

USW@Work

A Publication of the United Steelworkers

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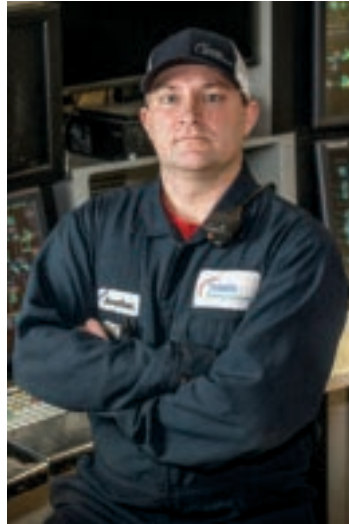
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"AGGRESSIVE INVESTMENT IN A MODERNIZED INFRASTRUCTURE WILL NOT ONLY HELP REBUILD OUR DOMESTIC SUPPLY CHAINS AND CREATE BADLY NEEDED MANUFACTURING JOBS NOW, BUT WILL ALSO ENSURE LONG-TERM SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC RECOVERY FOR GENERATIONS TO COME." INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT TOM CONWAY, JAN. 20, 2021

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Deputy Sheriff Kyle Achtyl is a member of Local 4-2001 in Niagara County, N.Y. Photo by Steve Dietz.

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KPS Steps Up to Help Workers

I am a proud retired member of Local 2-00221 in Mosinee, Wis. I was happy to see that KPS is stepping up to help USW members at the Briggs & Stratton plant in Milwaukee.

Years ago, when Wausau Paper was close to shutting down, the USW worked with KPS to make not only the Mosinee plant but also the Rhinelander and Kaukauna/Thilmany plants solvent and keep them running. This saved thousands of good-paying union jobs in Wisconsin. We came out with a good contract with little if any concessions. All of this was done while our Wisconsin governor at the time – Scott Walker – was more interested in busting, rather than building, unions.

KPS was a good company to work for and with; they always treated union members with dignity and respect. KPS is not one of those hedge funds that will come in and bust the union so they can make a quick buck and move on. They stuck with our union and helped to make us a profitable business again so they could sell the plants to a reputable business that would preserve our mills and our good-paying jobs.

Our team of negotiators, headed by Director Michael Bolton, did a great job of getting us a fair and workable contract. The folks with KPS, headed by Raquel Palmer, weren't interested in beating up on the union. They wanted a fair contract, too, and they were willing to pay good money and good benefits for good workers.

Our union also made huge strides in safety and health.

Thanks to KPS, along with the USW, we can keep good-paying jobs in Wisconsin. Good luck to our union brothers and sisters at Briggs & Stratton – go build the union.

*Rick Smith
Past President, Local 2-00221
Mosinee, Wis.*

Attack on Goodyear Workers

To all my fellow union brothers and sisters at Goodyear Tire Co.: I read about the attack on Goodyear by President Donald Trump in the fall issue of *USW@Work*, and it was the worst I have seen in my 81 years.

I was a member of the United Autoworkers (UAW) Local 75 for eight years at AMC in Milwaukee. I was a member of USW Local 1302 for 30 years at the OMC Evinrude plant in Milwaukee. I retired from OMC after 30 years.

I just bought new tires for my 2009 Chevy Impala. I bought Cooper tires because they are made in the United States. I also have a 2004 GMC Canyon with 213,000 miles on it. I need new tires on it now, and I am going to buy Goodyear tires for my truck. I was very saddened to read about Trump's attack on the Goodyear Tire Co. and all of the union members working there. Goodyear is an American company employing American union members. This must never happen again.

*James Sneller
Local 1302, retired
Milwaukee*



Still Proud to Fly the Union Flag

Having read *USW@Work* for some time, I am encouraged in each issue – as a former member of the United Rubber Workers (URW) Local 2 in Akron, Ohio – by the growth of the USW during these difficult times. Were I still a pipefitter at Goodyear Tire & Rubber, I would be a USW member today.

Having also been a member of the Teamsters while in college and working for United Parcel Service, as well as a 28-year member of the National Education Association while a teacher, I know through long experience the strength and the benefits that accrue to workers through union membership.

I thank you for your excellent publication (passed on to me regularly by a current USW member) and wish for your readership to know that, as a retiree, I continue to “fly my colors” in front of my house with a bright yellow “Justice for Local Workers” sign (see photo).

Keep up the good work for all of us.

*James Walker
Massillon, Ohio*

Make Better Steel, Organize D.C. Workers

I have two issues I wish to address: first, if you want to begin to retool American steel, you can start with a simple aim – create good, quality American steel for welders and their comrades. I've heard this complaint so much from their profession that cheap Chinese “junk” steel made from every mixture of metals under the sun just doesn't do the job.

Second, we need to organize more workers on Capitol Hill. If you don't want to organize them, at least expose all of the cheapskates in Congress and the Senate. At least I am certain of the House side, because I worked there for four months and was astounded. Try living in the Washington, D.C., area on those workers' wages.

*Anthony Guyda Jr.
Oil City, Pa.*

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USW members, retirees and their families are invited to “speak out.” Letters should be short and to the point. We reserve the right to edit for length.



J. Flogler



A. Donner



USW MEMBERS

PROTECT & SERVE



A. Paul



Sheriffs in Niagara, N.Y., Devote Careers to Law Enforcement

Kyle Achtyl never knows quite what to expect each day when he arrives to work as a deputy sheriff in Niagara County, N.Y. And that's the way he likes it.

"No two days are the same," Achtyl explained recently as he prepared to head out for his afternoon shift in the picturesque region of about 210,000 residents along Lake Ontario in northwest New York.

Niagara County is home to about 105 members of Local 4-2001 who serve as deputies, investigators and other law enforcement agents for the county sheriff's

office. They are part of a larger group of more than 600 USW members who serve in a similar capacity across the United States, and more than 25,000 public workers in the USW overall.

The unique nature of their jobs makes the work days exciting but also unpredictable and potentially dangerous for Achtyl and his fellow Local 4-2001 members.

Facing Difficult Days

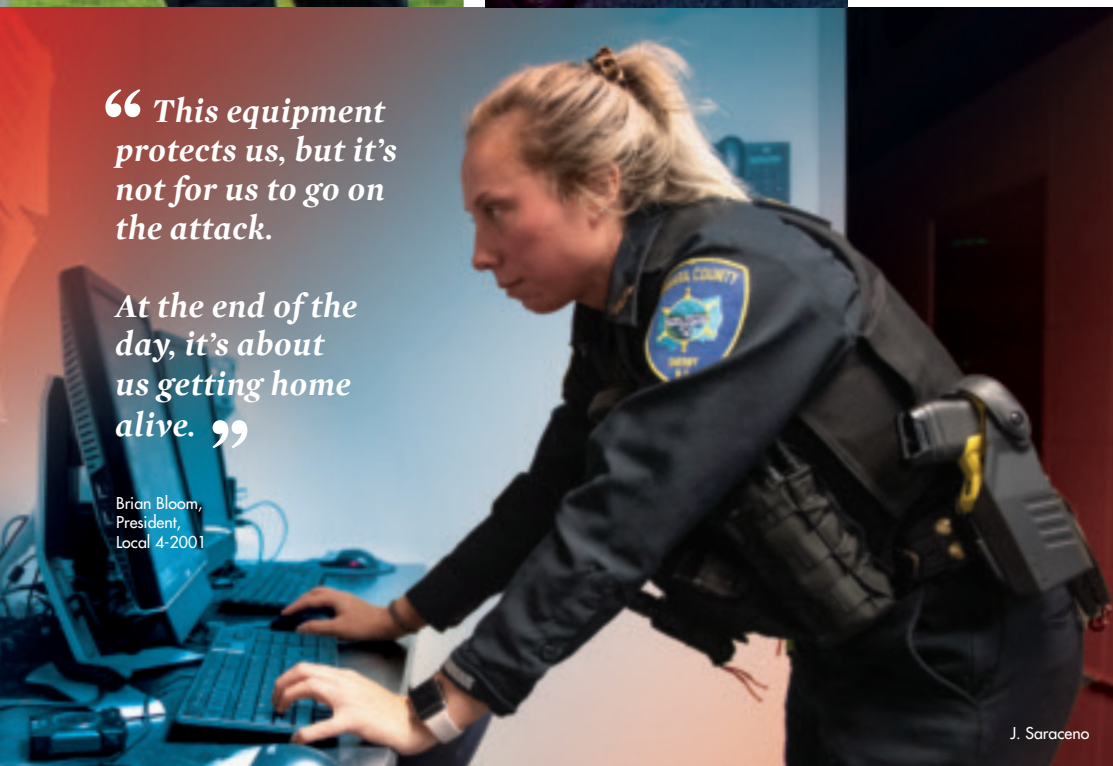
Local President Brian Bloom, an investigator, has been with the sheriff's office for 10 years after putting in five years of service with the New York State Park Police. He said that while he has had plenty of traumatic days on the job, he tries to begin each new shift with a clean slate.

"Everybody deals with

“This equipment protects us, but it's not for us to go on the attack.”

At the end of the day, it's about us getting home alive. ”

Brian Bloom,
President,
Local 4-2001



J. Saraceno

it differently. I try not to take it home with me,” Bloom said of job-related stress. “I’m not sure I could even tell you what my worst day was.”

As with any other USW local, the members in Niagara County are focused on the well-being and safety of their co-workers, although for law enforcement officers, ensuring a safe workplace looks a bit different than it might in an industrial setting.

Wearing vests loaded with equipment from communications devices to weapons to first-aid tools, the officers acknowledge that some bystanders may view the resulting appearance as intimidating.

Deputy Sheriff Joseph Flagler noted that officers’ equipment is more visible than it once was – they now wear much of their gear on their vests rather than their belts to avoid back problems. A better understanding of why and how officers carry the equipment they do could help to alleviate issues of trust, he said.

Bloom acknowledged that fact but said the officers’ job is – as the maxim goes – to protect and serve their community, while making sure every member comes back safely at the end of their shift.

“This equipment protects us, but it’s not for us to go on the attack,” Bloom said. “At the end of the day, it’s about us getting home alive.”

Part of Labor Movement

The Niagara County officers have long been part of the labor movement in heavily unionized Western New York. They were members of the Paper, Allied Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers (PACE) until 2005, when that union became part of the USW.

The USW local in Niagara negotiates their collective bargaining agreements across the table from a committee led by the county manager.

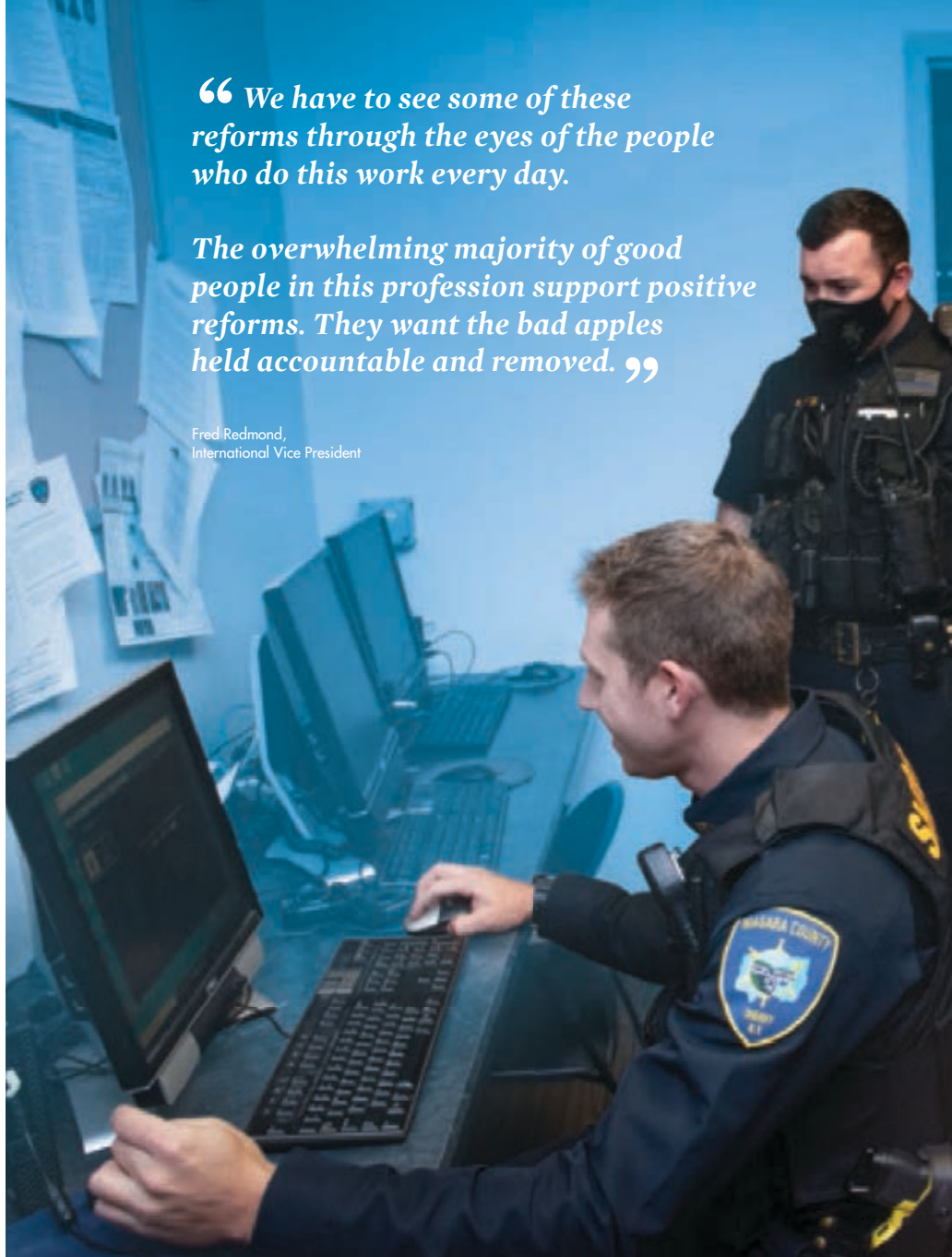
Bloom said that having a contract in place to support the Niagara County work force helps to ensure that members are treated fairly regardless of who sits on management’s side.

