

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am proud of you for standing together and supporting your local union's negotiating committee. We had some tough contract fights this year at the Solvay plants in University Park and Chicago Heights, Ill., and the 3M plant in Cottage Grove, Minn.

But you all persevered and participated in mobilization activities — such as informational picketing, sticker days and placement on your vehicle windshields and windows of “Fair Contract Now” placards—to show you were united and determined to fight for fair contracts.

Your efforts paid off since you obtained in your new agreements improved wages, benefits and contract language.

In this issue of *Chemical Solutions* we feature stories about these new contracts, the challenges we faced and how we overcame the roadblocks through solidarity and acting together.

Also included in this edition is an article about the Dow North American Labor Council annual meeting in Kentucky, which discussed the upcoming merger between Dow Chemical and DuPont. The council invited DuPont locals and guests from international labor federation IndustriALL, Unite from the U.K. and SOEPU from Argentina.

Lastly, this issue features the third annual District 4 and District 10 chemical sector conference. This event is a springboard to organizing other regional chemical conferences. In fact, we were going to have the first District 13 chemical sector conference in Louisiana this past fall, but the massive flooding there impacted so many of our chemical workers and their families that we had to cancel the meeting.

Challenging Year

We have had a challenging year, and I expect more change to happen in 2017. This past year we had three straight quarters of industry-transforming deal announcements including ChemChina-Syngenta, Bayer-Monsanto and Dow-DuPont.

Currently, many of these deals are on hold due to the regulatory review process.

We saw a heightened level of merger and acquisition activity this year as big companies were forced to divest business segments, and small companies were acquired because they no longer could compete.

One example of the new landscape was Dow Chemical's buyout of Corning's shares in their 50/50 joint venture. This acquisition closed June 1.



Carol Landry

All of this change is causing uncertainty, especially for Dow, DuPont and Dow Corning workers who do not know what will happen to their jobs when Dow-DuPont splits into three companies in 2017.

Already DuPont announced it would no longer contribute to active employees' pension plans, a decision affecting 13,000 workers in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Workers will

stop accruing benefits in November 2018 or when the \$130 billion Dow-DuPont merger is approved and the new entity is split into three separate companies.

To top it off, we all face the uncertainty of a newly-elected Republican-controlled Congress and presidency, including Trump-nominated cabinet heads who dislike the agencies they are nominated to run. Regardless of what happens, we will remain a union that fights for decent wages, benefits and working conditions.

If Congress, Trump or his cabinet heads try to eliminate unions, Social Security and Medicare, dismantle worker protections, or water down health and safety and environmental regulations that impact our lives and health, we will fight back and never give up until we win. Trump said he is for the working man and woman. We will hold him accountable to that.

It is time now for us to rest, relax and enjoy our family and friends during the holiday season. May you have a merry Christmas, wonderful Hanukkah and a prosperous and blessed New Year.

Carol Landry
International Vice President
Head of the USW chemical sector

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Members at 3M Flagship Plant Win New Contract, Beat Back Company Concessions by Mobilizing

Local 11-418 members at 3M's flagship plant in Cottage Grove, Minn., ratified a new, four-year agreement after four months of negotiations and collective action to modify the company's takebacks.

A majority of the local's 365 members approved 3M's last, best and final offer on Oct. 17. It included wage increases of 3 percent the first year, 2 percent the second and third years, and 2.5 percent the fourth year. Health care benefits remained the same, while there was a minor language change in vacation selection.

Long-term workers who have a defined benefit pension received a \$6,000 increase from \$76,000 to \$82,000 per year. If they also participate in the 401(k) plan, 3M will match 40 cents of every dollar contributed up to 5 percent of their pay.

Newer employees who do not have access to the defined benefit plan, but who have a 401(k), can deposit 6 percent of their pay into this defined contribution plan, and 3M will match it 60 cents on the dollar up to 5 percent gross pay.

Layoffs will be according to plant seniority. Overtime remains voluntary for a member if they work over 200 hours above scheduled time. Premium pay is phased out for the four-crew operation in four years, and the 16 custodial positions will not be subcontracted.

