

The Calgon Carbon Lockout on Neville Island

Background

- Management at Pittsburgh-based Calgon Carbon Corp. locked out 60 members of United Steelworkers Local 5032 who work at the Neville Island, Pennsylvania facility near Pittsburgh at midnight, Feb. 29.
- Management is attempting to run the plant with local management and supervisors shipped in from Kentucky and Ohio. The union has received reports of multiple mishaps since these replacements took over
- Workers at this Calgon facility produce activated carbon products for filtration systems and for removing impurities from water and air. At work, they come in contact with a lot of heavy metals, mercury, lead, benzene, chrome, copper, silver nitrate and other dangerous substances.

The Issues

- Union workers are fighting to maintain affordable family health care benefits, as well as their pension plans, both of which management wants to gut.
- Workers in this plant deal with a variety of toxic and carcinogenic materials. Cuts to health insurance coverage after a lifetime of exposure to toxic chemicals would be devastating.

Betrayal

- Over the past decade, union workers have responded to management pleas and taken concessions to keep the company afloat as it faced financial trouble. Now that the company is turning windfall profits amid a boom in the market for activated carbon, these sacrifices by union workers are apparently forgotten by bosses.
- Union workers have been receptive to doing whatever needs to be done to keep the business profitable, even supervising themselves as a “self-directed workforce” to save on the cost of having shop floor managers.
- Many workers felt a sense of betrayal when in the current round of contract talks, management was completely inflexible in demanding to take away workers’ health care insurance and pension benefits.

Fighting to Win!

- Union members set up 24-hour picket lines at the plant’s two entrances, and are sometimes joined there by other union members and supporters from the community.
- Fellow union members and community supporters are rallying to the defense of the locked out Calgon workers, and vow to expand the struggle if a fair contract offer from management is not forthcoming. Food, cash and other donations have been offered to USW Local 5032 members and their families.
- USW 5032 union member are holding strong and vow to continue fighting for a fair union contract and justice for all Calgon workers.