

# Straight Talk

## CAT TEAM Local 235A



TUESDAY, JULY 28, 2015

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# SAFETY ISSUES PERSIST AT SHERWIN ALUMINA

### *Company Must End Lockout and Return Experienced Union Workers to Their Jobs*

A series of incidents at Sherwin Alumina shows that health and safety issues continue to be a problem nine months into a company-imposed lockout of 450 members of USW Local 235A.

Some of the recent incidents resulted in injuries so serious that employees had to miss days of work. In one incident, a worker received second-degree burns to the face, nose, mouth, arm and shoulder.

Because the company's experienced union work force has been locked out since October 11, 2014, most of the recent injuries were sustained by employees with very little experience.

In fact, as recently as July 7, MSHA cited Sherwin and issued an order for failing to properly train employees, deeming this a "significant and substantial" (S&S) violation. The company also was



cited twice this month with S&S violations for failing to abide by personal protective equipment standards. In addition, twice in June, the company received S&S citations when equipment operators were found to not be wearing required harnesses or seat belts.

In February, March and again in May, MSHA cited Sherwin for S&S "housekeeping" violations. While most violations have proposed penalties of \$100 to \$500, these cases were severe enough to warrant fines of \$1,795, \$1,530 and \$1,203.

This is not the first time that safety has been an issue at Sherwin. In February,

a USW report revealed a nearly 10-fold increase in S&S citations and orders from MSHA under Sherwin's ownership, as well as an increase in incidents since the October lockout.

In the first quarter of 2015, Sherwin's Non-Fatal Days Lost (NFDL) incidence rate was 3.71, compared with a national rate of 1.82 at similar facilities.

Over the last 12 months, 42.9 percent of Sherwin's S&S citations or orders were considered either a "high" level of negligence, or "reckless disregard."

"It's long past time for Sherwin to do the right thing, end this destructive lockout and put these well-trained, experienced workers back on the job," said USW District 13 Director Ruben Garza. "The well-being of this entire community depends on it."

**One Day Longer – One Day Stronger**