

SPARK at Ford Rouge
Week of September 26, 2011
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GM-UAW Contract Makes Concessions Permanent

From past experience, many of us know that the contract highlights make it seem like workers have won the jackpot.

But the real deal is, that in exchange for a small up front bribe of \$5,000 before taxes, or less than \$25 a week over a 4 year contract, 99% OF THE LOSSES INFLICTED ON AUTO WORKERS SINCE 2003 ARE SUPPOSED TO BE MADE PERMANENT:

Permanent two tier, NO Raises, NO COLA, NO Performance Bonuses, NO return of lost break time...

What's Hidden, Beneath the Surface: -- Against Retirees and Future Retirees

There is no mention of pensions for current and future retirees in the Contract Highlights. And like a used car salesman who is in a hurry to get you to sign on the dotted line before you notice more of the problems with the car, the actual 600 page contract has a section on retirees stating that the UAW International can negotiate changes in the pension for retirees, AFTER workers have voted.

All of us know they want workers to sign it. Why should workers agree to anything if they're going to change it later?

Beware of the Stab in the Back Against Skilled Trades

"Tucked deep within the nearly 600 page tentative labor contract between GM and the UAW is a so-called side letter" that spells out a "decision to exit 'non-strategic skilled trades work. The agreement is a major win for GM, and it could save millions as GM uses lower-cost workers or even contractors to perform maintenance tasks." Detroit Free Press, Sept. 22, 2011.

The side letter lists a whole series of tasks that "are no longer to be performed only by skilled trades" from construction, to painting, to building, specialty, welder, mechanical and electrical maintenance!

And skilled trades workers who find themselves back on the line may face a pay cut as well – yet another way to push out workers to take the buyout, even if they weren't ready to go. If they are forced back on production, their pensions will go down because they would be making less money in their final years.

In one side letter of a contract workers haven't seen, they want to get away with further dismantling skilled trades.

"Jobs, Jobs, Jobs" – No, No, No

They keep talking about job creation in the GM contract. But do the math. Even IF they "will create or retain an additional 6,400 jobs", GM eliminated 76,000 jobs since 2003.

And Ford has eliminated 54,000 jobs since 2003.

The Media Does a Sell Job

With the exception of a few reporters, most of the media coverage on the GM-UAW contract has been a sell-job for the corporations.

But as some days have passed since the initial contract announcement, reporters have had to admit, Oh, by the way, legal services is eliminated. Oh yeah, and Skilled Trades is being dismantled. And, the pension plan can be changed without membership vote, after the contract is signed.

We Aren't Their "Highest Labor Costs!"

We are angry the way the news media covers auto workers – like we are the ones who are making so much money – especially Ford workers.

Why don't they print the labor costs of the top managers and CEOs for the public to read? It seems to us that putting our \$28 or \$15 an hour next to Mulally's \$12,750 an hour, just in salary, or "Don't you care about your neighbor" Fields' \$4,240 dollars an hour, would give the public the real story.

They Have to Give Us "A Little Bit Extra" – Because We Stood Fast in October, 2009

It's obvious that every single commentator has indicated that it will be more difficult to come back to Ford workers with a patterned agreement – that they will have to give Ford workers more.

If they put more in the Ford contract than the GM contract, it's because we stood up in October of 2009 and fought back against the concessions and voted NO! All throughout the country. Which tells you that if they try to give us something that is not good enough this time, we will know what to do.

Everyone Up To Full Pay, Now!

The new GM contract supposedly raises the "second-tier" wages. But whether they receive the \$1.75 an hour increase, or the \$3.50 an hour increase over 4 years, that would not make up for the concessions stolen from them in the 2009 re-opener, which amounted to over \$4,000 a worker.

By the way, Ford second-tier workers are making more than their counterparts at GM and Chrysler today because we voted down the Oct. 2009 concessions.

Ford to Resume Paying Dividends!

Analysts have already indicated that they expect Ford to resume paying out a dividend in "the relatively near future." Sound familiar? Back in 2009, they announced their profits and restored salaried raises right after we voted down the October 2009 contract.

So chances are the "relatively near future" for Ford will be to announce how many millions they will reward their major stockholders after the contract vote again.

Forbes Just Announced It's Billionaire List – Among Michigan's: Billionaire Bill Ford Jr.

WALL STREET NIGHTMARE

Plan on attending the Oct 16th SPARK Public meeting.