



Bakers Local 114 Secretary-Treasurer Terry Lansing (right) shows displaced workers from Kerry Sweet Ingredients around a job fair it hosted March 1.

Bakers #114 holds job fair for nonunion crew

Portland Bakers Local 114 held a job fair March 1 for nonunion employees at Kerry Sweet Ingredients in Tualatin.

Kerry, one of the world's largest manufacturers of food ingredients, with headquarters in Ireland, announced in December that it would close its Tualatin plant in June 2008 and lay off 80 employees. The plant makes cookies and ice cream.

Workers tried to join Local 114 starting last spring, but faced a brutal anti-union campaign. Management held mandatory meetings, fired a key union supporter, and threatened to close down if the union won.

Local 114 filed several unfair labor practice charges, along with 19 objections to employer conduct prior to and during the union election – which it lost in August by just nine votes.

The regional office of the National Labor Relations Board investigated the complaints and forwarded eight charges to the full Board in Washington, D.C.

There the Bush-appointed Board found no merit to the charges, and validated the election.

In December, the company said it was closing.

"We made a commitment to these folks, and we're standing behind it," said Eric Anderson, an international rep for the Bakers Union. "This is a win-win for everybody."

The union set up a job fair at the Plumbers and Fitters Hall in Tualatin, where they invited representatives from unionized shops United States Bakery's Franz Bread and Smith Cookies; Kroger Clackamas Bakery; Safeway Bread Plant; and Bimbo/Oroweat Bakery, to come interview prospective employees and take applications.

Fortunately, March and April are busy months for the baking industry, so the union is confident it can find work for some of the displaced Kerry employees.

UNION LAYOFFS SINCE JANUARY 2008

ROBERTS MOTORS (Closure)
Portland, Eugene, Medford, Redmond
Union(s): Machinists Local 24, Teamsters #305
Number Affected: 162

SEALY MATTRESS (Seasonal/Temporary Layoff)
Union(s): Steelworkers #330, Teamsters #162 and #206
Number Affected: 150

COE MANUFACTURING (Cessation of manufacturing)
Union(s): Teamsters #305
Number Affected: 45

BAY VALLEY FOODS (Closure)
Stienfeld pickles;
Union(s): Teamsters #305
Number Affected: 88

OHSU (Layoff)
Union(s): AFSCME #328
Number Affected: (Unknown)
Possibly 200-300 "program specific"

NONUNION LAYOFFS SINCE JANUARY 2008

MERIX CORPORATION (Closure)
Number Affected: 131

KERRY SWEET INGREDIENTS (Closure)
Number Affected: 80

NATIONWIDE INSURANCE (Closure)
Number Affected: 230 call center employees

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