

UPS announces plans to close Commerce City, Colorado facility as Teamsters head meets with top Republicans

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UPS has announced that it will be closing its Commerce City, Colorado facility on January 15 of next year, laying off 404 employees. Almost all the job losses are in package processing, with three in revenue recovery, according to a WARN notice submitted to the Colorado state government.

Management says that half of the facility will be closed to allow for renovations to bring new automation technology into the distribution center, with plans to bring it back online in 2026.

The company claims it will try to reallocate as many workers to other locations as possible during the transition. Members of the Teamsters will also reportedly have bumping rights, allowing them preference in applications to other open positions. However, the company has made no statement on how many workers will be able to find new jobs while the facility is closed.

Whatever the case may be for individuals, UPS is carrying out massive job cuts, utilizing new automation technology. Through its Network of the Future plan UPS plans to close or automate 200 locations around the country and destroy tens of thousands of jobs through massive cuts to its labor force.

In announcing the cuts, management stated that the facility would reopen as an “enhanced facility,” i.e., with a much smaller workforce.

With a full year of renovations ahead at a major distribution site in a metropolitan area of three million people, UPS is likely preparing to implement extensive automation that will render much of the current

workforce redundant.

Nando Cesarone, president of the company’s U.S. operations, told investors earlier this year, “Network of the Future is targeting all activities for automation within our four walls. These building consolidations and automations yield real savings. For example, we’ll have fewer feeder runs. We’ll be able to eliminate both a.m. and p.m. ground and air feeds in many, many locations.”

In total, UPS is seeking to cut operational costs by at least \$3 billion by 2028. So far this year UPS has closed 45 operations, including nine full buildings, and reduced package capacity by one million parcels. These reductions are part of a campaign to realign operations with lower demand and slash thousands of jobs through automation. UPS has already increased the amount of packages handled by automation in some form to 63 percent, a figure that is slated to grow rapidly.

Elsewhere around the state, Boeing also announced that it will be laying off 63 people next January across seven locations in its Colorado operations, following a strike by 33,000 machinists and layoff of thousands of workers during the strike. Bus drivers at the Roaring Fork Transportation Authority, serving towns around Aspen, Colorado, filed notice to strike on January 1, 2025.

Predictably, Teamsters officials have said nothing about the facility closure, as has been the case with virtually every closure or renovation since it rammed through a contract last year under false pretenses. The bureaucrats called off a national strike at the last minute to announce the deal, which they called an “historic victory.” It contains no meaningful protections against the job losses, and UPS itself has cited the “labor

certainty” provided by the contract as critical to their automation plans.

However, the UPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee, formed to transfer power from the bureaucrats to workers themselves, has repeatedly warned about the cuts and called for a campaign in defense of jobs. In April, the Committee issued an open letter to Teamsters General President Sean O’Brien accusing the union of “deliberately concealing” knowledge of the cuts.

“We workers have every right to take all action deemed necessary to protect our jobs, regardless or whether you choose to sanction them or not,” the statement concluded. *“If you will not fight the layoffs, then get out of the way so that UPS workers can do it ourselves.”*

Instead, on the same day that UPS announced the closure, Teamsters President Sean O’Brien met with Republican lawmakers “about how we can advance a bipartisan agenda that supports the creation of good union jobs and holds political and corporate elites accountable.” In reality, the Teamsters are meeting with the most ruthless representatives of the “political and corporate elite” to coordinate attacks on the working class and ensure the bureaucracy’s future under the Trump regime.

This is a continuation of the bureaucracy’s open courtship of Trump and the extreme right over the course of the past year, culminating in O’Brien’s appearance at the Republican National Convention and the union’s official neutrality in the US presidential election, widely understood as a de-facto endorsement of Trump.

This party of open fascists and capitalist representatives is embarking on an aggressive program of assaults on the rights and living standards of the working class. While O’Brien meets with congressional Republicans, Trump is assembling a cabinet of fascists, billionaires and anti-science nut jobs to dismantle the remaining vestiges of public health, social services and regulations on businesses, deploy the military to deport millions of immigrants and “rule as a dictator from day one,” in his own words.

A post on X by the Teamsters about the discussion was responded to with several comments calling O’Brien a “scab”, a “rat” and a “class traitor.”

At the same time, if Trump was able to win votes

from sections of the working class, including at UPS, this is above all due to the open indifference of the Democratic Party to economic questions such as the rising cost of living, as well as President Biden’s personal identification of the Democratic Party with major sellout contracts. This includes a contract imposed on railroad workers in 2022, in which O’Brien himself played a crucial role by refusing to call a strike.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* commented following O’Brien’s appearance at the Republican National Convention, the bureaucracy is a “natural base of support for fascism” because it is “deeply hostile to the working class,” with the internal regimes of the unions “run as bureaucratic dictatorships.”

“Politically, the bureaucracy is dominated by nationalism and anticommunism, which expresses its mortal fear of the revolutionary threat posed by the working class.”

In the wake of Trump’s victory, significant sections of the bureaucracy have expressed their willingness to “work” with Trump. In particular, major unions have applauded Trump’s appointment of Congresswoman Lori Chavez-DeRemer as secretary of labor. The Oregon Republican, defeated for reelection this month, combines right-wing policies with a support for the PRO Act, a bill which the bureaucrats see as key to shoring up their institutional and financial stability.

The decisive question in the coming period is the independent mobilization of the power of the working class to fight the corporate attacks on living standards and basic democratic rights. Workers at UPS and around the world must develop rank-and-file committees, coordinating their work on a global scale, to leverage this power in a fight against both the sellout bureaucrats and the lurch towards dictatorship by the corporate parties.



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