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Gary Allen (left), general vice president for the Machinists Union's Western Territories, was on the Daimler Trucks North America picket line July 12. Talking to him about the strike, which began July 1, are from left to right: Machinist Lodge 1005 members Paul Serlet, James Kelly, Ka Wang, and Ko Vue (out of the picture).

## United Food and Commercial Workers expected to rejoin AFL-CIO in August

WASHINGTON, D.C. — United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) will rejoin the AFL-CIO by the end of this year, according to the magazine *In These Times*.

Jeff Anderson, secretary-treasurer of Tigard, Oregon-based UFCW Local 555, confirmed the story. Anderson was at an earned sick days conference in Washington, D.C., where the international union is headquartered, when the story broke on July 10.

"People here (at UFCW) are aware of the article, but are not commenting on it," Anderson told the *Labor Press*. "Which tells me some high level negotiations are happening."

Press Associates Inc. reported that a source close to AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka also confirmed the article was correct.

The announcement was supposed to occur at UFCW's convention in Chicago in mid-August, and then be ratified at the AFL-CIO convention in Los Angeles in early September, but the magazine broke the story beforehand.

UFCW convention delegates must

vote on reunification.

"It still remains to be seen what it all means," said Anderson, who will be one of 24 delegates from Local 555 attending the UFCW convention.

UFCW, with 1.3 million members, is a key component of Change To Win, the coalition of unions that broke away from the AFL-CIO in 2005. UFCW President Joe Hansen now chairs Change To Win, but has stayed on good terms with the AFL-CIO.

UFCW also has cooperated with the larger labor federation in national politics and in mass rallies for labor causes.

Besides UFCW, the Change To Win federation includes the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, and the United Farm Workers. Three other founding unions of Change To Win — the 500,000-member Laborers, the 265,000-member UNITE HERE, and the 500,000-member Carpenters — have left. The Carpenters operates as an independent union, and the other two are back in the AFL-CIO fold. [In 2009, approximately 100,000 of UNITE HERE's members seceded,

formed Workers United, and joined SEIU.]

The Change To Win unions seceded from the AFL-CIO in 2005 because, they said, they differed with the federation's emphasis on political activism and lobbying as opposed to organizing. But over the years the two labor federations drifted closer together as affiliated unions in both organizations realized that politics could open the way for organizing — and that organizing more members increased political clout.

Through Solidarity Charters, UFCW Local 555 has maintained affiliations with all of Oregon's central labor councils, but not with the Oregon AFL-CIO. In Washington, all UFCW locals but Tacoma Local 367 are affiliated with the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO.

The return of the UFCW would boost the national AFL-CIO's membership by almost 10 percent and provide an infusion of resources.

According to *In These Times*, Trumka has been courting the UFCW since he first came to office in 2009.

## Daimler brings in strikebreakers

By DON McINTOSH  
Associate Editor

Fifteen days into a strike by 588 machinists and painters, Daimler Trucks North America introduced striker replacements to its Portland truck plant. At about 6:30 a.m. July 15, a fast-moving convoy of vans and SUVs drove through the gate to the main employee entrance, and nearly ran over one picketing union member.

Craig Blair, a 32-year employee at the truck plant, said he was marching back and forth across the entrance with a strike picket sign when company guards opened the gate, and a line of about five white vans, three black SUVs and several cars drove up.

"I had to step back or be run over," Blair said.

Picket captain Riller Clegg witnessed the incident, and says she tried to use her smart phone to film it, but it happened too quickly. Company guards were filming, however.

Another striker called police, and an officer took a statement. No charges were filed.

Machinists District W24 Union Rep Joe Kear said it was unlikely that such a small group of inexperienced workers would be able to produce trucks any time soon, but he said the company's use of striker replacements sends a pretty clear message to union members. "They're putting money into counter-strike measures, instead of into an offer."

Daimler met July 10 with representatives of the Machinist and Painters unions, but showed no willingness to

improve its final offer — 10 days into a strike at its Swan Island truck plant in Portland. More talks were scheduled for July 17 and 18, after this issue went to press.

No trucks have been produced at the plant since 520 Machinists and 68 painters struck July 1. The Swan Island plant is the only site manufacturing Western Star trucks, which are specialized for use in logging, mining, and other industries.

Members of Machinists Lodge 1005 and Sign Painters and Painter Makers Local 1094 walked out after rejecting a company offer that included raises of \$1.30 an hour over three years. They've had no raises for four years, during which time productivity increased 25 percent. The company's proposed raises would have been partially offset by increased health insurance co-pays. The company proposal also would eliminate supplemental health coverage after retirees turn 65.

The strike has also idled 117 members of Teamsters Local 305 and 19 members of Service Employees International Union Local 49 who work at the truck plant. Workers in those units voted to ratify the company's offer, but are honoring the picket line.

On July 2, the company declared that employer-provided medical benefits were terminated effective July 1 — not just for the strikers but for Local 305 and 49 members as well, who were deemed to be waging a "sympathy strike." Workers will have 60 days to decide whether to continue health insurance coverage at their own expense. COBRA coverage will cost over \$500 a month for single employees, and as much as \$1,672 a month for family coverage.

"The company is playing hard ball trying to make sure it's painful for folks," Kear said.

Workers received their final checks July 9 for work performed prior to July 1, so there are no immediate hardship cases yet, said Dave Clingen, chair of the strike resource committee. Clingen said his committee's purpose is to make sure members don't give in to company demands because of financial hardship. As the strike continues, the committee



Sign Painters and Painter Makers Local 1094 member Doug Sandercock walks the picket line on July 12.

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