

When We Organize, We Win

By Matt Utecht, President

"I can't say...that I have ever seen a larger margin of victory in any union," is what I told reporters on Friday, June 23, after Seward Community Co-op workers voted overwhelmingly to join the UFCW Local 653 family.

The union at Seward is almost 300 workers and includes all three locations--the Creamery, Friendship Store and Franklin Store. Turnout was 82 percent and, of the votes counted, Seward workers voted 94 percent Union Yes. Counting all three Minneapolis co-ops that unionized with us this year, 355 co-op workers have voted and 311 voted Yes. That is 88 percent Union Yes. This shows strong resolve and unity, and sends a powerful message going into bargaining.

Other employers have and will take note of our significant organizing wins. And we won't stop there. As we kick off our Minneapolis Retail

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"I can't say ... that I have ever seen a larger margin of victory in any union."
Matt Utecht, president of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 653



Seward Co-op workers, seen at a rally June 8, voted 191 to 12 on Thursday to affiliate with United Food and Commercial Workers Local 653.

Seward Co-op joins union wave

With Seward aboard, UFCW has successfully organized all the food co-ops in Minneapolis.

By PATRICK THOMAS • patrick.thomas@startribune.com

Seward Community Food Co-op workers voted by an overwhelming count to unionize, becoming the last food retail co-op in Minneapolis to do so.

The vote Thursday was 191 to 12 to affiliate with United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 653.

"I can't say in my 35 years working for Local 653 that I have ever seen a larger margin of victory in any union," said Matt Utecht, president of the local.

The Seward Co-op employs about 340 people at grocery stores on E. Franklin Avenue and E. 38th Street, and a cafe and food production facility on Franklin.

The Twin Cities has one of the largest concentration of food co-ops in the country, and Seward is the oldest and largest, with about 17,000 members.

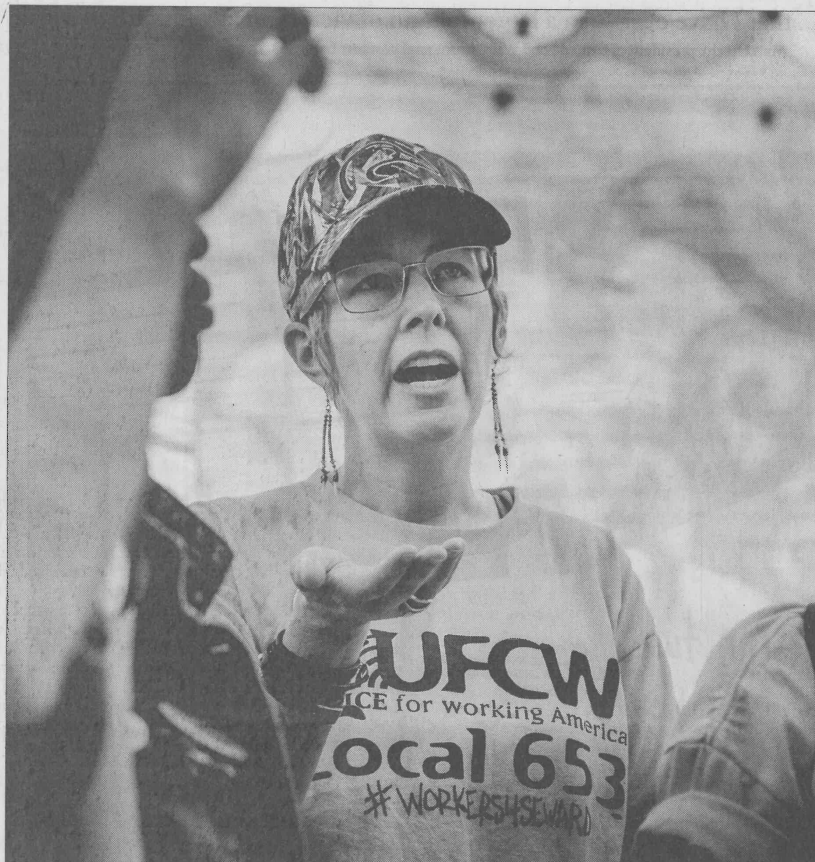
Employees earlier this month marched for better wages and benefits and alleged that managers were retaliating against them for demanding union recognition.

