

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Feb. 24, 2012

WHAT: Meeting on Progress in UAW Negotiations with American Axle (AAM) concerning Pattern Contract with AAM Detroit Gear and Axle and Cheektowaga, N.Y. which expires Feb. 25th

WHO: Rank and File American Axle workers covered by the contract, members of UAW L. 22

WHERE: UAW, L. 22, 4300 Michigan Ave., Detroit, 48210 (west of Clark St.)

WHEN: Sat., Feb. 25, 2012, 2 pm

Contact: Rodney Eshenroder, 734-731-2222

American Axle and Manufacturing which got its start when GM sold off its first five plants in 1994 is now saying it will close Detroit Gear & Axle, 1840 Holbrook, the fourth plant to be closed out of the original five. AAM has never faced bankruptcy and has built and bought plants in the U.S. and in other countries including Mexico and China. Originally claiming to be pro-union and pro-urban plant location, they built their headquarters on Holbrook near I-75 due to the two Detroit plants located there, both of which they now want closed.

This did not stop them from recently requesting an extension of tax breaks from the city of Detroit. The City Council majority and the UAW argued against the extension since AAM illegally moved work out of Detroit during the previous tax break period and are continuing to move out work to close the Gear & Axle plant at the present time. Companies leaving Detroit like AAM is doing have greatly decreased the city's tax base fueling its present financial crisis.

Originally agreeing to the Detroit Three pattern contract, AAM demanded in 2008 negotiations that unlike the Detroit Three or Delphi that ALL legacy workers most with 13 to 15 years seniority have their wages cut in half, eliminating their defined benefit pensions and gutting their health care. This led to a long and bitter strike where the company basically got what they wanted. This did not stop AAM from demanding a contract reopening with further concession demands shortly thereafter.

Although the UAW does represent AAM workers in other locations, the company has succeeded in destroying pattern bargaining among these plants which has weakened the union's ability to negotiate. The UAW has submitted a "closing agreement" in response to the company's plant closing announcement. At this point there is still no agreement with the company. This will be the topic of the meeting between the rank and file workers and the UAW negotiators this Sat. at 2 pm at UAW, L. 22.