

Pulp truth

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Please copy Pulp Truth front and back and distribute it during non-work time using your Contract Action Teams, steward system or Rapid Response network. Be sure to leave copies in lunchrooms, break rooms, etc. We want to hear what's happening in your workplace. Send your news to lbaker@usw.org

Verso Contract Major Victory in Coated Free Sheet

The contract gains our union negotiated with Verso Paper move national paper bargaining forward. The new contract covers Verso's Sartell, Minn., and Bucksport, Maine facilities—both former International Paper sites.

We obtained common contract expiration dates for the two mills, and together they represent over half of Verso's coated free sheet production. This will give us extra bargaining power in future contract talks. The new contract contains an enforceable successorship clause and code of conduct during organizing drives, which will help us bring more Verso workers into the union and increase our power. With the code of conduct language, we will have more of a level playing field to organize Verso's two un-

ganized locations, including the Jay, Maine mill which was lost during the fight in the late 80s when IP permanently replaced the workforce there.

Other gains made included a \$50/year of service pension and improvement of local contract language. We protected our health care by keeping employee premium payments at 20 percent of the cost, and took a big step toward retiree health care by getting them into the company plan. They still have to pay the full premium, but it is at a group rate which is much cheaper than buying insurance on one's own. By being in the pool, the retirees do not have to worry about getting denied for preexisting health conditions.



Successorship Protects Boise Cascade Workers During Sale

By negotiating a successorship clause with Boise Cascade in advance of Aldabra 2 Acquisition Corp.'s purchase of Boise Cascade L.L.C.'s paper, packaging and newsprint operations, our union protected the workers' agreement during the sale.

The new public company will be called Boise Paper Company (BPC), and Boise Cascade will continue to own

a significant interest in it.

Boise Cascade said it "does not currently foresee staff reductions in the organization" and may have to hire more people because there will be two separate companies to run. The company also said there will not be much change for employees on a day-to-day basis and that union contract terms will remain the same.



John Edwards Stands Up for Wausau Workers

Presidential candidate John Edwards sent his national campaign manager, Congressman David Bonior, to go with USW member and Congressman Mike Michaud to Groveton, New Hampshire, to speak with Wausau mill workers who will lose their jobs when their facility closes by the end of December.

Edwards also sent a letter to Wausau CEO Thomas J.

Howatt, urging him to bring the workers' severance package in line with those offered to displaced employees at other mills. The company is cutting severance pay and ending health insurance after 12 weeks for people who have worked 40 years or more at the facility. Edwards also urged the CEO to reconsider the decision not to sell the Groveton mill to any competing business.

How much Injury does it Take?

Coated paper imports have cost NewPage Corp. to lose 20 percent of its business and have resulted in the loss of 2,300 jobs at the company. Yet, to the International Trade Commission (ITC) this did not demonstrate that U.S. industry is materially injured or threatened with material injury by the imports. At the end of November, the ITC, in a 5-1 decision, abolished the anti-dumping and anti-subsidy duties imposed earlier this year on coated paper imports from China, Indonesia and South Korea.

The ITC made this decision despite its acknowledge-

ment that the three countries provide subsidies of up to 44.25 percent of the cost of paper to their paper manufacturers and that the Asian paper companies sell their paper in the U.S. at prices below manufacturing costs—a practice known as dumping.

Our union joined NewPage's complaint with the Dept. of Commerce about the subsidies. Commerce found that China, Indonesia and South Korea were engaged in unfair trade and imposed anti-dumping and anti-subsidy duties. The ITC decision throws out those duties.



Acquisitions & Mergers

NewPage signed an agreement to pay \$2.5 billion for Stora Enso's North American paper unit. The deal is expected to close in first quarter 2008.

After six months of integration with the fine paper division of Weyerhaeuser, Domtar is prepared to take downtime or close some of its most costly mills over the next two years to adjust to lower market demand. Domtar

has cut annualized production by nearly 6% to 4.96 million tons through lack of order downtime and rationalization. Chief Operating Officer Marvin Cooper said Domtar expects to remove another 425,000 tons/year of capacity by 2009 if demand falls by 3.5% to 4% this year and by up to 2% in 2008. He would not identify the mills that could be targeted.



Paper Worker Burned by Hot Wax

A paper worker from Thilmany Papers in Kaukauna, Wisc., was heating a line with a hand torch where wax had hardened while the machine was down. A flange and gasket gave way and spewed hot wax on the worker. The incident happened Nov. 27.

Media attention prompted OSHA to investigate, but the investigation was delayed on Nov. 28 because a water problem knocked out the electricity at the plant and shut down all the operations. The investigation resumed Nov. 30.



Insurance Fraud Charges Levied at Smurfit-Stone Managers

Managers from Smurfit-Stone Enterprises in Salinas, Calif., had charges of insurance fraud levied against them for allegedly persuading workers not to file worker's compensation claims for on-the-job injuries.

An amended complaint was filed against box plant

manager Douglas Tateoka and retired manager David Polk after a fourteenth person came forward following publicity about the case. The case now includes 44 felony and misdemeanor counts involving 14 current or former SSCE employees.

Smurfit-Stone Container Corp. has not been charged.



UK Paperworkers Negotiate 3.65% Wage Increase for 2008

Annual two-day wage negotiations between Unite, GMB and the Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI) resulted in a 3.65% wage increase in 2008 for 12,000 paperworkers in the UK converting sector. Balloting began the first week of December and will continue through mid-January.

Unite National Officer Peter Ellis said his members faced above inflation pressures in 2006-07 and that the 3.65%

increase represents an affordable outcome for the industry.

Unite and the CPI negotiated a partnership agreement in late 2006 and early 2007. In October they launched the partnership inside the UK's House of Commons. The agreement represents a modern approach to employment practices in the paper industry and includes full equalities on the job, employee development, skills training, health screening and regulation of temporary or agency workers.