COLUMBIA GAS WORKERS UNITE

OCTOBER 2024

WHEN UNIONS BARGAIN, WORKERS WIN

UTILITY WORKERS AT UWUA LOCAL 1-2 SECURE HISTORIC CONTRACT WITH FASTER WAGE INCREASES, BETTER BENEFITS

Keeping the lights on, houses warm, and families safe and comfortable is what utility workers like us do every day – and we mean every day. It's a nonstop job, which is why we need competitive pay, strong benefits, and time off to care for ourselves and our families. There's no better way to do that than by working together as a union, just like our fellow utility workers in New York have been doing for years.

Recently, UWUA Local 1-2, which represents utility workers in and around New York, secured a massive victory on behalf of 8,000 members who do just about everything imaginable to keep New York City shining bright, from field crews to engineers to customer service. Under this new agreement, members were able to reach both of the goals they had set to achieve when they headed to the bargaining table: higher wages and a shorter progression to top tier wages.

Now, members receive a 17.83%, 4-year compounded wage increase – one of the highest in the industry in years. After one year, members receive a wage increase of 4.5%, a second and third year increase of 4%, and a fourth year increase of 4.25%. In other words, members are moving to even higher

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pay tiers in even less time. UWUA Local 1-2 President James Shillitto described it this way: “We cut two years off by reducing it from 15 to 12 steps. By the end of this contract, members will be able to reach top pay in 5.5 to 6 years instead of the prior 7.5 years.”

Gaining bigger pay increases in fewer years was a huge achievement, but that wasn’t all Local 1-2 was able to accomplish at the bargaining table. For the first time, bargaining resulted in members facing zero downgrades to their medical plan. In fact, Union members were able to receive additional health plan options based on need and family size without any increases in copays, deductibles, or co-insurance for most members. What’s more, this new contract includes higher employer contributions to the Health Savings Account (HSA) essential plan, an improved dental plan, and four hours of paid leave annually for wellness visits.

This new contract also contains improved provisions for maternity leave, increased paid excused time for family bereavement, higher shoe and meal allowances, and the addition of Juneteenth as a holiday without the loss of any existing holidays, personal days, or vacation days. Meanwhile, the Union was able to save several essential provisions that the company had sought to alter or eliminate at the start of bargaining, such as sick pay, increases in overtime thresholds, eliminating the retention of vacation carryover and payouts, and the preservation of the current pension eligibility and cash balance options. Proud of their accomplishments, President Shillitto reported, “We had not a single giveback.”

While a massive success for Union members, there were plenty of obstacles on the way to this finalized contract. It wasn’t until the prior contract was about to expire that the Union and the company were able to reach a tentative agreement. Until then, members were poised to strike, having worked through a record-breaking heatwave with no signs that their employer would reward their hard work with a fair contract. President Shillitto described just how close the Union got to calling a strike. “We were very close to walking out,” he said. “Strike captains had prepared the troops, and we were ready to do whatever was needed to reach a contract that acknowledged our members’ vital contributions to the company.”

Fortunately, a strike was averted, the Union bargained an historic contract, and members ratified it by a record breaking 92%.

Ready for a contract we all can be proud of? Call Deirdre (484) 678-8896 or J.J. (330) 631-1751 to learn more and to get involved.

GIVING BACK – AND HAVING FUN!

ALL AROUND AMERICA, UNION UTILITY WORKERS FIND FUN WAYS TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER

As utility workers, we all work hard – and it shows! The work we do powers homes and businesses across the country. But we know how to have fun too, and how to give back to the community. Check out some of the great events that UWUA members have recently held.

Members of UWUA Local 388 turned out in force for the Labor Day parade in Muskegon, MI.

UWUA National President James Slevin visited California gas workers in August, attending a membership meeting of UWUA Local 522 in L.A. accompanied by Senior National Rep. Robert Houser.

We’re hanging onto summer just a little bit longer with a few more photos from the 2024 Gas Workers Union UWUA Local G-555 Union Family Picnic.

This year, Local 107 celebrated 25 years of holding their annual golf tournament. Over this time, members have raised $100k in donations given to the local’s families.

Gas Workers Union
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WANT TO LEARN MORE AND GET INVOLVED?

SCAN HERE!

QUESTIONS? CONCERNS? CALL DEIRDRE (484) 678-8896 OR J.J. (330) 631-1751 TO LEARN MORE ABOUT BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE UTILITY WORKERS UNION OF AMERICA (UWUA) AND TO GET INVOLVED.

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