

LABOR: THE PEOPLE'S LOBBY

At least 10,000 individual union members visited Washington lawmakers this Spring, mobilized during Spring legislative conferences by the Building and Construction Trades Department, the Steelworkers, Communications Workers, International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, the National Association of Letter Carriers and the American Federation of Government Employees.

LETTER CARRIERS AT IMPASSE OVER USPS USE OF 'CASUALS'

The National Association of Letter Carriers broke off negotiations with the U.S. Postal Service in early April after reaching an impasse over management's plans to use "casual" hires and other means to privatize mail delivery.

The USPS Board of Governors is chaired by former Reagan Budget Director James C. Miller, III. NALC President William Young described management's privatization scheme as a "low road of low-wage contingent labor."



Label Letter

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All-Union Factory to Manufacture Replacement Housing for Gulf Region

First Major Step in Labor's \$750 Million Commitment to Restore Gulf Coast

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita destroyed more than 300,000 housing units in the U.S. Gulf Coast region. Planners and lawmakers agree, the key to a healthy long-term economic recovery for that area is to restore enough housing units to bring working families back.

The AFL-CIO and individual unions have made a six-year \$750 million commitment to the Gulf's recovery, developing a "high road" strategy that would emphasize an all-union approach to creating high-quality, affordable housing built with union labor. Part of that commitment is a leveraged investment to help a start up company that will manufacture modular homes—at the rate of 250 units a month once it is fully operational.

The AFL-CIO Investment Program is the focal point for financing the project, through its Investment Trust Corporation (ITC). Over the past year, ITC conducted a competitive bid process eventually selecting Housing International to set up a Gulf Coast subsidiary. Housing International secured a 75,000 square foot production facility on 18 acres in the tiny town of Reserve, Louisiana located 30 miles out-

side of New Orleans. The company agreed to representation by the AFL-CIO Metal Trades Department based on signed authorization cards from employees.

Housing International is no ordinary pre-fab home builder. Its products are based on new design concepts developed by award-winning architect Stephen S. Mouzon in collaboration with Tulane University.

The new line of virtually indestructible modular homes features all steel framing and steel roofs blended into traditional Gulf Coast designs with the look and feel of stick-built homes, but tough enough to withstand winds of 140 miles-per-hour, impervious to water or termite damage, with a life expectancy of 300 years. The interiors feature eco-friendly features such as bamboo flooring and contain 60 percent recyclable materials. A model unit was presented with the highest, platinum LEED rating from the U.S. Green Building Council.

The all-union Gulf Coast Housing International workforce will be drawn from the area and will be trained in various crafts required by the high-tech manufacturing process.



Standing, Left to Right: Mike Arnold, Executive Vice President, AFL-CIO Investment Trust Corporation (ITC); Ray Taylor, President, Housing International, Inc. (HI); Merlin Taylor, Gulf Coast Labor Liaison, ITC; Ron Ault, President, AFL-CIO Metal Trades Department; observing trainees Leron Stewart and Robert Martin.