

Strikers, workers vote today

Striking and non-striking Watsonville Canning and Frozen Food Co. workers began voting this morning on whether they want the Teamsters union to represent them.

All was quiet today outside the Watsonville Canning plant, where workers were voting in a trailer just inside the gate. The Teamsters union called off its pickets for the day so that strikers wouldn't have to cross the picket line to vote.

Voting began at 10 a.m. and will continue until 8:30 p.m., after which the votes will be counted.

If the workers vote for the union, it will guarantee union representation for at least another year. Last September, 1,000 workers went on strike in a pay dispute; the company replaced them with non-union workers.

The union was shuttling strikers from the Veterans' Hall on East Beach Street to the polls at the plant.

Non-striking workers were able to vote in the company cafeteria. The two sites were agreed on by union and company officials to avoid any friction between strikers and current workers.

Outside the Veterans Hall, members of INCAR, the International Committee Against Racism, passed out fliers critical of the Teamsters and the company. The group complained that it was unable to get on today's ballot as an alternative to Teamsters representation.

Negotiations between the Teamsters and Watsonville Canning are scheduled for Tuesday.



Sam Vestal

Picket signs were abandoned outside Watsonville Canning this morning as strikers went to vote.