Joining Together

Getting this agreement and convincing 3M to back off its concessions took the collective efforts of the union's 3M Council and the Local 11-418 members.

In December 2015, six months before the Cottage Grove negotiations began, the International brought together the 3M locals to form a council. This enabled them to support each other during contract talks and in issues with the company as well as to plan strategies and share information.

The council did an in-depth contract analysis for its members and informed the Cottage Grove local what contract provisions 3M wanted to attack.

"Most members at Cottage Grove were aware that concessions were coming before we started negotiating," said Local 11-418 President Mike Schanks.

"We went into negotiations prepared with the knowledge of what the other 3M locals contained in their contracts," he said.

"We took the language on mandatory overtime from other locals' agreements and adapted it to our facility," Schanks added.

Fighting Givebacks

As predicted, 3M presented a list of givebacks when negotiations began June 13, eliminating several major provisions in the existing agreement. Concessions included mandatory overtime, 12-hour shifts and the elimination of premium pay for weekend work.

Other takebacks included disregarding seniority for temporary layoffs during slow production times, subcontracting custodial work and not paying overtime when employees are told to work extra shifts, even on their day off.

"These demands prompted questions about worker safety," said District 11 Staff Representative Brian Ecker. "We were concerned about long hours, injuries and spills."

3M did not agree with union counterproposals to address a lack of work and a procedure for mandatory overtime, and "the talks got nasty," Ecker said. It was during this time the local engaged in mobilization activities and strike preparation.



Local 11-418 members did a tremendous job of showing unity and support for a fair contract.

Acting Collectively

The local formed a Communication Action Team (CAT) to distribute bargaining updates and started a Facebook page to keep the membership informed about negotiations. Members wore "Fair Contract Now" stickers and union shirts, and placed "Fair Contract Now" signs on their car and truck dashboards. Other locals in the council wore stickers in support of the Cottage Grove workers.

Members conducted informational pickets in front of 3M's corporate headquarters in Maplewood, Minn., when there were bargaining sessions, and outside the Cottage Grove plant before work, during lunch breaks and on their day off.

They rode or marched alongside the local's float in three community parades. When the

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Local 11-418 Members' Collective Action Results In Improved Contract

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3M race car passed by, members held up their “Solidarity” or “Fair Contract Now” signs.

To get further community support, the local updated Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton and Lieutenant Governor Tina Smith on negotiations.

Authorizing a Strike

Three days before the contract expired on Aug. 19, both sides agreed to extend it for one month. To get the company to move on outstanding issues, the membership on Sept. 1 overwhelmingly authorized the bargaining committee to call a strike.

A federal mediator was brought in to assist with bargaining and some progress was made. After negotiating for 13 hours on Sept. 26, the local’s bargaining committee decided it had a contract the members could vote on, but it did not recommend passage.

Voting Down Offer

After several contract information sessions and voting, the membership rejected by a 5-to-1 margin the proposal on Oct. 3.

“We’re willing to bargain, but some of the things they want are just too much to ask,” Schanks said to the media afterward.

Both parties agreed to weekly contract extensions as long as negotiations continued, and a federal mediator returned to the talks on Oct. 11.

The local gathered over 300 signatures from the plant for petitions demanding the company bargain fairly, and delivered them, as a group, to corporate headquarters. The Minnesota Nurses Association and state AFL-CIO joined the action.

Accepting Final Offer

Several more bargaining sessions followed until the company said its proposal was the best offer the union was going to get. The membership voted Oct. 17 on whether to accept 3M’s offer or go on strike.

“We pushed as far as we could,” Schanks said. “It was either accept the company’s last, best and final offer or go on strike. Our members decided not to strike because we had too much to lose.”

Preparing for Next Contract

Schanks said the local learned a lot from this contract fight that it can apply toward the next round of talks.

“It’s a tough battle now to get an agreement. We’re already starting to plan a strategy so we know what we need to do in four years to get another decent contract,” he said.

“Without our members’ and the council’s support we would have had a much harder time getting the company to back off its concessions.

“That’s why I’m glad we formed the council and got our members involved through the CAT team. You can really see the positive results,” Schanks added.

