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## **“LWC Meets to Plan Contract Mobilization”**

### **Longshore Workers' Coalition News Update • February 19, 2009**

As the ILA and the USMX prepared to begin negotiations for a new master deep-sea contract in Orlando, Florida, 100 members and supporters of the Longshore Workers' Coalition met to discuss a contract campaign strategy.

#### **NO WAGE BRIDGE, NO CONTRACT!**

The high turnout for the LWC Quarterly Membership Meeting, which took place February 7-8 in Tampa, Florida, was reflective of the high stakes of this bargaining round.

Members agreed, during a workshop on “Understanding the Economic Crisis and Why Concessions Don't Work,” that the USMX, like all major employers, will use any excuse to squeeze deep givebacks out of the workers. After seeing hard facts on how workers wages have been stagnant for over 30 years, participants concluded that the ILA's logo needs to be “No Wage Bridge, No Contract!”

#### **PORT TO PORT UNITY**

Meeting participants agreed that building unity within the ILA and keeping all deep-sea members informed of the negotiations is crucial to our fight for a strong contract.

Important steps towards building unity were already reported on at the meeting. Local 1588 reported that their “Port Unity Tour,” which involved 20 members of their local, had been well-received at the various ports where they had stopped on the four-day drive from New Jersey to Tampa.

Said Anthony Falcicchio, Local 1588 President and Port Unity Tour participant, “Our employers talk, why shouldn't we? ILA members face a lot of the same problems and we must look for solutions together. That's why we organized the Port Unity Tour.”

Members of ILA Local 24 in Houston, Texas, also spent two days driving to Tampa and stopped at key ports on the way. “In Houston we were kept in the dark during the last master contract negotiations in 2004. The only way we're going to have a chance at winning a strong contract in 2010 is if all the ports are on the same page this time,” said Ricky Henderson, from ILA Local 24.

#### **COMMUNICATION=UNITY**

Jackie Smith, an ILA member of Local 1883 in Wilmington, Delaware, told the LWC after the 2004 contract negotiations: “During the negotiations, LWC members were the only reliable source of information.”

The LWC is committed to getting contract information out to as many ILA members as possible. Stay tuned for details on further port-to-port unity caravans and other coordinated actions in the coming weeks. In the meantime, follow the LWC website at [www.lwcjustice.com](http://www.lwcjustice.com) for bargaining updates.

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