On Friday, Seward Co-op said in a letter to members, "We want co-op owners to know that management is committed to [making] sure this process goes smoothly. The co-op management and the union have agreed that we have zero tolerance for retaliation directed at employees, whether they were in favor or against the union."

The UFCW pushed to organize workers at local co-ops after losing members in the 2014 exit of Rainbow Foods from the Twin Cities market. Linden Hills Co-op and the Eastside Food Co-op, each with about 85 employees, were unionized this year, and the

See **UNION** on D2 ►

When We Organize (continued from page 1)



Seward Co-op employee Amy Swenson explained her support for a union during a June 8 rally. GLEN STUBBE • glen.stubbe@startribune.com

Seward Co-op workers vote by large margin to unionize

◀ **UNION** from D1

Wedge Community Co-op, with about 160 employees, was unionized in 2015.

Seward Co-op general manager Sean Doyle said it has operated on a "living wage" model since 2007, meaning workers are paid more than minimum wage. The current living wage for a single adult in Hennepin County is about \$11.40 an hour, according to a calculator by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"We are looking forward to working with them [the union] and trying to find common ground and create a good workplace for our employees," Doyle said. "Unions are similar to co-ops in our mission to be for the people. We see them as partners, and we hope we can work together to ensure the co-op is here for another 40 years."

Doyle said he wasn't sure yet how his workers being

unionized will impact the business, but he said the co-op's revenue has fallen in the past few years due to a more competitive market.

Since Rainbow's exit, Hy-Vee, Aldi, Trader Joe's and Fresh Thyme Farmers Market have all expanded in the Twin Cities. Seward's revenue in 2014 was about \$34 million, but Doyle said he expects this year it will be about \$28 million.

"There are more options for people to buy groceries now than there were a decade ago," he said. "We still have a strong niche. Forty percent of our food is locally made and we think that will make a difference in the marketplace."

Staff writer Randy Furst contributed to this report.

Patrick Thomas • 612-673-7740

Contract campaign, we want to give every worker the chance to have a voice in the process to build a better life. That's why we're surveying all workers included in the Minneapolis Retail Contract. We want your opinion on the economic issues that are important to you, as well as the non-economic issues.

Member input and participation are how we win the best contract possible. Your opinions and voice matter. Please share your concerns and ideas for what should be addressed in negotiations. After the survey process, a summary will be created and shared with members. There will also be several meetings at various times and locations to talk about our bargaining priorities after the survey process. Survey results will be used to develop proposals and bargaining strategies for the upcoming negotiations. Individual responses and surveys will not be shared with employers.

If you are a part of the Minneapolis Retail Contract, fill out the survey online here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/retailsurveyUFCW653>.

I hope you are enjoying your summer, you've worked hard for it!

UFCW Retail Conference - “Stronger Together”

By Paul Crandall, Secretary-Treasurer



I recently attended the UFCW Retail Conference in St. Louis held on Sunday, May 21 through Thursday, May 25, with President Matt Utecht, Organizing Director Rena Wong and Steward Jay Grygar. This was an excellent conference packed with workshops and speakers designed to cover the topics facing all hard-working union members in the retail industry across the United States.

This conference was designed to assist local union staff members and stewards with ideas and information that would help their local unions' membership in areas such as:

Communications: A variety of communication skills, from local unions using technology to better communicate with its members, to delivering the message to new and current members of the value of belonging to their union and understanding the many benefits they have in their contract and membership privileges such as our local union that provides the opportunity to all members to send in for scholarships, educational grants, sporting event tickets, ValleyFair tickets, and Renaissance Festival tickets, just to name a few. Local 653 members also have the privilege to rent cabins at “Ours Resort” located directly on the shoreline of beautiful Lake Superior in Lutsen, Minnesota.

Organizing: These workshops covered topics to assist staff with the tools to help build long-term relationships by making a real connection with the membership, by servicing to communicate value and build strengths, and to continue building and developing our greatest resource--**membership involvement**--that will assist in growing our membership!

Bargaining: International Vice President and Director of National Bargaining for the UFCW Kevin Williamson directed a strategy session on bargaining for the future in health, welfare and pension and securing strong language as we prepare contracts for the future.

