

Minutemen Staffing the sight of protest over ATMI temps

By Pat Barcas
Staff writer

Protesters entangled in the ATMI Precast saga cast their ire last Friday toward Minutemen Staffing in Aurora, claiming that the company offered up quick temporary replacement workers for the locked out permanent ones, allowing the concrete company to remain in business in the mean time.

The protesters were quick to point out they were not against any form of labor, just any company that refuses to allow its workers to protest for a better wage.

“The workers allege that Minutemen sent in new workers to replace them during the lockout,” said Tim Bell, senior organizer with the Chicago Workers’ Collaborative.

Minutemen has provided ATMI with temporary labor for years, but not in such a large scale as to support the labor of the entire company.

“Our position is, even though Minutemen has had workers in ATMI for years, leaving them in there as to facilitate production while the full-time



Pat Barcas photo

A “Community Labor Pledge” was rejected by Minutemen Staffing Friday. The pledge called for non retaliation of ATMI workers who choose to strike.

workers were locked outside, that’s wrong,” said Bell. “Minutemen enabled the company to lock out the workers

without recourse.”

A large, symbolic “community labor pledge” was presented to management

at Minutemen Staffing during the protest. It read: “Minutemen of Illinois pledges not to retaliate against any of its workers who should desire to organize with any other ATMI Precast workers for better workplace wages and conditions. Minutemen of Illinois pledges not to provide staffing services to ATMI Precast in the event of a lock-out or strike.”

Both statements were not agreed upon by Minutemen management, so the boxes on the pledge were marked “no.”

“This refusal is classic. Corporations treat workers like cogs on a machine, not as human beings,” said Mary Shesgreen of Northern Illinois Jobs with Justice. “This is a terrible way for our economy to be running. Minutemen is part of today’s anti-worker sentiment. We are here to call for a complete change, where the needs of workers and families come first, and the needs of corporations shrink.”

Jennifer Rice’s email address is: jen@foxvalleylabornews.com