**Building a Mass Campaign to Unionize at the Rocky Mount Engine Plant**

For the past 20 years, the CDC Unity Committee a member of the Carolina Auto Aerospace and Machine Workers Union (CAAMWU) a private sector member of the North Carolina Public Service Workers Union-UE Local 150, has been a union at the Cummins Rocky Mount Engine Plant (RMEP) and has awakened the consciousness about the importance of worker self-organization and rank-and-file social movement unionism.

While not having a contract, the union has many important accomplishments:

* Many grievances have been won with the assistance of CDC union stewards who represented workers in disciplinary hearings,
* Fired workers have been reinstated with back pay,
* Won a Martin L. King, Jr. paid holiday for all workers
* Policy changes have been made in the company handbook,
* Management claimed a plant shutdown was part of a Christmas vacation, but the union proved it was a for business needs and won a week’s pay for workers,
* Won a major labor board charge at the 4th Circuit Supreme Court against management’s confiscating union literature in break rooms, claiming it was cleaning. Management was made to put union literature bens in all break rooms for management to put union literature left on tables,
* Organized 250 workers to represent a class that sued the company for not fully paying a promised bonus, resulting in all plant workers being paid for a promised bonus that the company did not fully pay equaling more than $1 million.
* Got 330 workers to sign a petition, wear union stickers and talked to Cummins board of directors and CEO when they visited the plant in October 2013 calling for a seventy-five cent across-the-board pay raise. In May 2014, workers got an eighty cent raise.
* CAAMWU members working for DTZ, a maintenance and housekeeping onsite contractor at RMEP led a campaign that won a 3% raise in April 2014 and on May 2, received retroactive back pay from January 1, 2014.

These gains represent significant improvements resulting from in plant worker organization, rank-and-file education and mobilization, community support and collaboration with the Black Workers For Justice, a community organization with contacts and committees in a number of workplaces engaged in labor organizing and support work in Eastern, NC.

**Resources for Campaign:**

The CAAMWU has built an important infrastructure of support in Edgecombe, Nash, Wilson and Pitt Counties including representatives of town councils, state representatives, churches and community organizations to reach out to for endorsing the campaign.

* Has a list with addresses and phone contacts of RMEP workers to start house visits immediately.
* Is part of the Southern Workers Assembly that can provide some volunteer rank-and-file organizers to help conduct house visits and gate leafleting.
* Is part of the Moral Monday Campaign and can get support from Rev. William Barber and others.

Building an RMEP campaign that involves permanent, temporary, contract and warehouse workers must become the focus to unite, organize and empower all these workers that contribute to the RMEP operation

**Launching the RMEP Campaign Using the $15.00 per Hour Minimum Wage Demand**

The starting wage for “permanent” RMEP workers is less than $11 an hour, and for many workers in sub-companies – onsite contractors, temp agencies and warehouses its less than $8 an hour. For example, workers from the Tri-County Industry doing final inspection on auto engine piston heads start at $7.25 per hour with no benefits.

The Raise Up campaign of the fast food workers for $15.00 per hour has created a further awareness among workers at RMEP, their contractor DTZ and the temporary and warehouse workers about how underpaid they really are.

There are at least three advantages for taken up the $15.00 per hour campaign at RMEP. First it connects with the energy that has been generated by the fast food workers campaign, and further opens the eyes of the public about low wage are in the manufacturing industries. Second, it offers an opportunity to build a common demand to unite the various categories of worker entities at RMEP. Three, most of the manufacturing plants in Eastern, NC have starting wages less than $10.00 per hour. This campaign has the potential to attract other manufacturing workers to CAAMWU.

**Where to Begin?**

1. Do orientation about the strategy and character and goals of the RMEP Campaign.
2. Begin agitation at RMEP and warehouse entrances that identifies all workers as part of the RMEP deserving a livable starting wage of $15.00 per hour and union recognition.
3. Break down worker contact list by town and department and review and do basic rating with CAAMWU members at RMEP.
4. Hold informational pickets at RMEP and Warehouse entrances with fast food workers promoting $15.00 and for workers to join CAAMWU.
5. Hold RMEP worker speaks outs to hear issues impacting all workers and form in plant organizing committees with a goal of establishing sub-company units of CAAMWU for concerted activity.
6. Develop workers speak out leaflet with photos addressing the issues for distribution.
7. Develop petition for workers to use to take to managers calling for a $15.00 per hour minimum wage.
8. Get community and faith base organizations to endorse campaign that can be used on literature.
9. Hold press conference with community and faith supporters (Moral Monday) calling for $15.00.
10. Begin major house visits after agitation begins at the plants that continue as part of ongoing work.
11. Conduct a RMEP $15.00 motorcades in Rocky Mount, Whitakers, Enfield, passing other plants and rallying at Martin L. King Park where workers from RMEP, DTZ, Warehouse and Temporary speak.
12. Hold a CAAMWU RMEP Workers Assembly to develop a plant-wide program and to elect representatives from the sub-unit companies to a unity council.

We need to have an office and meeting place near the plant like the Bloomer Hill Community Center. A donation would be good.

Daily briefing and debriefing meetings and contact with all organizers and rank-and-file are needed; and weekly meetings with in plant organizing committees to begin forming new branches and stewards of CAAMWU.

Each work section needs to establish a membership goal for establishing a CAAMWU unit. This needs to have at least 8 weeks of concentrated activity to help raise the demands for $15.00 and union recognition in preparation for the holding of a CAAMWU RMEP Workers Assembly. **9/20/14**