



Mobilizing local Teamsters and waking the sleeping giant in the Central Valley

Teamsters launch community, legal campaigns to keep VWR in Brisbane

What started as a tough contract negotiation with a long-time employer in the Bay Area has turned into a major union, community and environmental campaign spreading across the Central Valley.

For the last 52 years, Local 853 has represented the warehouse workers at VWR—a Brisbane-based distributor of medical and scientific supplies. For most of that time, the union and the company enjoyed good labor relations. In 2007, however, after the Chicago-based private equity and investment firm Madison Dearborn Partners purchased VWR, labor relations began to sour almost immediately.

In the midst of negotiations last fall, VWR suddenly announced that they intended to close their Brisbane facility and move the work out of town. They initially sought to keep the new location a secret, but the union learned that they plan to move to Visalia. This move will impact 68 Teamsters and roughly 80 more employees. It also represents a significant blow to the City of Brisbane's general fund, as VWR generates 50% of the city's sales tax revenues and 14-18% of its annual general fund revenue.

Since the move came to light, VWR has refused to meet with Brisbane officials and union representatives to discuss alternatives that would enable the company to continue to employ Teamster members. Further, they are not offering employees transfer rights to the new facility, a fair severance package, or

neutrality for organizing rights.

When it was clear that the negotiations were at a standstill, the local started looking for new strategies. "We contacted the IBT's Capital Strategies Department to investigate Madison-Dearborn's investment portfolio. We figured that the Teamster pension funds, with billions in investments, should offer us some clout," says Local 853 Business Agent Bob Strelo.

After some diligent research, the IBT uncovered several investors to target. IBT Secretary-Treasurer Tom Keegel wrote letters to these investors and to the other unions to inform them about what was going on at VWR. For a while, it seemed like the pressure of the strategic corporate campaign paid off as the company came back to the table. "But ultimately, we realized we were going to need a larger campaign," Strelo says.

In fact, the union has since learned that the City of Visalia has been fast tracking this project with apparently no community input or regard for either the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and San Joaquin Valley Air District rules requiring permits for emissions associated with large-scale industrial developments.

"It's all been under the radar," says Joint Council 7 Political Director Doug Bloch. "They've circumvented local and state environmental laws in an effort



Teamsters meet with Visalia allies. The VWR campaign has received strong support from Locals 350, 431, 517, 853, 856, and the IBT. From left: Doug Bloch, JC7 Political Director; Bob Strelo, LU 853 Business Agent; Danny Smith, LU 517 Business Agent/Political Director; Ronny Jungk, IBEW 100 Director of Membership Development; Doreen Jungk of GRAPE (Goshen Residents Against Polluting the Environment); Kevin Long, LU 517 Recording Secretary; Gary Jenkins, LU 517 Business Agent/Organizer; Chester Suniga, LU 517 Secretary-Treasurer; and Kevin Cole, IBEW 100 Assistant Business Manager.

to shut the Brisbane facility and move as quickly as possible to bust our union."

"Visalia is a community hard hit by unemployment and it's a targeted tax credit area," Strelo says. "It's easy to see why Visalia would want the jobs, but as far as we're concerned, those would be pirated jobs."

The lawsuit

In December, working with attorney Richard Drury and the Center for Environmental Health, Joint Council 7 joined Local 517 member and long-time Visalia-resident Kevin Long to file suit against VWR and the City of Visalia in Tulare County Superior Court.

The proposed VWR distribution center is estimated to be 500,000 square feet in size and will generate hundreds, if not thousands, of truck trips daily. These trucks will transport hazardous chemicals, emit dangerous particulates in the air and travel through residential neighborhoods and by farms and cattle ranches, significantly impacting air quality, traffic and noise.

The San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District requires building development projects larger than 100,000 square feet to secure approvals for specific air emissions. VWR has not applied for those approvals.

The suit seeks to halt construction of the massive facility until important environmental and public health clearances are obtained as required by California State law.



At VWR's proposed Visalia site: CW from top left, a tree marked for removal; stakes already placed on the land; a nearby cattle ranch holds 750-1000 cows.



LOCAL 70 Oakland

General Membership and Steward

Council Meetings are held at 400 Roland Way, Oakland, as follows:

Thursday Meetings - 7 p.m.:

Feb 24 • Mar 24 • May 26 • Sept 22

Saturday Meetings – 10 a.m.