3M Locals Defeat Concessions in Winning New Agreements

USW members at 3M sites in Wausau, Wis., St. Paul, Minn., and Guin, Ala., stood united and ratified agreements that beat back major concessions.

Last summer, Local 2-666 at 3M’s plant in Wausau ratified a three-year agreement without takeaways from the company. The contract included a bump in the pension; wage increases of 2.6 percent the first year, 2.4 percent the second year and 2.2 percent the third year; and a \$1,000 signing bonus.

The new agreement began Oct. 1 and covers 90 workers who make the granules used in roofing shingles.

Local 11-75, St. Paul, Minn.

3M pushed for subcontracting, especially on the weekend shifts, during contract negotiations with Local 11-75 at the St. Paul plant, but the union successfully forced the company to drop its proposal.

The local also successfully eliminated the existing two-tier wage system by negotiating a \$1,750 lump sum payment for employees hired prior to April 2013 and a 2.9 percent wage increase in the first year of the contract for workers hired after that date.

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Local 11-418 members took their contract mobilization campaign to the street in September.

Other 3M Locals Negotiate Improved Agreements

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In the second year of the agreement all employees receive a wage increase of 2.4 percent, followed by a 2 percent wage hike in the final year of the contract.

Another improvement was the language on voluntary overtime. Now, members can roll over unused eligible overtime hours into the next month.

The three-year agreement, which expires in August 2019, covers 200 union-represented employees who work in the warehouse and in research and development maintenance for the lab.

Local 9-675, Guin, Ala.

Local 9-675 ratified a new three-year contract after negotiating only five days on Oct. 3. The old agreement was not set to expire until 22 days later.

The local's president, Jason Gann, attributed the speed in getting a new contract to educating the membership, involving District 9 Staff Representative Kevin Johnsen—

“He was a tremendous factor”—and having a good relationship with site management.

Under the new contract, wages increase 2.7 percent the first year, 2.5 percent the second year, and 2.3 percent the third year. Health care stays the same, and new hires who contribute to their 401(k) receive a company match of 60 cents on the dollar up to 5 percent of their contribution. 3M also contributes to the 401(k) plan for all new hires, whether or not they participate in the plan. More senior employees have a defined benefit plan and a 401(k) match from the company.

Other improvements include additional money for the safety shoe allowance, better seniority language, less time to wait for a second week of vacation, and improved sickness and accident insurance.

Local 9-675 represents 240 workers who make glass bubbles that go into paints used for creating reflective pavement striping.

Mobilization, Perseverance and International Support Results in Improved Contracts for Solvay Locals

Worker mobilization, solidarity and the International's persistence in getting Solvay corporate management to engage in face-to-face negotiations resulted in USW members obtaining contracts this fall at the company's two Illinois plants.

Local 2011 members at Solvay's University Park, Ill., plant ratified a new three-year contract on Oct. 19 after negotiating for almost a year. The new agreement covers over 90 workers at the former Rhodia site.

Negotiations resulted in a progressive discipline program, wage increases, and improvements in retirement benefits and contract language.

“I compliment our members for sticking together on their demand for a disciplinary procedure. Management said that wages only mattered to the people, and they were wrong,” said Local 2011 President Mike Spicknall.

Key Issue Resolved

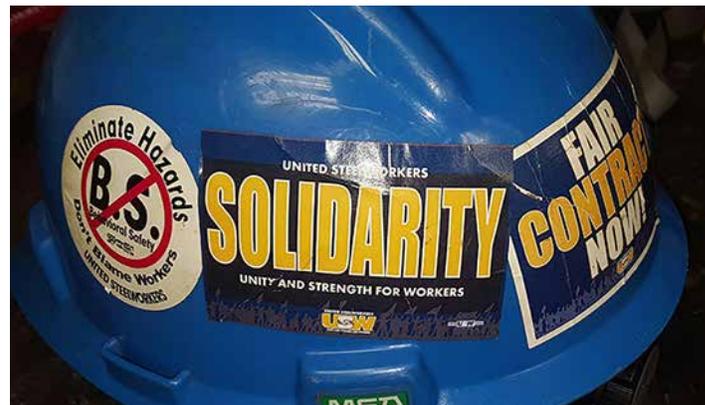
He said that getting contract language on progressive discipline was the key issue for the membership because it did not exist in the previous agreement and management treated employees differently.