“You have a voice,” he said. “It doesn’t mean you won’t have problems, but it means you can sit down and talk about them.”

“ We have to see some of these reforms through the eyes of the people who do this work every day.

The overwhelming majority of good people in this profession support positive reforms. They want the bad apples held accountable and removed. ”

Fred Redmond,
International Vice President



Wide Range of Duties

While Bloom and the other members of the local regularly deal with day-to-day issues such as criminal investigations and traffic violations, their work extends far beyond those duties into more complex situations such as hostage negotiations and drug trafficking.

The sheriff’s office includes an aviation unit equipped with a helicopter, a marine patrol unit, a SCUBA-certified underwater response team, a K-9 unit, a search-and-rescue unit, and an emergency response team that answers calls to the most volatile situations.

Because Niagara County is easily

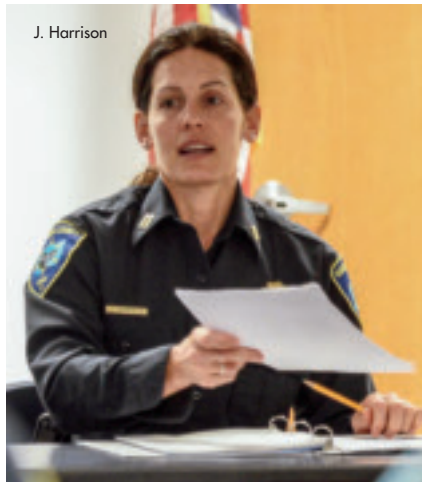
accessible by road, water and air from neighboring Canada, USW members also work in conjunction with state and federal agencies, including the U.S. Border Patrol and U.S. Coast Guard, and are part of a task force charged with stopping the flow of illegal narcotics and other dangerous substances.

Focusing on Safety

Bloom said he knows that some in his community may view law enforcement officers with mistrust or skepticism, given the high-profile deaths last year of George Floyd in Minnesota and Breonna Taylor in Kentucky, among others, and the resulting nationwide



A. Nemi



J. Harrison



J. Flagler



Left to right:
J. Casterline
A. Nemi
J. Williams

demonstrations. Still, he said, the officers he has worked with in Niagara County and elsewhere are committed to making sure every member of their community is free from harm.

“Our goal is to be safe and for others to be safe,” Bloom said. “We never show up with the idea of doing harm. Using force is the last thing anyone here wants to do.”

Flagler said he works hard to put other members of the community at ease when he is on the job patrolling Niagara County’s neighborhoods.

“You’re in your uniform, and you don’t even think about it,” Flagler, a 30-





A. Nemi



year veteran officer, said of his on-duty appearance. “It’s like a second skin.”

One piece of equipment all deputies in Niagara County employ is a body-worn camera, which records each interaction that an officer has with the public during their work day. USW members say the cameras are there to ensure safety – both of the public and the officers who are called to serve them.

“Who else goes to work every day with an eye on everything they do?” Flagler asked. Such cameras have helped to protect the public, and hold officers accountable, while also often vindicating officers who have been accused of wrongdoing. He noted that making the use of cameras is “one of the best things that has happened.”

Task Force Aims at Reform

As the national conversation last year turned to issues of systemic racism and police brutality, International Vice President Fred Redmond tapped Bloom to serve on an AFL-CIO subcommittee within the recently formed Task Force on Racial Justice charged with recommending changes to community policing and public safety. The USW is one of 13 AFL-CIO unions that count police officers as members.

“It’s a slow process, but we are making progress,” Bloom said of the task force, which has been meeting, virtually, every two weeks since last fall.

Bloom said that while calls for reform

are rightly highlighting the need for more community investment in areas other than policing, he wants to make sure that the movement doesn’t turn into an attack on the rights of union workers.

As Bloom pointed out – from the perspective of a labor leader – reductions in funding could threaten the good jobs, pay and benefits that the USW membership provides to working families like his.

“Just ‘defunding’ is not the answer, but we don’t have a problem having the conversation. Let’s get people together and let’s have conversations,” Bloom said, noting that more funding – not less – is the answer across the board, so that municipalities can invest in more intensive training for officers, as well as in other community-based programs to help ensure the public welfare. “We need to work with the government and get money devoted to different things.”

Redmond said that too many government officials in the United States are trying to use the current climate as an excuse to attack collective bargaining, which is the wrong approach.

“What we are trying to do is create a new blueprint on public safety,” Redmond said. “Some of these municipalities, they’re coming after collective bargaining under the guise of reform, and that’s all wrong. Communities would benefit from a more holistic approach that includes the labor movement.”

Redmond said that unions must be part of the discussion as the nation grapples with ways to reform and improve community relationships with public safety professionals.

“We are taking a quite different approach – we are saying that collective bargaining can be the solution to a lot of our issues,” he said.

‘On Board with Reforms’

Redmond and Bloom both said it’s important to remember that the vast majority of police officers, in Niagara County and across the country, are workers with families and children who care about their co-workers and the people who live in their communities.

“We have to see some of these reforms through the eyes of the people who do this work every day,” Redmond said. “The overwhelming majority of good people in this profession support positive reforms. They want the bad apples held accountable and removed.”

The USW supports the adoption of a set of national, professional standards for unionized public safety officials, Redmond said.

New York state already has strict guidelines for police officers on the use of force, and the Niagara County officers have a detailed policy that puts them ahead of their counterparts in other areas of the United States, Bloom said.

“We’re on board with a lot of these reforms already,” he said.



Community Support

While upholding their duty to serve and protect their neighbors, the members of Local 4-2001 go even further to support their community, raising thousands of dollars each year through various fundraisers, which they in turn donate to causes throughout the region, including local food banks, child advocacy groups, domestic violence-prevention programs, children’s athletic teams and summer camps, holiday toy drives and other charities.

Flagler said that through October 2020, the officers’ charitable fund had already exceeded the total amount it collected throughout 2019. He took that as a signal from residents that they have the officers’ backs.

“Our community here supports us very well,” Flagler said. “And we appreciate it.”

Bloom said that the positive relationship the USW local maintains with management has helped the entire region of Niagara County.

Sheriff’s deputies help to patrol 12 distinct zones in the county they serve, some of which have their own police departments and some of which rely on the county sheriff’s office and the state police as their primary law enforcement agencies.

For each shift, the county has a minimum of six officers in patrol cars at all times. The office fields an average of

more than 200 calls per day.

Most of the members of management in the office, including Niagara County Sheriff Michael Filicetti, worked their way up through the rank and file. That has helped to make the relationship between management and Local 4-2001 more productive, Bloom said. Management knows what kind of equipment and support officers need to get their jobs done right and to remain safe, and they make sure the members have it, he said.

That mutual respect extends to the public, which must vote to elect the sheriff in Niagara County. That gives local residents a stake in what happens in the sheriff’s office, Flagler said.

“The public respects that,” he said. “They know exactly what we do every day.”

Strict Standards

Flagler said that the union and the sheriff’s office also share a commitment to strict training and certification standards, which has helped the office to build a positive reputation within the community.

The members of Local 4-2001 undergo a rigorous training regimen, both when they are new to the profession and continuously throughout their careers. New recruits must complete at least 24 weeks of police academy study, including four weeks of on-the-job training, as well as two to three more months in the

field. They also undergo continual firearms training as well as regular anti-bias and anti-harassment programs.

Before joining the sheriff’s office, deputies must pass extensive background and physical fitness checks, Bloom said.

“We are constantly training,” he said.

In addition to regularly taking classes, USW members also teach them. They are among the instructors at the Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy on the campus of Niagara University, just a few miles from the office headquarters.

The academy provides training for officers in Niagara County as well as several nearby communities on subjects including civilian dispatch training, impaired driving detection, accident investigation, police supervision, homeland security and other topics.

Keeping their skills fresh and staying up to date on law enforcement standards helps officers maintain community trust, Flagler said.

Bloom said that even though he sometimes worries that “mistrust breeds mistrust,” he hasn’t let the changing landscape of law enforcement in the United States alter his basic approach to his job. He still approaches every call the same way.

“We are all human beings,” Bloom said. “Every life is valuable, and we need to treat it like that.”

A FUTURE ON THE LINE

PIPELINE ISSUE EQUALS UNCERTAINTY FOR OHIO REFINERY WORKERS



Daniel Flores

When he was just a little kid, Mike Sarns Jr. recalls, his grandfather worked at the oil refinery about a mile from the Maumee River in East Toledo, Ohio.

As the younger Sarns was growing up, his father started working there. Today, Sarns himself is beginning his fourth decade in the facility,

which, at 125 years, is one of the oldest refineries in the United States.

"It's not just a job," he said. "It's home, man."

That's a sentiment shared by many of the 300-plus members of Local 912 who work at the Toledo Refining Co. facility.

"Our refinery needs to be a vital part of the future," said Local 912 President Justin Donley, who has worked at the facility for 17 years.

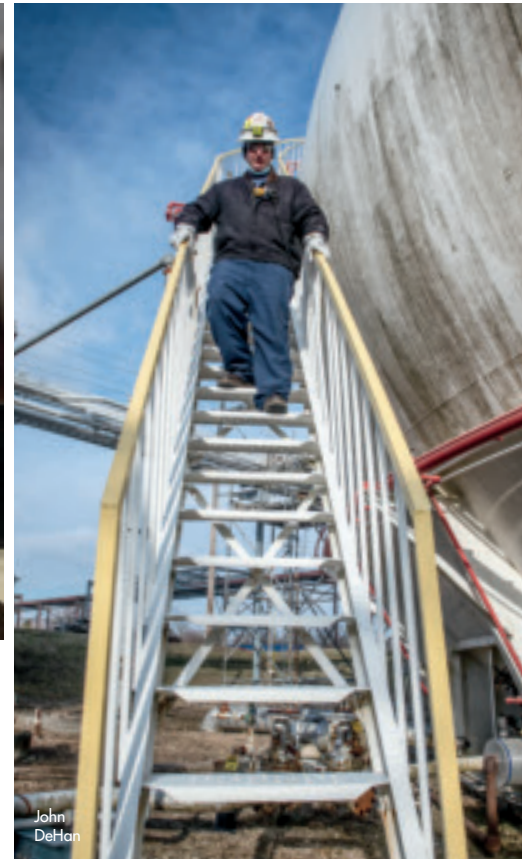
Sadly, that future is murky today due to the uncertain status of



Dave Rowlett

Enbridge Line 5, a set of pipes that carry crude oil, natural gas liquids and other petroleum products through the Great Lakes states and parts of Canada. In 2019, Michigan filed a lawsuit seeking to shut down parts of the line that pass under the Straits of Mackinac, waterways that connect Lake Huron and Lake Michigan between the state's upper and lower peninsulas.

