



# TEAMSTERS

WAREHOUSEMEN, GARAGE EMPLOYEES AND HELPERS

## LOCAL UNION NO. 839

AFFILIATED WITH THE INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS

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June 12, 2006

Garnet Zimmerman, International Vice President at Large  
International Brotherhood of Teamsters  
14675 Interurban Ave. S. Suite 301  
Tuckwila, WA 98168

Re: Smith Frozen Foods

Vice President and Brother:

The purpose of this letter is to extend my heartfelt thanks to you for your role in securing a tentative agreement with the above-referenced employer.

As you know, after the International dissolved Local 556 last year and assigned its former jurisdiction to Local 839, Smith refused to recognize us as the exclusive representative of its employees who, by the way, had been Teamsters for 50 years. The employees had already been without a labor agreement for a year, so at that time the International sent an organizing team to Weston to work with our Local to rally the support of the employees. In June of 2005, and directly as a result of those efforts, the employees voted by a margin of 4 to 1 in an NLRB recognition vote to retain the Teamsters as their representative in collective bargaining.

After that initial victory, Local 839 immediately engaged Smith in contract bargaining, but the company did not bargain in good faith. (You are probably aware that the company is owned by Oregon's Republican U.S. Senator Gordon Smith.) By spring of 2006 the employer had illegally declared impasse and selectively implemented most of its last, best, and final offer, the Local had been forced to file two ULP charges with the NLRB, and what could have been the final bargaining session had been scheduled for June 8. In advance of that bargaining session the International again acted in support of Local 839. Thanks to Randy Cammack and Fred Gegare, Carlos Barnett was able to come up and help us plan a rally for the Smith employees and help with advance work on letter-writing campaigns, among other actions. Iain Gold was also kind enough to provide help with stickers and placards, and worked with Carlos and others to bring pressure to bear upon Smith's customers and Senator Smith's political colleagues.

At that time, Garnet, Joint Council 28 President and International Vice President Al Hobart made the key decision to grant our request that he assign you to chair the negotiations on June 8. Smith Frozen Foods did not want to give us a contract, and candidly admitted it was happy with

its implemented agreement. The situation you came into on June 8 could not have been more polarized, and the stakes could not have been higher. The Local believes that it might likely have had no other option than some type of collective labor action if the June 8 talks had not produced a tentative agreement. You proved to be a quick study, even though you had been operating on little sleep and had limited time to review the progress of negotiations. The highly developed bargaining and diplomatic skills you demonstrated in that session cannot be overly praised. You were clearly the right man for the job, and your tenacious efforts that day resulted in a tentative agreement that the Local will take to the employees in a ratification vote.

Even though the offer will not merit the Local's recommendation, it would preserve seniority, union security, dues check-off, a Teamster pension, Teamster life insurance, Teamster medical insurance, and a grievance procedure. It provides for increases in wages for all employees in each year of a 3½ year term of agreement. Most importantly, it would retain the 170 full-time and several hundred more seasonal employees as Teamsters under a collective bargaining agreement, allowing us to set our sights on the next organizing project.

Again, the multifaceted support of the International, culminating in the negotiations you chaired, was one of the crucial elements which led to this victory. Please accept my sincere thanks to you for being willing to come and close this deal on such short notice.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Hawks', written over a horizontal line.

Robert C. Hawks, Secretary-Treasurer  
Teamsters Local Union No. 839