Apr 16 • Jun 11 • Oct 15 • Dec 17

NOTE: Due to the Thanksgiving Holiday, the Nov Membership/Steward Council meeting will be held Tuesday, Nov. 15, 7 p.m.

Marty Frates, Secretary-Treasurer

LOCAL 87 Bakersfield

All meetings are held at Teamsters Local 87, 2531 G Street, Bakersfield, CA

NOTE: All meetings start promptly at 10:30 a.m.

April 17 • July 24 • October 23

Rudy Hernandez, Secretary-Treasurer

LOCAL 137 Redding

Membership Meetings are held the third Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. at Teamsters Local 137 Union Hall, 3540 S. Market St., Redding

Feb 17 • Mar 17 • Apr 21 • May 19 • Jun 16 • July-Aug-Sept Meetings are suspended • Oct 20 • Nov 17 • Dec 15

Dave Hawley, Secretary-Treasurer

LOCAL 150 Sacramento

General Membership Meetings:

First Wednesday of the month, 7 p.m. at Local 150, 7120 East Parkway, Sacramento.

Feb 2 • Mar 2 • Apr 6 • May 4 • Jun 1 • Jul 6 • Aug 3 • Sept 7 • Oct 5 • Nov 2 • Dec 7

New Member Orientation:

First Wednesday, 6 p.m. at Local 150

James Tobin, Secretary-Treasurer

LOCAL 287 San Jose

General Membership Meetings:

2nd Tuesday of the month, 7 p.m. at Teamsters Local 287, 1452 North Fourth St., San Jose

Feb 8 • March 8 • April 12 • May 10 •

June 14 • July 12 • Aug 8 • Sept 13 •

Oct 11 • Nov 8 • Dec 13

Stewards meetings: Last Thursday of the month, 7:00 p.m.

Bill Hoyt, Secretary-Treasurer

LOCAL 315 Martinez

General Membership Meetings are generally held on the second Wednesday of the month at 8:00 p.m. with the exception of Saturdays May 14 and October 15 when the meeting begins at 10:00 a.m.

New Member Orientation begins at 7:30 p.m.

The 2011 Meeting locations as follows:

Martinez Union Hall—2727 Alhambra Ave.

Jan 12 • Feb 9 • April 13 • Sat. May 14 •

July 13 • Aug 10 • Sat. Oct 15 • Dec 14

Vallejo Union Hall—445 Nebraska Street:

March 9 • June 8 • Sept 14 • Nov 9.

Directions at www.teamsters315.com

Dale Robbins, Secretary-Treasurer

LOCAL 350 Daly City

Membership Meetings:

San Francisco – 7 p.m. at Electricians Hall, 55 Fillmore St., San Francisco

Mar 10 • Jun 9 • Sept 8 • Dec 8

San Jose – 7 p.m. at 1452 North Fourth St., San Jose

Mar 23 • Jun 22 • Sept 28 • Dec 14 at San

Jose Airport Garden Hotel, 1740 North

First St., San Jose

Robert Morales, Secretary-Treasurer

LOCAL 386 Modesto

General membership meetings are held 2nd Thursday of the month, 8 p.m., at Local 386, 1225 13th Street, Modesto.

Gaylord Phillips, Secretary-Treasurer

LOCAL 431 Fresno

Membership Meetings

are held the first Thursday of each month (unless otherwise noted), 7:30p.m. at Local 431

Membership Hall, 1140 W. Olive, Fresno.

Feb 3 • Mar 3 • Apr 7 • May 5 • 3rd

Thursday—Jun 16 • July/Aug/Sept

(Summer months) suspended • Oct 6 •

2nd Thursday—Nov 10 • Dec 1

Darrell Pratt, President

LOCAL 439 Stockton

General Membership Meetings

are held 3rd Wednesday of the month, 7 p.m., at Local 439, 1531 East Fremont St., Stockton.

Tel: 209 948-9592

Sam Rosas, Secretary-Treasurer

LOCAL 517 Visalia

General Membership Meetings:

Visalia: Local 517 Union Hall, 512 W. Oak St., Visalia, 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.: Feb 24:

Bylaws proposal meeting • Apr 28 • Jun

23 • Aug 25 • Oct 27 • Dec 22

Fresno: Local 431 Union Hall, 1140 W.