Enbridge, the Canadian energy company that maintains the line, wants



John DeHan

to relocate some parts of the pipe into a tunnel deep below those waterways mitigating any possible environmental threat to the Straits. But last fall, Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer revoked a 1953 easement, which could prevent the



Matthew Avery

Photos by Steve Dietz



line from continuing to operate, putting the tunnel project in jeopardy and imperiling the financial viability of the Toledo plant.

A Cleaner Refinery

Whitmer’s opposition to the Line 5 project stems from environmental concerns, but USW members say that those fears are misplaced and note that their facility is one of the most environ-

mentally friendly oil refineries in the world.

Donley, who has led Local 912 since 2016, said that Line 5 supplies the Toledo facility with a type of light, sweet crude oil that allows workers there to produce cleaner products than most other sites.

“Our whole process ends a lot cleaner,” Donley said. “If you’re focusing on the carbon

footprint, we set higher standards for ourselves, and it all comes from what we get through Line 5.”

District 1 Director Donnie Blatt said USW members have met with lawmakers and environmental groups in Ohio, Michigan and Washington, D.C., since the summer of 2019, including representatives of Whitmer’s office, to address the Line 5 issue.

“We are committed to advocating for a safe, clean environment,” Blatt said. “But we believe that does not have to come at the cost of good-paying, family- and community-sustaining jobs.”

Blatt said that the tunnel project would alleviate environmental concerns related to the Straits and would ultimately benefit residents of Michigan and Ohio. Another refinery in Toledo, jointly owned by BP and Husky, is home to members of Local 1-346.

“We just need the time and the cooperation from all involved to get it done,” Blatt said.

Childhood Memories

Donley, a native of the Toledo area whose father, Tod, has worked at the refinery for 30 years, said he remembers visiting the plant on “Take Your Child to Work Day” as a sixth-grader. It was a dirty, smelly enterprise in those days, but by the time he started working there a decade later, that was no longer true.

“I said I’d never work in a place like that,” Donley said. “Just in that time, the place had completely changed. If we lose Line 5, even if we continue operating, we’re not going to have that same clean starting product.”

That’s one reason why USW members have mobilized, to make sure that Line 5 can continue to operate safely and cleanly and that the refinery can continue to serve as an economic engine for the families and businesses of northwest Ohio.

Industry statistics show that each of the good, family-supporting jobs at the refinery in turn supports 12 to 15 good jobs in the broader community. Including management, there are about 500 regular employees along with – at times – hundreds more contractors who work at the site.

“Even on the low side of that, you’re talking at least 6,000 jobs in the surrounding community that could be lost,” he said. “The economic impact could be horrible.”

For Tira Houston, a single mother and Toledo native in her 18th year at the facility, shutting down the refinery would mean the loss of the job that has allowed her to provide for her 13-year-old while also giving back regularly to those in her community who need support.

Houston, an active Woman of Steel, has consistently worked to support those in need in the Toledo area through holiday donation and school supply drives, volunteering for after-school programs, and other philanthropic efforts.

“We have always helped the community in our area,” said Houston, one of the few Women of Steel at the Toledo refinery. “These jobs are important.”

Economic Ripple Effect

Houston, whose labor lineage stretches back to her mother’s and grandfather’s service as stewards, said the prospect of losing Line 5 “is very troubling” because it could result not only in lost jobs for Local 912 members, but shuttered restaurants, gas stations, hotels, grocery stores and other businesses in the area around the refinery.

“We’re all in this together,” said 25-year refinery worker and Local 912 member John Avery. “This is where we live, and we all have to take care of it.”

Taking care of their community means working to preserve the use of Line 5 so that the oil – as Sarns, Donley

and others say – “stays in the pipe.”

The alternative, they said, could mean thousands of tankers carrying petroleum products back and forth along local highways and railways, as well as higher fuel prices throughout the region, from the jet fuel used by carriers at Detroit Metropolitan Airport to the heating oil that is vital for residents of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.

Looking at the big picture, the result would be more widespread economic consequences, as well as additional environmental problems from increased emissions, leaks and other potential disasters, Local 912 members say.

“It’s just not feasible,” Donley said. “When the stuff gets out of the pipe, that’s when it gets dangerous.”

Donley called himself an “avid outdoorsman” and said that he and other members of the local in Toledo consider themselves to be environmentalists. They are proud to work in a facility that they view as an essential part of the transition to a greener economy, he said.

“We need to use the resources we have,” said Avery. “But we need to use them wisely.”

Without Line 5, he said, “we would become a worse polluter, which nobody wants to be, especially moving forward. We are proud to be a clean, safe refinery.”

Worker Health and Safety

In addition to fighting for a cleaner, safer environment outside the refinery, the members of Local 912 have a deep commitment to safety inside their workplace.

Donley acknowledged the inherent dangers in any refinery and said that if “things go wrong,” the potential for



Tira Houston

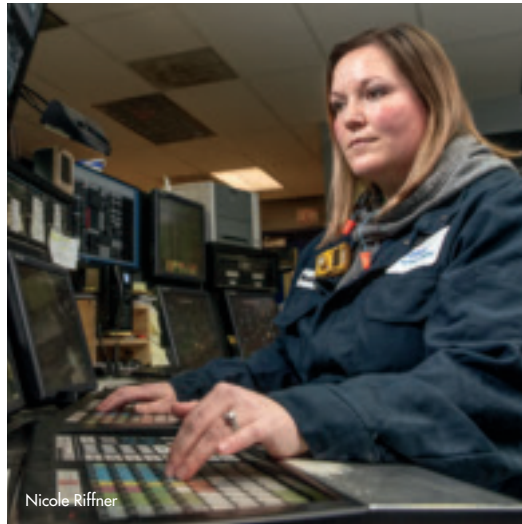


John Avery

serious injuries is high. But, he said, the USW’s commitment to safety on the local, district and international levels gives him peace of mind that workers will return safely home each day.

Donley pointed out that the USW international has fought for process safety management standards and other industry-specific processes designed to keep workers as safe as possible. In Toledo, he said, plant management works closely with the local to ensure worker safety and environmental protection.

“You don’t want anybody getting hurt no matter where they work,” Donley said. “I don’t think we would be anywhere close to where we are now if we didn’t have the union.”



Nicole Riffner

Experienced Work Force

Besides its steadfast support for worker safety, the USW has helped to secure strong wages and benefits for the Toledo workers, which has helped to build an experienced work force with a sense of dedication to their work and to each other.

Avery has worked at the refinery since 1995 and said that one thing that sets the facility apart from other industries is that there is always work to be done – 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

“There’s no on/off switch,” Avery said. “There are always people there. It doesn’t matter if it’s Christmas, Thanksgiving, we are there.”

Sarns recalled his family celebrating the holiday on Christmas Eve so that his father could work a shift at the refinery the next day. “That’s the refinery,” he said. “It’s that kind of a job.”

It’s also the kind of job that gives workers the chance not just to make a living but to build a life. Avery was able to serve 22 years in the Air National Guard, including two tours of duty overseas, always knowing that he would have a job when he returned.

Sarns said that he started working at the refinery out of high school and, thanks to a tuition-reimbursement program, was able to earn a civil engineering degree.

“Everybody thinks ‘it’s just a refinery,’ but there are so many opportunities there,” Sarns said, noting that he is one of many workers who have a long family history at the facility.

Sarns has known Donley, the local union president, since they were kids. Donley’s father, Tod, still works there, too, and said that getting his job at the refinery after working other jobs made him “feel like I hit the jackpot.”

“Things were tough, and things really turned around once I got into the refinery,” Tod Donley said. “It opened a lot of doors, not just for me, but for my entire family.”

Those family and community connections are part of the reason that Local 912 members are fighting so hard to preserve the refinery’s future in the face of the uncertainty surrounding Line 5.

Justin Donley said that even as the global economy slowly but surely shifts away from fossil fuels, he knows there will still be a need for clean, safe and efficient oil refineries like the one in Toledo for a long time.

“Even as things do start to shift,” Donley said. “I think our refinery will be one of the last ones to go.”



Pete Flores



Left to right: Justin Donley, Tod Donley, Jacob Donley



Julie Ann Frias

USW MEMBERS

HOPEFUL ON INFRASTRUCTURE



'NEW ERA' FOR U.S. MANUFACTURING COULD RESULT IN MILLIONS OF JOBS

As President Joe Biden begins his administration, members in the USW's manufacturing sector are optimistic that the new chief executive's ambitious "Build Back Better" proposals will finally deliver a long-awaited comprehensive plan to overhaul the nation's crumbling infrastructure.

"We're hopeful that this administration will usher in a new era in Washington of leaders who don't just talk about supporting working Americans, but who actually follow through with action," International President Tom Conway said following the November election.

The Biden administration, Conway said, took office this January with one of the most aggressive economic recovery plans in American history – a proposal to spend \$1.3 trillion over 10 years to rebuild and modernize U.S. infrastructure, including schools, roads, bridges, dams, transportation systems, communications networks and other public utilities.

The plan would ultimately increase demand for USW-made goods and

create tens of thousands of jobs in core manufacturing industries such as steel, aluminum, rubber, glass, cement, and mining, as well as supporting countless other jobs in communities where those workers live.

In an early sign of his commitment to manufacturing, on his fifth day in office, Biden signed an executive order strengthening domestic content requirements for federal projects. "A meaningful plan to rebuild and improve American infrastructure is key to stabilizing our manufacturing base, not just in the steel industry, but across all of the industries where our members work," said International Vice President David McCall. "Our nation's infrastructure is in dire need of rebuilding and doing so will be the economic fuel to provide long-term job security for USW members and their families."

One of those members is Kameen Thompson, president of Local 9462, which represents about 90 workers at the former ArcelorMittal, now Cliffs, steel mill in Conshohocken, Pa. The workers there turn out products used in military vehicles, construction equipment and other heavy machinery.

Thompson said that the economy of his town, northwest of Philadelphia, has suffered over the past five years as a result of the failure of leaders in Washington,

D.C., to invest in infrastructure improvements, despite continuous promises.

"Infrastructure has to be a promise kept," Thompson said. "If we're not invested in the infrastructure here, then the steel has to come from somewhere. I'd rather it come from here than it come over from China."

Parts of Thompson's workplace have shut down over the years as a result of federal inaction on infrastructure. The factory, which once employed 450, at one time played a major role in making steel bridge crossings. The rolling mill was idled in 2018.

"An infrastructure bill creates jobs in the community, it brings jobs in the steel mill back, it reopens what we closed down," Thompson said. "It creates jobs, it creates a better economy. The economy grows, you grow the middle class. Everything goes hand in hand."

Georgetown University calculated, in a 2017 study, that a \$1 trillion infrastructure program would create more than 11 million jobs over 10 years. The Biden administration is aiming for \$300 billion more than that, paying for the plan by closing corporate tax loopholes and reversing the Trump administration's tax cuts that favored the wealthiest Americans at a cost of more than \$2 trillion.

"The administration's comprehensive infrastructure plan is central to our



economic recovery and must be a top priority for the newly elected president and Congress,” Conway said.

In particular, the USW supports the part of the Biden plan that puts workers first by ensuring that the products used in the infrastructure modernization projects are made in America.

The Biden plan follows through on a commitment the previous administration consistently promised but failed to deliver. Despite his administration’s Section 232 tariffs on steel and aluminum, Trump’s overall manufacturing policy proved to be a failure, resulting in shuttered factories, lost jobs and a trade deficit (before the coronavirus pandemic) of more than \$620 billion, the highest level since the economic crisis of 2008.

Four years without a major infrastructure overhaul resulted in a decline in U.S. demand for steel and helped lead to the idling of U.S. Steel’s Great Lakes Works in Michigan, where Bob Kemper and 1,500 other USW members worked.

Kemper said swift action on a major infrastructure bill must be a top priority for the new administration and Congress.

“There’s no time to waste,” he said. “It should have been started four years ago. It needs to happen right now.”

Scott Paul, president of the Alliance for American Manufacturing, a partnership between the USW and some of the

nation’s largest manufacturers, said that while lawmakers have talked about the idea of a massive infrastructure package for several years, the economic crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic

“ THERE’S NO TIME TO WASTE, IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN STARTED FOUR YEARS AGO. ”

should provide the impetus to get it done.

