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**CONTACT:** Michael Bolton: (920) 722-1288,  
[mbolton@usw.org](mailto:mbolton@usw.org)

## **USW: Deal Must Address All KC Jobs**

FOX CROSSING, Wis. (July 24) – Members of Local 2-482 of the United Steelworkers (USW) ratified a tentative agreement with Kimberly-Clark (KC) with the goal of preserving and expanding employment at the company’s Fox Crossing plant.

Earlier this year, the governor and State Assembly committed as much as \$115 million in taxpayer money to entice Kimberly-Clark to remain in Wisconsin. KC indicated that it would not ask elected officials to vote on the enormous subsidy package until it was able to renegotiate a contract with its workers.

Following the passage of a massive federal tax cut, the multinational personal hygiene and paper product giant announced plans in January to shut down up to 10 plants around the world and eliminate 5,500 jobs. Those cuts included the company’s plants in Neenah and Fox Crossing, Wis. Last week, Kimberly-Clark was said to be considering selling its tissue business in Europe, while other financial publications have speculated that the company was contemplating much broader asset sales as well. The handling of the announcement by KC has sparked outrage in the global labor community leaving workers on five continents wondering about their future.

Since KC’s January announcement, the USW has been meeting with company officials in an effort to negotiate a deal that would preserve good jobs.

“While our local leaders have done what needed to be done to preserve the jobs for workers and the community, we are extremely disappointed by the way Kimberly-Clark approached this matter,” said Michael Bolton, director of USW District 2, which includes Wisconsin and Michigan. “The company’s behavior throughout this process underscores why it is having global labor relations issues.”

Kimberly-Clark, founded in Neenah, Wis., in 1872, considers the Fox Crossing facility one of its “flagships.”

“The company’s handling of the announcement of its intention to shutter up to 10 plants has created enormous anxiety for communities and workers across the globe,” said USW International Vice President Jon Geenen, who oversees the union’s paper bargaining. “We are proud of local union leaders for the work that they have done to keep jobs in the community. Now it is time for the state Senate to move a package forward that is conditioned on long-term preservation of all KC jobs in Wisconsin, including the economically critical mill in Marinette. Any deal that fails to meet that objective would be a massive abuse of taxpayer trust.”

*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:*

<http://www.usw.org/>.

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