

# TEAMSTERS READY MESSAGE, MUSCLE FOR 2016 ELECTIONS

A MESSAGE FROM GENERAL PRESIDENT JAMES P. HOFFA



Having an idea is one thing. Getting it done is another.

The Teamsters late last year introduced a package of legislative priorities when it unveiled "Let's Get America Working" (LGAW). And the union saw progress made toward those goals when Congress in December passed its first long-term transportation funding bill in more than a decade.

But not all of our proposals are going to slide through the process so smoothly. There are trillions of dollars' worth of infrastructure needs not only for roads and rails, but for the nation's energy and water systems. There is a need to protect the rights of workers to organize, and for better education and vocational training as well. And elected officials must ensure that everyday Americans can have a secure retirement.

Now, the union is debuting a new program for activists that will help make the LGAW platform a reality. "Building Teamster Political Power" is meant to get members involved in making these policies a reality. Locals will identify members who will be trained on how to talk about political issues and persuade their fellow Teamsters on the issues that matter most to this union.

By starting early, the Teamsters can have scores of trained political activists on the ground to participate in the union's 2016 election program. And we will need every one of them to push back on the message of the corporate candidates who are seeking to reward their contributors.

Remember—Teamster Strong, America Stronger!



# BAKERY & LAUNDRY News



James P. Hoffa, General President | Ken Hall, General Secretary-Treasurer | Dave Dudas, Conference Director



**FLOUR POWER!**  
Workers at California Flour Plant Join Local 166

California millers, lab technicians, warehouse and maintenance workers knew they had the right ingredients to win Teamster representation at Ardent Mills. After years of making and handling flour for the company's milling center in Colton, Calif., the 24-person unit stood strong in their fight for a voice on the job, overcoming management's tough opposition to join Local 166 in Bloomington, Calif.

"We have had a hard time with a supervisor and we needed to form our union to begin getting treated fairly," said Raul Alvarez, a lead worker on the organizing committee and three-and-a-half-year employee for the company. "Our health insurance is also very, very expensive. I pay \$320 a month out-of-pocket for a family plan with very high co-pays."

Alvarez said he and his co-workers are very happy about the vote.

"It feels good to be a Teamster, really good," he said.

In addition to better health care, the 24-worker

bargaining unit is also looking to put an end to favoritism and unfair work rules, said Joe Maae, a business agent and organizer with Local 166.

"They need fairness and respect. They need fair, consistent work rules and better benefits. Some workers are required to do other jobs and they are paying a lot out of pocket each month on health care," Maae said.

Local 166 Secretary-Treasurer Mike Bergen is looking forward to negotiating a contract for his new members at the Ardent Mill's bakery-mix center.

"The workers are desperately seeking respect and fairness on the job and we will work hard to negotiate a contract that addresses their needs at Ardent Mills," Bergen said.

Ardent Mills was formed in 2014. The flour milling company is a joint venture between ConAgra Foods and Horizon Milling. The Colton, Calif. workers are the first Ardent Mills unit to join the Teamsters Union.

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## STRONG LEGACY, POWERFUL FUTURE

As Bakery and Laundry Conference members, you should take pride in knowing that you are part of the oldest conference within our union. I challenge you to carry strong Teamster traditions on into the future and I appreciate and applaud the work Bakery and Laundry Conference members do each and every day.



Over the coming weeks and months, I will be traveling across the country to meet with members and hear your ideas on how we can better the lives of everyone in our conference. Working together, we will bargain the best contracts possible, we will organize smarter, and we will hold irresponsible corporations accountable.

I do not want to pretend this will be easy. But I know we can do it. No matter the challenges we may face, I will be your ally and champion each and every day. By working together we will improve wages, provide affordable health care, build a solid retirement and protect you on the job.

I encourage every member of our conference to get active in their local union by going to meetings and participating in the activities of your union. Remember, you have the power to shape your future.

The more involved and active we are, the more successful we will be. Let us build a solid future for our families and for all of our brothers and sisters in the Teamsters Bakery and Laundry Conference. Thank you for your continued support.

## MERGER IN MICHIGAN Teamster Unity Adds Horsepower in Motor City



Unions are founded on the principle of pooling the collective strength of workers to achieve a better life for themselves and their families. Similarly, unions join together to enhance their strength.

Teamsters have long known that success at the bargaining table is based on collective strength. When workers harness their collective power, they are more powerful at the negotiating table. It was with this in mind that two longtime Detroit Teamster bakery locals recently joined forces, bringing added strength to members of the Teamsters Bakery and Laundry Conference in the Wolverine State.

On October 30, a merger was formalized between Local 51 and Local 337. The transition has been smooth and all parties involved are excited to join forces for more organizing and added bargaining power. All parties are confident the merger will bring significant improvements across the board.

“Our unions complement each other well, and together you will be stronger than ever.” said Mike Martin, President of Local 337.

Although uniting two unions is a large and detailed undertaking, leaders at both locals have united in the spirit of solidarity and Teamster unity. Martin noted that he has been working with former Local 51 President Larry Freeman to make this a seamless transition, both for current Local 337 members and the new members from Local 51.

“This unification makes Local 337 one of the most powerful Teamster local unions in Michigan,” said Freeman, noting the merger will also allow for stronger political action. “Union members are under attack here in Michigan like never before, and we have to fight back any way possible to protect our members’ interests as we look to the future. This merger is a positive step for everyone and bodes well for us today and for years to come.”



Last fall, the Teamsters unveiled its “Let’s Get America Working” (LGAW) platform that stressed the need for Congress to approve infrastructure investment and defend worker-friendly policies. Members and everyday Americans are already seeing positive results.

The biggest victory came in December when, after more than a decade, Congress approved a five-year, \$305-billion long-term transportation bill that sets a path forward to pay for road, rail and mass transit upgrades. Its passage was somewhat miraculous, given that Capitol Hill is still mired in conflict and unable to come together on much of anything.

“Congress should be congratulated for this major accomplishment,” said Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa. “Infrastructure investment provided an opportunity to break the political gridlock in Washington, and elected officials from both parties made the first move toward rebuilding and repairing the trust between government and workers.”

But the victories didn’t end there. The Teamsters supported a \$1.1 trillion omnibus appropriations bill

signed into law just before Christmas that ensured workers retained their rights to organize on the job and continued to receive comprehensive health insurance from their employers without being financially penalized.

The effort to implement LGAW isn’t over yet. In 2016, the union will keep up the fight to defeat the 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership and keep American jobs at home. It will also continue its efforts to defeat a proposal by the Central States Pension Fund that would dramatically cut the pensions of tens of thousands of Teamsters.

Going forward, this nation must invest in rebuilding its energy and water systems, as well as make sure union members retain their ability to collectively bargain so they can earn a fair wage. Workers need proper training and access to educational opportunities. And retirement should be made secure by bolstering both pension plans and Social Security.

Teamsters need to join together to make this happen. That way everyone wins.