

“We’re fighting for fairness!”

The struggle for a fair contract at Wendt Corp



In June 2017, workers at Wendt Corporation’s Buffalo, New York manufacturing shop overwhelmingly voted to join into a union and be represented by Ironworkers Shopmen’s Local No 576.

But workers say that the company has been dragging its heels and preventing them from getting a fair first contract.

“Everyone that works here deserves fair pay, a safe workplace, equal treatment, and a little job security for ourselves and our families,” one of these brave workers said.



Don't Shred Our Rights!



#FairContractNow

Workers to Wendt Corp: “Don’t Shred our Rights!”

The Wendt Corporation is a manufacturer of industrial scrap recycling machinery. It has major contracts and partnerships domestically and across the globe. The company was established in 1977 and is privately owned. The company is headed by President Thomas Wendt, Jr.

The Wendt Corp. has approximately 100 employees in two facilities in the Buffalo, New York-area. Wendt Corp has estimated annual revenues of \$37 Million.

Keep Buffalo union strong! Workers are asking for fairness

The workers all agree, “We just want a fair contract that helps us have a good life for our family.”

“I want to be in a union at Wendt, so I have job security and can support my family,” said Noel Pauly.

“I’m standing up for a fair contract because I need better wages for my family, respect from the bosses and to be treated as equals,” said Robert Domaradzki.

“I want to be treated fairly along with my co-workers,” said Dale Thompson.

Workers said they also “want a little stability in our jobs” and for the company to “listen to us workers.”

Workers want an end to company favoritism in treatment and pay, “unequal discipline” and company threats.



Wendt employees make metal shredders and recyclers like this one.
Photo courtesy of recyclingtoday.com

Wendt is threatening workers in return

Unfortunately, Wendt Corp has responded with threats and intimidation against the workers and with stalling at the negotiating table.

Before the election, Wendt Corp used nationally renowned, out of state union busters from Florida to scare workers and forced them to attend frequent captive audience meetings and one-on-one sessions. Management even raised the possibility of outsourcing and plant closure.

Even after the workers voted to join the union, the company has continued threatening behavior against its workers. “I feel like they’re trying to intimidate us and wear us down with unfair discipline because we’re trying to get a union contract,” said one worker.

Management also has sent workers letters in their paychecks designed to discourage them.

“They’re trying to scare us,” but workers aren’t backing down

Workers agreed that, “Supervision acts like they are better than you” and that “disrespect is an issue. They seem to talk down to [us].”

One of the workers stated it felt as if the company intentionally maintained an atmosphere of fear and intimidation [so] that they could “get rid of you for no reason.”

These workers noted management dramatically raised suspensions, discipline and other punishments to instill fear. Management also increased “bird-dogging” and monitoring workers more closely around the shop floor and in break areas.



“Don’t be a bad neighbor,” say community leaders

Allies of the Wendt workers say that the Wendt Corporation is being a bad corporate actor and bad neighbor to the community. And although the state has been generous to Wendt Corp, Wendt has not been nearly as generous to its shop-floor employees, community leaders note.

The Wendt Corp was awarded over \$4.8million in tax credits and exemptions since 2004 through New York State’s Empire Zone program.

Wendt Corp also was awarded state-subsidized electric power through the New York Power Authority’s RechargeNY, a program intended to

create jobs and raise investment.

Community leaders insist that public dollars shouldn’t be complicit in supporting companies that mistreat workers and deny them fair wages and treatment.

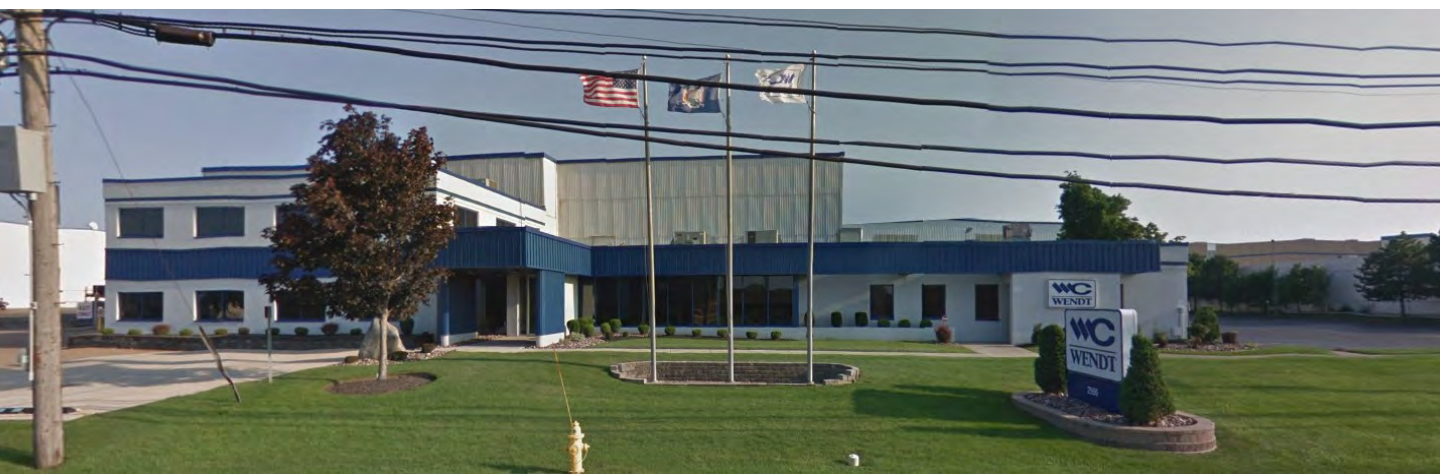
We know that worker satisfaction leads to more productive employees, producing higher quality goods and providing better service.

