COLUMBIA GAS WORKERS UNITE

FEBRUARY 2024

GAS WORKERS WIN WHEN THEY ORGANIZE WITH UWUA

UWUA LOCAL G-555 MEMBERS WIN AUTOMATIC PROGRESSION, ENSURING STEADY, PREDICTABLE PROMOTIONS

In negotiations with Dominion East Ohio Gas, UWUA Local G-555 members scored a dramatic win with the reinstatement of automatic progression. Automatic progression means exactly what it sounds like: when a new employee comes on the job and joins the Union, they can be guaranteed that their job title and pay tier will advance automatically along a determined timeline. It's written right into the contract!

Automatic progression used to be far more common, but Dominion East Ohio repealed this important provision in the late 1990's, taking away an important avenue for advancement for gas workers. Back then, employees would begin as helpers, then advance to Customer Service - C employees before progressing to the rank of Customer Service - A. All the while, workers could rest assured that their pay would increase in a predictable manner as they moved through the ranks.

In the years since Dominion East Ohio took away automatic progression, workers began getting stuck in a two tier pay scale, sometimes going eight to ten years without receiving a promotion. But while the promotions stopped, the additional responsibilities did not. Employees continued to take on additional duties, even while their title remained the same and their pay stagnated. This created tension between workers as some employees saw their colleagues working at a higher pay rate and with a higher title for performing almost the same work.

UWUA Local G-555 members came together to flip that script. They used midterm bargaining – bargaining that can occur between contract negotiations – to do away

GAS WORKERS WIN WHEN THEY ORGANIZE WITH UWUA (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

with the two tiered pay scale and bring back automatic progression. It was an almost unprecedented victory for workers. Employers, focused on the bottom line, don't "give" pay and benefits to employees, especially not pay or benefits they've previously taken away. Workers have to come together as a Union to bargain for them.

Now, thanks to G-555's successful bargaining, members who start as helpers know that they will progress steadily through pay tiers, with predictable annual wage increases. And that's not all. Local G-555 members have bargained for strong health reimbursement accounts, or HRAs, meaning significant pre-tax deposits into employees' accounts to cover medical, dental, and optical expenses that workers would otherwise pay for out of pocket. Retirees also get an HRA for up to five years or at the age of 65. Talk about the Union Difference!

Thank you to everyone here in Ohio who's already involved in our organizing efforts. Haven't connected with us yet? It's not too late. Call **Deirdre (484) 678-8896**, **Valerie (202) 412-5258**, or **J.J. (330) 631-1751** for more information and to get involved.

UPWARD MOBILITY

IN A UNION WORKPLACE, EMPLOYEES HAVE THE FREEDOM TO MOVE AROUND – AND MOVE UP

Recently, about 50 internal candidates at Columbia Gas applied for the same position. Rather than considering the years of work experience, dedication, and loyalty of their own employees, Columbia Gas began looking for external candidates. In the end, they passed over all the internal candidates who applied and gave the position to an outside candidate.

At Unionized workplaces, this sort of thing just doesn't happen. Take the employees of CenterPoint Energy Ohio who organized with UWUA. Under their Union contract, their employer must share job openings with current employees on the company's bulletin board and network – and notify the Union – 14 days before posting publicly.

Within 14 days of posting, employees interested in the position can register their interest with their employer. The employer must then offer the position to an employee based on seniority, as long as that senior most employee meets the job requirements. That employee must then be moved out of their current position and into their new one promptly – usually within 60 days.

It's just another example of why it pays to be Union. We always get it in writing!

COLUMBIA GAS WORKERS IN THE NEWS

Recently, Local G-555 President Eddie Hall penned an op-ed in The Columbus Dispatch. In it, President Hall makes the case for Unionizing at Columbia Gas and shows the public how when gas workers unite, we all win.

Read the full story at columbiaworkersunite.org

The Columbus Dispatch

Columbia Gas raised your rates while nickel and diming employees. They are standing up.

Eddie Hall | January 13, 2024

BUILDING STRENGTH IN THE BUCKEYE STATE

COLUMBIA GAS WORKERS ARE TAKING OUR MESSAGE ON THE ROAD

Keep an eye out for our new billboard coming soon to Gahanna near the Training Center!

COMING SOON!

THE UNION DIFFERENCE

Being a Union means being prepared for a rainy day – or a snow emergency! While workers at non-Union Op Centers were called into work during the recent storm, Local G-555 members were on emergency-only duty.

SURVEILLANCE UPDATE

Talks on the contentious issue of Columbia Gas using technology to surveil workers began January 17, but were later postponed due to snow. Talks are set to resume February 7, 2024.

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QUESTIONS? CALL DEIRDRE (484) 678-8896, VALERIE (202) 412-5258, OR J.J. (330) 631-1751.