

# President's Report – December 2008

*by Greg Golembiewski*

Greetings Members of Local 730

## **Visit from International Rep**

On November 24, Bonni Reffitt from the International staff met with our Community Services Committee, Steve Rop, and myself. Bonnie talked to us about services and opportunities that may benefit our members. Some of the programs we discussed were:

## **No Worker Left Behind**

Under the No Worker Left Behind, \$5000 a year for two years is provided for retraining in a high demand job. You must be unemployed or about to be unemployed and earn less than \$40,000 to qualify. The tuition can be used at a Community College.

Displaced workers need to take an assessment test administered by Michigan Works. They must pursue an associated degree or attend a technical training program for high demand or emerging industry. There is a high demand for green jobs. If you search the website with Green Jobs Initiative, it will give you resources to train for this growing field.

## **Michigan Talent Bank (MBT)**

Under the Michigan Talent Bank there are links to more resources. Click on the Education and Training link. This will link to apprenticeships, tech schools, online training, and financial help.

## **Rapid Response Team**

This is comprised of a Workforce Consultant from the Rapid Section, representatives from the local Michigan Works agency, and a representative from the Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency. The Rapid Response Team works together to ensure that both employers and their employees receive all available assistance to help through the closure/layoff process. In closing, Bonni told us that this committee will play an important role as the plant winds down.

## **Visit to Michigan Works**

On Tuesday, December 2, Steve Rop, Bill Dau (Labor Relations), Mike Reinerth (Personnel Director), along with myself visited with a group from Michigan Works on Leonard and Ball Street in Grand Rapids. Maureen Downer from Michigan Works, along with

Lloyd Conway from the Department of Labor and Economic Growth and their respective staff gave us an overview of all the services and workshops that are offered at the facility. Everything from resume and cover letter preparation to budgeting skills, career exploration, and job fairs. We felt that it would be easier for our members if the workshops were held at the plant or the union hall.

## **Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)**

Jointly, Local 730 and our management counterparts will be filing an application for TAA benefits. The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program is a federal program established under

the Trade Act of 1974, as amended, the TAA program provides aid to workers who lose their jobs or whose hours of work and wage are reduced as a result of increased imports.

TAA offers a variety of benefits and re-employment services to assist unemployed workers in preparing for and obtaining suitable employment. Workers may be eligible for:

- Training
- Job Search
- Relocation Allowances
- Income Support, and
- Other Re-Employment Services

### **Trade Information Meetings**

These meetings are held for workers who have been certified under a Trade Act petition. Local Michigan Works agency and state staff provide information on the benefits and services available under the Trade Adjustment Assistance Reform Act of 2002.

### **National State of the Big Three Meeting**

On December 4, Steve and I, along with Don Oetman, Gerald Kariem, and Harvey Woodard from Region 1D attended this meeting in Detroit.

President Gettelfinger talked about:

- TARP money
- Bridge to Bridge (until Obama took office)
- Sacrifices in the 2007 Agreement

Presentation by Steve Girsky covered:

- Shared sacrificing
- Oversight with loans
- Money invested in the USA
- All constituents faced with painful choices.
- Alternative is disaster.
- UAW needs to be part of the solution, but not the only part.
- Labor is only 13% of the cost of the car.
- Reviewed the agreement and modifications that could possibly be made.

Executive Board Council Recommendations:

- Revise 2010 VEBA and defer until later.
- GM owes \$7 billion and cannot pay that.
- Jobs Bank: Dismantled as we know it today.
- GM Appendix K Memo of Understanding – more controversy.
- Currently in Jobs Bank: 1400 GM, 711 Chrysler, and 1427 Ford

In closing, I would like to thank the entire membership for their support during these trying times. As we look ahead to the challenges that we have facing us in the coming year, I ask for your

support, patience, and understanding. I will continue to be an advocate for our members and to help secure all the resources that are available to us.

The Transitional Self Help Center will be up and running by the end of January and will be located next to the plant manager's conference room.

Wishing you and your families the very best this holiday season and to a healthy New Year.

In solidarity,

Greg Golembiewski  
President