



Contract Talks Will Determine the UAW-Ford Relationship



As with any relationship pivotal moments occur and both sides evaluate the give and take that each side offers. Over the last few years Ford Motor Company has been in a state of change as far as the auto industry and the need to become more competitive with global players such as Honda, Toyota, and GM. When critical moments of cooperation were asked of the UAW, the membership and leadership stepped up. These changes were done to help move the company and membership to a stronger position long term. In the Fall of 2009 Ford Motor Company went in for the kill in regards to concessions and exercised overreach in regards to what it wanted the membership to vote in as far as givebacks, and in my opinion the unthinkable demand to give up the right to strike.

Where does this put the membership at now in regards to an acceptable contract that we all can live with? Two weeks ago in Chicago, Ford Council met about the current contract and the Presidents and Chairman from Ford locals around the country stated to the International United Auto Workers where the membership was at on the floor in regards to contract demands. I, and your President Carlo Bishop, clearly stated to the President of the UAW Bob King and the Vice President of the UAW Jimmy Settles that the membership not only expects but deserves the sacrifices made in the name of good faith bargaining to be reversed. My view was different than most when it came to the topic of executive compensation. It is clear to me and I voiced this to the Vice President of Ford Motor Company that I think the total compensation for the top executives are obscene but I do not represent the CEO's. My take on the compensation is that if the company is healthy enough to pay ten's of millions of dollars to those at the top of the company then it should be no issue to pay a modest increase to those that actually build the cars and trucks that produce the profits for the company.

Over the next few weeks the level of rumors will be at a heightened level throughout the plant and company. When the negative rumors that intend on dividing one set of members against another such as young versus old or transferee's versus non-transferee lets remember that this only plays into the company hands. The biggest fear the company has is a membership that stands united and stays away from infighting. One thing the company is good at is staying focused on Organized Greed. The most effective weapon that working men and women have always had and always will have is Organized Labor to combat this goal by corporations. The men and women of Local 551 can be proud that the leadership team of the UAW will guide us to a contract resolution that is fair and equitable on both sides, and this may get bumpy but as with anything worth fighting for, it will be worth it in the end.

In Solidarity,

Grant Morton, Plant Chairman.