



## INFORMATION UPDATE #43

December 1, 2011

### **Local 1005 Thanks Ontario Workers and Unions for Support**



Four executive members of Local 1005 USW, Rolf Gerstenberger, Gary Howe, Dennis Van Meer and Jake Lombardo attended the Ontario Federation of Labour Convention from Nov. 21-25. They exchanged experiences with many of the 1,400 delegates attending the Convention. During the strike appeal session, Rolf specifically thanked the OFL and the many workers and union locals for their support during the 11-month phony lock-out imposed on the steelworkers by U.S. Steel. He emphasized the significance of the opposition by workers and their unions to the attacks of the monopolies, denouncing the back to work legislation against postal workers and Air Canada workers as well as attempts by corporations like Vale Inco and U.S. Steel to act with impunity.

Even though U.S. Steel managed to extort the pensioners' index payments and hive off new hires from the defined benefit pension plan, Rolf highlighted

that thanks to the workers' fight, the company will not get away with acting with impunity. The workers are already preparing for the next round of the fight, he said.

Gary Howe spoke on the importance of manufacturing. He called for support for the farmers' fight against the dismantling of the Canadian Wheat Board and supply marketing systems. Together with Steve Weller, President of Local 7135 USW, he raised the significance of resolving the crisis of manufacturing in favour of the working people, not monopoly interests.

Local 1005 also made its concerns known to delegates through the distribution of two issues of *Information Update*.

On Thursday, November 24, a contingent of Local 1005 members and retirees participated in the OFL demonstration behind their banner calling for "A New Direction for the Economy."

### **Local 1005 Fights Back** - Poem by Bill Mahoney -

*The phony lock out is over,  
Our members have gone back,  
But we know it's not the end of the corporate  
attack.*

*We still have our dignity,  
We still have our pride,  
Thanks to both young and old fighting side  
by side.*

*We fought them in the courtroom,  
We fought them in the street,  
We fought them in the freezing cold,  
And in the blazing heat.*

*The corporate puppet government has sold  
the country out,  
Greed and corruption is what they're all about.  
Where there's a fight for justice,  
You'll see our colours fly,  
1005 will battle on,  
With our heads held high.*

### **Cold Mill to Start Rolling this Week**

*Information Update* has been informed that the cold mill department is scheduled to begin rolling coils as of November 30. The yard is full of coils from Lake Erie. Once the kinks are sorted out, the Z mill will begin to finish the coils.

The cold mill is expected to run at five turns until enough unqualified workers are trained to ramp up production to 10 turns.

The Z-line was scheduled to begin production about a week later but there are unexpected start up problems which have to be resolved.

### **Canadian Wheat Board Yes! Nation-Wrecking No!**

### **Demonstration Opposes Dismantling of Wheat Board**

On Friday, November 25, U.S. Steel and National Steel Car workers, members of Local 1005 USW and Local 7135 USW, were joined by CUPE workers and community members for a rally and information picket in front of the Federal Building in Hamilton to support the Canadian Wheat Board. Forty people participated in the action. They stood in front of the Local 1005 banner reading "A New Direction for the

Economy!" holding signs reading "Support the Canadian Wheat Board!"; "Support Our Farmers! Oppose CETA! (Canada-European Union: Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement)"; "Manufacturing Yes! Nation-Wrecking No!"; "CWB Yes! Nation-Wrecking No!"; and "Save the CWB!"

Local 1005 Vice-President Gary Howe said that the defence of the Canadian Wheat Board is important for .../ 2

the livelihood of farmers and thousands of workers whose jobs depend on it. Steve Weller, President of Local 7135 said that besides the impact the destruction of the Wheat Board will have on the farmers, it will also affect manufacturing because National Steel Car builds the rail cars that store and move the wheat and these are now due to be refurbished or replaced. If the Board is destroyed, he said, what is going to happen to the building of these cars? Hamilton is already hurting from all the losses of manufacturing jobs and cannot afford to lose more manufacturing employment, he added.

