

Another Casualty of “Free” Trade

Almost 45 years ago, Ford opened its Talbotville assembly plant in St. Thomas to meet the Canadian-content rules of the Auto Pact. Since then it's assembled millions of top-quality vehicles, and generated billions in incomes.

Tragically, the plant is now closing. Ford is highly profitable. It has the largest Canadian market share of any car company. Yet it's shuttering this plant, badly damaging a community that can't afford another blow. Why? Because it can make more money manufacturing vehicles elsewhere – like Mexico.

Under free trade deals and the World Trade Organization, Canadian-content rules have fallen out of favour. But if Auto Pact rules still prevailed, Ford couldn't shut this plant. Worse yet, it's the eighth major car or truck plant to close in Canada since 2001.

Our whole country is de-industrializing before our eyes. Yet the federal government wants more free trade deals – like with Europe and Korea, both of which would kill many thousands more jobs.

At full capacity, the St. Thomas plant supports up to 15,000 jobs in total, dozens of supply firms, and generates \$1 billion in incomes and \$350 million in tax revenues per year. Throughout their history these workers reached into their pockets and supported many charitable organizations, such as women's shelters, food banks and hospitals. In addition they raised over \$7 million for the United Way in their community. All that's now being lost to our economy, when we can least afford it.

Today, the entire CAW, nation wide, pays tribute to the men and women of Talbotville and the hundreds of auto parts supplier workers who made this facility one of the greatest assembly plants in the world.

On behalf of these workers, we pledge to keep on fighting for good jobs, good wages and pensions, fair trade policies and a decent standard of living to benefit all Canadians. Together we can win.



Ken Lewenza
National President



Peter Kennedy
National Secretary-Treasurer

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CAW Locals 27 and 1520 have worked together for over 40 years. Whenever there has been a need or call to action, 1520 has been there. From helping women's shelters, food banks, Habitat For Humanity and the United Way or fighting cancer, and countless other causes, 1520 has been there for St. Thomas and London. We have lost a member of our family and the area's most vulnerable have lost a true ally.

– Tim Carrie, President
CAW Local 27, London

September 15, 2011 will mark a very sad day in the lives of our CAW brothers and sisters at the St. Thomas Ford Assembly Plant. The closure of this workplace will have a terrible impact on the families of each and every employee and will result in additional employment loss in the surrounding communities. I would like to thank the Local 1520 leadership and membership for their guidance and support and commend them for their amazing history of social conscience shown in their commitment to enriching the lives of those less privileged.

– Nancy McMurphy, President
CAW Local 302, London

CAW Local 2009 is saddened by the closure of both the St. Thomas Ford Assembly Plant and the Lear St. Thomas Seating Plant. This is a devastating blow to our city in the dollars they spend in the community as well as the donations that they have given to the United Way. We would like to thank the workers for all their efforts and wish them and their families all the best in the struggles they will face ahead.

– Brad Poupard, President
CAW Local 2009, London

On behalf of CAW Local 2168, I would like to thank the leadership of CAW Local 1520 and their membership – the workers at Ford St. Thomas, for their decades of making London, St. Thomas and surrounding areas a much better place to live. Their generous donations to United Way, their hours of community service, and their compassion helping those less fortunate will be deeply missed.

– Ryan Dolby, President
CAW Local 2168, St. Thomas

A dark cloud will blanket south western Ontario on September 15 when the St. Thomas Ford plant closes. Many of those workers commuted daily from various communities. Woodstock being one of those who reaped the benefits of the 1520 members living, shopping, purchasing and generously giving back to their community's social and service agencies.

We can never lose sight of what these jobs meant to our communities and the devastation closures and job loss have on us all.

– Ross Gerrie, President
CAW Local 636, Woodstock

The closure date of the Ford St. Thomas assembly plant has been known for a while, but this knowledge does not make the fact any less devastating to members of CAW Local 1520, their families and the surrounding community. In our early years, CAW Local 1520 provided much needed guidance and leadership to our very young local union. The leadership and membership of CAW Local 1520 will be sadly missed by the communities of St. Thomas and London, CAW Local 88, the labour movement, including the entire CAW.

– Dan Borthwick, President
CAW Local 88, Ingersoll