

# Sappi Union Council Bulletin

On January 5, 2006 we held a meeting of the Sappi Union Council to exchange information with the five Sappi locations.

USW Vice President Dick LaCosse was in attendance to discuss the issues and comments that Sappi has raised to our members. USW President Leo Gerard addressed the council delegates by phone and answered questions from those in attendance.

Both President Gerard and Vice President LaCosse advised the group that Sappi had indicated through various meetings and conference calls that they wanted to develop an improved relationship for the future that would enhance their ability to attract future capital investments in Sappi North America. It became clear in the days that followed that their idea of an improved relationship was having everything their way. They steadfastly refused to consider any forward thinking options that were put forth by the union.

The delegates reported that Sappi has escalated its rhetoric at all locations in an attempt to blame the union for lack of local negotiations, when in reality Sappi had not yet provided the additional information that is required in order to go forward on talks regarding health care.

## **Here is a brief report on other company anti-union actions:**

- They have announced they will sub-contract maintenance work in Muskegon;
- They have frozen the pension plan for a majority of members in Allentown;
- They have held hallway meetings with local officers in Cloquet to see if there is an interest in a contract extension;
- They have demanded bargain dates at Westbrook, while refusing to bargain over Project Zero;
- They have insisted there be no retroactivity of wages at Skowhegan.

## **Council approves actions:**

On a positive note and by unanimous vote, the delegates have adopted the former USWA strike authorization policy for the Sappi Union Council. The former USWA policy calls for a 50% plus one vote to authorize a strike and votes can be taken prior to contract expirations.

We will have site by site strike preparation training done as soon as possible following the National Paper Bargaining Conference as part of this educational process. The council encourages every member to learn about this process when the dates are announced.