The speakers that addressed the group were excellent as they covered topics such as bargaining, retail trends, new retail technology and company updates on a national level. The final workshop was:

Closing the Gap between Strategy and Execution:

It was led by Ram Charan who is a world-renowned global advisor, author and speaker with 35 years' experience working with top CEOs to form powerful insights that help leaders face their organizations' toughest challenges. Mr. Charan led an interactive session outlining his strategy for success by executing, believing and practice. His six major points covered in detail how to make yourself and your organization and the people you work with better:

- *Know your people
- *Know the anatomy of your organization
- *Focus
- *Priorities
- *Staff meetings “productive”
- *Collaboration

This was an awesome presentation that helped me take a closer look inside and make a plan to help better communicate to others. I can't wait to read his book.

The conference concluded with a Regional UFCW Breakout Session. It was extremely insightful to know how organizing and bargaining has been going in Region Six (our region) covering Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Wisconsin, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas.

Rena Wong, Director of Organizing for UFCW Local 653, led a panel on organizing and gave a great presentation on the model she uses that led to **two** recent **election victories** for the workers at Linden Hills and Eastside Co-ops in Minneapolis.

I gave a bargaining update that included six contract ratifications since last April, improving the lives of over five hundred members and their families.

I want to thank Local 653 President Matt Utecht for inviting me to attend and for inviting Union Steward and rank and file member Jay Grygar to attend (see her article in the June Fact Finder). It was great getting to know her and see her passion. I definitely came away excited to continue working for the membership and help make us stronger together!

Wilson-McShane Corporation



Surviving Your Summer Allergies

Although the fully bloomed trees, flowers and green grass in June, July and August may be nice to look at, summer can be an uncomfortable and occasionally a dangerous time for allergy sufferers. Trees are usually done with their pollination by late spring, which leaves grass and weeds to trigger summer allergies. Ragweed is one of the most common summer allergens in our area. Other common allergens that strike during the summer months are pollen, mold, insect bites, smog, seasonal fruit/vegetable allergies (such as apples and celery), smoke from campfires, and chlorine.

Symptoms are not limited to the hallmark sneezing, runny nose and watery eyes. Black eyes, lines across the nose and other cosmetic symptoms can occur. Even if you have never had allergies before, they can suddenly appear at any age and time of the year. You may want to visit an allergist if you experience any of the signs below.

Symptoms of Summer Allergies:

- Runny nose
- Watery eyes
- Sneezing
- Coughing
- Itchy eyes and nose
- Dark circles under the eyes
- Allergic Shiner: Dark circles under the eyes which are due to swelling and discoloration from congestion of small blood vessels beneath the skin in the delicate eye area.
- Allergic Face: Nasal allergies may promote swelling of the adenoids. This results in a tired and droopy appearance.
- Nasal Crease: This is a line which can appear across the bridge of the nose--usually the result of rubbing the nose upward to relieve nasal congestion and itching.
- Mouth breathing: Cases of allergic rhinitis in which severe nasal congestion occurs can result in chronic mouth breathing, associated with the development of a high, arched palate, an elevated upper lip, and an overbite. Teens with allergic rhinitis might need braces to correct dental issues.

Pollution/smog:

Summer air pollution can make your symptoms worse. One of the most common pollutants is ozone. It's created in the atmosphere from a mix of sunlight and chemicals from car exhaust. Summer's strong sunlight and calm winds create clouds of ozone around bigger cities.

Insect Bites:



Bees, wasps, yellow jackets, hornets and other insects can cause allergic reactions when they sting. Insect bites usually cause mild symptoms, like itching and swelling around the area. Sometimes they lead to a severe allergic reaction. During a severe reaction, your throat feels like it's swelling shut, and your tongue might swell. You may feel dizzy, nauseated or go into shock. This is an emergency and you or someone else should call 911 immediately. For a severe allergic reaction, use an epinephrine shot (EpiPen) and call 911. Always carry two doses with you if you are at risk for a severe allergic reaction. For mild reactions, apply ice to the bite area to ease the swelling. If you get stung, remove the stinger. Try a pain reliever, like acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Use a topical cream like hydrocortisone to ease pain and itching. Calamine creams may also help. Use oral antihistamines for itching.

Mold:

Mold loves damp areas including the basement and bathrooms. Mold spores get into the air and set off an allergic reaction. Microscopic insects called dust mites peak during the summer months. They thrive in warm, humid temperatures and nest in beds, fabric and carpets. Their residue can get into the air and set off sneezes, wheezing and runny nose.

