

WakeUpWalMart.com Weekly Wake-Up Call 2.24.06 Edition



Week in Brief:

New Shocking Report, More Wal-Mart PR Stunts, Faltering Public Image, Site Fights and Growing Political Implications

This week Wal-Mart attempted to salvage a faltering public image by proposing minor changes to their employee health care plan.

Newspaper articles around the country included harsh criticism of this publicity stunt, discussing the new WakeUpWalMart.com health care report about Wal-Mart's abuse of taxpayer-funded health care programs.

In other news, another politician swore off Wal-Mart. The store tumbled from number four to number 12 in Fortune magazine's annual corporate survey of America's Most Admired Companies, released this week – in a painful nosedive from the number one spot in both 2003 and 2004.

Meanwhile, communities continue to fight Wal-Mart, from New Hampshire to Ohio to Oregon. The Fair Share Health Care debate continues all across the country. And, WakeUpWalMart.com grows to 183,000 strong.

WakeUpWalMart.com Releases New "America Pays, Wal-Mart Saves" Health Care Report

New Wal-Mart Document Reveals A 5% Decrease In The Percentage Of Workers Covered By The Company

Report Estimates Wal-Mart Health Care Crisis Cost Taxpayers Nearly \$1.4 Billion in 2005/Projects Cost Of \$9.1 Billion Over The Next 5 Years

On Friday, newspapers from Los Angeles to Denver to Washington DC discussed the new report by WakeUpWalMart.com as well as Wal-Mart's alleged health care improvements.

From the Associated Press:

Wake Up Wal-Mart, one of Wal-Mart's harshest critics, called the retailer's attempts to improve its health care plan as "nothing more than a facade."

"Wal-Mart's proposed changes are clearly designed to try and salvage a faltering public image, rather than make substantial changes to improve health care benefits for its employees," said Paul Blank, campaign director for Wake Up Wal-Mart in a statement.

In fact, the labor-backed group released a report Thursday that showed the health care issue at Wal-Mart is getting worse - Wal-Mart failed to provide health coverage to over 57 percent of its employees last year, up from 52 percent the previous year. The group said the report is based on new analysis of Wal-Mart's reported data of its health care spending.

<http://www.wakeupwalmart.com/news/20060223-ap.html>

From the Denver Post:

Wake Up Wal-Mart, another group that is critical of Wal-Mart, on Thursday released an analysis of the company's health care spending. The group said it showed that Wal-Mart failed to provide health coverage to more than 57 percent of its employees last year, compared with 52 percent the year before.

"Talk is cheap," said Dave Minshall, a spokesman for United Food and Commercial Workers Local No. 7, which unsuccessfully tried to organize workers at a Wal-Mart tire and lube center in Loveland.

"The facts speak for themselves. Wal-Mart's own documents show their health care is getting worse, not better," he said.

<http://www.wakeupwalmart.com/news/20060224-dp.html>



America Pays, Wal-Mart Saves" report available at WakeUpWalMart.com

Press release of the week

WHAT IS THE TRUTH? WAKEUPWALMART.COM CALLS ON WAL-MART TO COME CLEAN WITH ITS HEALTH CARE FACTS

WAL-MART REMOVES DOCUMENT FROM ITS WEBSITE AND CONTRADICTS ITSELF ON HOW MANY EMPLOYEES ARE RECEIVING HEALTH CARE COVERAGE AS OF JANUARY 2006

Washington, DC. - WakeUpWalMart.com calls on Wal-Mart and CEO Lee Scott to explain to the American public why Wal-Mart deleted a company document published on Walmartfacts.com stating Wal-Mart only covered 43% of its employees under its health care plan.



The document, published January 2006, contradicts Wal-Mart's public statement yesterday of 46% as of January 2006, and would indicate, contrary to Wal-Mart's claims, their health care coverage has actually gotten worse, not better.

The group also calls on Wal-Mart and Scott to explain a series of conflicting statements by the company regarding just how many Wal-Mart workers actually receive company health care coverage.

"It's time to hold Wal-Mart accountable. Wal-Mart is playing fast and loose with the facts to cover up its health care crisis. If Wal-Mart wants to earn customers trust, then they should come clean with the American people and disclose how many workers they have on their health care plan," said Paul Blank, campaign director for WakeUpWalMart.com.

New survey finds vehement community opposition to Wal-Mart

From the February 22nd release by Business Wire:

The Saint Index(C), a new survey by the Hingham, MA-based Saint Consulting Group, confirms Americans' love-hate relationship with Wal-Mart. Even as the global company revs up a campaign to protect its reputation, and despite Wal-Mart's undeniable popularity among consumers, almost two-thirds of those surveyed (63%) said that they would oppose a Wal-Mart store if one were proposed in their community.

According to The Saint Index, only landfills, quarries, power plants, and casinos generate more vehement community opposition than large retail stores. However, respondents singled out Wal-Mart as particularly unwelcome.

Mangieri won't shop at Wal-Mart

PEORIA, IL - Paul Mangieri, a Democratic candidate for state treasurer, vowed not to spend any more campaign money at Wal-Mart following a demand by his opponent Thursday to explain the \$1,300 he spent at the "anti-union company that routinely ships American jobs overseas."

<http://www.wakeupwalmart.com/news/20060224-cns.html>



WakeUpWalMart.com Spotlight Communities Fight to Keep Wal-Mart Out

From the *HippoPress*: **Big Box Brawl: How mild-mannered Nashuans battled Wal-Mart and won**

The Nashua Planning Board narrowly denied Wal-Mart's site plan for a supercenter at the current site of Building #19 last month. After charging through Conservation Commission and Zoning Board challenges, Sam Walton's retail giant looked like it was on its way into town.

Many consider the company just plain evil, but Wal-Mart would tell you they're simply a business. After all, doesn't Magneto have perfectly good reasons for fearing non-mutants? Is Lex Luthor really a villain, or just a multimillionaire hanging out with high school farm boys?

All that stood in Wal-Mart's way was a group of concerned citizens who didn't want their traffic snarled and their water polluted. They banded together and, with a supporting cast numbering in the hundreds, did battle for their way of life.

This is their story....

<http://www.wakeupwalmart.com/news/20060223-hippo.html>

Pickerington, OH Residents Say No To Wal-Mart

The following is a letter from a WakeUpWalMart.com activist in Ohio:

Last weekend, I went door-to-door with other WakeUpWalMart.com supporters to inform residents that Wal-Mart was trying to sneak its way into our community. While distributing 2,500 flyers on a rare sixty-degree winter day in Ohio, I greeted dozens of neighbors who were gardening and enjoying the sun. One person after another thanked me for spreading the word. Not a single person wanted Wal-Mart in our community.

The news created quite a buzz, and about 300 concerned citizens attempted to squeeze into the public hearing room with a maximum capacity of 71. The group spilled out into the parking lot.

As citizens of Violet Township and Pickerington, we have a right to speak out against a Wal-Mart store that will forever negatively influence our way of life. We are stepping forward to protect our property values, our work lives, our safety and our outstanding community.

We're still fighting!

Tina Morgan
Columbus, Ohio