



TOP: Bodycote employee and new Machinist Union member Brian Almeida (left), talks with union business reps Will Lukens, Joe Kear, and Ron Teigen during a solidarity rally June 8. Workers are having a difficult time securing a first contract at the plant, which “heat treats” aerospace parts. Precision Castparts is its largest customer.



Machinists at Bodycote battle for first contract

By Michael Gutwig
Editor & Manager

CAMAS, Wash.—Forty workers are still trying to get a first contract at Bodycote, a multinational corporation that provides thermal processing services. The company operates 180 plants in 26 countries. Of the 50 facilities in the U.S., the Camas plant, which “heat treats” aerospace parts, is only the second to unionize. The other union facility is in Ohio with United Auto Workers.

Workers in Camas voted last June to join Machinists District Lodge W24. The campaign was a difficult one, with Bodycote hiring a union-buster, and using all the anti-union tricks in the book. Following the union victory, the company engaged in a number of unfair labor practices, retaliating against supporters by changing their work shifts and break times. The Machinists filed and won two unfair labor practice complaints with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

When bargaining began last August, the company flew in an attorney from Oklahoma. The attorney was rarely able to meet, and when he did, refused to put

proposals in writing. Those actions led to another unfair labor practice complaint, which the union also won.

Talks have moved slowly since then, with fewer than a dozen items agreed to, said Will Lukens, a business rep for Machinists District W24.

Solidarity rallies have been held (the most recent was June 8), and last month workers strongly supported a preliminary strike vote. The union also filed another NLRB charge against the company for directly bargaining with employees, and for failing to maintain status quo by unilaterally discontinuing annual pay raises. The NLRB is currently investigating the complaint.

In bargaining held June 9-10, Lukens said minor progress was made on articles pertaining to grievance procedures and seniority, but nothing was finalized in writing.

“They were a little upset with our solidarity rally on June 8,” he said. “Their attorney went into stall mode, and wanted to talk about disciplining an employee for coming out during his break to participate in the rally.”

Lukens believes the company is still surface bargaining, holding out for a decertification vote after the one-year anniversary of the election (the NLRB extended the anniversary date by four months, pushing it to October).

But workers are getting impatient. They want a first contract. At the June 8 solidarity rally there was even talk of a strike action to get the company to stop stalling.

“It may have to come to that,” Lukens said.

More bargaining is scheduled July 22-23.

Providing auditing and accounting services to labor organizations and employee benefit plans since 1941

MKA MILLER KAPLAN ARASE LLP
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS SINCE 1941

Jeffrey Goss / Catherine Gardner
971.255.0546
MillerKaplan.com

Low Prices!

WHITE & WESCO
“Always the best Quality”
**10” SMOKE JUMPER
16” LINEMAN**
HUGE SELECTION
WATERPROOF BOOTS
SIZES IN NARROW,
MEDIUM & WIDE
AI'S SHOES
5811 S.E. 82ND • 771-2130

Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat 9:30-5:30, Sun 12-6