

Dougherty, Kelley protest advent of Wal-Mart in Lemay development

Lemay — Representatives of union grocery stores and their employees last week protested the advent of a Wal-Mart store as part of a proposed \$81.4 million retail development southeast of Interstate 55 and Weber Road.

The developer, Pace Properties Inc., has requested an \$18.5 million tax-increment financing arrangement for the 39-acre development in the unincorporated area.

Jim Dougherty, president of Local 655, and Bob Kelley, who represented the union grocery chains, protested the tax-abatement proposal at a public hearing of the St. Louis County Tax Increment Financing Commission because the plan involved a Wal-Mart.

In a speech before the commission and more than 100 concerned residents who would be affected by the development, Dougherty questioned granting a TIF proposal involving Wal-Mart — both the world's largest retailer and the world's largest company.

"In TIF development after TIF development across the St. Louis area, we have seen a company — whose profits amount to \$20,000 a minute, \$29 million a day, \$10 billion a year and growing — become the main tenant in these developments," Dougherty said.

"Wal-Mart has unfair advantages because they pay substandard wages and provide few healthcare benefits that the employee has to purchase," he said.

Wal-Mart is in competition with union stores — Schnucks Supermarkets, Shop 'N Save and Dierbergs Markets — that employ UFCW Local 655 members and pay them an average salary of \$14 an hour plus fringe benefits including good health insurance.

"It is possible our hometown retailers will be forced to close their stores permanently in Lemay," Dougherty said. "If that happens, Lemay will not increase new revenue but simply shift revenue — revenue from quality employers like our hometown retailers to large, out-of-town retailers.

"I implore you to do what is right for the community," Dougherty said. "You have an opportunity to set the standards — standards that ensure quality employers with quality jobs."

Kelley, who represented the union grocers at the public hearing, said the stores would suffer from unfair competition from Wal-



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Mart, which pays substandard wages and few benefits.

"Unfortunately, in many instances, cities are rolling out the red carpet for retailers who only cannibalize existing retail," Kelley said. "Schnucks, Dierbergs and Shop 'N Save all have stores extremely close to this proposed development. We hope that you might consider the types of jobs and benefits that these retailers offer before you bring in a retailer that pays far less and does not offer benefits anywhere close to what these quality retailers offer."

Promotion of "generic drugs" by Wal-Mart: a "generic publicity stunt"

By **RONALD E. POWELL**
UFCW International Vice President

"Wal-Mart's recent announcement offering \$4 prescription drugs is nothing more than a publicity stunt that offers little real savings to the consumer.

In fact, it has been reported that the container holding the generic drug often costs more than the generic drug itself.

"If Wal-Mart was truly sincere in its efforts to provide its customers with relief from the high cost of healthcare, they should claim responsibility for the burden they place on working families by passing on the cost of providing healthcare for Wal-Mart employees to the taxpayer," Powell said. "This is nothing more than a 'bait-and-switch' stunt that leads to another high payoff for the retail giant."

This company is costing the very same consumers they claim to help—first for their medical care, and second through taxpayer-funded

programs that help Wal-Mart employees.

In a report by the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services, it was reported that in 2005 Wal-Mart shifted \$2.5 million in uncompensated/charity care by hospitals to consumers for employee health care because high paid executives at Wal-Mart do not take responsibility for their own employees. This underscores that this new drug program is just another shameful practice by the company and a desperate attempt to build upon their large profits, Powell said.

"Wal-Mart has no problem taking taxpayer dollars by passing off the healthcare costs of their employees and taking taxpayer money to develop and build their stores. Ultimately, the taxpayers do not see how much of their tax dollar actually goes to fuel the expansion and business practices of Wal-Mart. This program is simply another example of Wal-Mart's 'low prices' coming at a high cost to taxpayers."



POWELL

An Exclusive Twice Monthly Report For UFCW Local 655 Members & Their Families

LOCAL 655 REPORT

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Affiliated with United Food & Commercial Workers International Union



Unions rally for victory Nov. 7

Local 655 officers were among hundreds of union members from Labor Clubs around the St. Louis area last Thursday who attended "The Main Event" political rally with U.S. Senate candidate Claire McCaskill and other COPE-endorsed candidates at a Holiday Inn in south St. Louis County. "This election is about turn out," said state AFL-CIO President Hugh McVey, in encouraging all union members to vote Nov. 7. "If we get our voters out, we will win." McCaskill told the rally, "we are in danger of losing our way of life," referring to the Bush administration and Republican Congress efforts to destroy unions, reduce Medicaid for the poor, turn over Social Security to Wall Street, and oppose any raise in the minimum wage without more tax cuts for the wealthy. "They are destroying the middle class," she said. McCaskill accused the Bush administration of "creating a mess in Iraq" that is helping create more terrorists around the world. Her opponent, Republican U.S. Senator Jim Talent had supported Bush's policies 94 percent of the time, she said. "It's time for a change." At left is Judy Davidson, vice president and assistant to the president of Local 655. At right is David Politte, vice president and assistant to the president. They are legislative representatives for Local 655.

Labor Tribune photo



Gearing up for door-to-door canvassing

Jimmy Lappe, a member of UFCW Local 655 (left) helps Tom Green (seated right), Democratic candidate for state representative for the 15th District of St. Charles County, review a list of registered voters prior to door-to-door canvassing. Looking on are Tri County Labor Club volunteers Jennifer McNay, campaign manager for State Senate candidate Wayne Henke; and Dave Sachse, a member of IBEW Local 1.

Labor Tribune photo

Attention voters
There is no excuse for not voting...
FREE RIDES TO AND FROM THE POLLS

The A. Philip Randolph Institute, St. Louis Area Chapter, will provide free rides to and from the polls on Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 7. Arrangements may be made by calling (314) 383-9080 on or before election day to give us your pick up time.

November 4, the chapter will be hand-billing neighborhoods in the city of St. Louis, in an effort to reach the voters on important choices to be made. Volunteers will work out of the Westly House, 4507 Lee Ave. St. Louis, MO

Support Working Families
With Your Vote Nov. 7