

# The Leading Edge



News for Boeing  
South Carolina Employees



Volume 1, Number 1

June 2014

## Organized Labor: Building the Middle Class



For nearly 150 years, Unions have been on the front lines fighting for many of the basic workplace protections we take for granted today.

In 1911, more than 100,000 mourners flooded the streets of New York for the funeral procession of the 146 garment workers who lost their lives to a tragic fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory.

The Machinists Union just a few years later battled management head on and began winning an 8-hour work day in many shops and factories across the country.

When West Coast longshoremen went on strike in 1934 for better working conditions, they were confronted with widespread intimidations and violence by law enforcement. Sadly, two individuals lost their lives.

It was the sacrifice of these early trade unionists and the countless that came after them that led to workplace protections and benefits such as:

- **The 40-hour work week.**
- **Overtime pay.**
- **Child labor protections.**
- **Paid vacation.**
- **The weekend.**
- **Sick leave.**

And it's more than just basic protections. It's higher wages, workplace safety and a secure retirement. Unions still contin-

ue to raise the standard of living for everyone – both union and non-union. But anyone who thinks that fight is over is wearing blinders. Today, organized labor is fighting to preserve the promise that a lifetime of hard work is rewarded with a secure retirement. They are also fighting to balance the scales of power between the middle class and the top 1 percent by seeking a living wage for all workers.

Unions are also fighting to ensure detached politicians don't roll back any of the basic protections that preserve a strong working class. As recently as last year, House lawmakers introduced legislation that would eliminate the 40-hour work week by removing the requirement that employers pay a cash premium for overtime work.

### Representing Workers

The core mission of any union is to represent its members. The IAM has won a number of victories on behalf of their members in recent years.

Earlier this year, the IAM reached an agreement with United Airlines to pay 30,000 IAM-represented fleet service, passenger service and stockroom employees retroactive wages they were owed, plus interest. IAM members had received wage increases ranging from seven to 29 percent effective November 1, 2013. The agreement mandated full (Continued...)



*Working 10 hours a day for just 20 to 25 cents an hour, 19 railroad machinists converged for a secret meeting in a locomotive pit in Atlanta, GA some 126 years ago. The mission of these original Machinists – to receive fair treatment and compensation for an honest day's work – continues today.*

## Building the Middle Class...continued

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...retroactive payments were paid by April.

Machinist LaShawn Buford (right), who works for Olin Corporation in East Alton, IL, earlier this year was awarded more than \$70,000 in back pay after being unfairly terminated from his job in 2012. After IAM District 9 filed a grievance and ultimately took the case to arbitration, the Machinist was awarded all lost wages, including any overtime he missed. The company was also responsible for reimbursing out-of-pocket costs to cover medical and dental insurance, the company's 401(k) match and the company's contribution to the defined benefit pension plan. When asked by his co-workers how he got his job back, he said, "The Union did it all for me."



IAM retirees at Raytheon Missile Systems in Tucson, AZ recently won \$2.5 million in back pay. The dispute originated when Raytheon made unilateral changes to retirees' healthcare benefits that had been spelled out in the IAM/Raytheon agreement. The IAM went to court to get the benefits restored.

### ***Fighting for Good Jobs***

The IAM is on the front lines fighting for programs, such as the Lockheed Martin F-35 Joint Strike Fighter and the Bath Iron Works DDG-51 Destroyer, that create jobs and ensure the success of our members.



When sequestration threatened to devastate more than one million working Americans and numerous businesses, the IAM worked with the Aerospace Industries Association and others to call for alternatives to the \$600 billion in proposed budget cuts.

In the general aviation industry, the IAM teamed with a consortium of stakeholders to fight against short-sighted government policies that cost valuable jobs at Cessna, Hawker Beechcraft and Bombardier.

## Your Right to Organize, It's the Law!

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You have the right to join or support a union. Under the law, you can:

1. Attend meetings to discuss joining a union.
2. Read, distribute, and discuss union literature (as long as you do this in non-work areas during non-work times, such as during breaks or lunch periods.)
3. Sign the petitions or file grievances related to wages, hours of work, working conditions, and other job issues.
4. Ask other employees to support the union, to sign union petitions, or to file the grievances.

Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act says: "Employees shall have the right to self-organization, to form, join, or assist labor organizations to bargain collectively through representation of their own choosing, and to engage in other concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining..."

## Links

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**Employee Rights:** [http://www.dol.gov/olms/regs/compliance/EmployeeRightsPoster11x17\\_Final.pdf](http://www.dol.gov/olms/regs/compliance/EmployeeRightsPoster11x17_Final.pdf)

**GoIAM:** [www.goiam.org](http://www.goiam.org)

**Machinists Union Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/MachinistsUnion>

**NLRB** <https://www.nlr.gov/>

**AFL-CIO:** [www.aflcio.org](http://www.aflcio.org)

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