Before turning to over-the-counter antihistamines and nasal sprays for relief, allergy sufferers should speak with an allergist to make sure the medication is right for them and enough to combat symptoms.

How are allergies diagnosed?

Your doctor will most likely refer you to an allergist who will perform a skin test. The allergist will expose a small area on your back or arm with a small sample of allergens. If you react, a small red bump will form.

How do I treat my summer allergies?

- Antihistamines: Benadryl, Allegra, Claritin, etc.
- Decongestants: Claritin-D, Allegra-D, Zyrtec-D, etc.
- Nasal spray decongestants: Dristan, NeilMed, etc.
- Corticosteroid nasal sprays: Flonase, Nasacort, Rhinocort, etc.
- Nasal irrigation: Neti pot, saline nasal spray or nebulizers
- Immunotherapy: Receive tiny doses of allergens in the form of shots, tablets or drops.

Steps to make allergy season easier:

- Stay inside when the pollen count and smog levels are high.
- Keep your doors and windows closed. Run your air conditioner to keep allergens out. Use an air purifier.
- Clean air filters in your home often. Also, clean bookshelves, vents and other places where pollen collects.
- Wash bedding and rugs in hot water to get rid of dust mites and allergens.
- Wash your hair, shower and change your clothes after you go outside.
- Vacuum often and wear a mask. The process can kick up pollen, mold and dust trapped in your carpet. Use a vacuum with a HEPA filter.
- Wear a mask when you mow your lawn to avoid grass pollen.
- Keep the humidity in your house between 30% to 50% so dust mites don't thrive.

If you find yourself suffering with summer allergies or have additional questions or concerns regarding allergies, please contact your health provider. Immunotherapy in combination with over-the-counter medications can make a significant difference in your overall comfort level/quality of life when allergens strike.

It's Golf Tournament Sign-up Time!

By Scott Larson, Union Representative



Our 8th Annual John Lego Memorial Golf Tournament will be held on Wednesday, August 30, 2017. It again will be held at Brookview Golf Course in Golden Valley. It will be a shotgun start at 8:00 a.m. Check-in will start at 7:00 a.m. As always, it will be played as a four-person scramble. There will be longest putt and closest to the pin events.

This event is open to active members and retirees. We will provide water and pop on the course and lunch will be served at the conclusion of play. The award ceremony and prizes will top off a great day of golf.

The cost this year is \$192.00 for a foursome. That's only \$48.00 per person, which includes a golf cart!

Questions? Call Scott Larson at 763-525-1500.

8th Annual John Lego Memorial 4-Person Scramble Golf Tournament

1.		
(Team Captain)	Work Location	Telephone
2.		
	Work Location	Telephone
3.		
	Work Location	Telephone
4.		
	Work Location	Telephone

Make checks payable to: **UFCW Local 653**

Mail payment and
entry form to:

(Deadline to register: 08/18/17)

*UFCW Local 653
Attn: Golf Tournament
6160 Summit Dr N, Ste 600
Brooklyn Center, MN 55430*

Service Pins Sent Out June 2017

15 Years

Nanette Kaye (Lunds & Byerlys—Hennepin)
Anne Srnc (Cub—Lakeville West)

20 Years

Bonita Benton (Senova--Villa at Bryn Mawr)
Erik Nelson (Cub—Plymouth Station)

25 Years

Reed Grunseth (Haug's Cub—Plymouth)

30 Years

Dave Cadmus (Kowalski's—Lyndale)
Andrea Mandel (Hirshfield's)
Thomas Pitleck (Jerry's Cub—Quarry)

35 Years

Karen Dahlbloom (Senova--Villa at Bryn Mawr)

40 Years

James Bothum (Jerry's Cub—Bloomington)

45 Years

Jeff Ches (Lunds & Byerlys—St. Louis Park)



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@UFCW653 to stay up
on Local 653 member
news, events, Minnesota
and national labor
movement news!



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today!