Rolf Gerstenberger, President of Local 1005, said that steelworkers firmly oppose this attack on farmers and nation-building – the scrapping of the Canadian Wheat Board is going to hand control of the \$5.2 billion Canadian grain trade to the private agri-monopolies and is going to affect the



livelihoods and way of life of farmers and all Canadians.

During the action, Local 1005 distributed the issue of *Information Update* which explains the importance of the Canadian Wheat Board and calls upon Canadians to hold the Harper government to account for its nation-wrecking agenda.

## Supreme Court Dismisses U.S. Steel Appeal

For the umpteenth time, a Canadian court November 24, ordered U.S. Steel executives to face the charges against them for breaking the *Investment Canada Act*. *Information Update* expected this refusal of the Supreme Court to hear U.S. Steel's appeal, as the federal court at the lower level demanded the U.S. monopoly stop wasting the court's time with frivolous delaying tactics.

Company executives decided it was an appropriate use of revenue to spend millions on lawyers' fees and other court costs rather than invest in the two Canadian mills, admit they broke Canadian law, agree to face the consequences of their illegal and immoral actions and hold themselves to account. Holding U.S. Steel executives to account means they should pay the required fines for breaking Canadian law (\$20,000 a day retroactive to November 1, 2008 and \$44 million to

steelworkers for lost wages) and agree to their legal and moral obligation to run both Hamilton Works and Lake Erie Works for at least three years with 3,105 workers producing more than 13 million tons of steel.

The executives should own up to their crimes in cutting production and jobs and kicking us Canadians in the teeth by servicing Canadian steel customers from their U.S. mills. While they are on a new moral plane, they could also agree to reverse the extorted negative changes to steelworkers' pensions, which in 2007 they solemnly promised to protect. As Local 1005 has said, a just settlement of the pension issue has not gone away and will be revisited when workers have the necessary united and organized strength to force U.S. Steel executives and other monopolies and governments to recognize the pension and other rights of Canadian workers.

## Hold U.S. Steel Responsible for Problems at Max Aicher North America

On November 12, 2010 Max Aicher North America (MANA) bought the old Stelco's Bar Mill and Bloom Mill Departments from U.S. Steel. Since then, Local 1005 members who worked in those departments moved over to MANA which at present employs 110 workers. However, since July 2011, production at MANA has been sporadic at best, with the whole plant with the exception of three employees shut down for stretches of time. For the last few weeks less than 30 workers have been working.

The problem, it seems, is that the company does not have enough orders for the bar mill.

It will come as no surprise to the Hamilton community to learn that, you guessed it, U.S. Steel is largely responsible for MANA's problems. Max Aicher bought the bar mill and the bloom mill based on the understanding that U.S. Steel would provide MANA with blooms from the caster. However, in a treacherous show of bad faith, U.S. Steel disabled its blast furnace whereupon Aicher faced an impossible situation. MANA's investors started getting cold feet as concerns providing the financing for the deal to go through. Rather

than hold U.S. Steel to account in any way, the provincial government basically provided a guarantee in the form of a \$9 million loan. With great fanfare it made the announcement in front of the plant saying that the loan was "to create jobs." MANA could employ 300 workers and this was a boon to the Hamilton economy, the government said.

The treachery of U.S. Steel can be seen when we look at the difficulty it created for MANA. Once it could not get the blooms from U.S. Steel, it could not readily switch to another source because of the difficulties getting the quality control approvals required by many of the old bar mill customers. At least six months worth of contracts were lost waiting for the approval process to be completed. Then the workers report that much of the steel that MANA received from various sources was not the best quality and the mill had difficulty running it.

The workers at MANA and the Hamilton community are now faced with the uncertainty of not knowing what will happen to this mill and their jobs. Some have worked in the bloom mill and bar mill for more than thirty years.

To contact USW Local 1005: Call 905-547-1417 or e-mail [info@uswa1005.ca](mailto:info@uswa1005.ca).  
Visit the website: [www.uswa1005.ca](http://www.uswa1005.ca)