“Millions of Americans need work, and factories will be eager to supply the materials necessary to turn these ambitions into reality,” Paul wrote in a recent column calling for massive, job-creating investments on the scale of those in President Biden’s “Build Back Better” plan.

Thompson said that leaders in Washington must put politics aside and realize that creating good jobs and building a stronger economy helps everyone, regardless of their background, economic class or political party.

“It’s about us coming together as a country and getting done the things that we need to get done,” he said.

Conway said that USW members can help push the plan forward by demanding that lawmakers across the country put the interests of workers first.

“We can never let the president or Congress forget that they are there to

work for us,” he said.

“This ought to rise above politics,” Conway said. “It’s an American issue. This really is the way to put the nation on good footing.”

U.S. Rep. John Garamendi, a California Democrat who serves on the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, said he expects bipartisan agreement that infrastructure must be a priority.

“There’s a very large appetite in Congress to pass a very large infrastructure bill,” he said. “Republicans need infrastructure as much as Democrats.”

Garamendi said repairing and rebuilding the nation’s transportation systems – including the thousands of structurally deficient bridges across the country – will provide a lift for workers at a critical time.

“We’re going to make sure that the materials are American-made,” he said, “and that the American manufacturing sector flourishes once again.”

There is no time to waste, Thompson said, given the scale of the economic crisis and the need for good, family-supporting jobs that can help communities across the country thrive for the next generation.

“We need to start now,” Thompson said. “We needed to start yesterday.”

USW FIGHTS TO ADVANCE WORKERS' RIGHTS IN CONGRESS



FILE PHOTO:
JULY 2019

With a new president and Congress just beginning their terms, the USW is optimistic that the incoming leaders in Washington, D.C., will begin to tackle a large backlog of pro-worker legislation that former president Donald Trump and Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell ignored for four years.

The new Senate, with the slimmest of Democratic majorities, has set an expanded COVID-19 relief bill as its first priority. After that, in addition to calling for an ambitious infrastructure program as part of the Biden administration's "Build Back Better" plan, USW

members will push for bills to fortify struggling pension funds, protect Social Security and Medicare, expand union organizing rights and shore up workplace health and safety after years of neglect.

"The Biden-Harris administration has its work cut out for it after four years of Republican indifference left agencies like OSHA, MSHA and the Chemical Safety Board, among others, in dire need of funding and attention," said International Vice President Roxanne Brown, who oversees the union's legislative and policy work from her Washington, D.C., office. "We look forward to new leaders who will make working Americans a priority again."

In addition to preserving pension plans and ensuring worker safety, the USW

plans a major effort to urge lawmakers to pass the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, which the U.S. House passed a year ago but which languished in the Republican-controlled Senate.

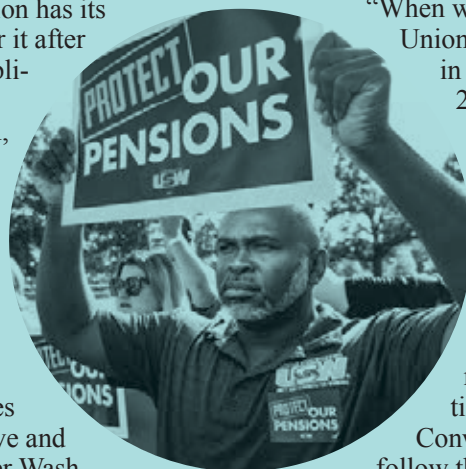
The bill would level the playing field by expanding workers' rights to form unions and increasing penalties against companies that illegally violate those rights.

In addition to that measure, the USW will be waging state-level fights for workers' rights in places where "right to work (for less)" measures could come up, including New Hampshire, Missouri, Montana and elsewhere.

"When we sent out the Your Union, Your Voice surveys in the run-up to the 2020 elections, thousands of members responded and made it very clear that their priorities include affordable health care, retirement security and workers' rights," said International President Tom Conway. "We intend to follow the guidance of USW

members as we pursue a pro-worker legislative agenda in the coming years."

A major part of that agenda will be ensuring access to quality, affordable health care for workers and retirees.





CABINET PICKS SIGNAL PRO-WORKER AGENDA

While many USW members have access to health care plans through their collective bargaining agreements, retirees, laid-off workers and others often struggle to find affordable coverage, even with the Affordable Care Act in place. The USW will fight to extend the Health Coverage Tax Credit, which helps to cover the cost of certain insurance premiums and is currently due to expire at the end of 2021.

In addition, the union will prioritize the fight for the future of Medicare, which projections from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) show could be facing a crisis in the coming years. According to CBO estimates, the Medicare Part A fund, which covers hospital, nursing home and hospice services, will begin to run dry in 2024 with no mechanism currently in place to cover the shortfall.

Brown said that members should look for regular updates from the USW’s Rapid Response program in the coming months so that the union can harness the power of its activists around the country to advocate for legislation that is important to workers.

“Four years of Republican stonewalling has left workers and our allies in Congress with a long to-do list,” Brown said. “But USW members know better than anyone how to fight for what’s right. We’re ready to go.”

WORKERS’ RIGHTS, JOB CREATION, AND FAIR TRADE ARE PRIORITIES

As the Biden administration begins to take shape, the new president’s cabinet choices so far are showing a commitment to a strong pro-union, worker-friendly agenda.

In particular, President Joe Biden’s choice of Marty Walsh to lead the U.S. Department of Labor promises to be a sharp contrast from his anti-worker predecessor Eugene Scalia, a management attorney who built his career representing corporations in trying to destroy organizing rights and health and safety protections.

Walsh, the mayor of Boston since 2014, comes to the job of Labor Secretary with deep roots in the labor movement. He be-

came a member of the Laborers’ International Union of North America (LIUNA) at age 21, eventually serving as president of Laborers’ Local 223 and later as the leader of the Boston Building and Construction Trades Council, an umbrella group of 20 unions representing about 35,000 workers.



MARTY WALSH

“President Biden has long prioritized workers, and naming Boston Mayor Marty Walsh as Labor Secretary helps set the country on the path toward greater economic equality and shared prosperity,” International President Tom Conway said in January

following Walsh’s nomination. “He understands the value of a hard day’s work and a collectively bargained contract.”

The Labor Department oversees the enforcement of health and safety regulations, wage and benefit laws, pensions, union organizing, and other policies and rules that deeply affect the lives of American workers both on and off the job.

“Given Walsh’s commitment to workers’ rights, including the right to organize, he will undoubtedly use the office of Labor Secretary to continue fighting on behalf of all working people,” Conway said.

As Boston Mayor, Walsh demonstrated his solidarity with the USW by joining locked-out National Grid workers on the picket line in 2018 and helping to push for a

resolution to the work stoppage that affected about 1,200 members of Local 12012 and Local 12003 at the Massachusetts utility company.

“Marty Walsh has always been a fighter who understands the power of working people standing together for a better life,” said AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka. “It will take an unprecedented effort from the president-elect and the Labor Department to recover from the failed policies of the past four years.”

Just hours after his inauguration, Biden demonstrated his deep commitment to workers’ rights when

he fired National Labor Relations Board General Counsel Peter Robb, who has spent his career pursuing an extreme anti-union agenda.

Biden’s choices for U.S. Commerce Secretary and U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) also met with strong approval from union members.

As Commerce Secretary, Rhode Island Gov. Gina Raimondo will be tasked with promoting job growth while overseeing the new administration’s pro-worker trade policies.

“As Rhode Island governor, Raimondo addressed the worst unemployment rate

in the nation and advanced work force training programs and other initiatives



to promote good jobs in her state,” Conway said. “Her stewardship over the Department of Commerce’s trade responsibilities should help promote economic recovery in key trade-impacted industries.”

Biden’s choice as USTR, Katherine Tai, further underscores his

commitment to more worker-friendly trade policies, Conway said. The USTR oversees and implements U.S. trade policy and conducts negotiations with trade partners.

Tai spent her career fighting for fairness in that system, first as the USTR’s chief counsel for China trade enforcement and later as the top trade attorney for the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee. In that role, she oversaw negotiations with the Trump administration to ensure stronger worker protections in the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA), which replaced the

failed North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

“For decades, administrations of both political parties have enacted harmful trade



policies that held down wages and didn’t provide for better working conditions,” Trumka said. “Katherine Tai’s nomination signals a stark departure from the failed practices of the past.”

LONGTIME USW LEADER TAPPED FOR OSHA ROLE



Frederick, who will serve as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health, spent 25 years with the USW health, safety and environment department.

“There is no stronger advocate for worker safety in this country than Jim Frederick,” said International President Tom Conway. “He brings to OSHA not just a deep commitment to safer workplaces for all Americans, but the expertise and experience to get the job done right.”

Until 2019, Frederick served as assistant director of the USW’s health, safety and environment department. In that role, he investigated workplace incidents and fought for progress on countless issues, including workplace violence, beryllium, silica, hazard communication and ergonomics.

In addition to Frederick, Biden selected Joseph T. Hughes Jr. to serve as Deputy Assistant Secretary for

Pandemic and Emergency Response. Hughes previously served as director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Worker Education and Training Program, which provided grants to unions, including the USW, to train rank-and-file workers on safety.

“For nearly a year, American workplaces have needed an emergency workplace standard to help them fight the spread of COVID-19,” Conway said. “This is one more signal that OSHA will be doing the job that it was intended to do after four years of neglect.”

Conway said that the Biden administration’s proactive approach will be a welcome change.

“There has long been a void in our executive branch,” Conway said. “Working Americans deserve leaders of intellect and empathy who not only understand what it’s like to work for a living, but who will fight for the rights, health, safety and well-being of them and their families.”

The USW applauded President Joe Biden’s decision to tap longtime Steelworkers health and safety advocate James S. Frederick for a leadership role in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

FREE COLLEGE BENEFIT AIDS USW FAMILIES



Paying union dues can deliver more than just better wages, stronger benefits and safer workplaces – for thousands of USW members and others in the labor movement, their union cards are providing them and their families with access to free college courses.

“For me, this is a life-changer,” said Jessica Hilty, a member of Local 7248 at Ohio’s Chase Brass. “I couldn’t possibly afford to go back to college. I didn’t have to make that tough decision of buying groceries, paying the electric bill or making a tuition payment. My union took care of that for me.”

Since 2018, the USW Free College Benefit has been available to all full-time, dues-paying USW members through the Union Plus program, a nonprofit created by the AFL-CIO in 1986 that provides consumer and financial services and assistance to members, retirees and their families. No USW dues money is spent to fund the program.

The USW Free College Benefit offers nearly 40 associate’s degree or certificate programs through Eastern Gateway Community College in Steubenville, Ohio, and a handful of bachelor’s degree choices through Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio.

“We are always adding new programs and new degrees,” said Christina Wanat, senior vice president and chief student affairs officer at

Eastern Gateway. Wanat also has close connections with the USW – both her father and brother retired from Local 1190 after careers at Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel. “The program continues to grow, with no end in sight.”

Open to Families

The only requirement, Wanat said, is that participants must be full dues-paying members of their union and must complete the enrollment steps for the program, as they would at any other college or university. Members can visit <http://freecollege.usw.org> to complete an inquiry form and find out more information.

The program is open to members, spouses, domestic partners, children, grandchildren, parents and siblings, as well as to members of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR), Wanat said.

Even Steelworkers who have been laid off from their jobs are eligible, and Wanat said she has traveled to workplaces where USW members have faced job losses to make sure they know about the program.

Began in District 1

The program, originally offered in 2015 through local unions in Ohio, now boasts more than 1,400 students from USW families and, so far, 25 graduates. Participants range in age from 18 to 77 years old and are in all 50 states as well as Canada, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

District 1 Director Donnie Blatt said that when the opportunity to participate in the program arose, he and then-Director David McCall researched the program and decided it would be worth offering to members.

“This is another great benefit available to full dues-paying members of the USW, besides the obvious services our union normally provides,” Blatt said. “We were proud to offer it first in District 1.”

Michael Geoghegan, president of Eastern Gateway Community College, said the benefit could prove especially useful during the current health and economic crisis.

“We’re proud of this partnership and glad to have the opportunity to provide quality educational opportunities to the hard-working members of the USW and their families,” Geoghegan said. “We know that for many families, paying for college can be a daunting responsibility, especially during this time of rising unemployment and economic uncertainty. So being able to relieve that burden for working families and expanding access to higher education is something we’re very proud to do.”

