

DHL Building 263 Victory!

The last area non-union DHL facility is now a Teamsters' shop. The 339 employees at DHL's Building 263 at JFK Airport voted to join Local 295 and Local 851 in late April. Local 295 represents the 225 drivers, lead agents, ramp workers and mechanics. The remaining 114 clerical workers are members of 851. The union is currently in negotiations to reach a first contract for the new members.

"This victory took good, old-fash-

ioned Teamster hard work and the support of the International Union," said Local 295 President Lou Calemine. "Our drivers played a critical role. When they went to Building 263, they talked to the workers about the benefits of being in the Teamsters."

When DHL purchased Airborne Express, it had 15 non-union facilities in the area. At 14 of the facilities, the DHL and Airborne employees were integrated and the Teamster contracts were honored.

DHL initially separated off Building 263, which is a gateway. But not for long. The current Local 295 administration had started an organizing drive at the facility before the merger and even prior to taking office.

"The workers at Building 263 really worked hard for this. They signed cards and stayed strong throughout the campaign. We welcome them to our union and look forward to seeing them change their focus from the organizing drive to being active members," said Calemine.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT:

295 News is starting a new feature. We will profile members who exemplify what being a union member is all about. The story of Jack Ruggiero will be hard to top, but it's a good place to start.

Jack Ruggiero has been a member of Local 295 for 13 years and is a driver at DHL's Elizabeth, NJ barn, where 200 members of 295 work. The barn was by all accounts not in the best of shape for those working there. So the officers of 295 turned to Jack to straighten it out, tapping him to be a shop steward just over a year ago. Within a few months and with a lot of hard work, Jack turned the barn around.

Just when things were looking up, Jack got into a bad car accident. He had knee surgery and was forced to go on disability while he recovered. When he was out, the barn slipped a little. With the integration of Airborne and DHL looming, Jack knew what he had to do.



Local 295 Business Agent Bill Robertson presents Jack Ruggiero (right) with a plaque recognizing his service to the union.

"I called Lou [Calemine] up and asked him to get me back in the barn. With the integration coming, I knew the guys would have questions and problems. I needed to be able to do my job as a shop steward," said Jack.

Local 295 President Lou Calemine and Trustee Bill Robertson, the business agent who services the barn, shared Jack's concerns and goals for the barn and appreciated his sincere willingness to go the extra mile to do his job.

Jack Ruggiero

"Jack went back to work unpaid in December. He stayed until May — literally. Sometimes, he stayed overnight so he could meet with all the drivers," said Robertson. "The guy put in 80-hour weeks — and he wasn't getting paid! Jack Ruggiero is a hero. But if you ask him, he'll say he was just doing his job."

Today, the barn is again running smoothly and Jack became a full-time, paid employee again in May.

"We are lucky to have so many great shop stewards. The best ones, people like Jack, see the big picture. They are willing to make unpopular decisions because they are trying to do what's best for the entire shop and union. They don't play politics or try to win popularity contests. Jack's leadership is an example for all of us. I know he inspires me every day," summed up Calemine.



Lou Calemine

Looking Back, Looking Ahead

Since the union's Executive Board was sworn into office a little over a year ago, we thought it would be appropriate to take a look back at what the board and the members have accomplished together.

We'll start with our efforts to create regular and open communication between members and officers. The newsletter you are reading is an important part of that goal. While it is still a work in progress, we hope that it contains useful and important information. We've received great feedback so far. We are also starting a 295 web site (www.teamsterslocal295.org). We are holding Sunday regional meetings as well as general membership meetings at our union hall. Finally, our officers and business agents make regular job site visits.