UFCW Local 653
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763-525-1500 or 1-800-292-4105

Matthew P. Utecht, President (mutecht@ufcw653.org, 612-965-4307)

Paul Crandall, Secretary-Treasurer (paulc@ufcw653.org, 612-965-4301)
Brainerd / Baxter Cub Foods - Baxter Super One - Crosby Super One - Pequot
Lakes Supervalu

Jessica Hayssen, Director of Communications (jessicah@ufcw653.org, 651-261-8559)

Rena Wong, Director of Organizing (rwong@ufcw653.org, 612-865-4345)

Jess Alexander, Organizer (jessa@ufcw653.org, 612-567-1225)

Amber Allen, Union Representative (ambera@ufcw653.org, 612-865-6755)

CORPORATE CUB FOODS: Apple Valley, Bloomington, Burnsville HOTC, Burnsville South, Chanhassen, Eagan East, Eagan North, Eagan West, Lakeville North, Lakeville South, Lakeville West, Rosemount, Savage, Shorewood
Radermacher's Shakopee Cub
Park Health & Rehab, Healthcare Services at Park H&R

Scott Larson, Union Representative (scottl@ufcw653.org, 612-961-6305)

LUNDS & BYERLYS: Bloomington, Central, Edina, Hennepin, Lake Street, Minnetonka, Navarre, Plymouth, Prior Lake, Richfield, Wayzata, Lunds Manufacturing
Almsted's - Bergan's - Cooper's - Driskill's - Everett's - Ingebretsen's - Jubilee - Oxendale's
Villa at Bryn Mawr, Senova (Bryn Mawr), Healthcare Services (Bryn Mawr)

Rick Milbrath, Union Representative (rmilbrath@ufcw653.org, 612-965-4310)

JERRY'S CUB FOODS: Bloomington, Brookdale, Chaska, Eden Prairie, Elk River, Knollwood, Lake Street, Nicollet, Quarry, Richfield, Rogers, Southdale, West Broadway

JERRY'S FOODS: Eden Prairie, Edina

KING'S COUNTY MARKET: Andover, St. Francis

Hirshfield's
Minnesota Meat Masters
Brede Exposition Services
Swanson's Meats
Monarch Healthcare - Estates at Chateau, Estates at Bloomington
Healthcare Services (Bloomington and Chateau)

Doug Rigert, Union Representative (dougr@ufcw653.org, 612-889-9121)

LUNDS & BYERLYS: Burnsville, Chanhassen, Eagan, Eden Prairie, Edina, Glen Lake, Golden Valley, Maple Grove, Ridgedale, St. Louis Park, St. Cloud
HAUG'S - Cub Coon Rapids (Williston), Cub Minnetonka (Haug), Cub Waterford

KNOWLAN'S FESTIVAL FOODS: Andover, Bloomington, Brooklyn Park
Benedictine @ Innsbruck Healthcare

Jim Schommer, Union Representative (jims@ufcw653.org, 612-965-4308)

CORPORATE CUB FOODS: Blaine North, Blaine South, Blaine West, Brooklyn Park North, Brooklyn Park South, Champlin, Coon Rapids South, Crystal, Fridley, Lagoon, Maple Grove, Monticello, New Brighton, Rockford Road, Silver Lake Road, Vicksburg

KOWALSKI'S MARKETS: Chicago (Parkview), Eagan, Eden Prairie, Excelsior, Hennepin, Lyndale
Homestead at Anoka, Gold Cross, Monarch Healthcare - Oaklawn

Ondrea Shallbetter, Union Representative/Organizing Dept. (ondreas@ufcw653.org, 612-406-9419)

CUB FOODS: Plymouth Station, St. Louis Park

Union Representation

By Rick Milbrath, Union Representative

Our first and most important job as a union representative at Local 653 is to serve and help the membership with any issues they have. We take a great deal of pride in helping the membership solve problems that may arise with management. We are here to **protect the rights** of our union members as well as listen to their concerns and help them understand the union contract.

When you become a union member, you receive benefits under a collective bargaining agreement that nonunion companies do not have for their employees. One of the greatest and most overlooked benefits that a union member has is to have your union representative present during an issue with management. This is known as the grievance procedure.

We believe in handling any and all grievances for our members in the most professional manner. It also would be an understatement to think for one minute that we would allow management to take advantage of our members in regard to the rights they have bargained for over the years in the collective bargaining agreement. Most grievances deal with hours, wages, vacation, or wrongful suspension and termination. If you feel that one of your rights has been violated, give your union representative a call. The union representative makes contact with Human Resources or management in regards to the member's issue. Oftentimes just by communicating with management the majority of the grievances from our members can be resolved at the store level. No formal mediation is required, which is a win/win for everyone involved. Grievances that are not settled at the store level go onto mediation with the member, union representative, along with the employer and a mediator from the State Bureau of Mediation services to be settled. We also can go, if needed, to arbitration, which is the final step of the grievance procedure.