Flexible Scheduling

Hilty said that the flexibility and obvious affordability of the program have made it perfect for her, a single mom with a full-time job. Students can complete classwork in their free time, at their own pace and finish

a degree while they continue to work.

“The last time I went to college, I drove over an hour each way every day, spent all day at school, spent all night at work,” said Hilty, who is currently in her last semester and on track to graduate this spring. “I took out loans when my money ran out, and still didn’t finish my degree.”

This time, Hilty said, college advisers are there to offer help with scheduling decisions and with transferring credits from other schools for those who have previously studied elsewhere.

“Families have the opportunity to better themselves,” she said, “and not have the stress weighing them down while doing it.”

UNION PLUS BENEFITS

The AFL-CIO’s Union Plus program offers a number of products and services to union members, retirees and their families, including discounts, financial assistance, strike benefits and other aid. For more information about the program, visit www.unionplus.org.

FREE COLLEGE PROGRAM

Steelworkers, SOAR members and their families who are interested in the free college program can visit <http://freecollege.usw.org> or www.unionplusfreecollege.org for more information.



From left to right: Charlie Legere, V. White, Ryan Martin, Katie Pirilla, Ramon Camacho, Ethan Gladding, Gabi DiDonna, Malia Dyson, Stephanie Garrison, Heather Nilson and Shannon Thompson

Photos by Steve Dietz

Museum Workers VOTE TO JOIN USW

Hundreds of Pittsburgh-area museum workers won a major victory in December when they voted overwhelmingly to become members of the USW.

Workers across four Carnegie Museums voted by a nearly 4-to-1 margin to become part of a 500-member USW unit called the United Museum Workers. The workers serve as scientists, educators, art handlers, front desk and administrative staff, gift shop clerks and ushers at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, the Carnegie Museum of Art, the Carnegie Science Center and the Andy Warhol

Museum.

“We are thrilled to become members of the strong and diverse labor union whose founding members helped to build the fortune of our museum’s namesake,” said Gabi DiDonna, associate registrar at the Carnegie Museum of Art. “We look forward to having a seat at the table and a voice in the decisions that affect our quality of life both on and off the job.”

Founded by Steel Baron

The Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh system was founded in 1895 by steel baron Andrew Carnegie. The

system’s workers announced their USW campaign in June with an online rally.

“Our movement began with concerns about transparency and limited career opportunities, but it now has even greater urgency as it has expanded to address furloughs, pay cuts, and safety issues resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Katie Pirilla, an art handler at the Carnegie Museum of Art. “Workers continued organizing throughout the pandemic and found renewed strength in our fight for a safe museum for employees and the public alike.”

The museum workers join a growing



number of white-collar USW members who perform academic and other scholarly work. Two of the museums at the heart of the latest USW organizing campaign sit adjacent to the main branch of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, where about 320 workers across 19 branches voted in August 2019 to join the USW. That group is in the process of bargaining its first contract.

Academic Center

Those institutions are in the heart of Pittsburgh's Oakland neighborhood, home to the University of Pittsburgh, where thousands of faculty members and graduate students have been engaged in simultaneous, years-long efforts to become USW members despite the university's relentless and aggressive union-busting campaigns.

"Our group represents a diverse range of departments, duties, interests and ideas, but what all of us need is a seat at the table and a voice in the

museum's decision-making process," said Ryan Martin, a sales associate in the Carnegie Museum of Art gift shop. "The founder of our museums, Andrew Carnegie, made his fortunes on the backs of thousands of workers who labored for low pay in extremely hazardous conditions. We intend to honor the legacy of these workers."

Safety and Health Issues

Aiyana Kachmarek, gallery attendant at the Andy Warhol Museum, said that the COVID-19 pandemic helped to fuel the organizing effort through the summer and fall of 2020 by bringing to light on-the-job health and safety concerns that some workers may not have considered before.

"Our goal is to build the best, most welcoming and safest museum system for workers and for the people of the Pittsburgh area," said Chloe Deardorff, program presenter at the Carnegie Science Center. "The best way to do that



V. White

is through collective action. We look forward to sitting down and bargaining a first contract that helps us to reach those goals."

DiDonna said that while she and many of her colleagues view working at a prestigious, mission-driven nonprofit organization like a museum as a labor of love, many of the workers struggle to make ends meet.

"What unites us is a dedication to preserving and presenting art, scientific collections, and ideas," she said. "Prestige doesn't pay the rent."

USW Members Play Crucial Roles in COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution!



As COVID-19 infection rates soared to ever-higher levels early this year, hundreds of Steelworkers put their lives on the line, and in some cases logged exhausting amounts of overtime, to distribute the vaccines essential to ending the pandemic.

Because of the unique challenges involved in producing and disseminating the vaccines – one requires super-cold temperatures during transport, for example – manufacturers relied on the precision-made materials and pharmaceutical packaging expertise that USW members provide.

Members of Local 2-432, who work at Dura-Fibre in Menasha, Wis., made specialty laminated paperboard sleeves and inserts to protect the virus during shipment around the country.

Meanwhile, members of Local 2175 in Bloomington, Minn., produced parts for Thermo King refrigeration units that helped trucks keep the vaccine cold on the road.

“I think a lot of people are just happy to help out in any way they can,” said Cole Wilhelm, a steward with Local 2175, noting the parts his members manufacture are typically used in motor coaches’ air-conditioning units and to keep items like produce cold during shipment.

The workers put in extra hours to meet vaccine manufacturers’ demand for their products, while realizing that the longer days boosted their chances of contracting COVID-19 on the job. Wilhelm said he and his colleagues know their work will help America turn the corner on the pandemic and noted, “It’s definitely a big motivator to get even more parts out the door.”

Demand for Glass

The urgent need for millions of doses of the vaccines generated skyrocketing demand not only for packaging materials and refrigeration units but precisely manufactured glass vials. At Corning, in Vineland, N.J., and Nipro Glass, in Millville, N.J., USW members ramped up production at great personal sacrifice.

“The members are proud of what we do,” said Chris Ramirez, president of Local 701-01, whose members at the Corning plant make glass tubing that’s turned into vials. “We feel like we’re making a difference and helping other people.”

But even as workers put their safety at risk on the production floor, he said, company managers working remotely and in private offices had the audacity to resist the union’s call for common-sense COVID-19 safety measures.

“I try to tell them, you don’t feel what we feel. We’re out there. We’re in a war zone,” Ramirez said.

In nearly 27 years at Nipro Glass, Brian Banks, president of Local 219M, has never seen the company’s facilities so busy.



“The members are proud of what we do.”

Banks’ plant makes tubing, which the adjoining Nipro facility converts into vials. Staffed at minimal levels for “quite a few” years, he said, the plants now rely on workers to put in 60- or 70-hour weeks both to fill a surge of orders and cover for co-workers sickened by COVID-19.

Taking a Toll

Some of his colleagues’ friends and relatives, including local health care workers, already received at least one dose of the vaccine. And while union members take satisfaction in helping to keep neighbors safe, he said, the unrelenting overtime takes its own toll on workers and their families.

Banks said the problem isn’t merely Nipro’s history of lean staffing but the decrepit state of American manufacturing overall. Just as the nation found itself unable to produce face masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE) when the pandemic struck, it now strains to produce the glass and other products necessary to rush the vaccines to the public.

“We used to have a lot more glass

plants,” said Teresa Rodgers, Local 219M’s recording secretary, noting that the consolidation, closing and off-shoring of many facilities – including some once located in Millville – placed a “great demand on those of us that are still there.”

Close Collaboration

In Philadelphia, Local 286 and PCI Pharma Services – a pharmaceutical packaging company – closely collaborated to protect workers from COVID-19 and prepare for an eventual role in distributing vaccines.

The company provided enhanced PPE, installed Plexiglass dividers between work stations, brought in a mobile health center, and cut each shift by a half-hour to keep groups of workers from having unnecessary contact with each other. Because of concern about workers contracting the virus on public buses and subway cars, the company provided reimbursements for shared-ride services and set up a private shuttle service that offered free rides to and from the plant.

Local 286 President Carlo Simone Jr. described the “unprecedented” safety measures as an outgrowth of the long-standing, strong working relationship between his local and the plant.

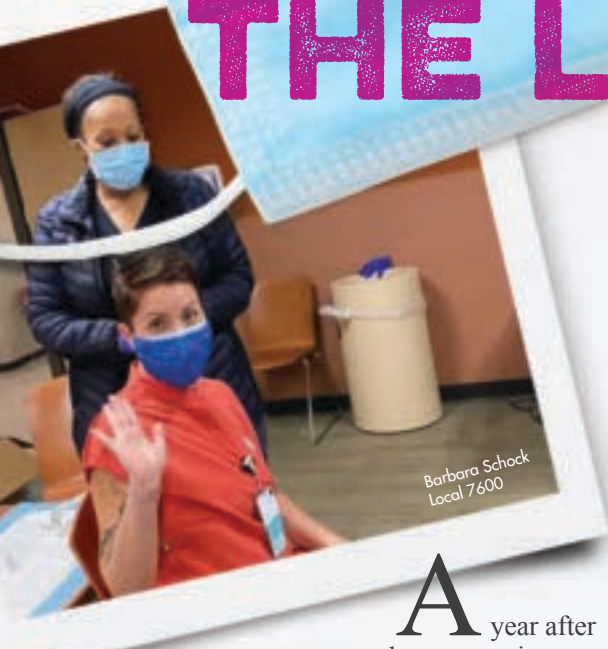
“It was a true partnership,” agreed Chris Blanton, vice president and general manager of PCI’s Philadelphia commercial operations, noting the company far exceeded federal infection-control guidelines “because keeping our workers safe is our No. 1 priority.”

“When you do the right thing – truly do the right thing – the financials will take care of themselves,” said Blanton, who praised union members for diligently performing their duties even when it wasn’t clear early in the pandemic just how easily the virus might be spread.

Because these measures helped to control the virus in the plant, PCI had hundreds of healthy workers ready to go when manufacturers approached the company for help packaging and distributing millions of doses of vaccines.

“It’s an exciting job, a very important job,” noted Penny Burroughs, a Local 286 steward and packer who’s worked at the plant for 35 years. “It’s something that’s going to be in the history books.”

PANDEMIC PUSHES WORKERS TO THE LIMIT



Barbara Schack
Local 7600

A year after the coronavirus began to spread, the ongoing pandemic continues to push the limits of the U.S. health care system while fueling a renewed interest in union activism among its workers.

Still, despite the rollout of vaccines, and workers doing their best to keep their patients and each other as safe as possible, USW-represented hospital and long-term care workers from New Jersey to Minnesota to California and everywhere in between are working ever-longer hours under extreme circumstances to contain the spread of COVID-19.

“Burnout is a very real issue, and staffing, as a result, is a revolving door,” said Briita Noyes, a registered nurse and steward with Local 9349 who works at a long-term care facility in Minnesota.

Congressional Hearing

Noyes joined other workers in December for a hearing with the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee, where they shared with lawmakers their struggles and concerns in dealing with the unprecedented and ongoing health crisis.

The hearing came in the middle of a holiday-fueled spike in COVID-19 cases, one that led to record-setting hospitalization and death rates and pushed some health care facilities beyond their capacity to respond.

For workers, that meant long hours, supply shortages and health risks for themselves and their families. But many USW members used the strength in numbers that comes with union membership to try to improve conditions for themselves and their patients.

When the pandemic forced Niagara, Wis., nursing facility Maryhill Manor into lockdown, Veronica Dixon and her colleagues in Local 3168 had a choice: band together or fall apart.

They worked longer hours, assumed extra duties and leaned on each other to keep the nursing facility operating as the virus sickened dozens of residents and staff members.

Their unflagging teamwork kept the virus at bay for months and sustained them when patients and co-workers eventually began to get sick.

Dixon, a cook at the nursing home and the local’s financial secretary, said the union’s efforts

to combat COVID-19 at Maryhill Manor could offer a blueprint for the rest of the country as it struggles to end the pandemic and create a more equitable economic system.

“We held on,” Dixon said. “And we did a lot better than all the other nursing homes in the area.”

Difficult Conditions

Across the country, health care workers – doctors, nurses, assistants, aides and food service and custodial staffers, among others – faced the most difficult working conditions imaginable. Emergency rooms overflowed into hospital hallways. Hospitals ran so short on beds that some had to send patients hundreds of miles away to find adequate space.

