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CONTACT: Ben Lilienfeld: (832) 556-0370,
blilienfeld@usw.org

USW Blasts Dow Chemical Co. for Locking Out Texas Workers

DEER PARK, Texas (April 22) – The United Steelworkers (USW) union today condemned Rohm and Haas Texas Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Dow Chemical Co., after the company made the decision to lock out more than 200 workers at its plant in Deer Park, Texas.

The members of USW Local 13-1 have been working to bargain a new contract with Rohm and Haas for the past several weeks.

“The company’s decision to lock its doors on these hard-working union members is reckless and irresponsible,” said Ruben Garza, director of the union’s District 13, which includes Texas and three neighboring states. “These workers have been bargaining with this company in good faith to reach a fair agreement, and now, through no fault of their own, they find themselves on a picket line.”

The union and the company had been operating under a 24-hour rolling extension of the current collective bargaining agreement while negotiations on a new contract continued. Dow Chemical Co. informed the union last week that it would lock the workers out if they could not reach a deal by 2 p.m. today.

For the USW, a sticking point in the negotiations has been the issue of overtime and possible safety and fatigue concerns as a result of understaffing.

“The USW is committed to making sure that we have consistent and safe staffing levels,” Garza said. “These negotiations are about more than just money. We also must consider the safety and well-being of the workers and the entire community.”

The union is committed to bargaining for as long as it takes to reach an agreement, Garza said.

“We have been and we remain willing to work with the company to reach a fair and equitable contract settlement,” he said. “We hope that the company reconsiders this ill-advised decision, puts its work force back on the job, and returns to the bargaining table to negotiate a new agreement.”

The USW represents 850,000 workers in North America employed in many industries that include metals, rubber, chemicals, paper, oil refining and the service and public sectors. For more information: www.usw.org.