

Pulp truth

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Please copy Pulp Truth front and back and distribute it during non-work time using your Communications and 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

USW Succeeds in Changing Labor Law to Benefit Workers

Through the joint efforts of the USW organizing and legal departments our union won two landmark cases before the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) that enable workers to more freely organize a union.

In *Lamons Gasket Company*, our union successfully prevailed upon the NLRB to overrule its Bush-era case of Dana Corp. which, despite 50 years of prior NLRB and court law to the contrary, had made it more difficult to get voluntary union recognition from an employer. With the *Lamons Gasket* case, the NLRB has placed the law back

in conformity with the original intent of Congress in passing the National Labor Relations Act to promote union organizing and collective bargaining by workers.

In *Specialty Health Care*, our union successfully prevailed upon the NLRB to permit unions to more freely choose the types of bargaining units they wish to organize.

These victories will enable us to help paper workers organize a union at their facilities. Increasing the number of union paper workers in the industry bolsters our bargaining strength.

Greater Resources Enable Us to Overcome Paper Company Bankruptcies

Since the 2005 merger between PACE and the USWA we have access to a wide array of experts that can help us predict a company's bankruptcy and get through it with our wages, benefits and job security intact.

Even before Abitibi-Bowater and Smurfit-Stone publicly announced they were going into bankruptcy, our in-house financial analysts flagged them as potential bankruptcy candidates. Having this knowledge in advance of the bankruptcies enabled us to build solidarity, conduct strategic planning and call upon the expertise of our locals and the International.

The collective institutional knowledge of our leadership, staff and legal experts from the International was put to work along with the experience of financial consultants who had assisted in similar bankruptcies within the steel and rubber industries.

We mobilized through our Building Power program to ensure the bankruptcy process provided security for us and our families as well as financial security for the employer. As a result we emerged from these two bankruptcies with contracts and benefits in place.

At Smurfit-Stone we were able to protect our pensions in spite of the plan having more than a billion dollars in liability and we kept our wages intact. This was unprecedented for a bankruptcy reorganization.

At Abitibi-Bowater our collective efforts enabled us to

maintain the best pay rates in the industry and keep lucrative retirement benefits and future profit sharing. We emerged with new Master Agreements and centralized bargaining that will secure our negotiating power for generations.

NewPage Bankruptcy

NewPage Corp., the largest North American maker of coated papers, filed for bankruptcy Sept. 7 and this wasn't a surprise for our union because we had been closely monitoring the company's performance for the past year.

Our union is assembling a team so we can be an active party to all aspects of the company's reorganization. Legal and financial experts as well as local union leaders at the NewPage sites are being consulted about the next steps to take. Once the Creditors' Committee is formed we will seek a seat on it.

In bankruptcy cases we work with employers and other stakeholders that are willing to work constructively with us in order to preserve secure jobs for our members and secure benefits for our retirees. We will also gather our collective strength through the Building Power program to secure our wages and benefits.

NewPage said it has received approval from the U.S. Bankruptcy Court to continue its operations as usual without interruption in its payment of employee wages and benefits.