining from the purchase or use of a product or service.

POLICY GUIDELINE FOR ENDORSEMENT OF AFFILIATES’ BOYCOTTS

The AFL-CIO Executive Council has developed policy guidelines that regulate how the federation endorses boycotts undertaken by its affiliates. To get AFL-CIO sanction, boycotts should be directed at primary employers.

THE GUIDELINES INCLUDE THESE PROVISIONS:

- All requests to the national AFL-CIO for endorsement must be made by a national or international union.
 - Any affiliated union with a contract in force with the same primary employer will be contacted by the AFL-CIO to determine whether there is an objection to the federation’s endorsement.
 - Affiliates will be asked to provide the AFL-CIO with background information on the dispute in a confidential information survey. Prior to endorsement of the boycott, the executive officers, or their designees, will meet with the national union’s officers, or their designees, to discuss the union’s strategic plan and timetable for the boycott, or other appropriate tactics, and to discuss the federation’s role.
 - The national or international union initiating the boycott is primarily responsible for all boycott activities; the AFL-CIO will provide supplemental support.
 - Boycotts will be carried on the AFL-CIO national boycott list for a period of one year, and the endorsement will expire automatically at the end of that time. National and international unions may request one-year extensions of the listings for actions where an organizing or bargaining campaign is actively in place. ■
- (These guidelines were adopted by the AFL-CIO Executive Council in April 2011.)*

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EndNotes

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RICH KLINE, President and Editor

VICE PRESIDENTS: Debby Szeredy, Kenneth W. Cooper, Otis Ducker, Kenneth Dean, George Galis, Loretta Johnson, Patrick Kellett, Edward Kelly, Amy Wiser, Richard McClees, Nicole Rhine, James B. Wood

By Rich Kline, *President, UL&STD*

A Redesigned Do Buy List Loaded with Information



We are announcing a new database of union made products, union provided service and information ranging from collective bargaining agreements and links to union on sites and other union material. Call it a new and improved Do Buy List.

Importantly, the new Do Buy list makes it possible to update product and service information along with other pertinent information. It is available on our website: unionlabel.org.

This newly developed database offer the opportunity to union officials and members to submit updated information to keep the data current and accurate.

This major advance will enhance the promotion of union-made products and services by making it easier for consumers to find what they need and for unions to update their entries.

Additionally, we believe that unions at every level will

find the other information incorporated in the database useful in negotiations, organizing and membership education.

The Union Label Department maintains a true union directory of products and services unlike any other. We do not include non-union offerings. Our database will serve as a clearing house for those seeking to learn about union products, services and the unions involved. And it will grow more comprehensive as its database expands.

Our new Do Buy list is user friendly and ready for inspection. Find it on our website at unionlabel.org. ■