“One guy was fired for cell phone use, while others were treated differently for similar infractions,” Spicknall said.

He said the local successfully shortened the time for disciplinary action to be in an employee's file.

Workers will receive what the company calls a \$1,000 “front-loaded” payment for 2016. In 2017 and 2018, the remaining two years of the three-year agreement, employees will get a 2.25 percent wage increase each year.

Local 2011 members will maintain their health insurance benefits.



Increased Retirement Benefits

Solvay agreed to match up to 9 percent of an employee's total compensation, including regular pay and overtime. Previously, the match was only based on straight-time pay.

In the past, the company laid off full-time, bargaining unit employees and replaced them with contractors. Even when union members were available, some supervisors did bargaining unit work.

The new agreement specifies that bargaining unit work has to be done by union workers if they are available and not supervisors or contractors.

More Union Leave

The local tried hard to get substantially more time for union leave so that members could attend more Solvay council meetings, conferences, educational programs, health and safety training, other union-related classes, and handle union business.

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Locals Successfully Overcome Difficult Negotiations With Solvay

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They were successful in getting the company to add at least 60 more hours to the 200-hour limit for union leave. That will cover the 60-hour preparation time for the local's recent arbitration over Solvay's decision last year to lay off two full-time maintenance employees, while retaining the contractors.

Improvements at Chicago Heights

Local 7-765 members at Solvay's Chicago Heights plant overwhelmingly approved a new three-year contract on Nov. 16 that contained wage increases, access to benefit programs and improved contract language.

The 27 members of the bargaining unit received a 3 percent wage increase upon ratification, a 3 percent raise the second contract year and a 2.5 percent lift in pay the third year.

Now, they can participate in the same health and welfare plans as all U.S. salaried plant employees. This includes the 401(k) and retirement benefits that were part of the company's "harmonization of benefits" in 2015.

Labor Activities

The new contract spells out that union employees have the right to engage in union activities onsite, without management's permission, as long as it is during "the employee's meal or break times, or times before or after their working time."

The Local 7-765 bargaining committee was successful in negotiating a compromise with the company so that management has to exhaust all available means, including call-outs, before allowing a manager the right to "troubleshoot" equipment.

The committee was also successful in getting the company to leave the probationary period at 90 calendar days and to remove the words, "new plant" from the contract lan-

guage so that employees who transfer to Chicago Heights from other USW-organized plants do not have to repeat the probationary period.

Getting improvements for the two Solvay contracts was difficult.

Difficult Negotiations

Before Local 2011 started bargaining on Nov. 2, 2015, the company laid off seven bargaining unit employees at its University Park facility.

It was not long before Solvay gave the Local 2011 negotiators its "last, best and final" proposal, which the membership rejected soundly on Dec. 17, 2015.

For the next six months, there were few bargaining sessions at either the University Park or Chicago Heights plants where management negotiators sat down and bargained face-to-face with the local union negotiating committees.

Management's mode of operation was to drop off their contract demands and leave to caucus without returning to the table until the next bargaining session. At Chicago Heights, local management admitted it had not looked at Local 7-765's proposed package in 73 days.

The locals knew they had to step up the pressure on the company, so they involved District 7 Director Mike Millsap, International Vice President Carol Landry and the USW's Strategic Campaigns department.

Delegates from Locals 2011 and 7-765 at the USW's June Solvay Council meeting told everyone what had been going on at both locations, and by the end of the meeting the council had planned mobilization activities.

In July, the council and local union members engaged in a day of action. They wore "Fair Contract Now" stickers on their uniforms and hardhats, signed a letter in support of bargaining, and delivered that letter to the Solvay plant manager at each location.

In August, prior to bargaining at both sites, the Solvay locals wore the stickers again and displayed "Fair Contract Now" and "USW Coming Soon" placards, with a graphic of picket signs, on the windows and dashboards of their vehicles. Managers could not avoid seeing evidence of the workers' discontent concerning management's lack of movement toward a fair agreement.

