One of the most important goals in bargaining is to have similar, if not identical, standards for workers across an industry or region. Local 175 in South Charleston, W. Va., has achieved that goal for 118 members who work at United Dairy and Broughton Foods facilities throughout the state.

“These contracts will maintain the excellent healthcare benefits at both companies — not to mention, increase wages and strengthen job security,” said Ralph Winter, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 175. “We worked hard to secure past gains at the bargaining table and win the best contract possible in terms of wages, pension and working conditions.”

“We got off to a strong start in 2015 negotiating these two contracts. Everyone is proud to keep the securities and benefits we have long worked for at both companies,” said Luke Farley, business agent of Local 175. “West Virginia Teamsters have a strong presence in the state’s dairy industry. It was clearly in everyone’s best interests to have equally solid agreements at both companies.”

Farley and Winter worked alongside General Secretary-Treasurer Ken Hall, who also serves as President of Local 175, to bargain simultaneously with representatives from each company. Together, the negotiating team would reach two strong agreements in less than a month. Both units voted overwhelmingly in favor of their respective three-year contract.

“Let’s get America working and revive our nation to the shining city on the hill it once was again.”
When workers organize, they take a major step forward in improving their lives. But we know that once an organizing election is won, the hard work is far from over. It takes a strong contract and consistent enforcement by local union representatives and shop stewards to protect and maintain those negotiated standards.

Over the past several months there have been significant gains throughout the dairy industry. Through successful organizing campaigns and strong collective bargaining efforts, the Teamsters Dairy Conference has raised industry standards—organizing new members and negotiating strong contracts with real results.

We successfully negotiated several contracts to create a work environment that fosters productivity and pride, not disrespect and mistrust. This includes two strong agreements at United Dairy and Broughton Dairy, bargained simultaneously by representatives of Local 176 in West Virginia. These contracts will help stabilize our members’ job security and ensure wages and benefits remain secure for years to come.

In this issue of the newsletter, you’ll also read about Balford Farms in Pennsylvania, where workers displayed such a strong show of unity and support for Local 463 that management agreed to card-check, providing workers with immediate representation under the protection of a union contract.

Our ability to successfully organize and bargain is directly linked to the strength of local unions. As local unions work to achieve strong contracts for their members, the Teamsters’ Dairy Conference is working hard to provide adequate resources for local unions. In the coming months, we hope to focus on local union efforts, whatever they may be. Think of us as a resource for you, and let us know how we can help you achieve your goals. Together, we will continue building a strong division and even stronger union to improve the lives of all working families in the dairy industry.

Dairy workers at Balford Farms in Hatfield, Levittown and York, Penn., displayed such a strong display of unity and support for Local 463, presenting management with a unanimous secured card-check for the 87-person unit, that management chose to forgo the union election and grant workers representation. The 100-percent participation paid off again later that week when the company agreed to provide workers with the protection of a union contract, which the workers quickly voted to ratify.

The workers who drive and work for the company’s warehouse and distribution facilities are now covered by the same contract as their brothers and sisters in Yorktown, Penn., also represented by Local 463.

“This is a great contract, with wage increases and maintenance of the superior Teamster benefit package,” said Rich Deal, a business agent for Local 463.

“We were able to work with management so that the workers not only gained representation but also an immediate contract. We already have two contracts with this company,” said Robert Ryder, Local 463 Secretary-Treasurer.

“Thank goodness we are Teamsters. Now we have a secure contract backed by strong, union protection,” said Steve, a delivery driver for Balford Farms for over 16 years. “We’re really pleased with what we got, especially the health and welfare package. It was important for the unit to have health care and retirement because otherwise we could not afford it. Now we can maintain our benefits and keep pace with the economy.”

Teamsters Dairy Conference has successfully negotiated several contracts to create a work environment that fosters productivity and pride, not disrespect and mistrust. This includes two strong agreements at United Dairy and Broughton Dairy, bargained simultaneously by representatives of Local 176 in West Virginia. These contracts will help stabilize our members’ job security and ensure wages and benefits remain secure for years to come.

In this issue of the newsletter, you’ll also read about Balford Farms in Pennsylvania, where workers displayed such a strong show of unity and support for Local 463 that management agreed to card-check, providing workers with immediate representation under the protection of a union contract. You’ll also learn of a major organizing campaign and strong support for Local 463 that management agreed to card-check, providing workers with immediate representation.

Two Wins in One Week at Balford Farms

Dairy workers at Balford Farms in Hatfield, Levittown and York, Penn., displayed such a strong display of unity and support for Local 463, presenting management with a unanimous secured card-check for the 87-person unit, that management chose to forgo the union election and grant workers representation. The 100-percent participation paid off again later that week when the company agreed to provide workers with the protection of a union contract, which the workers quickly voted to ratify.

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Solidarity Pays Off in Pennsylvania

Dairy workers at Balford Farms in Hatfield, Levittown and York, Penn., displayed such a strong display of unity and support for Local 463, presenting management with a unanimous secured card-check for the 87-person unit, that management chose to forgo the union election and grant workers representation. The 100-percent participation paid off again later that week when the company agreed to provide workers with the protection of a union contract, which the workers quickly voted to ratify.

The workers who drive and work for the company’s warehouse and distribution facilities are now covered by the same contract as their brothers and sisters in Yorktown, Penn., also represented by Local 463.

“This is a great contract, with wage increases and maintenance of the superior Teamster benefit package,” said Rich Deal, a business agent for Local 463.

“We were able to work with management so that the workers not only gained representation but also an immediate contract. We already have two contracts with this company,” said Robert Ryder, Local 463 Secretary-Treasurer.

“Thank goodness we are Teamsters. Now we have a secure contract backed by strong, union protection,” said Steve, a delivery driver for Balford Farms for over 16 years. “We’re really pleased with what we got, especially the health and welfare package. It was important for the unit to have health care and retirement because otherwise we could not afford it. Now we can maintain our benefits and keep pace with the economy.”

More Saputo Workers Join Local 662

Saputo workers won a breakthrough victory last October, voting overwhelmingly, 367 to 79, in favor of representation by Local 662 in Green Bay, Wisc. The 459 production, maintenance and warehouse employees at the company’s cheese production facility in Lena, Wisc., cited favoritism, unaffordable health insurance and lack of respect as the main reasons for organizing with the Teamsters.

“This margin of victory shows what we can do together when the membership is this united. We are looking forward to negotiating a strong bargaining agreement for this deserving group of workers,” said Tom Strickland, a business agent with Local 662. “Our victory clearly shows that workers in the dairy industry realize the power of union representation.”

Strickland is looking forward to negotiating a strong contract for the Saputo workers.

“I’m excited because I know I can keep on supporting my family and we can negotiate for fair wages and benefits as Teamsters,” said Deb Panske, a stick operator at Saputo.

“I am so happy to be a Teamster because I know we will be treated fairly,” said Brett Behnke, a string assembler at Saputo.

“We are proud to welcome these brothers and sisters to the Teamsters. Their campaign was a quick victory due to the resolve of the group to gain Teamster representation,” said Rick Skutak, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 662. Saputo is a Montreal-based dairy company with operations in more than 40 countries. It is the 10th largest dairy processor in the world and second largest cheese maker in the United States. The Teamsters now represent more than 1,600 Saputo workers at 11 facilities in the U.S. and Canada.”

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Deb Panske, Saputo Stick Operator

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