

<<<<< JOB DESTRUCTION NEWSLETTER No. 1819 -- 2/14/2008 >>>>>

Chrysler is replacing some of their employees with H-1Bs and that's got some people in the union angry.

Rich Harter, Local 412's second vice president and Unit 1 chairman, said he has begun the process of lodging a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board.

He said more than 150 contractors are costing the company an estimated \$150,000 each annually and there are 30 to 100 so-called H1B workers.

Harter's next statement is sort of baffling -- he seems to think that using UAW members would be cheaper than hiring the H-1Bs. That's highly unlikely since Chrysler probably wouldn't bother with H-1Bs if they were more expensive.

"This isn't right. We've got American workers getting laid off but they're keeping foreigners," he said. He argues it would be cheaper for the company to use UAW members.

I can't find anything about H-1B on the Local 412 website, so it's not obvious if the union is following through on their promise of filing a complaint. If they are doing something they sure are keeping it a secret. The website is at:

<http://uawlocal412.org/index.cfm>

Youtube has a news report about 119 high-tech layoffs at Chrysler. Pay close attention, because they talk a lot about contract workers replacing union members but there was no mention of H-1B. That makes me wonder if the main gripe of the union is that contractors replace union members, not the fact that the contractors are on H-1B visas. Could it be the union is deliberately downplaying the H-1B issue?

More than likely the H-1B contractors that are replacing the Chrysler workers are from bodyshops like Infosys or Tata. Tough to speculate further unless the union provides more information.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZjTrkiiXrc>

UAW Local Fights Chrysler

Layoffs break new contract, union says

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By TIM HIGGINS

FREE PRESS BUSINESS WRITER

UAW Local 412 leaders claim Chrysler LLC broke their new labor agreement when it laid off 119 workers Thursday. The union leaders vowed to fight the move, making it the first union local to go public with a labor disagreement since new contracts were signed last fall with the Detroit automakers.

More than 100 UAW members rallied at the local's Warren headquarters over the lunch hour Thursday, just hours after being told by the company that those salaried designers would be laid off indefinitely.

"It looks like we are at war with the company. They're doing everything wrong here," Jeff

Hagler, Local 412 president, told the Free Press. "The company seems to be doing whatever they want to do and it is a slap in the face of the union. And we're going to be doing what we've got to do to take them on over it."

Chrysler officials have said the layoffs are volume-related and part of the November announcement to eliminate as many as 12,000 jobs on top of a February 2007 plan to cut 13,000 positions over three years.

"We are in accordance with the UAW agreement," said Michele Tinson, a Chrysler spokeswoman. "And we continue to address our RTP -- the recovery and transformation plan -- and volume-reduction announcement on Nov. 1."

Chrysler and the UAW are believed to still be talking about potential buyouts for the laid-off workers.

Hagler and other UAW members said Chrysler is violating the contract by laying off UAW members but keeping nonunion contract employees to do the same work. "It's not a volume reduction," he said.

Union leaders are also upset that Chrysler is employing foreign workers in Auburn Hills who were let into the country under immigration rules that allow companies to hire skilled foreigners for jobs that can't be filled with local workers.

"The only reason they're supposed to be here is to do work we can't perform," Hagler said.

Rich Harter, Local 412's second vice president and Unit 1 chairman, said he has begun the process of lodging a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board.

He said more than 150 contractors are costing the company an estimated \$150,000 each annually and there are 30 to 100 so-called H1B workers.

"This isn't right. We've got American workers getting laid off but they're keeping foreigners," he said. He argues it would be cheaper for the company to use UAW members.

Hagler and Harter plan to try to get contract workers replaced by UAW members. Neither man would say if they planned to strike but Hagler told laid-off members they would get back to work "or else we're all going to go down."

Thursday's bad news was delivered to Patti Steinmayer in Conference Room 3B.

"It was devastating -- totally devastating," said Steinmayer, who lives in Rochester Hills and has worked for Chrysler for nearly 10 years. "All of these people kept coming up to my desk, and they were so heartfelt sorry to see you go, because they know you're one of the workers, you're one of the people getting the work done. And they don't want to see

that happen."

Donna Friend, 51, of North Branch, who had worked on transmission design in Auburn Hills, was teary-eyed Thursday after being laid off. "It was my dream to work for Chrysler," she said. "It's still my dream to work for Chrysler. I worked hard to get there. It's a good company with good people. I enjoyed my work there. ... Right now I am stunned."

She added, "A lot of people are proud of me and now I am kind of embarrassed to be laid off."

Shawn Dempsey, 43, of Armada is worried about his family. His wife was laid off from General Motors Corp. two years ago and recently found a new job in the medical industry earning a third of what she had made.

"I never thought that it was going to happen to me because of the contract," he said.

"What makes me mad is the contractors. We're doing the same exact job as they are," he added.

Steve Droope, 49, of Sterling Heights was laid off from his designer job and now worries about the future of Michigan. "People don't want to believe this, but especially in Michigan, if the Big Three aren't working, nobody is working," said Droope, who was six days shy of having 30 years with the company.

He hopes for a buyout. "If they offer me a package while I am out ... I am going to take it. I don't want to be here anymore. It's not fun to be there anymore," he said of Chrysler. "The stress, the lies...."

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