**President’s Report**

**Strattec cited by OSHA for accident in Die Cast;**

**Briggs production remains low**



by Greg Gorecki, President

**Strattec**

            Negotiations are moving very slow. We are entrenched in discussing numerous language changes proposed by the Company. We have met with the Company 8 times in the last month and as of the writing of this article, have at least 4 more dates planned. We have offered them an additional day and more, if progress was being made. Our intention is to get a paper with all the agreed changes mailed to each member's home by Thursday, May 17, 2001. We have reserved the hall at Manning's (76th & Good Hope) for May 20th at 9:30 a.m. for the ratification vote.

**OSHA Citations**

            After a severe injury to one of our members in Die Cast, a visit from O.S.H.A. followed. While the investigation was taking place, Strattec was cited on 4 different serious counts. The April 19th letter from O.S.H.A. reads as follows:

1. Strattec did not have effected employees, such as die cast set-up operators performing work on the "Techmire" die cast machines, wear flame retardant clothing to protect them from burns associated with molten zinc. The O.S.H.A. inspector said this was corrected during the inspection, but would still carry a $2,275.00 fine.
2. Employees did not use a face shield when exposed to the hazard of molten zinc and hydraulic fluid potentially spraying from hoses and the injection during start up of Techmire #123 zinc die cast machine. It carries a fine of $2,275.00.
3. The lockout procedure for the Techmire #123 die cast machine was not utilized for the control of potentially hazardous energy such as hydraulic energy when employees were engaged in changeout of a gooseneck and hydraulic hoses which are covered by this section. This carries a fine of $1,300.00.
4. The die and injection point on the Techmire #123 machine was not guarded to prevent employees from having their face and eyes in the danger zone during operating cycles. The "garage door" barrier guard was not in place at the time of the start up and operation of Techmire #123, allowing employees to be exposed to the die coming apart and being ejected, injuring the employee and/or molten zinc from being sprayed on an employee. This citation also carries a $2,275.00 fine.

            On April 24, 2001 a letter from O.S.H.A. indicates that a conference will be held on May 9th at the U.S. Dept. of Labor  office to discuss the citations and fines. It is our understanding that Strattec is considering contesting at least one citation and looking for clarification on another one.

**Briggs**

            Briggs negotiations are set to open June 4th. We have nine full day meetings set with the Company. We are looking at a ratification date of July 8th. This is being done because of the change in shutdown dates to the last two weeks of July. We did not want to disrupt anybody's vacation. The next three weekends encompass the vacation shutdown and the Contract requires a vote by August 1st. The location is yet to be determined due to the size of our membership. The Executive Board will be making that decision in the up-coming month.

            Production at Briggs seems to remain slow with the exceptions of a few pockets of people that have been recalled to Die Cast and Dept. 716. With production being as slow as it has been, the Union did also receive its fourth W.A.R.N. notice this year. A W.A.R.N. notice is sent out when jobs are being permanently eliminated from where they now exist and not being moved to another plant that we represent. The latest one is in regard to four (4) jobs that will be eliminated at the Service Div. in Menomonee Falls. The other three (3) have been attributed to the West Allis Plant and mainly Dept. 552, with the exception of one (1) job in M7. With the circumstances listed above, one can only wonder if a partial E.V.A. check is even a remote possibility. Barring a big production turn around in this last quarter and the Company accountants moving some numbers around, very little optimism remains to see a bonus check in August.

            The Company and the Union were able to resolve about six (6) grievances that were headed for arbitration. While we still have more pending, this was closure to some grievances that had been slated for arbitration for over a year.

**Skilled Trades**

            The Bargaining Committee, Joe Chambers and some of the Skilled Trades people met with the Company on work that was being done in the plant by outside contractors. It was work that the Union feels could be done by our own skilled people and at a lower cost to the Company. The Company agreed that there had been a lack of communication between the Skilled Trades foreman and the managers that contract the outside work. The results of the meeting were as follows:

1. If the skilled trades see outside contractors in the plant doing work that could be done by our members, they will notify their grievance reps and they will document the days, times and jobs.
2. At a later date, the Union and Company will meet to discuss these documented jobs and projects.
3. If the work being done could be done with our own skills and equipment and we have the manpower; we will be considered in the future.

            The Union wanted this meeting to raise awareness to the Company that our skills are capable of doing a lot of the work that gets contracted out. Not only is this better for our members, but our financial secretary feels that after crunching the numbers, it is probably a better deal economically for the Company. Hopefully, this awareness will bring some more work for our skilled trades' people.