I believe the most overlooked and best value item you have is representation in the collective bargaining agreement. It is extremely important for each member to know what your rights are under the contract. Take time to read your union contract, and if you do not have one, call the office or your union representative and we will get you one. If you have any questions on anything regarding your contract, give us a call--we will be more than happy to look into it for you.

Posted Schedules

By Amber Allen, Union Representative

Itend to address issues that come up frequently in a short period of time. A hot topic that has been brought up recently is the issue of posted schedules. One of the issues we get calls about is someone not being available to work a posted shift. My best recommendation in that case is to address it with management as soon as possible; the schedules are up two weeks in advance, so if you know you will be unavailable, the sooner it's addressed the more likely they will be able to work with you. If you can't get the issue resolved with management, be sure to contact your union representative.

The second hot topic recently is management making changes to the posted schedule, or the posted schedule in the breakroom not matching the schedule in the department. In this case, my best recommendation is to address the issue with management. If there is no resolution, always go with what is posted in the breakroom or common area, and if possible take pictures of your schedule once it is posted. Then you will have a record if there have been any changes. Many times management will ask before making changes, due to unforeseen circumstances, and often employees will agree to the changes, which is great; however, remember there is no obligation on your part and once the schedule is posted, those hours and shifts are a guarantee. Again, if you can't get the issue resolved by dealing with management, contact your union representative.

Cashiers are Crucial and Never Forgotten

By Doug Rigert, Union Representative

As you might assume, there are many responsibilities to being a union representative. If I'm doing the job properly, the one thing that is always on my mind is what I can do or improve upon to be better at my job and deliver a better value to the members I represent. There is no part of the job that is more important than the time spent with you the member during store visits to hear how you are doing and to find out if there is anything I can perhaps do to help if there is a problem. Although there is no way around it, I know how difficult and awkward it can be at times to stop and speak to your union representative while at work. There's always plenty of work to be done and often not enough help to do it. Because of this, many times meaningful visits with members are simply not possible and may consist of little more than a pleasant hello.

There are two groups among all members who experience the least amount of regular contact or face-to-face time with their union representative. They are those who are working overnights and those who hold the position of cashier. In the day-to-day operation of a store it takes many tasks, skills, knowledge, hard work as well as a variety of different job positions to make it all work and to be profitable. One of those most important jobs is that of a cashier. This job requires a high level of accountability and excellent people skills in order to do the job properly. In most cases the last interaction a customer has is with a cashier. Believe it or not, that last encounter can often make the difference on whether they will continue to shop there or go elsewhere.

We all know it's the customer that comes first and makes all of our paychecks possible. It's for that reason more often during a store visit cashiers are far more challenging to talk with because they are servicing the customer, and nothing else is more important or should get in the way of that. This, however, should not be misunderstood that if you are a cashier, that you are somehow a less important member in the eyes of your union representative. Nothing could be further from the truth. You are the **BOSS** and we all work for **YOU!** If you ever find that you would like to speak to your union representative but it never seems possible when they are in your store for a visit, please give them a call when it is convenient for you. The best way to reach your representative is to call them on their cell phone. Their phone numbers and email addresses are listed in every Fact Finder (page 7 of this issue). All communications--whether by phone, text or email--are 100% confidential unless you request otherwise.

Executive Board Members

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Cub Has Three Grand Reopenings!

By Jim Schommer, Union Representative

On Thursday, June 8, Corporate Cub Foods held three grand reopenings at their newly remodeled stores, one in Champlin and two in Brooklyn Park. Each of the stores kicked the grand reopening off with an employee appreciation party Wednesday night to thank the employees for their many, many hours of hard work and dedication in getting the stores ready.

All the stores are beautiful, with very similar updates which include produce and meat departments. The deli departments were totally remodeled with all new cases and a variety of salads and hot foods. There is a new large seating area in each store for customers to gather for coffee, conversation, lunch and dinner. Self-checkout lanes have been expanded; they now have a corral type area with many more self-checkout registers.

Each Cub store gave away 240 free bags of groceries. There were many giveaways the customer could register for, along with numerous demos. There were even

activities outside that customers could participate in.

I didn't take many pictures of the shiny new stores, so you will have to stop in and see them for yourselves. I want to highlight the hardworking Local 653 members that made these grand reopenings a huge success. CONGRATULATIONS!! You all did an incredible job. Keep up the hard work.