“When the pandemic hit, it felt like we were waiting for a storm,” said Noyes in her testimony. “As PPE shortages became a reality, our facility began rationing masks and our staff were forced to wear a single surgical mask for the entire week.”

Data from the University of Minnesota’s Hospitalization Tracking Project found that, in December, as many as 60 percent of intensive care patients with COVID-19 were in critical condition.

Tim O’Daniel, president of Local 1014L, said he and his co-workers at Cleveland Clinic Akron General saw such a rapid spike in COVID-19 cases that it became difficult to find an empty bed in the facility.

“We’re paying with our health,” said O’Daniel, who in November lost a co-worker of 25 years to the coro-

navirus. “We’re paying with our lives.”

In North Carolina, a spike in intensive-care patients led to other critically ill patients being sent to other units, despite their dire conditions.

Activism on the Rise

At Mission Hospital in Asheville, N.C., nurses took the crisis into their own hands, voting to unionize by a margin of 70 percent. They were among a growing number of front-line health care professionals choosing to join the labor movement in response to the difficulties presented by the virus.

Despite organizing restrictions imposed at the outset of the pandemic, NLRB statistics showed an increase in the percentage of union petitions in the health care sector, from 14 percent to 16 percent, from 2019 to 2020.

While nonunion workers were busy organizing, unionized health care workers also responded with an increase in activism, demanding safe staffing, adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) and safety standards to curb the spread of the virus.

In Albany, N.Y., nurses picketed in December demanding more PPE. Nurses in eastern Pennsylvania went on strike in November in response to staffing shortages. The union reached a new contract agreement a month later that gave nurses a greater say in staffing decisions. Unionized nurses in Colorado publicly called out management practices – including staffing levels – they saw as unsafe. Management responded by hiring more people.

Biden’s Response Plan

Noyes said that, in addition to union organizing, another action that could make a big difference for health care workers would be for

the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to enact an emergency temporary standard that workplaces would be required to follow during the pandemic. It’s a measure that the USW and other unions have sought since the early days of the pandemic, but a step that federal officials failed to take until the Biden administration took office.

“We need a better system in place,” Noyes said.

That better system, including a COVID-19 OSHA workplace standard, is on the way, part of the comprehensive pandemic relief plan the new president unveiled in January.

The \$1.9 trillion program includes a national vaccination program with the goal of delivering 100 million doses in 100 days, along with detailed plans to safely reopen schools, to use federal power to ramp up production to eliminate supply shortages, to deliver \$1,400 relief checks to American families, to support small businesses

and to rescue struggling cities and states facing budget shortfalls.

Addressing the virus and its effects is the immediate first step in the new administration’s ambitious plan to rebuild America’s infrastructure, put workers back on the job and revitalize the economy, Biden said in unveiling his proposals.

“This can’t wait,” O’Daniel said. “We needed help a long time ago.”



Victoria Zarate
Local 7600



Amy Blanchard
Local 7600



Monique Valdez
Local 7600

USW ECHOES CALL FOR MEXICAN LABOR REFORM

The USW is calling for the United States to support continued labor reforms in Mexico after the Independent Mexico Labor Expert Board issued a report assessing the current state of the nation's labor laws.

"The USW commends the board for its thoughtful and thorough investigation into the progress of Mexican labor reform and concurs with its recommendations to further protect Mexican workers," International President Tom Conway said in a statement following release of the board's interim report on Dec. 15.

Congress established the advisory panel to monitor labor rights in Mexico under the 2019 United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), the replacement for the failed North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Ben Davis, the USW director of international affairs, serves as chairman of the panel.

The board's members were appointed by the leadership of the U.S. House and Senate as well as the Labor Advisory Committee for Trade Negotiations and Trade Policy, which Conway chairs.

While noting significant progress on labor law reform in Mexico, the board's report found that "many of the changes promised to improve the lives of workers, in terms of union democracy, freedom of association and collective bargaining, remain to be implemented." The board also determined that Mexico's system of employer-controlled "protection unions" remains intact.

The board recommended that the United States carefully monitor Mexico's actions to end violence against workers' rights advocates, increase transparency and focus enforcement of priority sectors, which include manufacturing and mining.

The U.S. government also should accelerate the delivery of aid to strengthen Mexican workers' ability to exercise their rights to organize and bargain under the new law, the board found.



USW URGES CONTINUATION OF STEEL TARIFFS

The USW joined four domestic steel industry groups in January to urge the Biden administration to preserve steel tariffs and quotas put in place in 2018 to protect national security.

The USW co-signed a letter to the new president, along with the American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI), Steel Manufacturers Association (SMA), the Committee on Pipe and Tube Imports (CPTI) and the American Institute of Steel Construction (AISC), that stated that the U.S. steel industry remains vulnerable and that "continuation of the [steel] tariffs and quotas is essential to ensuring the viability of the domestic steel industry in the face of this massive and growing excess steel capacity."

"Removing or weakening of these measures before major steel producing countries eliminate their overcapacity – and the subsidies and other trade-distorting policies that have fueled the steel crisis – will only invite a new surge in imports with devastating effects to domestic steel producers and their workers," the group said in its letter to Biden.

The letter stated that steel overcapacity was expected to grow to 700 million metric tons in 2020 – eight times the total steel output of the United States last year. China, Vietnam and Turkey, among others, continue to increase their steel production even as the pandemic has caused demand for steel to drop around the world. Korea, Russia, Ukraine, Indonesia and others continue to export large shares of their steel production to other markets.

The U.S. Commerce Department imposed tariffs of 25 percent on steel imports and 10 percent on aluminum imports in March 2018 under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, which allows for the administration to take such measures to protect U.S. national security interests.

Industry data from the AISI showed that the tariffs were successful in reducing the market share for imported steel in the United States from 30 percent to 18 percent over the past three years.

USW BACKS THERMAL PAPER TRADE PETITIONS

The USW filed letters with the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) and the International Trade Commission (ITC) last fall in support of petitions that call for antidumping duties on unfairly traded thermal paper imports from four countries.

The petitions, filed by Domtar and Appvion, call for antidumping duties to be imposed on imports from Germany, Japan, Korea and Spain.

“Domestic papermaking supports good, family-sustaining jobs, and the workers in these operations take a great deal of pride in what they do,” said USW International Vice President Leeann Foster, who oversees bargaining in the union’s paper sector. “They deserve to compete on a level playing field.”

Thermal paper is coated with a chemical mixture that causes a reaction and forms images when the paper is exposed to heat. The product is used to print bank, credit card, restaurant and retail receipts as well as to produce labels and tags.

The USW represents workers who make thermal paper in Appleton, Wis., Ware, Mass., and West Carrollton, Ohio.

“We cannot allow dumped thermal paper to undermine our domestic industry or the communities that rely on these jobs,” Foster said.

The DOC and the ITC will investigate the dumping claims in the petitions. If the ITC finds that there is a reasonable indication that the imports are injuring the U.S. thermal paper industry, the DOC will then determine preliminary margins for antidumping duties.

The DOC is scheduled to make a preliminary determination on March 16.

Dumping occurs when a company exports a product at a price below its domestic market value or below its actual production cost in order to gain market share against overseas competition.

ITC MAINTAINS DUTIES ON CHINESE TIRES

The U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) decided on Jan. 26 to maintain anti-dumping (AD) and countervailing duty (CVD) orders on certain passenger vehicle and light truck (PVLTV) tires imported from China.

The USW hailed the decision, which came as a result of a five-year ITC “sunset review.” International President Tom Conway said the duties are essential to protecting U.S. workers from the devastating effects of unfair trade.

“For too long, domestic tire makers have been forced to grapple Chinese efforts to undercut their products and undermine their jobs,” said Conway. “It’s essential that we continue holding bad actors to account, even as we take strategic, long-term steps to fix our broken trade system.”

The USW successfully filed the original AD and CVD petitions on Chinese PVLTV tires in 2015. The U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) would have been required to revoke the original duties if the DOC and ITC had not determined that the domestic tire industry would be “materially injured” as a result.

“As our country seeks to regain its economic footing in the wake of the deadly Covid-19 pandemic, it’s more important now than ever that American companies and workers can compete on a level playing field,” said Kevin Johnsen, who chairs the USW’s Rubber and Plastics Industry Conference. “These orders will help ensure they can focus on what they do best: making tires.”

The USW is the largest North American union in tire manufacturing, representing workers at the following U.S. PVLTV tire plants: Cooper Tire’s plants in Findlay, Ohio and Texarkana, Ark.; Goodyear’s plants in Fayetteville, N.C., and Topeka, Kan.; Michelin’s plants in Fort Wayne, Ind., and Tuscaloosa, Ala.; Sumitomo’s plant in Tonawanda, N.Y.; and Yokohama’s plant in Salem, Va.



USW SEEKS ACTION ON VIETNAM CURRENCY MANIPULATION

The USW presented testimony last December in a case that could result in trade sanctions on imports from Vietnam similar to those imposed on Chinese-made products in 2018.

The Trump administration imposed tariffs on Chinese products, with some exclusions, under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974. That provision allows the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) to investigate the practices of foreign trading partners, a process that the USTR initiated last fall into Vietnam’s currency manipulation practices.

USW Legislative Director Roy Houseman joined industry leaders, trade policy experts and others in testifying Dec. 29 as part of the USTR office’s investigation into Vietnam’s currency manipulation practices.

Foreign governments often try to depress the value of their currency to make their own exports less expensive in overseas markets and to make other nation’s imports into their markets more expensive. The practice harms U.S. manufacturing and kills good-paying USW jobs, Houseman said in his testimony.

“That’s why the USW strongly supports this 301 currency investigation and urges timely action,” Houseman said.

Vietnam’s unfair practices have helped to balloon the U.S. trade deficit with the country, he said.

“The IMF, World Bank and U.S. Treasury Department have all concluded that Vietnam’s currency undervaluation has contributed to the country’s large and growing trade surplus, and that the surplus is not warranted by market fundamentals,” Houseman said. “It is the union’s belief that these currency interventions by Vietnam have negatively impacted American jobs.”

The USTR’s Vietnam investigation followed a rule change in February 2020 under which the Department of Commerce (DOC) allowed for the imposition of duties on imports from countries found guilty of devaluing their currencies.



KUMHO WORKERS Look Forward to First Contract

USW members at Kumho Tire in Macon, Ga., are preparing to negotiate their first contract with the company after a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) official in January certified the workers' organizing victory and dismissed the company's remaining objections.

The January ruling from the board's acting Region 10 director followed a November decision from NLRB hearing officer Brenna C. Schertz that discredited the company's objections to the workers' vote, determining that one company witness fabricated testimony and that Kumho presented "nonsensical" evidence and made allegations that were "wholly without merit."

Next Steps

The next step now is for members to sit down and bargain a first contract with the company after overcoming years of Kumho's oppressive anti-union tactics. Even after the result of the workers' vote was clear, the company continued to file objections

in an effort to overturn the election.

The NLRB regional director dismissed some of those objections months ago, and Schertz recommended overruling the remaining objections and certifying the workers' election.

"Since the start of the organizing campaign, Kumho has employed every underhanded tactic possible to thwart the election, break the will of its workers and silence them," said District 9 Director Daniel Flippo, who represents Georgia and six other southern states as well as the U.S. Virgin Islands.

"It's time for the company to face facts," he said. "Workers voted to unionize so they could obtain decent wages and safe working conditions. Kumho must now come to the negotiating table and bargain in good faith for the fair contract their workers earned."

A Struggle Ahead

James Golden, a belt-cutter operator who has worked at the Kumho factory for two years, said that while he knows that the road ahead for the

work force in Macon may not be easy, he hopes that the worst is behind them.

"It's going to be a struggle," Golden said of bargaining the first contract with the company. "We can see the finish line, but I think the process is going to be grueling. But once the company realizes that the union is here and is not going away, then we can get down to business."

Golden said he hopes the workers' first contract raises wages at the facility while improving workplace safety and morale.

"Hopefully we can come to an agreement and both sides can get what they want out of this and move on," he said.

Relentless Bullying

It's been a long, difficult road for the Kumho workers to get to this point. In 2017, they narrowly lost in their first organizing attempt after the company waged a vicious union-busting campaign that included threats against its own workers.

Kumho's behavior during the 2017 campaign was so egregious



that Administrative Law Judge Arthur J. Amchan not only ordered a new election but took the extraordinary step of ordering the company to read workers a list of its numerous labor law violations.

Kumho's violations included illegally interrogating employees, threatening to fire union supporters, threatening plant closure, and creating an impression of surveillance.