International labor support for a fair contract also came from the Solvay Global Forum, where USW Solvay member Jeff Hill was the international union's representative. He detailed the problems that the University Park and Chicago Heights locations were having in getting a fair contract. Hill also got Albert Kruff, a representative from the Solvay European Works Council and a member of the global forum, to advocate on behalf of the USW Solvay workers. Kruff attended the June council meeting and pledged to bring the workers' concerns to the attention of top management.

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Local 7-765 negotiating committee with District 7 Staff Representative Frank Shubert (sitting, far left) and Local 7-765 Unit President David McGowan (sitting in the middle).

Council's Mobilization, International's Pressure Keep Solvay at Bargaining Table to Resolve Contracts

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International Pressures Solvay

Landry went directly to Solvay corporate management in Brussels, Belgium, to get the bargaining problems resolved. She invited Jean-Christophe Sciberras, Solvay's head of Industrial Group Relations, in Brussels and Gerald (Jerry) Prete, Solvay North American labor relations director, to attend the June Solvay council meeting.

Sciberras and Prete listened intently to what the University Park and Chicago Heights workers told them about how difficult it was to bargain a new agreement with local management. Then they flew to both locations to hear from the plant management.

At the end of June Sciberras, Prete and other Solvay officials met with Landry to give her their feedback.

In no uncertain terms, she told them that if Solvay refused to take action to ensure U.S. managers followed its policy of accepting and working with unions, the USW would pull out of the Global Framework Agreement (GFA) negotiated between the company and the international labor federation, IndustriALL. IndustriALL had begun negotiating a new GFA last July, and Landry knew it would be a major embarrassment to Solvay if our union was not a party to the labor pact.

Management Stays to Negotiate

Meanwhile, Director Millsap was working with Landry and both locals to get management to sit down and stay at the table until a fair agreement was reached.

"Director Millsap provided tremendous support to both

locals during the entire process," Landry said.

Finally, on Oct. 11-12, Ron Lehman, industrial director for Solvay's Novocare North American division, and other corporate officials joined the Local 2011 negotiating committee, District 7 Staff Representative Frank Shubert, Director Millsap and Prete for face-to-face negotiations.

Local 2011 President Mike Spicknall said both parties negotiated for 16 hours and that it was the first time the company moved on its positions.

"Getting the bargaining problems resolved helped us end up with an agreement the members could accept," Spicknall said.

Resolution Achieved

Next up was the Chicago Heights contract. Again, Solvay corporate and union officials and the Local 7-765 bargaining committee met for face-to-face bargaining.

"The local's negotiating committee worked hard, and was willing to withdraw its outstanding economic and non-economic proposals, including the main issue of 'double-back' pay, in order to reach an agreement," Shubert said.

Local 7-765 and Solvay reached a tentative agreement on Nov. 10, and the membership ratified it on Nov. 16.

"International Vice President Landry and the local union negotiating committees at University Park and Chicago Heights did a great job at setting the stage for the final push for the agreements. They all were key to getting the company to sit down, negotiate face-to-face and get agreements with improvements in wages, retirement benefits and contract language," said District 7 Director Mike Millsap. "I am proud of the job they did."

Dow North American Labor Council Strengthens Global Solidarity

By Kent Holsing, DNALC Chair

This past fall, the Dow North American Labor Council (DNALC) met with DuPont locals and international union officials to discuss the pending Dow-DuPont merger and build ties of international solidarity. The council held its annual meeting Sept. 26-30 in Elizabethtown, Ky.

"With the uncertainty surrounding the Dow-DuPont merger and its split into three companies, we thought it was appropriate to invite international union leaders who represent members at these corporations as well as the DuPont local unions," said USW International Vice President Carol Landry. "The conference provided the opportunity for increasing communication and solidarity in preparation for massive change in the future."

International Chemical Workers Union Council (ICWUC) Local 970 from Dow Corning's Elizabethtown, Ky., plant hosted the four-day conference, which had a full agenda.

Landry addressed the delegation and encouraged the

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Kent Holsing, DNALC chairperson and USW Local 12075 (right) and Brian Berndt, president of ICWUC Local 970-Dow Corning Elizabethtown, Ky. (host local).



