

## IAMAW makes news in Stockholm

December 1, 2010 - During the past two weeks, the IAM's organizing campaign in Danville Virginia, location of IKEA's wholly owned subsidiary, Swedwood, has received extensive coverage in Sweden. Not only a feature story in a large monthly Swedish magazine and numerous stories in some of Sweden's largest daily papers, but a 15 minute feature on Swedish TV's most watched news show highlighted the IAM's struggle to create safe working conditions, promote social justice, and end unduly harsh treatment of workers in Swedwood by helping them join the IAM. Per Olof Sjöo, President of the large Swedish Union GS has appeared on TV and in the print media calling on IKEA to honor their global agreement

President of the Swedish Manufacturing Union as appearing in Swedish Press

with BWI.



Per-Olof Sjöo, ordförande för GS-facket i Sverige.

IKEA has a Global Framework Agreement with the international union federation for builders and woodworkers, BWI. This agreement calls on IKEA to assist in the formation of unions at its locations around the world. In Danville, Virginia, with a predominately US based management team, Swedwood workers have been denied access to union representatives, put into a dangerous work environment, have had their weekend overtime pay unilaterally eliminated, and have been forced to work both long hours and third World style work weeks.

While a significant number of Swedwood workers have signed authorization cards for the IAM, most are scared and many more are intimidated by harsh supervisors and a ruthless willingness to terminate any workers for no reason.

“In tough times, a good paying job is a valuable commodity, even so, Swedwood workers understand that unsafe work and work schedules that undermine family and church life are simply not required for any business to succeed,” according to William Street, Director of the IAM's Woodworkers Department. “The work culture in Danville is very harsh and among the worst I have seen in the US. Lock out/Tag out regulations are rarely followed, mechanical maintenance workers are working with industrial electrical voltages, a growing number of workers have been fired for being injured on the job, and the number of discharges is huge. The attitude of the bosses is that the equipment is far more valuable than the workers and many are treated as if they were still working on a plantation.”



While this type of treatment may be accepted in the US, it is not acceptable for any Swedish workers and IKEA needs to live up to its own code of conduct and correct the situation in Danville.