The next area of accomplishment is protecting our members on the job. The most obvious example is the contract we negotiated with DHL and the battles we fought during the DHL acquisition of Airborne Express. We negotiated a solid contract that contained raises, improved health and welfare benefits and will bring parity to the workforce. The health improvements were particularly important. Most workers are facing increasing costs and/or decreasing benefits. We increased the employer's contribution levels, expanded benefits and maintained no employee contributions for monthly premiums. When the two companies merged, we made sure that the DHL employees became Teamsters, and we convinced the company that layoffs were a bad idea. This was not an easy fight, but the members' solidarity and the negotiat-

ing committee's efforts made it possible.

We have also worked hard to help members on the job by improving the way we service the members and enforce our contracts. Increased job site visits are one part of this. We will hold training workshops for shop stewards to provide them with the resources they need. This will make us better able to fight off management harassment on the job and handle grievances and resolve disputes.

Another accomplishment is making our union an organizing machine. Our members are out talking to non-union drivers about the benefits of being in the union. As a result, we have added close to 700 new members in the last year. As the union grows, it helps us negotiate better contracts and keeps our benefit funds strong.

We have worked hard to put the union back where it belongs — in the members' hands. By having more and better communication, we also hope we have brought accountability back to the Local. Members should feel comfortable taking their concerns to their officers. We are here to serve all of you.

In the coming year and beyond, we will continue to work extremely hard to make our union even better. By no means do we feel we have finished anything. We know we can always do better. However, I am very proud of what our union has overcome and accomplished in the last year. I have never been more proud to be a Teamster. On behalf of the entire Executive Board, I would like to thank you, the members of Local 295, for standing with us and fighting the good fight.

Teamsters Local Union 295

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Executive Board

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REGISTER TO VOTE!

With the presidential election coming in November, it is important for all members of Local 295 and their families to register to vote. You can register to vote in person or by mail. Your form must be delivered or mailed at least 25 days before the election for it to be effective in that election. To get a voter registration application, contact your county board of elections: in New York, call (518) 474-8100 or visit www.elections.state.ny.us; in New Jersey, call (609) 292-3760 or visit www.state.nj.us/lps/elections/electionshome.html; and in Connecticut, call (860) 566-7106 or visit www.sots.state.ct.us. If you live elsewhere or need more information, call the union office.

Time to Make Our Voices Heard

In this year's presidential election, there's a lot at stake — especially for working people.

We generally do not like union endorsements of political candidates. We don't like telling people how to vote — and we're not even sure we have the power to get people to vote one way or the other anyway. We want our members to get involved, learn about the candidates and the issues, and then make up their own minds. We do not want our members to think that simply electing a Democrat or a Republican will solve our problems. They're not going to give us anything. We've had to fight for everything we've ever got, and that's not stopping now. Finally, we do not want the candidates to take our votes for granted. They need to earn our votes.

We should all take a look at Washington's track record on issues that matter to union members.

Our country has lost 2.2 million private-sector jobs since 2001. And the new jobs being created are largely non-union, low-wage, no benefit jobs.

This translates to real problems for

families. The typical family has seen their income decline by \$1,462 in the last three years. At the same time, college tuition has gone up 35 percent, health premiums have gone up 49 percent and gas prices are up 24 percent.

On the other hand, the rich have seen their tax rates cut and regulations designed to safeguard against corporate corruption, to protect labor rights and to protect the environment have been eliminated. Corporations actually get tax breaks for moving jobs overseas.

The Labor Department is about to change overtime regulations so millions of Americans will be excluded, and the National Labor Relations Board is trying to eliminate card check elections.

As you can see, our elected officials in Washington have not exactly been friends to working families. We need to hold all of our elected officials and anyone who wants our votes accountable for the decisions they make. Call them to let them know how you feel. Vote. That's the best way to make our voices heard and to make our representatives accountable.

Members Strike, Win Contract at Lione Trucking

Negotiations at Lione Trucking were a difficult process. The talks got bogged down and management would not budge. So, on June 7, the members went out on a one-day strike. Talks resumed quickly after that and a three-year agreement that includes Health and Welfare Fund contributions as well as wage increases was reached. The members ratified the contract unanimously.