Buffalo has had significant economic hardships and population loss in its urban center, but unions have been a critical part of maintaining good jobs for our citizens in Buffalo.

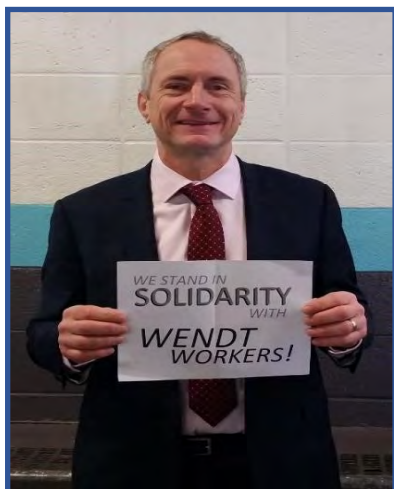
“We don’t want handouts, just to be compensated fairly.”

Wendt has partnerships with the Rochester Institute of Technology, the University of Buffalo’s engineering school, and Erie County BOCES program, a high school program for teaching trade skills to juniors and seniors.

But what do students in the partnership learn? Wendt’s worker allies fear that that the company may be teaching them the wrong lessons if it maintains its anti-worker approach.



The community is standing up, standing together, standing tall for Wendt Workers!

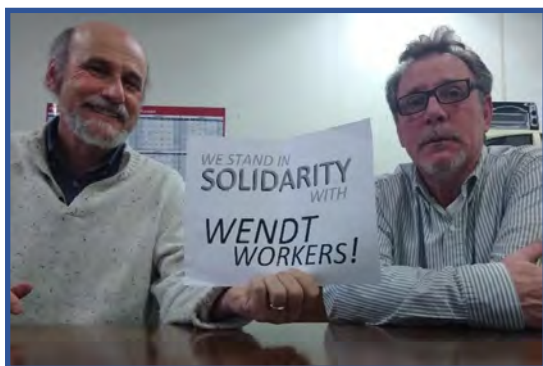
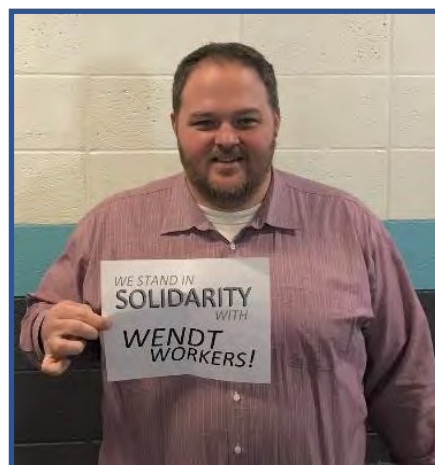


Assemblyman Sean M. Ryan
NYS Assembly District 149

"I am honored to stand shoulder to shoulder to fight back against efforts to weaken worker's rights at Wendt. Hard working middle class employees deserve to be treated fairly, and it is my privilege to stand in solidarity with the men and women of Wendt."

Reverend Kirk Laubenstein
Director, Coalition for Economic Justice

"Jesus was as worker. Wendt workers, like all workers, deserve dignity, respect, fairness and security. We stand with Wendt workers in their struggle for a fair contract."



Richard Lipsitz
President, Area Federation of Western NY (Representing 160,000 area union members)

"This first contract is always the hardest to achieve. But it will lead to living standards and wages that will never be taken away."

***Also picture: John Mudie,
President, Buffalo Central Labor Council***

The Workers Freedom Coalition of Western New York



The Workers Freedom Coalition is formed of Wendt workers, construction workers, safety advocates, labor, faith, and community allies who have come together to support the employees of Wendt Corporation to gain a first contract that upholds dignity, justice and fairness in their workplace and work to help improve their lives, and raise standards for working families across Western New York.

We'll fight as long as it takes! FAIR CONTRACT NOW!

Join us!

Contact:

E-mail: wendtworkers@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/WendtWorkers/

