

UFCW Members in Southern California Ratify New Agreement



UFCW members in Southern California voted to ratify a new contract with Ralphs, Vons and Albertsons.

UFCW members at Ralphs (Kroger), Vons (Safeway) and Albertsons (Supervalu) in Southern California voted this past Friday and Saturday to ratify a new three-year contract with the companies.

The new contract, which covers 52,000 grocery workers in the largest bargaining unit of the UFCW, includes:

- Sufficient funds negotiated to protect medical benefits.
- Maintained current weekly employee premiums of \$7, 10.50 and 15.
- Retiree Health Benefit eligibility increased to 15 years of benefit credit for retirees.
- Protection of current pension accruals and Golden 85.
- Bonus for top rate and over scale employees based on \$.25/ hour for all straight time hours worked during previous 12 months upon ratification.
- Bonus for employees in progressions and Clerk's

Helpers based on \$.15/hour for all straight time hours worked during previous 12 months upon ratification.

- \$.25/ hour increase for all top rate members in all classifications on March 5, 2012.
- Bonus for top rate and over scale employees based on \$.30/ hour for all straight time hours worked during previous 12 months on March 4, 2013.
- Bonus for Clerk's Helpers based on \$.15/hour for all straight time hours worked during previous 12 months on March 4, 2013.
- Funeral leave- add domestic partners and extend to Clerk's Helpers.
- Reaffirm no split shifts (all employees shall receive 10 hours between shifts, including Sunday to Monday).

Throughout the eight months of negotiation, thousands of UFCW members stood together to send a unified message to all three companies that workers are willing to pay their fair share and the burden of higher health care costs, but refuse to let highly profitable companies eliminate their benefits entirely.

"We owe our success to our members, who stood united and strong, and to the hundreds of thousands of our loyal customers who signed cards pledging their support for the workers," the members of the bargaining committee said. "This package protects our members' access to affordable comprehensive health care for themselves and their families. That was our top priority throughout the negotiating process."

The new agreement, ratified by members of UFCW Locals 8GS, 135, 324, 770, 1167, 1428 and 1442, replaces the previous contract which expired this past March, and will retroactively take effect from March 7, 2011 and expire on March 2, 2014. An additional 28,000 working at Stater Bros., Gelson's and Food-4-Less will all follow the pattern set by the big three. **OP**

Nebraska Prime Group Workers Say Union Yes with UFCW Local 22

Two hundred and sixty conventional and kosher beef slaughter workers at Nebraska Prime Group in Hastings, Neb., have exercised their right to join UFCW Local 22. Nebraska Prime Group recognized the workers' choice for a real voice on the job after an overwhelming majority of workers at the beef processing plant signed cards to show their desire for UFCW representation.

"Our victory is important for me and my family," said David Pettit, a plant employee and father of three children. "We can work for better benefits at my plant and that means I can take better care of my three kids and cover them on my insurance. I'm so glad that Nebraska Prime let us choose a card check process. It speaks a lot for their character and it makes me have more respect for where I work."

Key issues for bargaining will include Sunday work due to the kosher work schedule, benefits and wages. **OP**

Workers at Bob's Discount Furniture in Stamford Say Union Yes with UFCW Local 919

Workers at Bob's Discount Furniture in Stamford, Conn., voted on September 23 to form a union with Local 919. The Stamford store, which employs 14 workers, is the third store to go union in the 40-store chain, which stretches across New England and the Mid-Atlantic. Around 50 workers at Bob's Discount Furniture stores in Manchester and Orange, Conn., voted to form a union with Local 919 in August.

Bob's Discount Furniture was formerly a privately held company, but is now controlled by Apax Partners, a London-based private equity firm. Apax Partners also has substantial interests in a variety of American retail outlets, including DKNY, Van Heusen and Tommy Hilfiger. **OP**

UFCW Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month



September 15 to October 15 is National Hispanic Heritage Month.

Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated between September 15 and October 15, recognizing independence from Spain for the Latin American countries of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Mexico. In 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson instituted this celebration in recognition of the growing Latino population.

The UFCW has a long and rich legacy of standing up for immigrant rights on the job - a tradition we carry on today, thanks in part to the efforts of organizers and leaders like Emilio Emeterio "Red" Gomez. Mr. Gomez passed away on April 16, 2011, after a long career, first as a meat cutter and later as an organizer with the UFCW. He was a founder of the United Latinos of the UFCW, becoming its president in 2001. He supported political candidates who supported workers, and served all members equally, regardless of race, ethnic background, sex, or religion.

Working people, their unions, and the growing U.S. Latino community face strong challenges from a weak economy and hostile social and political movements. In spite of the poverty and low wages Latinos experience, a recent survey by the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement at http://www.lclaa.org/images/pdf/LCLAA_Report.pdf found that Latinos are optimistic about the future of the country, which is what the union movement is about. To that we say, "¡Sí, Se Puede!" **OP**