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June 17, 2006

### **Two-Tier Injustice**

The policies of PPG toward its employees, deserves discussion in our local community as it has been reflected recently in other communities.

Last fall, PPG in contract negotiations in Natrium, WV, stonewalled the Union with a two-tier wage and benefit system, health care cost increases, and much more. The Union went on strike against PPG for about 5 months but was unsuccessful.

PPG's two-tier wage system allows for a newly hired employee to do the same work at much lower pay and will also affect benefits coverage in a similar fashion. **It cuts the wages and benefits nearly in half** for newly hired employees! This will in fact make a newly hired employee a second class citizen in the work place; imposed discrimination.

Now history is being repeated! PPG is taking the same approach in negotiations with the Union in Lake Charles, La. This work force of nearly 900 has weathered the wrath of Hurricane Rita and is still trying to recover. Some even rode out the storm at the facility and continued to do whatever was need to get it back up and running again. Full production did return within a few months.

To quote the PPG Progress newsletter (Dec. 2005), "Each of the employees who rode out Hurricane Rita at Lake Charles exhibited great valor and commitment". Is this how a company truly thanks its employees for a job well done?

The Union membership said, **NO THANKS**, to PPG and is currently on strike since May 26, 2006! This is the first time in history of Local 470 that the workers at Lake Charles have gone on strike! The rally cry is, "Whatever it takes, one day longer than PPG!"

I am not talking about a company in hardship. PPG has been and continues to be a very profitable Fortune 500 company, setting sales records year after year! These actions by PPG greatly impact not only the workers and their families, but the communities in which they reside.

PPG's position has been that these efforts are necessary to be competitive in the market place. I can only see this as just another case of rampant corporate greed. Profits for the top with pennies tossed below to those who actually produce the profit.

So, why be concerned about an apparent distant issue?

PPG Delaware will enter negotiations next February with UAW Local 1588, representing the workers at 760 Pittsburgh Drive. Will corporate greed “strike” locally?

I wish my Union brothers and sisters of Local 470 a successful resolution to their strike and the defeat of this two-tier system of injustice. They are also fighting for the workers at PPG Delaware, who may or may not face this same issue in less than a year.

In Solidarity with Local 470,

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UAW Member of Local 1588  
(28 year employee of PPG)