Olive, Fresno, 5 p.m.: Mar 24 • May 26 •

Jul 28 • Sept 22 • Nov 23-Wednesday

Chester Suniga, Secretary-Treasurer

LOCAL 533 Reno

General Membership Meetings:

Teamsters Local 533 Hall, 240 Gentry Way, Reno. Thursday meetings are held

at 8 p.m.: Feb 17 • May 19 • Jun 16 • Jul

21 • Aug 18 • Nov 17 • Dec 15.

Saturday meetings are held at 10 a.m.:

Mar 19 • Oct 15

NOTE: The April and September

Membership Meetings will be held in

Fallon, NV on Saturdays at 10 a.m.— exact address TBD

Debbie Calkins, Secretary-Treasurer

LOCAL 601 Stockton

General Membership Meetings:

Stockton – 3rd Tuesday of the month, 7 p.m., at Local 601, 745 East Miner Ave., Stockton.

Yuba City – 4th Tuesday of the month, 7

p.m., 326 B St., Yuba City

Ashley Alvarado, Secretary-Treasurer

LOCAL 624 Santa Rosa

General Membership Meetings

are held the fourth Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. at Teamsters Local 624 Union Hall, 1371 Neotomas Avenue, Santa Rosa.

NOTE: Due to Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays, the General membership Meetings will be held third Thursday

of the month at 7 p.m.: Nov 17 • Dec 15

Ralph Miranda, Secretary-Treasurer

LOCAL 665 Daly City

General Membership Meetings:

4th Tuesday of the month, 6 p.m., at Local 665, 295 89th St., Daly City, except

for June and December, which will be

held the third Tuesday, June 21 and

December 20.

Ernie Yates, Secretary-Treasurer



Joint Council 7 TEAMSTER

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Inauguration of new California leadership brings hope for California and inspiration for Teamsters

I began the new year by attending the inaugurations of our new Governor, Jerry Brown, and our new Attorney General, Kamala Harris. Our state capitol in Sacramento was bustling with supporters all hurrying to attend their winner's swearing-in.

The day was exciting for me, as it was the first of these events that I have ever attended. I thought it was important that the Teamsters had a presence at the ceremonies as our members played such an important role in keeping our state out of the hands of Tea Party right-wingers that would like nothing better than to see all workers toiling for minimum wages and no pensions. Your votes and your DRIVE contributions helped put into statewide office people with whom we can work.

Our new governor's inaugural speech sounded very much like he talks in person. Governor Brown was straight forward and didn't pull any punches. He clearly imparted the message that our state is in trouble with a multitude of problems and decisions are going to have to be made that will not be popu-

lar. He spoke of necessary cuts and of necessary tax increases and how both are needed to make California a viable state once again.

In what I thought was a tremendous point,

Loyalty to our union will bring us through these toughest of times.

Governor Brown strongly encouraged people to put aside their particular political affiliation as he called upon them to put their first allegiance to their state. I believe this thought should be in all our minds as think about our membership in the Teamsters. Loyalty to our union is what will bring us through these toughest of times.

I know that many of Jerry Brown's actions in the next year or two will be seen as controversial, but I also believe that his intentions are honorable and are directed toward making California better for all of us.

Our new Attorney General's ceremony was much different, but no less interesting. Kamala Harris celebrated her bi-racial makeup by discussing the strong points of both cultures and how it strengthened her in growing up and choosing to do what she has done all of her life—enforce the law and protect the men, women and children in the jurisdiction where she worked. However, she made a point of saying that she will work to do things differently by promoting rehabilitation of convicted persons to stem the tide of parolees going back to prison. Her goal is to help them come out and create a positive and productive life moving forward. Perhaps her most revealing quote was "Good prosecutors get convictions, Great prosecutors have

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BULLETIN BOARD

LOCAL 853 San Leandro

General Membership Meetings are held the second Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. at Teamsters Local 853 Meeting Room, 2100 Merced St., San Leandro, except the October, 2011 Membership Meeting which will be held at the Local 853 West Bay Office, 151 West 20th Ave., San Mateo, at 7 p.m.