Delegates at the annual Dow North American Labor Council meeting in Elizabethtown, Ky., Sept. 26-30.

Dow Council Focuses on Proposed Dow-DuPont Merger

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council to continue developing global solidarity, and she emphasized the importance of networking. She also spoke about the USW's plan for the chemical sector.

Developing Solidarity with Unite

"Strengthening relations between representatives in the U.K. and U.S. was one of the primary aims for our representatives at this meeting," said Unite National Officer Tony Devlin. "We achieved this with the new relationships we formed, and this will allow representatives from the U.S. and U.K. to communicate more readily and assist each other."

Devlin, who heads the union's chemicals, pharmaceuticals, process, textiles and downstream oil distribution sectors, spoke on behalf of the five-member U.K. delegation attending the meeting, and shared with the council the current state of affairs in Unite's chemical sector. He also discussed Dow and DuPont's U.K. operations and the current political climate in the U.K. Unite's Mark Lyon joined Devlin at the meeting.

"Workers in the U.K. are concerned about the Dow-DuPont merger, especially since there is no information coming from either company, which causes uncertainty in the work force," Devlin said. "There is also an element of the unknown for both work forces, as they know very little about each other's companies or how they operate. However, Dow workers in the U.K. are starting to see a difference, with a greater influence now coming from the U.S."

Locals Share Information

With the pending merger of Dow Chemical and DuPont, the DNALC invited locals from various unionized DuPont sites to attend the meeting. Locals from three DuPont sites attended the meeting: Buffalo, NY (U.S.W Local 6992), La Porte, Texas (ICWUC Local 900C), and Richmond, Va. (ARWI).

Each Dow Chemical and DuPont local present gave a detailed report, and there was discussion to better understand

what commonalities and differences might exist between each site. Locals from the following Dow Chemical sites attended: Midland, Mich.; Freeport, Texas City and Deer Park, Texas; Bristol, Pa.; Knoxville, Tenn.; Dow Corning—Midland, Mich., and Elizabethtown, Ky.

"I was surprised to a certain extent to hear how Dow Chemical and DuPont handle health and safety in the U.S.," Devlin said. "Poor health and safety at Dow or DuPont isn't something that we hear of regularly in the U.K."

"I thought that the meeting was excellent," Devlin added. "I was particularly impressed by the high level of communication within the group and the detail of the reports."

Global Networking, Solidarity Works

For the second time there was a contingent from Argentina representing the Sindicato de Obreros y Empleados Petroquímicos Unidos—SOEPU (Union of Workers and Employees Petrochemicals States) headed by General Secretary Mauricio Brizuela. Last year the union delegates reported they were struggling to organize the Dow Chemical site in Puerto General San Martín, Santa Fe province, Argentina.

The delegates reported tremendous news this year. Since the 2015 conference, they successfully organized the Dow plant and obtained a first contract. While it was not without its struggles, including a strike for several days, they obtained a first contract after decades of attempting to achieve their goal. This proves that global networking and solidarity work!

Analysis of Industry, Merger

IndustriALL Assistant General Secretary Kemal Özkan presented a comprehensive summary of the current state of the global chemical industry via Skype.

The USW Strategic Campaigns and Research departments prepared and shared presentations on subjects including the North American chemical industry and where Dow

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Council Tackles Fatigue Risk Management

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Chemical and DuPont fit in, a detailed examination of the economics of the Dow Chemical and DuPont merger and its potential effects, and a thorough look at the current status of Dow Chemical, Dow Corning and DuPont pension plans and what the future may hold.

“It was very helpful having both USW departments give presentations about issues of concern to all the locals present,” said DuPont Council chair Gary Guralny. “It was fascinating to hear how similar Dow and DuPont already are before the merger. I am sure we have set a solid foundation for future collaborative efforts.”

Health and Safety Discussed

Mike Wright, director of the USW Health, Safety and Environment department, provided details on the Department

of Labor/OSHA ruling against U.S. Steel for retaliating against workers who reported injuries. This was a timely and relevant topic for the council to review and discuss.

