



UAW WORKERS AT DTNA IN NORTH CAROLINA WIN BIG THROUGH STRIKE THREAT

by **BEN SMITH**, UAW Local 5287 — On the evening of Saturday, May 4 thousands of UAW workers at Daimler Truck North America received text messages announcing the successful ratification of a new four-year master agreement. The more than 7,300 workers at DTNA's four big heavy truck and bus factories in North Carolina and at two DTNA parts distribution centers, one in Memphis and one outside of Atlanta, voted by a margin of 94.5 percent to approve the new contract.

The contract represents a major step forward for DTNA workers, who have experienced declining living standards and years of setbacks and concessions. Workers won, among other advancements, a minimum 25 percent increase in wages over four years. Our union defeated efforts by the company to increase workers' healthcare costs. The union also forced the company to provide COLA. For the first time ever, UAW workers at DTNA will receive profit-sharing checks starting in 2025. Finally, against the steadfast opposition of the company, UAW workers at DTNA won an abolition of two-tier wages and an equalization of wage scales for workers across all of DTNA's UAW-organized plants.

These gains are a direct result of our solidarity and strike readiness prior to the expiration of our previous contract. In the weeks preceding the April 26 expiration, workers had provided ample evidence that we were fully prepared to walk. Workers made T-shirts announcing our intention to "Strike If Provoked." At Thomas Built Buses, workers wore shirts that proclaimed "TICK TOCK M**HA FU*ER!!" — a reference to a line delivered by Shawn Fain at the mass rally on April 2 at the Statesville union hall of UAW Local 3520. Meanwhile, numerous machine operators and tow motor drivers across DTNA posted cardboard signs at their workstations and on their forklifts proclaiming their strike readiness. Hundreds of workers at each plant across North Carolina wore red shirts every Wednesday to show their union pride and let the company know that we meant business. Workers also turned out in the hundreds for raucous practice strike events held at all of the plants on the weeks of April 14 and April 22.

Union workers across the plants also signed up their non-union coworkers in droves in preparation for the contract expiration and potential strike. On April 26, UAW Local 5287 at Thomas Built Buses announced on Facebook that we had achieved a membership rate of 92 percent — a record membership density previously unattained in our union's entire 19-year existence.

The contract campaign at DTNA produced a frenzied level of excitement in the plants. The solidarity and strike readiness became a palpable feeling for workers up and down the line. We were ready to strike — and our supervisors and the company knew it.

This is an excerpt of a pamphlet on the UAW struggle at DTNA, reprinted with permission of the author. The full text is published through the Southern Workers Assembly.



STELLANTIS DEPARTMENT SHAKEUP: TIME TO ATTACK HEALTH & SAFETY ISSUES?

by **BEN HINSEY**, *UAW Local 12* — Since the contract ratification, Stellantis has been trying to demoralize us. They have used the safety policies in a draconian manner to harass workers. They have issued discipline for failure to use certain safety gear while also failing to provide other safety equipment. They have stepped up their enforcement of their blanket ban on personal listening devices. Generally, they have been skipping progressive discipline steps and promoting a negative work environment. All while using emergency status to force more overtime.



Members prepare signs for the strike authorization vote at Warren Stamping in March.

Workers at Toledo Assembly Complex are not just accepting it, we are fighting back. We have started a campaign to file major safety grievances, the biggest being about the leaky roof. Roof leaks affect the safety of almost every person in the plant but the biggest issue is when water puddles in the traffic lanes of industrial vehicles. The forklift and tuggers wheels are not designed to handle water so the vehicles can become uncontrollable instantly. The roof is home to a colony of seagulls and all the water leaking filters through their refuse. It makes the occasional drip that lands on workers nauseating to think about.

We were inspired by the major safety grievances at Warren Stamping Plant. After filing grievances and voting to authorize a strike to enforce them, members of UAW Local 869 report the company has agreed to spend millions to settle the grievances. These included the leaking roof, ventilation, oil contamination, and unsanitary restrooms.

I am right there with members who have been disappointed by a lack of leadership from the Stellantis department for months. But the department just switched hands, and its new leader, Shawn Fain, has been vocal in his commitment to take on Stellantis. We may have an opportunity to get some of these important issues solved, but only if we step up and do our part as members.

WANT TO ENFORCE WANT TO ENFORCE YOUR CONTRACT ON THE SHOP FLOOR?

If you missed it, watch our webinar to hone your knowledge of the contracts with a Ford Health & Safety Rep, a General Motors Committeeman, and a rank-and-file Stellantis member.

Download the toolkit & watch the training:
uawd.org/defeat-the-boss.





ABSENTEEISM: HERE'S WHAT THE COMPANY GETS WRONG.

by **NICK LIVICK**, *UAW Local 31* — Management loves to blame workers for absenteeism. They say we don't want to work anymore and that we abuse FMLA. When we don't have enough workers to run, their solution is to scold us and say “Why can't you come to work? You just got a big raise.”

Here's why that's a load of bullshit.

Every year, management eliminates jobs and redistributes that work, causing remaining jobs to become overloaded. They hide this by shaving seconds off elements. This increased workload means increased wear on bodies. Eventually, more of us will have to take time off to have surgery or physical therapy.

At the same time, management goes all out scheduling overtime. Many plants are working 9-to-12-hour days, 6 to 7 days a week. Not only does this significantly increase wear on our bodies, it also leaves us with no time to recuperate and spend with family. Our time off hasn't increased in any meaningful way in decades. Management forces us to use some of our vacation time for July shutdown, which leaves us with even less time off.

If this is how management wants to run, no one should be surprised by absenteeism. It's entirely predictable, in fact it's guaranteed, under the current system. Emergencies happen. Kids get sick. Even the hardest workers need a break at some point to see our families and friends.

Want to solve the problem of absenteeism? Provide workers opportunities to plan our absences where we can. And expect emergencies. That means hiring more AROs (full-time rotating workers), so there's a buffer when one of us has a kid get sick or a breakdown on the way to work. Get serious about solutions. Stop blaming the results of your misguided cost cutting on us.

UPDATE ON WENTZVILLE'S POST-STRIKE EMERGENCY SCHEDULE

As covered in our last edition, General Motors has been forcing Wentzville to work nearly every Saturday using emergency language, to make up units from the Stand Up strike.

UAW Local 2250 members and leaders decided to fight back and demand a break from forced Saturdays, at least on holiday weekends. Members circulated an online petition via QR code, and meanwhile, they pulled teams together who were ready to gather signatures at the gates the following week.

On Wednesday, June 6, before the gate drive got going, the Shop Committee announced they stood up for members and negotiated for no forced overtime on holiday weekends!

UNITE ALL WORKERS FOR DEMOCRACY

Unite All Workers for Democracy (UAWD) is a democratic caucus of UAW members building a rank-and-file movement for the long haul.. Join us: uawd.org/join