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Bankruptcy trustee is unable to answer displaced workers’ questions this week; Wednesday evening; Lt. Governor other political officials visit Thursday.

Bankruptcy trustee Joseph Sarachek conducted a meeting at the Fine Arts and Civic Center last Tuesday afternoon for displaced workers at AgriProtein, Inc. Sarachek told the more than 100 people present that the Rubashkin family was no longer in charge of the plant and that all decisions rested in the hands of the bankruptcy court. He said that limited financing had been approved by the bankruptcy court and permission had been granted to slaughter chickens. He said the approval was granted through December 12, with a two-month extension likely. He commented that if the extension is granted, they should be able to process more than 700,000 chickens that are listed as part of the company’s assets. He further announced that he has been talking to potential buyers and that he is confident that the Kosher meat market is strong and the Postville plant is very marketable. He added that the wastewater treatment facility will also be a strong selling point.

He explained to the disgruntled workers present that production began on Wednesday and those workers who had been called back would receive back pay over the next few weeks. When asked how the employees were going to get their pay back, he said they would have to file a claim through the bankruptcy court. He said, “This is not the fault of the bankruptcy court. There are no extra funds for back pay.”

The back pay, he explained, could take up to a year or more to reach those employees not working.

He went on to say, “There are also no funds for processing beef at this time.”

Those who had been employed at the Postville plant, some for as long as 15 years and others for only a few months, were extremely upset by Troiet Sarachek’s comments. They stated concerns and questions that, for the most part, Sarachek could not address although he repeatedly said, “I am not the bad guy here.”

Among the questions asked were, “How come only those people called back to work are getting back pay? How did you decide which employees would be chosen to work?”

Sarachek’s reply: “I really cannot answer that.”

Another question asked: “Why wouldn’t you inform those of us who have paid our employees’ salaries and payments and insurance premiums taken from our paycheck and now we find out you have not been paid. Are we going to be held in contempt of court? How are we going to keep in contempt of court?”

Sarachek’s answer: “I really cannot answer that question.”

Harkin staff here today

On Wednesday, December 10 Senator Tom Harkin’s staff was in Postville to help. There will be a brief presentation at 1:30 at Turner Hall. Then the Aids will divide into work areas to work with people facing specific issues. They are looking for those people who need a personal presentation at the community center.

Sara Peck, who was extremely upset about the fact that neither she nor her husband had been called back to work and would not receive any back pay asked many pointed questions, including: “If the Rubashkins are no longer in charge, why is Heshy (Rubashkin) still there and calling the shots? It just isn’t fair.”

She said she would not receive any back pay asked many pointed questions, including: “I am not the bad guy here.”

Harkin’s staff responded by indicating that the community of Postville has needed help and government intervention for several months. A group of nearly 200 attended the meeting at Turner Hall last Thursday.

We needed help sooner

Father J. Paul O’Deterick tells the Lt. Governor the community of Postville has needed help and government intervention for several months. A group of nearly 200 attended the meeting at Turner Hall last Thursday.

Former resident receives Crime Fighter Award after helping to nab crack addict who robbed gas station

Dustin Bemis of Urbandale was one of 20 Des Moines area residents who were honored at this fall’s First Annual Crime Fighter Award, a Des Moines Police Program that recognizes ordinary people for extraordinary contributions

He received the award for his quick action and that of his friend. A crack cocaine addict in desperate need of cash for a fix had his robbery foiled by Bemis and Jason Butler of Carlisle at a fast-food restaurant on Southeast 14th Street in Des Moines in April.

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The men were eating when they saw a man break out a window at a nearby gas station and start to fill a plastic bag with cigarette carcasses.

Chamber of Commerce fills holiday treat bags

Catherine Fox, a volunteer with the Hometown of Hope, will be atFirstname’s to fill holiday treat bags. Several hundred bags were distributed to children through the local food bank and other agencies. Pictured here filling the bags are Lisa Bacon, Steve Strasser, Gena Sandeen, Kathy Gunderson, Dave Hjortland, and Kim Deering and many others who did not.

While small in volume, the chamber is proud of the effort to bring a little piece of holiday cheer to a deserving group.

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Senior youth from St Paul Lutheran Church sing seasonal songs at East Park, Good Sam

Donations welcome for those affected by the closing of Agriprocessors, Inc.

Quillin’s Share Program will benefit Postville

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