OPCMIA Statement on Strike by SAG-AFTRA

The Operative Plasterers’ & Cement Masons’ International Association of the United States and Canada, AFL-CIO (OPCMIA) – along with its Plasterers, Sculptors, and Shop Hands Local 755 – represent employees who work for employers represented by the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP). The OPCMIA and its members have been following the collective bargaining negotiations between the AMPTP and SAG-AFTRA, just as we have been following and supporting the strike by members of the Writers Guild of America (WGA).

As with the case of WGA writers, SAG-AFTRA members have struggled in recent years to make a living as our employers have shifted from traditional television formats to online streaming formats. SAG-AFTRA has sought in the current negotiations to increase minimum rates, as well as to increase streaming residuals, for its members. These proposals are necessary given not only recent inflation trends, but also the fact that show seasons – especially those on streaming platforms – tend to be shorter, which leads to reduced incomes for SAG-AFTRA members. Another critical issue is the impact of artificial intelligence on members’ future income and work opportunities.

SAG-AFTRA announced that 98% of its members to authorize a strike. The National Board of SAG-AFTRA has since declared that, effective July 14, 2023, its members are on strike.

Plasterers, Sculptors and Shop Hands Local 755 has a collective bargaining agreement with the AMPTP. Article 24 of that agreement provides, in relevant part, as follows:

The Producer will not discipline any employee covered by this Agreement because of his refusal as an individual to cross a picket line, providing that such picket line has been sanctioned by the Operative Plasterers’ & Cement Masons’ International Association of the United States and Canada.

The OPCMIA understands that all workers have invaluable skills and talent that they use to create valuable content for the entertainment industry. We further recognize the importance of ensuring that every worker can support themselves and their families through better pay and working conditions. Therefore, the OPCMIA sanctions the picket lines set up by the SAG-AFTRA and its members in furtherance of their strike. The OPCMIA continues to sanction the picket lines set up by the WGA and its members in furtherance of their strike.

However, the sanctioning of picket lines is not a directive, instruction, or order by either the OPCMIA or Local 755 for their members to honor the picket lines. The decision of whether to honor a picket line still is an individual one to be exercised by each Local 755 member.

Any questions with respect to this matter should be directed to OPCMIA Vice President Fitzgerald Jacobs at fjacobs@opcmia.org and/or Local 755 Business Manager Chuck Cortez at Local755Hollywood@gmail.com.