

## Former DHL Workers Stand Together

### Take a Stand with Them – Refuse to Use DHL Delivery Services

The workers who lost their jobs at DHL have not lost their spirits. While their individual situations vary greatly they continue to stand in solidarity with one another. At least ten of the workers and their families attended the December 13<sup>th</sup> press conference held by the Lane County Workers' Rights Board to denounce the actions by DHL. A number of them, including Wendy Sage, spoke to the press about their anger over being fired and their determination to continue fighting – not just for themselves but for other workers too. Replacement workers have been hired to staff the DHL facility. These workers, some of who had been unemployed and in need of public assistance, are just as vulnerable as the 17 who were fired December 9<sup>th</sup>. You can show solidarity with all of these workers by refusing to use DHL services until they change their ways. We need your help to put pressure on DHL to stop hiding behind third party employers and deal directly and fairly with these workers. If you are responsible for shipping decisions in your workplace ESSN/JwJ asks that you use UPS or the Postal Service instead of DHL. Take this appeal to your boss, co-workers, and the businesses you patronize. Ask them to avoid using DHL until they agree to hire these workers back, not through temp agencies but directly onto the DHL payroll.

## “DHL = Doing Harm Locally”

### Firing of 17 Workers at Eugene Facility Outrages Community

As reported in previous issues of the *Solidarity Network*, 17 workers employed through a temp agency at the DHL Express facility on Airport Road in Eugene lost their jobs on December 9<sup>th</sup>. These workers just happened to be the same workers who participated in a successful job action against the temp agency, Emerald Employment, earlier in the year. The workers had been negotiating a first contract with Emerald Employment after they had won recognition to join Teamster Local 206 back in 2004. DHL was able to effectively fire these workers, without fear of breaking labor laws, by dropping one sub-contractor and replacing it with a new one.

DHL is a package delivery service that is aggressively competing with UPS and FedEx. How it has chosen to do that and the toll it takes on local communities is revealed in its business model. Testimony given by local workers at the Lane County Workers' Rights Board November 1, 2005 public hearing on DHL's use of temp workers, showed that DHL has used third party subcontracts and temporary agencies to staff its Eugene hub. In some case the same workers have held positions for five years and more while still being considered “temps”. At the same time DHL has contracts with the Teamsters in its larger metro hubs where workers are on the DHL payroll. In its initial report on the DHL hearing the Lane County Workers' Rights Board panel found “...that DHL is perpetuating an employment arrangement that allows them to shirk responsibility for paying decent wages and benefits in Eugene. Further, these practices essentially nullify workers' right to form a union and collective bargain with the employer. The workers obviously want to be represented collectively, and their legitimate efforts to organize a union have been stymied and defeated by the complicated and unnecessary DHL ... practice of using multiple temporary employment firms.”

DHL management denies any responsibility for their employment practices. Chris Steindorf, Eugene Station Service Manager for DHL, declined an invitation to speak at the Workers' Rights Board hearing, stating “DHL does not employ pickup and delivery couriers in Eugene but instead contracts with independent cartage companies to perform local courier services” That means that the delivery drivers you see around town in the yellow trucks with red letters, and the DHL uniforms are not DHL employees but temporary workers. These workers are especially vulnerable being both temps and transportation workers. According to labor laws transportation workers are not subject to the same wage and hour laws that protect most other workers. DHL is not required to give them regular meal breaks or pay overtime. The temp agencies do not provide health insurance, or sick time. In negotiations with Emerald Employment the workers did manage to secure some paid vacation for long-term employees. But once DHL decided to alter its sub contracts even that small victory was nullified.

Both ESSN/JwJ and the Lane County Workers' Rights Board are determined to put pressure on DHL to change the way it does business in our community. This practice of keeping workers employed through third parties in small and mid size cities while maintaining Teamster contracts with its workers in larger cities means that DHL is profiting at the expense of our local community. DHL believes this model will give them the edge they need to compete with UPS and FedEx. This ignores the fact that UPS has become the number one package delivery company in the world with an almost fully unionized workforce. In the Board's initial report, Margaret Hallock, who chaired the hearing on DHL, states "This type of business model also threatens to undermine more responsible employers who are paying better wages who are willing to deal with their workers in a more legitimate way." ESSN/JwJ hopes you will join in the effort to push DHL to drop their current business model and to hire local workers directly, thereby providing them with the job security and employment protections due them.

### ESSN/JwJ and LERC Team Up for Workers and Sustainability

The Eugene-Springfield Solidarity Network/Jobs with Justice and the Labor Education and Research Center at the University of Oregon (LERC), are excited to announce their partnership in project designed to boost the impact of workers on the outcome of Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy's Sustainable Business Initiative. Together ESSN/JwJ and LERC have been awarded a grant by the Sociological Initiatives Foundation to carry out a community-based research project called: *"Equity Principles and Community Standards: A Worker-Oriented Approach to Sustainable Development."* Mayor Piercy launched her Initiative in hopes of creating a sustainable development strategy for the city of Eugene. The basic concept behind sustainable development is that a business can be successful while protecting the environment and contributing to the well being of workers and the community. Unfortunately as practiced in the United States the focus has almost exclusively been on business and environmental health while giving little or no consideration for the people employed by business. Mayor Piercy sought to create a greater balance in representation on the Task Force, appointing Lynn Feekin of LERC, and Claire Syrett, of ESSN/JwJ to serve as members. This research project will provide them with the information they need to bring forward workers' concerns to the Task Force as it develops its recommendations.

Working with a community-based research team, made up of Lucy Lahr, Ellen Teninty, Miriam Jordan and John Evans, LERC and ESSN will conduct a series of focus groups with workers in different industries in order to seek their views on social equity (the worker and community piece of sustainability), labor standards, and sustainable development. Through these focus groups they hope to deepen the engagement of working people in the development of innovative proposals such as Mayor Piercy's that seek to integrate environmental, economic, and social equity concerns. At the same time ESSN/JwJ and LERC plan to share the results of this research with the Task Force as well as other interested groups such as The Apollo Alliance and Good Jobs First. Through this sharing of ideas for "best practices" on sustainable development ESSN/JwJ and LERC hope to move the issues of workers further into the consciousness of policy makers, environmentalists and business owners seeking to capitalize on the future "greening" of business and our economy.

The Sociological Initiatives Foundation supports research and social action projects that focus on understanding and finding solutions to social problems. The primary goal is to encourage research, including community-based research that supports and promotes social change. You can learn more about the Mayor's Sustainable Business Initiative and how you can get involved by visiting the City of Eugene website.