The delegates engaged in a lengthy discussion regarding ongoing issues of fatigue risk management, work fatigue and the health effects on our members who work rotating shifts. The delegates agreed that a letter on behalf of the council would be drafted and sent to both Dow Chemical and DuPont to convey our willingness to address and collaborate with the companies on fatigue risk management.

At the close of the conference, the council unanimously agreed to have any DuPont unionized sites that are interested in participating become a part of the DNALC.

The 2017 DNALC conference is scheduled for the fall in Elizabethtown, Ky., and ICWUC Local 970 will host it.

Dow Network Essential to Handle Dow-DuPont Merger’s Impacts

By Kent Holsing, DNALC Chair

With the pending Dow-DuPont merger in 2017 and the proposed split into three publicly traded companies in 2018, the Dow North American Labor Council (DNALC) is doing its best to keep up with the changes as they happen.

Dow Chemical and DuPont are proposing to divest businesses in order to ease regulatory concerns. The newly-formed company will split into three parts—agriculture and chemicals, material sciences and specialty products—and the impact on union members may not be fully realized until the split occurs.

The DNALC network model is essential if we are going to be successful in dealing with the proposed actions of Dow and DuPont. It is more important than ever to work on strengthening this network and our ties to other union chemical councils in the U.S. and with international unions abroad. Dow and DuPont locals/sites will continue to work together, share information and communicate

throughout the upcoming year.

The DNALC is composed of locals at 11 manufacturing sites of Dow and Dow Corning from various unions including the USW; International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE); the Pipefitters (UA); International Association of Machinists (IAM); International Chemical Workers Union Council/UFCW Chemical Workers (ICWUC), and the National Conference of Firemen and Oilers.

The council also includes a number of DuPont locals from various unions, such as the United Steelworkers (USW); International Chemical Workers Union Council/UFCW (ICWUC); Ampthill Rayon Workers Incorporated, (ARWI) and the International Brotherhood of DuPont Workers (IBDW).

The DNALC works on a global basis, staying in touch with unions representing Dow sites in Brazil, Argentina, the United Kingdom, Germany and Japan, as well as with the global union, IndustriALL.

District 4 and District 10 Chemical Workers Share Workplace Stories

Local 4907 President Randy Beightol said he appreciates the District 4 and District 10 chemical sector conference—held last June 27-30 in Atlantic City, N.J.—because of the common ground he shares with other delegates.

Beightol works at Lonza Inc., a Swiss multinational chemical company, in Williamsport, Pa., which makes additives, water softeners and bases for shampoo and other personal care items. The USW represents 100 workers at the facility, and the unit is part of a larger amalgamated local.

“Many problems we have are the same as a lot of these other chemical locals, whether it is safety, training, or union issues like contract negotiations,” he said. “Some of the topics discussed at the District 4 and District 10 conference were items we tried to put into our contract.”

Beightol said he thought the conference was beneficial for the smaller chemical companies because it allows them to network with each other. Many of the chemical companies where our union represents workers are small firms. Having such a conference like the annual District 4 and District 10 meeting gives locals and units of amalgamated locals the opportunity to network, share contract information, discuss the issues they are confronting with management, and learn more about the industry and health and safety.

70 Percent Turnout

USW International Vice President Carol Landry, who heads the union’s chemical sector, District 10 Director

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Chemical Locals Report Challenges Facing Membership

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Bobby “Mac” McAuliffe and District 4 Director John Shinn welcomed the delegates to the third annual District 4 and District 10 chemical sector conference.

“This is one of our union’s biggest sectors, but it is so spread out,” Landry said. “We must start communicating with each other and figure a way to organize chemical workers to increase union density, so we have more power in bargaining.”

Shinn said there was 70 percent turnout from those invited to this conference. He noted that International President Leo Gerard appointed Landry to be head of the sector so that our union could coordinate strategy in a critical industry.

He talked about the ownership change within the industry and how “sometimes you don’t know who will end up owning your plant.”

“We have to be at stockholders meetings, pay attention to the industry and mobilize,” Shinn said.