United Food & Commercial Workers Local 653

6160 Summit Drive N, Ste 600
Brooklyn Center, MN 55430
763-525-1500 or 1-800-292-4105
www.ufcw653.org



UFCW Local 653 Membership Letter

Matthew P. Utecht
President

June 7, 2017

Paul Crandall
Secretary-Treasurer

Dear Pension Member,

Union Representatives

Amber Allen
Scott Larson
Rick Milbrath
Douglas Rigert
James Schommer
Ondrea Shallbetter

It has come to my attention that there may be misleading information that is circulating about the status of your pension plan, the Minneapolis Retail Meat Cutter and Food Handlers Pension Plan. Of course, the backdrop to this is the front-page news we all read regarding pension crises like the Teamsters Central States situation. Additionally, you may be concerned about Lunds and Byerly's recent withdrawal from the plan. For all these reasons, I want to use this communication to set the record straight and assure you that your pension plan is well governed and that UFCW Local 653 is doing everything in its power to protect your retirement security.

Director of Organizing
Rena Wong

First, your pension plan is in no danger of going insolvent, and is capable of meeting its benefit obligations. The plan actuary has certified this fact with the board of trustees and the Federal government as recently as of May 2017. The plan currently has assets of \$530 million. Expected employer contributions in 2017 will be \$23 million. An additional \$60 million will be contributed by withdrawn employers between now and 2021. Furthermore, the plan expects to earn \$40 million in investment returns on current assets in 2017 and similar amounts in future years. These facts attest to the fact that your pension plan in no way resembles the catastrophic financial condition of the Teamsters Central States plan.

Most of you are well aware that Lunds & Byerlys (L&B) withdrew from the pension plan in February 2017. Contrary to what was reported in the press, no event required L&B to withdraw from the UFCW Pension Plan. In one article, L&B representatives mischaracterized the pension plan's investment performance as poor. Yet in the very fiscal year that L&B withdrew, the plan's assets earned 14.9% return. Over the next five years, L&B will contribute \$50 million in quarterly payments to the pension plan, fulfilling their legal obligation to pay off their portion of the plan's unfunded liability. In the short term, the L&B withdrawal will actually enhance the pension plan's funded status.

At the same time, we recognize that without some additional funding, the plan has challenges to face going forward. The plan is certified endangered status

Pension letter continued on page 12

UFCW Local 653 Members:

Union Meetings are
recessed for the summer.
They will resume on
Monday, October 2, 2017.

SEND IN THE ENTIRE ADDRESS
BOX AT THE RIGHT
FOR A CHANCE TO WIN 4 TICKETS
TO THE MINNESOTA STATE FAIR!

All active, dues-paying members
are eligible for drawings.

Mail your entry to:
UFCW Local 653
Attn: Tickets
6160 Summit Dr N, Ste 600
Brooklyn Center, MN 55430



Retirees' Club Meeting Notice

Knights of Columbus -
Marian Hall

1114 American Blvd. W.
Bloomington, MN 55420

Thursday, July 20, 2017

10:00 a.m. Cards
12:00 p.m. Lunch
1:00 p.m. Speaker

For more information:

Thea Gullekson:
952-831-3143
Char Hanson:
612-869-9035
or Marlen Wahl:
952-888-3220

United Food & Commercial
Workers Union Local 653
6160 Summit Dr N Ste 600
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763-525-1500 or 1-800-292-4105

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Pension letter - continued from page 11

under the Pension Protection Act (PPA) because its funding ratio is 74% and may worsen without some added contributions. That is why Local 653 sought professional advice from two pension experts to recommend solutions on how to stabilize plan's finances. I actually appointed one of these experts as a union trustee on the pension's board in October 2016.

On March 30, 2017, the union and its experts met with most of the contributing employers to the pension plan to discuss potential ways to restructure the plan to improve funding. Those discussions continue.

Under my leadership, Local 653 has been proactive in protecting our pension plan. The security of our pension plan is of the utmost priority and we will take all necessary actions to accomplish that goal. You can expect that improving the funding and security of our pension plan will be front and center from now through upcoming industry negotiations in 2018.

As we make progress toward our goals of rebuilding retirement security, I will be keeping you informed and seeking your advice.

In Solidarity,

Matt Utecht
President

