**President’s Report**

**State elections key for working people;**

**Job losses at Strattec and Briggs to continue through end of the year**

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| http://www.pace7232.org/images/gorecki.jpg | by  Greg Gorecki  President |

The State AFL-CIO Convention has come and gone and now is the time to put into action the thoughts, ideas and wishes the majority of the delegates expressed at the convention. The main one being affordable health care here in Wisconsin, not just for Union members but for all working families. The one way we can do that is to absorb as much information on the candidates that we possibly can. We need to look at their stance on issues that will affect the every day lives of our families.

Many candidates will try to buy their way into office by saturating the airwaves with the bashing of their opponent. In my opinion, desperate folks will do desperate things. For instance, our current acting Governor McCallum tries to imply that James Doyle will scare businesses out of Wisconsin by asking them to pay their share of the taxes. I'm not sure where McCallum has been for the last 16 years or so, but our membership has shrunk from 7,775 members in 1988 to 2,021 as of last month's dues check-off. This has all been under the Thompson/McCallum administrations. Briggs has moved work and opened plants in Poplar Bluff and Rolla, Missouri, Statesboro, Georgia and Auburn, Alabama. Strattec has continually moved jobs to Mexico and continues to do so today.

Other manufacturing firms are just a shell of what they used to be, like A.O. Smith- Tower Automotive, Masterlock and Harnishfager, just to name a few. So don't believe everything that the big money candidates put on the air. They think that the working class isn't bright enough to check out the facts and they also know that candidates that are not supported by big money can't afford to keep running ads to dispute all of their misinformation.

Then we also have a candidate running for attorney general who's claim to fame is that he's not looking to prosecute business people for the crimes they commit but just the harden criminals. Well, working people dying on the job is also criminal, just as the CEO's who misrepresent the economic status to it's employees and shareholders for their own personal gain. These less fortunate people have a right to have justice also and Peg Lautenschlager has a proven record that she has gone after and persecuted these white collar criminals and will continue to do so. Let's show the big money candidates, by sending them a message on November 5th that working people are brighter than they give us credit for. After extensive interviews and research by the State AFL-CIO, Doyle, Lautenschlager and Lawton have earned the working peoples endorsements.

**United Way Drive**

There is another event that will be taking place in the shop over the next few weeks. Our own Union members will be soliciting you for United Way donations. Times are tough right now for working people, but they are even tougher for many of our brothers, sisters and the families of those members who have lost their jobs. Some people think that they don't need United Way services, well think again. If you think about it almost everybody has knowledge of somebody who has benefited from the United Way.

When your fellow brothers and sisters approach you for your donation, please be respectful and give what you can for the less fortunate people in our community. These needy folks all had jobs at one time, and when it comes to helping them, just remember that "their shoes could fit your feet someday".

On a similar note, about 15 Union people have volunteered their time to help out at the Hunger Task Force on October 10th. These volunteers are a perfect example of how our members do things to help make our community a better place to live, and I thank them for that.

**Strattec**

In a meeting on September 17th, the Company informed the Union that the moving of work to Mexico is not finished yet. Department 64 is the latest casualty. They defined six jobs for certain, but also eluded to some support jobs or indirect labor would also be re-evaluated. They also stated that by December 31, 2002 all the moves would be completed with no more plans for further depletion of Milwaukee Strattec jobs.

This writer finds that hard to believe. While the Company is saying one thing, their actions seem to say something else. The Company says they have no plans for bringing in any new work of any large magnitude. By moving all this equipment to Mexico, it will create empty floor space. They say they have no plans to occupy the vacated space. That unutilized space creates no return on capital investment, which impacts Strattec's E.V.A. Only time will tell, but for now lets just say that I am a little suspicious of the chain of events that have occurred since the contract ratification.

At Strattec, several attempts to settle a grievance prior to arbitration reached a dead end. The grievance was regarding an outsourcing issue. No further discussions are planned. Talks broke off when the Company's offer fell short of what the Union felt would be adequate compensation to the grieved members.

After several attempts and cancelled appointments it appears we are scheduled to hear a Strattec discharged member's case on November 8th. This is the third date that we've had to hear the case. The first time the arbitrator cancelled and the next time the Company cancelled. The original date was July 31st.

**Briggs**

The Bargaining Committee met with the Company on several issues on September 24th. The Union laid out some ideas that we felt would be beneficial to both the Company and our members. This was just an informal information gathering session and the Company said they would consider our suggestions and get back with us soon. We did ask the Company if there was anything new in the Die Cast partnership plan. They said not right now, but hoped they would have some idea or some specifics by the end of the calendar year. As soon as we have anything definitive regarding the partnership, we will get the word out to the stewards so they can inform our members.

We had discussion with the Company on a couple of grievances that the Union was going to pursue to arbitration. As of the writing of this article things were moving in a positive direction for a possible settlement on at least one.

The Union is scheduled to meet with Menomonee Falls management on their plans to change the "picking" jobs in department 472. The October 9th meeting will be to discuss the Company's plan to change to a measured daywork system.

We have also had some conversation with the Company on how they interpret their new work rules. We've had some questionable complaints when managers try to follow the new "rules of conduct". The Company told us that the new rules were to update the outdated rules that were in effect. They also said that the intent was not to change the rules. If you feel that you have been victimized by the new "rules of conduct" please see your steward. The Union did send a protest letter when these rules were handed out. It states basically, that we don't agree with the change and reserve the right to grieve any rule that is enforced contrary to the way it had been done in the past.