



# INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF THEATRICAL STAGE EMPLOYEES AND MOVING PICTURE MACHINE OPERATORS LOCAL NO. 12

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## **IA Reaches Agreement with George Fern Company July 29, 2009**

On July 17, after a protracted battle, striking members of IATSE Columbus, Ohio Local 12 and Knoxville, Tennessee Local 197 have reached a settlement agreement with the George Fern Company, a general service contractor with warehouse facilities in seven major cities. Both contracts are four-year agreements that provide for annual increases in wages and benefits. Both agreements also prohibit the use of subcontractors, which was an issue central to the dispute between the union and the company.

Local 12 had been bargaining with Fern for four years, and the company had had a proposal on the table for two years to cut wages and benefits by 30 percent or more. During these negotiations, Fern had increasingly subcontracted work to non-union labor brokers who now do approximately 85 percent of Fern's work in Columbus, displacing Local 12 members and referents. Finally on March 13, 2009, Local 12 began striking the company.

Also in March, Knoxville-based Tennessee Local 197 began their own strike against Fern when they established a picket line on a show at the Nashville Convention Center. The picket line was honored by members of Nashville Local 46 and Teamster freight drivers. Members of Local 197 had gone ten years without an increase in wages or benefits while Fern had insisted on having contract language that would allow them to sub-contract to non-union labor brokers before getting any employees from Local 197, effectively side-stepping the Local.

IATSE Trade Show & Display Director Bill Gears enlarged the battlefield, enlisting the support and aid of two dozen IA locals in 20 cities across the US, using picket lines, banners, leafleting and strikes to nationalize the effort. Among the coordinated efforts were those in Atlanta, where officers and members of Local 834 set up a picket line at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in downtown Atlanta; in Las Vegas, where Local 720 picketed a Fern show at Bally's Hotel, and several IA locals in Cleveland joined with members of Cleveland Local 12 to picket a George Fern show at the Cleveland Convention Center.

After the agreement was reached the IA's Gears said, "The IATSE looks forward to working with the George Fern Company in pursuit of common interests."

This hard-won victory by the IA underlines the importance International President Matthew Loeb has put on maintaining the national solidarity, the persistence and perseverance necessary to see that working members of the IATSE get the representation they deserve.

**About The IATSE**—short for International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Moving Picture Technicians, Artist and Allied Crafts—represents workers in the entertainment and convention industries. Local 12 members currently enjoy collective bargaining in Central Ohio with several venues including the Ohio, Palace, Capitol and Southern Theatres, Mershon Auditorium, Veterans Memorial and the Greater Columbus Convention Center.

Central Ohio based Local 12 was formed in 1883, as one of the original 13 charter members including locals in New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia, Denver and Pittsburgh. Local 12's jurisdiction includes Columbus, Newark, Marysville, Delaware and Zanesville.

The IATSE is an International Union that represents over 108,000 IATSE members in the United States and Canada employed in the stagecraft, motion picture and television production, and trade shows industries throughout the United States, its Territories, and Canada.

**For additional information on IATSE Local 12:** Contact Jason Gay, IATSE Local 12, at (614) 560-0576 or [jgay@iatse12.org](mailto:jgay@iatse12.org). Visit <http://iatse12.org/> and <http://iatse-intl.org/home.html>.

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