

## Oakville rejection a first in CAW history

'Mistruths' helped push local to vote 56% against

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Employees at Ford's assembly plant in Oakville have become the first union local to reject a tentative contract at the Big Three in the history of the Canadian Auto Workers.

The union confirmed yesterday that CAW Local 707 voted 1,108 to 863, or 56 per cent, against a three-year deal at Ford Motor Co. of Canada Ltd. after a raucous ratification meeting on Sunday.

Workers at other plants, in Windsor, St. Thomas and Brampton, voted overwhelmingly in favour of the contract, which contains a wage freeze, a temporary suspension of a cost of living allowance and loss of a week of vacation pay every year.

The rejection in Oakville pulled down overall support to 67 per cent, which also marked the lowest percentage in favour of a Ford, General Motors or Chrysler deal in the union's 23-year history.

Workers have traditionally ratified Big Three contracts by heavy margins after getting unanimous recommendations for acceptance from bargaining committees.

The union initially did not break out results for each location but finally released them yesterday, in line with past practice.

CAW president Buzz Hargrove said the result will not have any impact on contract negotiations and voting at GM or Chrysler later.

Hargrove said no one spoke positively at the meeting of Oakville workers after earlier distribution of leaflets at the plant that were filled with "mistruths and distortions."

"It was just one of those situations where a handful of people got control of the mikes early and shifted the mood," he said.

"It was a mood we couldn't turn around in a three-hour meeting. The results from Windsor, St. Thomas and Bramalea (Brampton) were more reflective of where the membership of our union is today," he maintained.

Local 707 president Gary Beck said workers at the busy plant, which will move to three shifts later this year, didn't understand the industry's overall problems.

"They didn't see outside of what's going on at our plant," he said noting Ford operations in St. Thomas and Windsor are struggling.