

Dow North American Labor Council Discusses Buyout of Corning Shares in Joint Venture

Members of the Dow North American Labor Council (DNALC) met April 18-19, 2016 in Elizabethtown, Ky., to discuss the pending Dow Chemical acquisition of Dow Corning.

In late 2014, Corning announced it planned to shed its stake in the 50/50 joint venture with Dow, and Dow Chemical decided to buy out Corning's share. The acquisition will close on June 1, 2016.

The DNALC limited meeting attendance to labor representatives the acquisition will affect. Dow Corning locals helped plan the meeting, and requested that representatives from Dow Chemical and former Rohm & Haas locals attend.

Dow Chemical acquired Rohm & Haas in 2009. The Dow Corning locals wanted to know how the Rohm & Haas locals adjusted to their new owners since they had the most recent experience with the company.

"The information the Dow Corning locals gained proved invaluable," said DNALC President Kent Holsing.

Meeting Goals

He said the goals of the meeting were to address the Dow Corning locals' concerns regarding the acquisition and to educate them on what they may expect when Dow Chemical completes the acquisition.

"We wanted to convey to the Dow Corning locals that they need to develop a plan of action, reflecting the best interests of their members, on how to handle the changes they will experience once Dow Chemical is in control," Holsing added.

Although there was a structured agenda, the DNALC kept the meeting loose to have much time for discussion and informal conversation on issues the local union representatives generated.

Much of the meeting ended up being a review and discussion over Dow Chemical's recent dealings with its unionized sites, whether the company engaged in standard versus interest-based bargaining, and how it handled benefits, performance awards, environmental health and safety, and outsourcing to contractors.

Local union representatives also discussed such issues as Dow Chemical's drug policy, pay practices for vacation and job leave, shift scheduling, union employees' assignment to



Dow North American Labor Council delegates representing USW and ICWUC/UFCW locals at Dow Chemical and Dow Corning plants.

non-bargaining unit work, and seniority.

Involvement Needed

Holsing said the meeting ended with a discussion over the importance of involving union members from the Dow Corning locals in the DNALC. The council shared the outcome of the meeting with Unite the union representatives who have members at Dow Corning's UK plant in Barry, Wales.

Bargaining committees from USW Local 12934 (Dow Corning-Midland) and ICWUC /UFCW Local 970 (Dow Corning-Elizabethtown, KY) attended the meeting. Union representatives from IUOE Local 564 (Dow Chemical-Freepport, TX); former Rohm & Haas locations from USW Local 13-1 (Dow Chemical-Deer Park, TX), USW Local 367 (Dow Chemical-Louisville, MI) and USW Local 88G (Dow Chemical-Bristol, PA) and USW Local 12075 (Dow Chemical-Midland, MI) attended the meeting as well. Shawn Gilchrist from the USW Strategic Campaigns department also participated.

DuPont Merger

Dow Chemical and DuPont officials project their merger
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Next Dow Chemical Council Meeting Examines Dow's Merger with DuPont

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to be finalized in the fourth quarter of 2016.

The USW is helping the DNALC network with DuPont labor representatives so they can exchange ideas in advance of the merger. In early discussions between the parties, they all agreed they will not see immediate changes because of the merger. But when the newly-formed company splits into three parts—agriculture and chemicals, material sciences and specialty products—they expect major changes to occur.

Next Meeting

DNALC's annual conference will be Sept. 26-29, 2016 in Elizabethtown, Ky. The council is inviting all DuPont union locals in North America to attend.

"It looks to be a full schedule with conducting the DNALC's business, continuing our discourse with our global allies, and creating a dialogue between Dow Chemical and DuPont labor representatives," Holsing said. "We'll communicate more information about the conference as the preparations continue."

First-Time USW DuPont Shareholders Resolution Gets Large Vote

USW's resolution requesting DuPont issue a report on the steps it is taking to reduce the risk of accidents garnered 30 percent of shareholders' votes at the company's annual meeting April 27 in New York City.

"Thirty percent of the vote may not sound like much, but in the world of shareholder resolutions that unions and progressive groups propose it is an incredible victory, especially since this is the first time the USW presented such a resolution in the chemical sector," said USW International

Vice President Carol Landry.

USW Local 6992 President Gary Guralny, who works at DuPont's Yerkes plant in Buffalo, N.Y., presented the USW's resolution that said DuPont must present its report at the 2017 annual meeting and include in it a description of the board of directors' oversight of process safety management, staffing levels, inspection and maintenance of facilities and other equipment.

Northeast Chemical Locals to Meet In Atlantic City

USW International Vice President Carol Landry, District 4 Director John Shinn and District 10 Director Bobby (Mac) McAuliffe are bringing together chemical locals from Districts 4 and 10 to discuss issues unique to the sector in a meeting June 27 through June 30 at Caesar's Hotel & Casino in Atlantic City, NJ.

This is the third chemical conference for the two districts, and the chemical locals will continue their discussion on collective bargaining, organizing, health and safety, and building power. They also will set a plan for the future.

Local union representatives need to bring a copy of their current contract so comparisons and contrasts can be identified between agreements with one company and among other companies.

Increase Communication

"At our conference last June, 22 local unions came and we hope more will attend so they can learn from other locals and broaden our communication network among chemical locals in the Northeast," Landry said.

Locals will have sufficient time to give their reports and share information, which will allow them to see how their companies treat different locations. Each district has com-

mon employers.

"Some locals are very small with only 40 people, but as they listen to other locals they learn they aren't alone in having difficulties with the same employer," said Ron Bowser, president of Local 13300.

"Banding together and developing solidarity through these conferences is very helpful for our chemical locals in this region," he added.

Make Contacts

To help the chemical members get to know each other, Directors McAuliffe and Shinn are hosting a hospitality event for delegates on Monday, June 27 starting at 6:00 p.m. at Caesars hotel.

Delegates are to arrive June 27 for the hospitality event and depart after noontime on Thursday, June 30. Sessions begin on June 28 at 9:00 a.m.

Locals are encouraged to send up to five delegates that reflect the diversity of the membership. Prior to the conference, locals and delegates will receive additional information and an agenda.

Each district office has a May 30 deadline to receive the conference registration form.