Rome Aloise, Secretary-Treasurer

LOCAL 856 San Bruno

General Membership Meetings are held last Tuesday of each month, 6 p.m. at Local 856's "Chetcuti Hall", 453 San Mateo, San Bruno, CA:
Feb 22 • Mar 29 • April 26 • May 31 • June, July, August meetings canceled • Sept 27 • Oct 25 • Nov—Annual Thanksgiving Meeting—to be announced • December—meeting canceled

Joseph Lanthier, Secretary-Treasurer

LOCAL 890 Salinas

General Membership Meetings are held the second Thursday of the month at Teamsters Local 890, 207 North Sanborn Road, Salinas, at 8 p.m.

Crescencio Diaz, President

LOCAL 896 Vallejo

Branch 1 Membership Meetings:

Saturday, 10 a.m. at TAP office, 300 Pendleton Way, Oakland
Feb 26 • Mar 26 • Apr 30 • May 21 • Jun 25 • Jul 30 • Aug 27 • Sept 24 • Oct 29 • Nov 19 • Dec 17

Branch 2 Membership Meetings:

Suisun Senior Center, 318 Merganser Dr., Suisun
Tuesday Meetings – 4:30 p.m.: Feb 22 • Apr 26 • May 24 • Jul 26 • Aug 30 • Oct 25 • Nov 22
Sunday Meetings – 9 a.m.: Mar 27 • Jun 26 • Sept 25
Saturday Meeting – 10 a.m.: Dec 17
Rene Medrano, Secretary-Treasurer

LOCAL 912 Watsonville

General Membership Meetings are held the 4th Tuesday of the month, 7 p.m. at Local 912, 22 East 5th St., Watsonville.

Brad Sebring, Secretary-Treasurer

LOCAL 948 Modesto/Visalia

General Membership Meetings:

Modesto: Third Tuesday of the month at Local 948 Meeting Hall, at Teamsters Local 948, 1222 I Street, Modesto, at 7 p.m.
Visalia: Second Thursday of the month at Visalia Memorial Bldg., 609 West Center St., Visalia, at 7 p.m.
Lupe Juarez, Secretary-Treasurer

LOCAL 2785, San Francisco

General Membership Meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of the month, 7:30 p.m., at the Slovenian Hall, 2101 Mariposa St., San Francisco.

Jack Booker, Secretary-Treasurer

YOUR LOCAL UNION PHONE NUMBERS

70.....	510-569-9317
87.....	661-327-8594
137.....	530-243-0232
150.....	916-392-7070
287.....	408-453-0287
315.....	925-228-2246
350.....	650-757-7290
386.....	209-526-2755
431.....	559-486-5410
439.....	209-948-9592
517.....	559-627-9993
533.....	775-348-6060
601.....	209-948-2800
624.....	707-542-1292
665.....	650-991-2102
853.....	510-895-8853
856.....	650-635-0111
890.....	831-424-5743
896.....	707-644-8896
912.....	831-724-0683
948.....	559-625-1061
2785.....	415-467-0450

Get your Teamsters news on the web:



Joint Council 7

www.teamstersjc7.org

IBT

www.teamsters.org

Notice to members

The California Teamsters are represented at the California Legislature and before state administrative agencies by the California Teamsters Public Affairs Council. Barry Broad and Shane Gusman are the Legislative Representatives and Marsi Newman is the Public Affairs Administrator.

Per Capita Tax

All Teamsters affiliated with Joint Councils 7 and 42 supports the California Teamsters Public Affairs Council through a per capita tax of 25 cents per member per month, from union dues. Twenty five percent (25%) of this is set aside in the Political Action Committee from which the Executive Committee makes campaign contributions.

Executive Committee

Rome Aloise, President of Joint Council 7 and Randy Cammack, President of Joint Council 42 serve as Co-Chairs of the Executive Committee, which supervises the staff of the Council.

Policy Committee

The policy committee shall consist of the Principal Officers of every local union represented by Joint Council 7 and Joint Council 42. The committee is responsible for the development of the Council's long-term political, legislative and education policy, screening candidates and making recommendations for endorsement for statewide offices.

