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Local Glatfelter employees speak up for industry

Union recruits Space to sign letter to president regarding Chinese subsidies

BY **JONA ISON** • GAZETTE STAFF WRITER • JULY 14, 2010

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A group of local paperworkers Tuesday took a stand against government subsidies for the Chinese papermaking industry.

A handful of Glatfelter employees joined a pair of representatives from the United Steelworkers Union, which also represents those in the paper and forestry industries, to speak with a local representative from U.S. Rep. Zack Space's office. The meeting resulted in what they were seeking -- Space's signature on a letter destined for President Barack Obama's desk.

The letter, already signed by at least two Democrats and two Republicans in other states, cites an Economic Policy Institute report that shows China's paper manufacturing has tripled in the past decade amid more than \$33 billion in government subsidies between 2001 and 2009.

"We expressed to (Space's representative) the importance of Glatfelter to this community, the tax base ... and the importance to these workers and their families," said Donald Blatt, USW District 1 staff representative. "We want (Obama) to examine trade practices, the harm it's done and



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any measures necessary to ensure we have a fair trade practice."

James Beatty, president of local 988, has worked at Glatfelter for 35 years and said he wants to do what he can to make sure people in Chillicothe are taken care of and have good, high-paying jobs available.

"I'd like to see the plant here for another 35 years so my grandchildren have a good place to work," Beatty said.

According to the USW, Chillicothe has 2,655 of Ohio's 26,420 paper industry jobs they feel are being threatened by China's aggressive moves in the industry.

"America's paper industry is the most efficient in the world and is part of a supply chain that promotes sustainable forestry practices and good-paying jobs. This industry should not be asked to continue to compete on the unlevel playing field that China has constructed through heavy subsidization of domestic production," the letter intended for Obama reads.

In February, the EPI report estimates the annualized growth rate of Chinese paper and paper-product imports into the United States was 22 percent.

"Anyone who can't see the disastrous effect that these Chinese trade practices are having on Ohio jobs just doesn't get it," said Andrew Ricci, a spokesman for Space. "We already know all too

well what the Chinese are doing to Ohio's manufacturing industry, and the issues facing Glatfelter today are a stark reminder that China's unfair trade practices are also affecting Chillicothe's paper industry."

Although increasing the education base of Americans has been touted as a way to decrease American dependency on manufacturing jobs, David Caldwell, USW District 1 assistant to the director, said education isn't enough.

"This government, both parties, have an idea we can educate our way out of this ... We all can educate ourselves to a high degree, and we all should, but we could all have Ph.Ds and if there's no jobs, there's no jobs," Caldwell said. "We need to produce what we're purchasing ... Educating yourself out of it is not going to make it."

USW members are meeting with congressmen across the nation this week in an effort to secure as many bipartisan signatures by the end of business Monday.



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