

EDMONTON OFFICE
14040 – 128 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5L 4M8
Ph: 780-452-0362 Fax: 780-451-3099

CALGARY OFFICE
102, 2367 – 37 Avenue, NE Calgary, AB T1Y 5V7
Ph: 403-291-1047 Fax: 403-250-3412

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News Release



Albertans asked not to purchase Old Dutch potato chips

Customers at grocery stores will be asked to support workers

Albertans are being asked not to buy potato chips made by Old Dutch Foods, after the company locked out 170 of its employees in Calgary. The union representing the affected workers, Local 401 of the United Food and Commercial Workers, says the company is trying to use the economic pressure generated by the recession to put the squeeze on its workers – even when the company is profitable.

Doug O'Halloran, President of Local 401, says that the recession is contributing to the dispute: "The company is still making money – lots of it. No industry is completely recession-proof, but snack food manufacturing comes pretty close. But managers at this company have decided to take advantage of the economic insecurity that people are feeling by saying 'my way or the highway'."

O'Halloran goes on to say that awareness of this economic insecurity makes the locked out workers even more determined: "We told the company we didn't want a work stoppage: that we wanted to keep bargaining, but they chose to take a hard line. In fact, our negotiating position is a response to the recession. We asked for some guaranteed minimum hours of work, so our members know from week-to-week what kind of money will be coming in."

"And this dispute isn't about big amounts of money – the difference between our wage proposals and the company's is something we think can be solved at the bargaining table. But we've also asked for sick leave provisions, which to us is just common sense – you don't want sick people dragging themselves into work and handling food, because they can't afford to miss a day's wages. We've asked for food

safety language, because the union and the employees want to be directly involved in making sure the food that leaves the plant is completely safe.”

The employer is also refusing to agree that all employees in the bargaining unit be required to pay union dues as they are in almost all other unionized workplaces.

“Old Dutch doesn’t give their chips away for free, so why are they interfering with the union’s right to survive?” says O’Halloran.

“We don’t think the public wants to see ordinary working people getting pushed to the wall in these tough times, so we’re asking them not to purchase the following brand names:

- **Old Dutch**
- **President’s Choice**
- **No Name**
- **Great Value**
- **Compliments**
- **Safeway Blue Bags.”**

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For more information contact:

Doug O’Halloran, UFCW 401 President at (403) 861-2121