

Workers picket at boat plant

They're upset that payroll checks from On-Site Marine have bounced.

By Mark R. Fletcher
News-Leader

On-Site Marine employees, upset because their payroll checks have bounced at banks, picketed outside the company's Halltown plant Wednesday.

Employees, some of whom have worked there for three years, said they haven't been able to cash payroll checks for the last two weeks to a month. Workers said they are owed amounts ranging from hundreds to thousands of dollars.



Miles



Riffel

Plant manager Marshel Keith declined to comment when contacted by telephone Wednesday.

On-Site Marine manufactures boat parts, river-gaming boats and paddle-wheel boats, including the "Branson Belle" on Table Rock Lake.

The company also has sites in Louisiana and Philadelphia, and employs a total of 50 workers, an employee said.

Half of the Halltown plant's roughly 13 nonunion workers picketed outside the plant.

Employee James Miles said he reported for work Wednesday morning but was told by the plant manager to go home because there was no work. Miles said he didn't want to work any more hours until he got a paycheck.



Mike Wingo / News-Leader

George Riffel (left), his wife Bonnie, James Miles and J.D. Christy (right) picket at On-Site Marine. The three men, who work for the company, say their last two paychecks have bounced.



"Things happen to people and they have problems, but they ought to talk to you and explain things."

— J.D. Christy

an employee at the Halltown site

"They owe me at least for 40-hours," Miles said.

Another picketer, George Riffel, said he picketed on Wednesday because the company owes him \$3,300 in back wages.

After their paychecks bounced, some employees turned the checks over to the Lawrence County prosecutor's office, a source at the office confirmed.

The source said the company has about 15 days to make a "good faith effort" to pay the checks.

"When a check is brought in we send them a 10-day letter," the prosecutor's office spokesperson said. "After that we send a five-day follow-up letter. If there's no response after that, charges could be filed."

Riffel also said the company recently flew him to Arizona to

work on a project, promising him a per-diem and travel expenses.

However, Riffel said, the company left him stranded there without pay or a way home.

"I had to hitchhike from Page, Ariz., to Flagstaff," he said. "From there I got \$150 out of my account with my bank card and got a bus to Tulsa. My wife picked me up there."

Riffel worked for the company in Arizona for three weeks and, "we worked 12- to 13-hour days, and one was a 16-hour day. That was seven days a week," Riffel said.

While many of the employees are angry, some simply want answers.

"I've known him (John Dismar) for five years, and his money was always good," said J.D. Christy, an employee at the Halltown site. "Things happen to people and they have problems, but they ought to talk to you and explain things."