



# Solidarity Today!

Information for Members of USW Locals 237 & 586, and the Trades at the RockTenn Tacoma Mill

November 19, 2014

## Senior RockTenn Execs Come to the Tacoma Mill

*RockTenn's Labor Relations Representatives come to Tacoma to explain the Master Agreement.*

*USW Internations Reprs and USW & Trades Locals join the discussion.*

*This was an informational meeting and no negotiations took place.*

*The Tacoma mill is not bound to accept the Master Agreement, as language in that agreement specifically excludes Tacoma from its provisions. If we do get in it, it should be on our terms.*

*Senior Executives from RockTenn Headquarters came to the Tacoma Mill to explain the recently negotiated Master Agreement (MA) to the local leadership representing the various unions at our mill. Representing RockTenn HQ were: VP Dennis O'Brien; Steve Hess; Karen Poole and Maria Martinez. For the local management were John Conkle, John Brandt and Mark Brigham.*

*For the USW International were Dan Flipppo, RockTenn Council Co-Chair and Ryan Meyhoff, International Rep. For USW Local 237 were President David Van Pevenage, VP Warren Chow, Committee members Wallace Simms, Gary Romero, Larry Coleman, Mike Pichler and Chuck Whitt. For USW Local 586 were President Bill Williams, Ken Ernst, Bob Weber and Dave White. For the Trades were Dave Walter, Nolan Walz and Ralph Chapman.*

*Dennis O'Brien started the meeting by passing out an agenda and making clear that they were not here to negotiate, but rather were here for informational purposes. After some mill and labor union history, given by John Conkle, Chuck Whitt, David Van Pevenage and Nolan Walz, Dennis O'Brien gave an overview of RockTenn's structure as it related to unions. Prior to their purchase of Smurfit-Stone, RockTenn had about 3000 union employees. After the purchase, they suddenly had 12,000 union employees, of which 7,300 are represented by the USW.*

*O'Brien, in response to a comment from Whitt about the nature of this meeting (Whitt believes they were previously told the meeting was to find a way to integrate the Tacoma mill into the MA), O'Brien explained that they were prepared to exploring full, partial or no integration into the MA. Going forward, Steve Hess would be the negotiator for that purpose.*

*Karen Poole then took the floor and explained in depth the medical program contained in the MA. Although there was some detail explained in the back and forth, the information she gave is consistent with what has previously been explained in these newsletters and in the information mailed to our members.*

*O'Brien went on to explain other items in the MA, Life Insurance, Short Term Disability, Pension, PIUMPF and Retiree Medical. All of these items have been previously shared with our members and no significantly new information was shared here. With regards to PIUMPF, and the Company's expressed desire to withdraw, O'Brien did explain that RockTenn has to withdraw all their plans simultaneously, and that they are in negotiations with PIUMPF to determine the withdrawal liability and there is not a time line of when this will be completed.*

*The discussion then turned to the Company's proposed Substance Abuse policy. In essence, this is a "one-strike-your-out" policy, any positive test and you're gone, regardless of the legalization of certain drugs in Washington. This proposal elicited much discussion, but it's clear that there is no wiggle room in their position. They said they may "knock on our door" about starting this program next year, but it was made clear that, with our exclusion from the MA, that we're under no obligation to start this anytime soon.*

*The next item to garner a lot of discussion was the language under the MA that will eliminate premium pay, or "as such pay" as O'Brien explained it (for us, this means Sunday and holiday OT). He explained their buyout proposal plans (one lump sum (possibly around \$20k), four annual payments, or keep it for four years before losing it), then went on to further say that they would entertain no other proposals.*

*We did talk about our desire to continue the discussion about the compressed wage, suggesting to O'Brien that we could possibly deal with some premium pay issues here. While he said that RockTenn would honor the contractual obligation to find a way to eliminate compressed wages, he was not going to let this be a vehicle to avoid the MA's previously described methods of eliminating premium pay. He was reminded again, in no uncertain terms, that the Tacoma mill has been excluded from the MA and that we're under no obligation to adhere to terms that we find disagreeable. We would like to find an amicable way to deal with this issue now, if possible, but if we can't do so before 2016, we're not going to feel bound to an agreement we did not have a voice in ratifying.*

*The meeting lasted most of the day, and for the most part, was an amicable meeting between the two camps. There is room for discussion on the issues that separate us, and we can probably do so in a professional manner, if that desire exists on both sides. Definitely, there is more to come.*

Strength in Unity

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