McAuliffe urged the delegates to take advantage of the networking opportunities offered by the conference so that they can continue to share information and support one another when they return home.

“This is our third chemical conference, and we are using it as a launch pad for establishing other regional conferences so that, eventually, we can gather the entire chemical sector together,” he said. “When we do that, we will be like other sectors within the union that have one conference for all the locals in that industry.”

Information Sharing

Keith Romig of the USW’s Research department discussed the USW and North American chemical sector. He gave a history of the union mergers that formed our union’s chemical sector today, and talked about the mergers and changes happening within the industry.

Ashlee Fitch of the USW’s Health, Safety and Environment department gave a health and safety presentation on effective health and safety contract language; behavior-based safety and why it is ineffective; effective

health and safety committees, and process systems management.

Shawn Gilchrist of the USW’s Strategic Campaigns department urged the delegates to review their contracts for language on successorship, organizing neutrality, union leave and subcontracting.

Local Union Reports

Much of the conference focused on local union reports. The locals talked about items such as contract settlements, relationships with management, contracting out, union involvement in health and safety, health and safety problems, and health insurance costs.

Other topics of discussion included mandatory overtime, two-tier wages, pension plans, 401(k) plans for new hires, staffing levels, competition with other sites, involvement of young workers, and the helpfulness of Building Power training.

“Companies are focusing on core activities and contracting out certain functions like maintenance,” Shinn said. He advised the locals to “write into your contract that contractors have to reach an agreement with the USW.”

Numerous Challenges

Local 6992 at the DuPont plant in Buffalo, N.Y., reported some unusual challenges for a plant owned by a renowned multinational corporation. The local said that DuPont outsourced the plant’s entire human resources department except for one person who is the lead bargainer for the company. If the local needs a problem resolved, it has to contact an 800-number.

The local’s delegates reported that workers sometimes go two or three weeks without a payroll check, and there are so many problems with the outsourced payroll system that people have to keep track of their own straight and overtime hours. Otherwise, a person might get overpaid and then receive a letter from DuPont saying they owe money to the company.

Outsourcing and chemical exposure are two other prob-

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Delegates from the District 4-District 10 Chemical Sector Conference in Atlantic City, N.J., June 27-30. Photo: Lynne Hancock.

Local 277 Turns Around Health and Safety Problems

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lems the local described to the delegates.

“We challenge DuPont all the time,” Shinn said. “Every day there is no cooperation between the management and the union or the exercise of common sense. The local has to fight the company every day.”

Successful Turnaround

Three years ago, Local 277 at the Goodyear plant in Niagara Falls, N.Y., had issues regarding exposure to toxic chemicals in the plant, said Local 277 President Joe White. The plant produces the oxide that goes into tires.

White said the local turned around the exposure problem through health and safety education with the help of the International’s Health, Safety and Environment department.

He said he believed that union pressure on management concerning health and safety improved communication between the parties.

“We have more people attend our meetings, and I believe it is because of what we accomplished in health and safety,” White said.

Joe Caridi, the local’s health and safety representative, suggested to locals that they reach out to the USW’s Tony



The chemical locals reported on their new contracts or other workplace concerns.

Mazzocchi Center and Emergency Response Team.

“We belong to a great organization and we have all kinds of avenues to work with the International. You have to use them,” Caridi advised.

Our union scheduled a District 13 chemical conference in Louisiana last fall, but the massive flooding in that state impacted so many chemical workers and their families that the meeting had to be cancelled.

**CHECK OUT
USW
CHEMICAL WORKERS
FACEBOOK PAGE!
CLICK LIKE!
TELL EVERYONE
ABOUT THIS PAGE!**

A screenshot of the USW Chemical Workers Facebook page. The page features a cover photo of an industrial facility with green piping. The left sidebar shows navigation options like Home, About, Photos, Reviews, Likes, and Posts. The main content area includes a post from Lynn inviting users to like the page, a search bar, and a description of the page's purpose: "This is a Facebook page for news and information on chemical sector bargaining, chemical local unions and the chemical industry." Below this, there are photos of a 3M sign and a hard hat with a "FAIR CONTRACT NOW!" sticker. The page also shows 417 likes and a location in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.