295 Welcomes DF Young

Local 295 reached an agreement with the owner of DF Young Trucking, a 100-year old company. Before this, the workers were covered by a contract with a contractor. Local 295 welcomes DF Young to the Teamster family and looks forward to a productive relationship for years to come.

Benefits News

295 Funds Fight to Stay Strong Despite Health Care Crisis

While workers across the country are dealing with rising health care costs and declining coverage, 295 members' benefits are stable and the benefit funds are strong. In July, we changed carriers in an effort to significantly expand the doctor network available to all members, maintain coverage levels and create a cost savings for the funds.

Over 43 million Americans, including 8.5 million children, now live without health insurance and millions more are struggling to pay for their coverage.

Employers that pay for health benefits used to pay 75 percent of total costs. In the last five years, that number

dropped to 70 percent. At the same time, out-of-pocket costs for workers with coverage more than doubled. In 2003, workers who had coverage through their

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jobs spent an average of \$2,126 on health care. That number is expected to rise to \$2,595 in 2004.

For now, union members are still doing better than non-union workers.

But the hot-topic issue in negotiations across the country is health care. The rising costs are forcing some union funds to run deficits. Many funds must choose between eliminating benefits and increasing out-of-pocket costs for members — a choice no one wants.

The only real solution to this crisis is national health care. Health care should be a basic right for all Americans. Meeting such a basic need should not be forcing government budgets, companies and workers into the red. Health care is the most critical issue facing the nation today. Until Washington acts on this issue, the 295 funds will continue the fight to maintain top-quality benefits at reasonable costs.



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Recent Retirees

Congratulations to the following members who recently retired. We wish you long and happy retirements and hope you will continue to be involved in the union for years to come.

George Baggio	John Johnston
John Bastedenbeck	Henry Kelly
William Booth	Michael Lacey
William Diaz	Wayne Meister
Glenn Gardner	Frank Puliafico
Salvatore Giordano	Frederick Santini
Joaquin Guevara	Bobbie Williams
Daniel Guidice	John Wlaysewski

Ask President Hoffa

Do you have a question for Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa? If you do, go to www.teamster.org/hoffa/AskHoffa/conversations.htm on the Teamsters web site to submit your question. Each week, President Hoffa will select a different question to answer.

Reporting Allegations of Corruption

Donald F. Schwally, Corruption Officer

The job of the Corruption Officer is to continue the efforts to keep organized crime and corruption out of Local 295. If you have any information concerning allegations of wrongdoing or corruption, contact the officer at (800) 613-4295, or by mail at P.O. Box 512, Valley Stream, NY 11582. All correspondence will be kept strictly confidential.

Withdrawal Card

Members may request a withdrawal card for the following reasons only: *disability, call to active duty, leaving the craft, layoffs or termination*. By obtaining a withdrawal card, members will not be obligated to pay extra back dues if re-employed under a Teamster contract. The charge for the withdrawal card is \$0.50. All initiation fees and back dues must be up to date. All requests for withdrawal cards must be made in writing to the union hall by the member.

Meetings

Monthly general membership meetings take place on the last Tuesday of the month at the Local 295 Union Hall at 6:00 PM. Upcoming meetings will be held on September 28 and October 26.

Regional meetings will be held on the following Sundays, from 9:00 am to 11:00 am:

- **Sept. 26** — The Inn at Ethan Allen (21 Lake Ave., Danbury, CT)
- **Oct. 10** — Holiday Inn - Newark Airport (160 Frontage Rd, Newark, NJ)
- **Oct. 24** — Elks Hall (21 West Jamaica Ave., Valley Stream, NY)

Make Your Voice Heard on Sept. 1

The New York City Central Labor Council's Labor Day event will be a massive rally outside of the Republican National Convention. This will be our chance to let the Republicans see our numbers and hear our concerns. It will take place on Wednesday, September 1, at 4:00 pm on Eighth Avenue, starting at 30th Street and stretching as far south as we need.