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Any questions about the California Teamsters Public Affairs Council may be addressed to California Teamsters Public Affairs Council, 1127 11th St., Ste. 501, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Phone: 916-446-0291

FAX: 916-446-9321

E-mail: info@teamsterctpac.org

President's Report: *State and Teamsters look to the future*

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convictions." I believe that Attorney General Harris has convictions and will make a real difference. All in all, the experience of being there to watch the celebration was inspiring. Let's hope that the future holds good things from those we worked so hard to elect.

Preparing for the international IBT convention

On another note, by March, all of our locals in our Joint Council will have finished their delegate nominations and elections for the International convention coming up in June. The convention is held once every five years and is convened with delegates from every local union in the Teamsters, from the U.S., Canada, and Puerto Rico.

We spend a lot of time at the convention on the constitution, which controls the governance of our union. As important, the delegates at the Convention will vote to nominate candidates to run in the national election for the General Executive Board. The election campaign then officially commenced in July.

The plan now is to mail ballots out to our 1.4 million members in October and they will be counted in

November. This process, to ensure democracy in our union, is incredibly expensive and time-consuming. Candidates spend thousands of hours bringing their messages and viewpoints to you, hoping for your vote. Since our members were first given a direct vote for their international officers more than 20 years ago, the percentage of members voting has declined each election. Five years ago, only 19% of the members even bothered to vote.

While I understand that in many Locals the General Executive Board seems distant and unimportant, I can assure you that it is not. What happens at the international union directly affects every member at some point in their Teamster career. I am committed to making sure that the locals in Joint Council 7 work very hard to make sure that you understand the importance of participation and of voting in this election. After all, the ballot comes to your house with stamp on the return envelope. All you are obligated to do is mark it and send it in. Not a big effort for what is a very important right and privilege.

Keep your eyes and ears open and study the issues and what the candidates have to offer. It is up to you to keep our union strong.

Building a community, environmental, union coalition to fight VWR

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"The Teamsters have long fought to protect the health and safety of drivers and communities from the dangerous effects of poisonous diesel emissions and have helped pass some of the strongest environmental and public health and safety laws in the country," said Rome Aloise, President of Joint Council 7, which represents more than 700 members in Visalia alone. "We won't let out-of-state companies like Madison Dearborn violate our important environmental protection laws or run roughshod over our communities at the expense of our health and safety."

The company's plan to consolidate its west coast operations in Visalia will significantly increase distribution distances to many of the company's largest customers further exacerbating the environmental and human health impact throughout the state. "Having represented VWR workers for more than 50 years, Teamsters know well the dangers of this business," Aloise said.

"As a member of the Visalia community all of my life, I want to preserve our environment and make sure it is always a safe and comfortable place to live," said resident Teamsters Local 517 member Kevin Long, who is a named party to the lawsuit. "Thousands of truck trips will ruin that!"

The Center for Environmental Health has signed on to the litigation and several local and statewide environmental groups are looking to support it as well. "This has been characterized as a 'union fight,' but it's so much more than that," says Bloch. "The relationships that we've built with environmental organizations through our work on the port campaign are paying off here," he adds.

Expanding the campaign

As the lawsuit wends its way through the courts, the Teamsters are seeking to mobilize the membership locally. "I'm just sick of people calling us a special interest group when we've got 700 members plus their families who live in the Visalia area," adds Bloch. "We represent workers in some of the largest companies in town, as well as the police officers. We're not a special interest—we're the community."

Bloch is excited about the opportunity that this campaign raises to do grassroots organizing among our own Teamster members. "Right now, we don't have much political clout in Visalia or Tulare County because we've never tried to mobilize it. But this issue is waking up a sleeping giant."

Bloch says that Locals 517 and 431 brought out

members to testify at the Visalia city council meeting. Teamster members have also addressed the Tulare County Workforce Investment Board.

This effort is being noticed by the media. Stories have already appeared in the *Fresno Bee*, the *Fresno Business Times*, the *Visalia Times Delta* and the *Valley Voice*.

The VWR campaign has received strong support from Locals 350 and 856 in terms of making political connections on the Peninsula, and Local 856 represents the Visalia police officers. Locals 431 and 517 have been mobilizing their members locally. Local 853 continues to put our VWR members at the center of this fight and the IBT has devoted significant time to all aspects of the organizing. "This has been a fantastic model for how we can work together to fight for our members and communities," Bloch adds.

"We're not a special interest—we're the community."