



INFORMATION UPDATE #34

September 26, 2011

Local 1005 to Hold Second Information Meeting

Thursday, September 29, 2011 – 7:00 pm
Michaelangelo's Banquet Centre
1555 Upper Ottawa St., Hamilton

Please be informed that on September 29 Local 1005 USW is holding a Second Information Meeting to update its members and retirees on the status of its contract talks with U.S. Steel.

As you know, Local 1005 met with the company on September 13. It then held a Membership Meeting on September 14 and a President's Forum (the Thursday meeting) on September 15. At both meetings, the Negotiating Committee informed members and retirees about the Company offer. It then met with the company once again on September 19 to present the workers' concerns about the Company's offer, following which the Local held an Information Meeting on September 21.

The Information Meeting on September 21 was very well attended. The Company's contract offer was distributed and

the workers and retirees were briefed on the significance of the proposals and the talks with the Company. Everyone was able to appreciate how matters stand and the challenges which lie ahead. Discussion started on the options the workers and their union face and on how the Negotiating Committee proposes to proceed.

We then met with the company once again this last Friday, September 23 to present the workers' views on the Company offer. We also received the views of U.S. Steel. The workers can now expect to receive the latest version of the Company's contract offer directly from U.S. Steel through the mail.

We call on all of you to attend the Second Information Meeting so that the Negotiating Committee can brief you on how matters stand and everyone can deliberate on how they want the union to proceed.



Hamilton This Week

Public Meeting: Canada's Communities Are Not for Sale!

Important discussion on the proposed Canada-Europe Free Trade Agreement which will jeopardize municipal services and independence

On Tuesday, September 27 the Council of Canadians and the Canadian Union of Public Employees are holding a public meeting under the theme "Canada's Communities are Not For Sale." Local 1005 President Rolf Gerstenberger has been invited to speak along with CUPE President Paul Moist and Council of Canadians National Chairperson Maude Barlow.

A press release issued by the two organizations points out: "Canada and the European Union are negotiating a new Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). This is a big deal for Canada and so far, negotiations have been quietly taking place behind closed doors."



This meeting in Hamilton is part of a country-wide tour to raise awareness of this trade deal with Europe and to point out the detrimental effects for Canada.

Everyone is welcome to attend and inform themselves about how this trade agreement jeopardizes our municipal services and deprives us of our public rights. It is never too late to become informed.

September 27, 2011 – 7:00 pm
Hamilton Convention Centre,
1 Summer's Lane, Albion Room.

Minnesota Plant

U.S. Steel Wiggles Out of Controlling Mercury Emissions

On September 13, U.S. Steel Corp. received the green light from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to increase mercury emissions at its Keetac taconite processing facility in Keewatin, Minnesota. It did this without also requiring a precise schedule of reductions at U.S. Steel's other operations to offset any increase, as required by a statewide plan to reduce mercury emissions. Following this decision, U.S. Steel will move forward with a \$300 million expansion of the Keetac operation, states a report in the *Minneapolis-St. Paul StarTribune*.

The newspaper also reports that environmentalists and Indian tribes opposed the decision. "We don't want a regulatory agency that operates on faith," said Kevin Reuther, legal director of the nonprofit law firm Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy.

The newspaper explains that "The Keetac case has been closely watched because of its economic impact and as a litmus test of the Pollution Control Agency's commitment to an aggressive statewide mercury reduction plan adopted in 2006 after years of intense discussion.

"The plan calls for massive cuts in mercury emitted by state producers, from about 3,200 pounds annually to 789 pounds by 2025. In order to achieve that, it states that every proposed new increase in mercury emissions should be accompanied by an equal or greater reduction elsewhere."

Agency officials said they cannot say for certain how soon

and how well it will work. On this basis, it granted U.S. Steel permission to increase mercury emissions by up to 75 pounds per year while the company figures out whether the new technology can remove mercury from smoke stack emissions. "Even if the new system works as well as it does in other industries, the plant would still add at least 21 pounds of additional mercury to the atmosphere," writes the *StarTribune*.

"U.S. Steel has agreed to reduce mercury emissions at its Minntac processing facility in nearby Mountain Iron, where it also plans to install the mercury reduction system. But the precise tradeoff is not spelled out in the legal permit," the report adds.

Environmentalist Reuther told the pollution control agency "This is what you told the public you would follow." "We don't have an outcome we can count on," added Paula Macabee, an attorney for Clean Water Action.

Agency staff told the citizens commission that oversees the agency and ultimately approved the deal that, legally, the permit process does not allow them to require mercury cutbacks at another U.S. Steel facility. They also said the legal agreement would allow them to take U.S. Steel to court if it failed to comply with the agreement.

Environmentalists note that the arrangement leaves the MPCA, which granted the non-specific arrangement, as the sole enforcer of the deal, precluding environmental groups and citizens from taking the company to court.

**To contact USW Local 1005: Call 905-547-1417 or e-mail info@uswa1005.ca.
Visit the website: www.uswa1005.ca**