In one particularly egregious case, Kumho tried to make an example of quality control worker Victoria Whipple, who was pregnant and working overtime to make extra money. As the election was wrapping up in September 2019, managers pulled Whipple off the plant floor and suspended her indefinitely without pay in retaliation for her support of the union. She was later reinstated.

"The workers' solidarity in the face of extreme intimidation shows just how urgently they need the workplace protections that only a union can provide," said Flippo. "Their victory over an abusive, greedy company should inspire other workers who want to end the mistreatment they face from their own employers."

'A Better Quality of Life'

Golden said that even after the workers' election victory, there is still some hostility from management at the

plant. He believes that once a contract is in place, it can be a step forward for both the workers and the company.

"I hope when we get a contract, it will improve quality in terms of the workplace environment in addition to improving the quality of the products we make," Golden said.

Flippo said that he hopes the Kumho victory, especially in the face of long odds and persistent, well-funded opposition, provides inspiration for other workers to organize.

"In forming a union and holding Kumho to account," he said, "these workers will help set stronger pay and workplace standards for the whole industry."

PRO Act

The Kumho case is a perfect example of why American workers need stronger labor protections, including measures like the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, which would streamline union organizing and impose more severe penalties against bad actors like Kumho, said International President Tom Conway.

"The hard-working members in Macon should be proud of this victory, but it should never have taken this long or been this hard," said Conway.

"The reason companies like Kumho think they can get away with busting unions is because so many have done so in the past. It's time for the bullying and harassment of workers to stop. The right to organize must be protected."

Golden said that he hopes that once the tension of Kumho's union-busting campaign fades and a contract is in place, the workers at the facility can get back to doing what they do best — making quality tires.

"The people here like what they do, and they like the people they work with," Golden said. "We're not just here to work and go home."

"We're here to build a better quality of life."





UNITED STEELWORKERS
USW

**NEXT
GEN**



NEXT GEN KEEPS MOVING FORWARD

YOUNG WORKER PROGRAM ENTERS SECOND DECADE WITH MOMENTUM

A decade after Steelworkers voted to formally establish the union's Next Generation program at the 2011 USW convention, the program continues to inspire hundreds of new leaders each year to drive education, networking, community service and mobilization efforts in local unions across North America.

"I look at it like we're bridging the gap," said Dustin Dryer, a member of Local 33 in Hagerstown, Md., for nearly seven years and a Next Generation coordinator for District 8. "We're getting the newer people to step up and carry that torch that the older folks have burned for us."

For Dryer, that has meant serving his local as recording secretary and as a member of the grievance committee, organizing training and activism opportunities for members across the four states in his district, and "volunteering for anything and everything" that the union might need him to do.

Last November, Dryer helped District 8 put together a first-of-its-kind online Next Gen training program, introducing several dozen young members to what the program is about. He's

already begun planning another session for this coming April.

"We're all virtual now, so we had some growing pains," Dryer said. "But we've had a lot of help."

'Building the Bench'

Originally established with the idea that it would be for members who were 35 and younger, the Next Gen program is in fact open to both the young and the young at heart, as long as they are newcomers to the labor movement.

International President Tom Conway took office in the summer of 2019 with a commitment to, as he said, "build the bench" and train younger leaders to guide the union into the future.

"We do this work not only for ourselves and our co-workers, but to make sure that our children and our grandchildren have a better life than we had," Conway said. "That's why Next Gen is so important – we need to pave the way so that when it's time for this generation to step aside, there is a seamless transition to the future."

One of those leaders, Tiffany McKee, has already started along that path. She recently joined the District 1 staff after spending eight years as a tire worker and member of Local 200L in St. Marys, Ohio.

McKee said Ohio's District 1 members have always been active, but that she was encouraged by the response to a

week-long, in-person Next Gen training program, prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, in which more members wanted to participate than the USW could handle.

"We had to turn people away because there was so much interest," she said. "Over the past year, we have really built the program up in the district."

District 1 has focused on training members on how to know their rights on the job, how to get involved in their local through committees, and how to understand their union contract, bylaws and constitution.

Making a Difference

Like others in the USW, District 1 Next Gen participants take part in more than educational programs. They network with each other at social events so they can share ideas and best practices, and they volunteer regularly to make a difference in their communities.

At the USW's inaugural Next Gen conference in November 2019 in Pittsburgh, members spent a day volunteering at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Pittsburgh.

McKee said members in District 1 this winter collected items – such as socks, hats, gloves, food and first-aid supplies – to build survival kits they could give to homeless people in the urban centers of Cincinnati, Columbus and Cleveland.

Another of McKee's favorite Next Gen initiatives involved an impromptu decision by members of Local 14200 at Solvay's Marietta, Ohio, plant. When they learned that a local organization that was putting together a prom for children with special needs might have to cancel the event because they were short on funds, the Next Gen members volunteered to set up and take down the party hall themselves.

It was, McKee said, exactly the type of effort that makes members proud to call themselves Steelworkers and makes others want to get involved in the union.

"That is why we have the Next Gen program," she said, "for days like that."

'A Lot of History'

For Dryer, 34, getting involved was as simple as showing up to a monthly local union meeting and talking to other members about how he could help.

He was new to the USW, but not to the labor movement. Workers in his family have been union members for five generations, Dryer said. Passing knowledge from one generation to another makes the union stronger for all members, he said.

"This is a first for me, but I've been around it," he said. "My dad has been a mentor. He's old school. There's a lot we can learn from the older generation. There's a lot of history, a lot of pride there."

History is part of what inspired Jordan Rego, of Local 5296 in Ontario, to get involved in the District 6 Next Gen program.

Rego's father was a union member, and Rego, a security officer, got his USW card six years ago.

Like Dryer, Rego found that becoming active in his local was as simple as showing up.

"Come to the meetings and it goes from there," Rego said in encouraging others to step forward as part of the Next Gen program.

He said his district has held a series of charitable events recently, including a T-shirt fundraiser for "Movember," an annual mustache- and beard-grow-

ing event held throughout the month of November to promote men's health awareness.

The district also launched a series of webinars, the first of which was a partnership with the Canadian Labour International Film Festival to hold a screening and discussion of the documentary "Company Town" about the shocking closure of the General Motors plant in Oshawa, Ont., in 2018.

As a result of worker mobilization across Canada, GM announced last November that, pending a union contract, it would begin producing vehicles at the plant again.

Another event included a panel discussion of how the COVID-19 pandemic was disproportionately affecting young workers.

Local Union Committees

In District 12, which includes 11 western U.S. states, coordinator Seth Clark has been busy working with members to set up programs in local unions that haven't yet started Next Gen committees.

"Much like the other USW districts, the COVID-19 pandemic has unfortunately put a lot of this on hold," Clark said. "But we're busy working on ideas for 2021."

While the continued spread of the coronavirus delayed a number of the union's in-person activities, many Next Gen committees have still been working to keep their union siblings safe throughout the pandemic.

Brian Callow, vice president of Local 318 in Edison, N.J., said that last summer, District 4 Next Gen members saw that many front-line workers in their areas still lacked adequate supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) to shield them from the virus.

The district's Next Gen members launched a T-shirt drive that raised nearly \$30,000 that the group used to purchase more than 700 reusable gowns for nurses in the district.

"It was union workers keeping the country running," Callow said.



TEXT NEXTGEN

TO

47486

Join the USW's Next Gen!

If you are new to the union and would like to get involved, the Next Gen program is one of many ways you can do so. If your local union has a Next Generation committee, go to a meeting and get involved!

If your local does not have a Next Gen committee, you can help get one started. Text NEXTGEN to 47486 (32323 in Canada) to join, and visit www.usw.org/nextgen for more information, materials that you can download, and contact information for the coordinators in each USW district.



NEWS BRIEFS

NLRB to Prosecute Tech Firm over Unfair Labor Practices

Region 6 of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) issued a consolidated complaint in October against HCL America Inc., whose employees work side-by-side with those at Google's Pittsburgh offices, over its unlawful actions at and away from the bargaining table.

In the complaint, the NLRB outlined HCL's failure to bargain in good faith with the unions representing its employees, including failing to provide information needed for bargaining and unilaterally implementing changes to working conditions.

"Most egregiously, HCL has been eroding its Pittsburgh workforce by brazenly moving work done here to its facility in Krakow, Poland, to retaliate against workers for exercising their right to choose union representation," said Josh Borden, who serves on the union's negotiating committee. "Management would rather break the law than negotiate in good faith for a fair contract."

"We will continue efforts to engage HCL management at the bargaining table in good faith," said Ben Gwin, also a member of the union's committee. "We will continue to hold the company accountable for the way it treats workers and file additional charges if necessary."

Roughly 90 members of the Pittsburgh Association of Technical Professionals voted in favor of representation with the USW about one year ago, though the company has employed a vigorous anti-union campaign throughout the process.

The complaint also alleges that this campaign violated employees' rights to be free of intimidation and coercion.

The NLRB scheduled a hearing for Feb. 9, when it will prosecute the case against HCL for the company's violations of federal labor laws.

USW Mourns Loss of Former District 6 Director

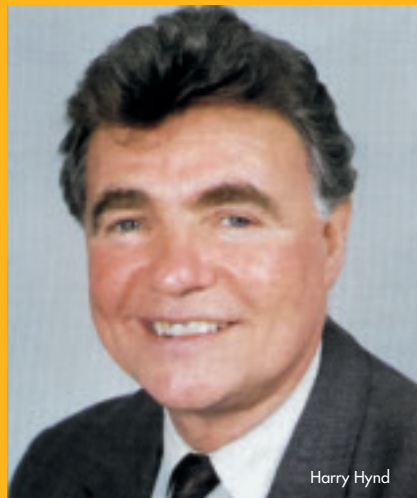
Former District 6 Director Harry Hynd passed away on Dec. 29 in Hamilton, Ontario, with his beloved wife Margaret at his side. Hynd was 87 and had been struggling with his health for many years.

Hynd's union career began in 1951 in the coal mines of Scotland, where he was a steward in the National Union of Mineworkers.

He immigrated to Canada in 1957. In 1958 he was hired at Stelco in Hamilton, where he became an active member of Local 1005 as plant grievance chairperson.

In 1971, he joined the USW staff, where he served members in Hamilton, the Niagara Peninsula and Toronto.

Hynd served as assistant to District 6 Director Leo W. Gerard and became district director in 1991 when Gerard left that post to become Canadian National Director. Hynd served as director until he retired in 2002. In retirement, Hynd was an activist in the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees.



Harry Hynd

Humanity Fund Aids Food Banks

The Steelworkers Humanity Fund last year contributed more than \$226,000 to 117 food banks across Canada.

As the country dealt with the health and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, an increasing number of working families were facing food insecurity. For many, the pandemic only worsened an already difficult economic situation as it exacerbated existing inequalities, and created a number of new food bank users.

"Many Steelworkers, their families and entire communities have been affected by the pandemic. In that context, our members who are still at work know about the importance of giving back," said Canadian National Director Ken Neumann, president of the fund. "This is why this year's Steelworkers Humanity Fund donation to food banks and other organizations across Canada is all the more important."

Founded in 1985, the Steelworkers Humanity Fund is a registered charitable organization that focuses primarily on development projects and emergency aid in developing countries, but also supports Canadian communities.

In addition to the food bank contributions, the fund contributed \$10,000 last fall to help alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia's Tigray region.

Song Pays Tribute to Late Local President

Nate Venturelli is welder for Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO), a member of Local 12775 in Porter, Ind., and a touring country artist. He recently released a song called "Union Man" that pays tribute to his late grandfather and former Local 1053 president Larry Venturelli.

Venturelli passed away in 1992 at the age of 54 from a heart attack. Those who knew him remembered him as a kind, compassionate person, including International Vice President Dave McCall who worked closely with Venturelli.

"Besides being a dedicated and effective union representative, Larry was also a community activist and supporter of the military personnel that were in harm's way," said McCall.

The inspiration for Venturelli's song "Union Man" came to him one day as he was looking at a photo of his grandfather and plucking out riffs on his guitar.

"My grandfather and I were part of the same international union, so it was relevant and influential," Venturelli said about his inspiration for writing the song. "Without the union, you don't have a brotherhood and people looking out for you."

Listen to Nate Venturelli's song "Union Man" on Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube and other music streaming sites.



Roxanne Brown

VP Brown Joins NED

The Board of Directors of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in January elected International Vice President Roxanne Brown as a member.

