News Items - March 2016

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Teamsters apply heat to US Foods after failed Sysco merger

Mar. 4, 2016  US Foods is coming under fire from its biggest union as it tries to go public following last year’s failed merger with Sysco. The Teamsters is pushing back against the company’s plan to close a distribution center near Baltimore, while union members at other centers are working without a contract. [nypost.com]

The fight against the corporate agenda begins now

Mar. 7, 2016  Corporate cronies for years have sought to do everything they can to push their platform to the public in hopes of getting more anti-worker policies passed at all levels of government. But a new report shows that effort might be succeeding... The agenda of the right wing includes takeovers of federal, state and local governments through extensive and permanent political organization down to the local precinct level and destruction of foes – notably unions – who oppose the corporate program. Its agenda includes everything from enacting so-called "right to work" laws to fighting school district taxes. It's encase of such efforts that the Teamsters are debuting a new program for activists... [teamster.org]

Local Unions recommend members reject Costco's contract offer

Mar. 15, 2016  Teamster local unions on the East Coast and in California that represent 16,000 Costco members are recommending a rejection of a contract proposal that was characterized as Costco's last, best and final offer. The main issue of disagreement is the company's refusal to allow their East Coast members to move into the same defined benefit pension plan as the California members. [Learn more here]. Questions? Contact your business agent at 410-284-5081. Ballots are being mailed this week and will be counted at the end of the month.

Local 570 news update

Mar. 16, 2016  Automation technicians who work for Pepsi in Columbia, Md., facility agreed in February to the terms of a mid-term wage re-opener agreement that provide significant increases and training at no cost to the employee. The Local also represents bulk drivers, fleet mechanics, systems operators and workers in other classifications at the Columbia facility. After soundly rejecting the company's first offer, workers at Pepsi in Havre de Grace, Md., ratified a second offer that provides significant wage increases and maintains health & welfare at no cost to employees. Ballots are being mailed to Costco members to submit their vote on the employer's last, best and final offer. Local Unions with Costco members have recommended rejection of the contract proposal. Negotiations continue with Pepsi in Baltimore, and US Foods.

Supreme Court upholds Tyson Foods workers class-action suit

Mar. 23, 2016  This Supreme Court case and the justices' ruling perfectly illustrates why the nomination of worker-friendly Supreme Court justices are so important to the future of working men and women in America. It is also a strong affirmation of workers' right to band together to sue their employer for its failure to follow federal law. (More than 3,000 employees sued Tyson Foods for not properly compensating them for hours worked.) The New York Times reports "The Supreme Court on Tuesday sided with thousands of workers at an Iowa pork processing plant who has sought to band together in a single lawsuit to recover overtime pay from Tyson Foods... The Tyson workers performed tasks that were "grueling and dangerous" at a plant in Storm Lake, Iowa, Justice Kennedy wrote, slaughtering hogs, trimming the meat and preparing for shipment. They sought to be paid for the time they had spent putting on and taking off protective gear to prevent knife cuts..." [nytimes.com]
42 years later, OSHA OKs rule protecting workers from silica

Mar. 28, 2016  |  ...New workplace limits for a lung-damaging and ubiquitous substance called silica are about to take effect, decades after federal health experts warned that the nation's existing rule was dangerously lax. Silica, found in rock and sand, poses a hazard when pulverized to a fine dust and inhaled -- a problem on construction sites, during hydraulic fracturing operations and at a variety of other workplaces... Truthout

Reminder: Hoffa scholarship application deadline is tomorrow, March 31

Mar. 30, 2016  |  Deadline for the application is Thursday, March 31, 2016. Applications must be received by this date or will not be considered. Email the application as one PDF to scholarship@teamster.org OR it can be faxed to (202) 624-7457, or mailed to the following address: James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund 25 Louisiana Ave NW Washington, DC 20001. Finalist notification will be given by June 2016 via email. Awards will be disbursed to the student's school by August 201

Paid sick leave bill gains key approval in Maryland House

Mar. 31, 2016  |  A bill that would require companies to offer sick leave to workers is advancing in the House of Delegates. The bill would require companies with at least 15 employees to allow workers to earn up to seven days of paid leave per year -- a change from 10 employees in the original bill. Smaller companies would only be required to offer unpaid sick leave... Baltimore Sun