The NED is an independent, nonprofit foundation dedicated to the growth and strengthening of democratic institutions around the world. The NED makes grants to support the projects of non-governmental groups abroad, including labor unions, who are working for democratic goals in more than 90 countries.

“Vice President Brown’s election to this position of trust reflects the USW’s commitment to democratic accountability in the global economy,” said International President Tom Conway. “Her expertise in global economic issues and the legislative process will help ensure that the NED continues to support the democratic aspirations of workers around the world.”

Created jointly by Republicans and Democrats, the NED is governed by a board balanced between both parties and enjoys congressional support across the political spectrum.

The board thanked International Vice President Fred Redmond, who stepped down after six years of membership.

Former UPIU President Wayne Glenn Dies at 97

Retired United Paperworkers International (UPIU) President Wayne E. Glenn passed away Jan. 3 after a long illness. He was 97.

Glenn dedicated his life to the labor movement and workers’ rights beginning with his experience working in a logging camp at a young age. After returning from service in the Navy after World War II, he started working at the International Paper mill in Camden, Ark., and became active in the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers Local 355. The international union later appointed him as a representative, and in 1965 at the union’s convention, members elected him a regional vice president.

Active in the Arkansas State AFL-CIO, he served in nearly every office, culminating with his election as president of the state federation. It was Glenn who convinced Bill Clinton to run for Arkansas governor again after the future president briefly left politics following his gubernatorial re-election loss in 1980.

After the Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers merged with the United Papermakers and Paperworkers union in 1972 to form the UPIU, Glenn continued his union activism, and members elected him UPIU president in 1978. They kept electing him international president until he retired in 1996 after 50 years of union activism.

“In the labor movement, in particular, we recognize that everything we achieve is possible because of the hard work, dedication and sacrifices made by those who came before us,” said International President Tom Conway. “We are proud to honor Wayne Glenn’s legacy by continuing to fight for all workers.”



Wayne Glenn

ArcelorMittal Sells U.S. Assets to Cliffs

Cleveland-Cliffs Inc. announced in December that it had completed its purchase of the steelmaking assets of ArcelorMittal USA and its subsidiaries, creating the largest flat-rolled steel producer in North America.

International President Tom Conway said that the USW’s contracts contain strong successorship language and that the \$1.4 billion acquisition should not change the USW’s relationship with Cliffs and Lourenco Goncalves, the company’s president and CEO.

“We are internally reviewing the potential impact on operations and have spoken with senior management at Cliffs regarding the development,” Conway said. “The assets changing hands in the deal are quality, competitive steelmaking facilities staffed by knowledgeable Steelworkers.

“The USW has had a good working relationship with Goncalves and Cliffs, and we expect that will continue,” Conway said.

The ArcelorMittal deal comes about a year after Cliffs’ \$1.1 billion purchase of AK Steel.

“Our new footprint expands our technological capability and enhances our operational flexibility,” Goncalves said. The deal, he said, elevates the company to a “prominent role as a major player in supporting American manufacturing, American future investments in infrastructure, and the prosperity of the American people through good paying middle-class jobs.”

NEWS BRIEFS

Atomic Council Meets Virtually

While COVID-19 cases surged across the U.S., International Vice President Roxanne Brown convened a virtual USW Atomic Energy Workers Council (AEWC) meeting on Nov. 19 to help assess atomic sites' coronavirus protocols.

COVID-19 policies vary contractor to contractor and state to state, but the biggest issue concerned workers getting paid differently under different protocols. For example, at some sites, if someone is healthy, but they were exposed to a person who is sick with or tested positive for COVID-19, they are sent home to quarantine with full pay.

But, if a worker gets sick with coronavirus, they quarantine and go on sickness and accident pay, which is not full pay. Such a policy encourages some workers to not get tested for COVID-19 and to go to work even if they feel ill.

Another scenario regarding COVID-19 protocols and pay concerns travel policies. For instance, if a worker travels to a place with a high COVID-19 positivity rate, they have to self-isolate for 14 days at home without pay or use additional personal leave time. This policy could be an incentive for workers not to disclose where they spent their vacations and what they did.

Brown requested that every atomic local send to her their site's COVID-19 protocols so she can work with the council's attorney and USW policy analysts in devising best practice guidelines that might help locals in their discussions with contractors.

NLRB Issues Third Complaint against ASARCO

Region 28 of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) issued a third consolidated complaint against ASARCO in January for the company's multiple unfair labor practices (ULPs), which include bad faith bargaining, unilaterally changing working conditions and failing to reinstate workers returning from the ULP strike.

The third consolidated complaint includes illegal actions by the company at its Amarillo copper refinery. The NLRB set a new hearing date to prosecute its case against ASARCO on June 29.

About 2,000 members of eight international unions launched the ULP strike at five ASARCO copper mining and processing facilities in Arizona and Texas in October 2019. ASARCO is a subsidiary of the multi-billion-dollar Mexico-based mining conglomerate Grupo Mexico.

Members decided last July to end the strike and make an unconditional offer to return to work. Under current NLRB case authority, when ULP strikers make such an offer, the company is required to return them to their pre-strike positions or similar jobs.

Previously, the NLRB outlined in detail management's failure to bargain in good faith with the unions representing its employees, including failing to provide information needed for bargaining,



failing to have decision makers at the table, changing an existing bonus program to discriminate against union representatives, unlawful surveillance and unilaterally declaring an impasse and implementing changes to working conditions in December 2019.

Locals Reach Agreements with Dow-DuPont

Several USW locals within the Dow-DuPont North American Labor Council (DNALC) negotiated and ratified deals this past fall.

Local 10-88G at Dow's Bristol, Pa., plant had a contract set to expire Oct. 24, 2020, but the local negotiated a one-year extension that included two \$750 lump sum payments.

President Walter Epp said the local negotiated the extension to avoid in-person bargaining and wait until the COVID-19 recession subsided.

DuPont approached its Midland, Mich., unit, Local 2-12075-24, about negotiating a one-year extension for the unit's contract that will expire this February.

"We worked with the DuPont union committee, and it was a good move for everybody," said Local 2-12075 President Kent Holsing.

The one-year extension for Local 2-12075-24 included a 2.1 percent wage increase.

The Local 2-12075-25 bargaining committee at Corteva's Midland, Mich., plant reached a three-year agreement for the 262-member unit, and the members ratified it the week of Oct. 12.

Alabama Members End Strike, Ratify Constellium Contract

Members of Local 200 voted in January to ratify a new, five-year collective bargaining agreement to end their unfair labor practice strike against Constellium at its Muscle Shoals, Ala., production facility formerly owned by Wise Alloys and Reynolds.

About 400 members of Local 200 began returning to work on Jan. 12 after about a one-month work stoppage.

International solidarity helped bring a swift end to the strike when the Metalworkers' Federation of France (FTM-CGT) announced its full support for the Muscle Shoals workers and promised to confront management on their behalf. The FTM-CGT, a USW partner in the global labor federation IndustriALL, represents workers at Constellium manufacturing sites in France, where the company is headquartered.

District 9 Director Daniel Flippo praised the union membership and bargaining committee for standing together in unity to defend longstanding seniority provisions and achieve a fair contract.

"Together, we took a stand on Constellium's attack on our members' seniority rights," Flippo said. "Our solidarity provided the protection that was necessary, and we look forward to working with this strong and vibrant, engaged membership in the future."

The unfair labor practice strike began on Dec. 15 after months of negotiations with management failed and despite extending the previous contract with Constellium for more than a month past its Nov. 1, 2020, expiration.

Chemical Councils Strategize Virtually

International Secretary-Treasurer John Shinn convened the 3M, Evonik and Solvay councils for virtual meetings in December and January to discuss bargaining strategies and learn how the locals are coping with the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Our union is in good shape,” said Shinn, who oversees the USW’s chemical sector. “Most of our members are deemed essential and have worked throughout the pandemic. This is especially true in the chemical sector.”

Negotiations are ongoing for contracts at 3M plants in Cottage Grove, Minn., and Tonawanda, N.Y., as well as for Solvay’s facility in Chicago Heights, Ill.

Bargaining started in January and February for contracts at Evonik’s Weston, Mich., and Calvert City, Ky., locations and for Solvay’s Kalamazoo, Mich., facility.

Council members agreed to stay in contact with each other and engage in solidarity actions if needed.

USW Members Get Virtual Education

The USW continued the vital work of training members with a jam-packed two-day education conference in November, holding the event virtually in the face of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

The conference, which took place Nov. 17 and Nov. 18, included more than 800 members of more than 230 local unions, with about one-third of the participants attending for the first time.

John Seckrettar, president of Local 318 in New Jersey, said that the conference was productive, particularly given the trying circumstances workers have faced over the past year.

Like traditional USW education conferences, the 2020 event included dozens of training sessions and discussions on a range of topics including local union management, health and safety, contract language, bargaining, civil rights, communications, grievance and arbitration procedures and political activism, among others.

What was missing this time was the face-to-face interaction and networking that members have come to take for granted, something that the 2020 participants attempted to replicate with virtual “socials” and district meet-ups held after business hours.

“Having the opportunity to network with other members and staff is always welcome,” said Jim Rodgers of Local 550 in Paducah, Ky.

Rodgers said he took classes on labor history and managing local union finances, a subject that included pieces on how to effectively use bookkeeping software.

While the lack of in-person instruction may have been an obstacle to some activities, Rodgers said the lack of travel expenses might have made the 2020 conference more affordable for smaller locals than an in-person event would have been.

“I’m thankful the conference was offered and that my local was able to participate,” he said.



NOTICE TO ALL EMPLOYEES COVERED BY A UNION SECURITY CLAUSE

All USW represented employees covered by a union security clause have the right, under *NLRB v. General Motors*, 373 U.S. 734 (1963), to be and remain a nonmember subject only to the duty to pay the equivalent of union initiation fees and periodic dues. Further, only such non-member employees have the right, under *Communications Workers v. Beck*, 487 U.S. 735 (1988), to limit payment of union-security dues and initiation fees to certain moneys spent on activities germane to a union’s role as collective bargaining representative. This latter statutory right is embodied in the USW’s Nonmember Objection Procedure.

The Procedure is available to any USW represented employee who is subject to a union security clause but who is a non-member and who objects to his or her union security fees being expended on nonrepresentational activities. Paragraph 1 of the Procedure states:

“1. Any individual, who is not a member of the United Steelworkers and who is

required as a condition of employment to pay dues to the United Steelworkers pursuant to a union security arrangement but objects to supporting ... political or ideological expenditures by the United Steelworkers which are not necessarily or reasonably incurred for the purpose of performing the duties of an exclusive collective bargaining representative shall have the right upon perfecting a notice of objection to obtain an advance reduction of a portion of such individual’s dues obligation commensurate with expenditures unrelated to collective bargaining as required by law.”

An eligible employee who objects to the USW expending monies for nonrepresentational activities such as charitable or political activities may choose to perfect a notice of objection under Paragraph 2 of the Procedure, which states:

“2. To perfect a notice of objection, the individual must send an individually signed notice to the International Secretary-Treasurer during the first thirty days following either the individual’s initial date of hire into the USW represented unit or an anniversary date of such hiring; provided, however, that if the individual lacked knowledge of this Procedure, the individual

shall have a 30 day period commencing on the date the individual became aware of the Procedure to perfect a notice of objection; and, provided, further, that a member who resigns membership shall have the opportunity to object within the 30 day period following resignation.”

Objectors are not USW members and have no right to vote in union elections or to be a candidate, no right to participate in union meetings or activities, and no right to vote on contract ratification.

Upon perfecting properly a notice of objection, the objector is entitled to an advance reduction of a portion of his or her union security obligation commensurate with expenditures unrelated to collective bargaining, as required by law. International Secretary-Treasurer John E. Shinn has determined, based upon expenditures for the calendar year 2019 that the reduction percentage under the Procedure is 10.64% (19.09% if organizing expenditures were to be included).

There are court decisions holding that organizing activities are non-representational activities. The USW does not agree with those rulings. However, without intending to waive its position that its organizing expenditures are not subject to

objection and without intending to waive its right to assert its position if there is a challenge to the reduction percentage, the USW has deemed it expedient to apply the 19.09% figure to most current and future objectors. Therefore, an objector will be charged 80.91% of the regular dues amount. Each objector will be given a detailed breakdown between representational and non-representational activities with a report by an independent auditor. The Procedure contains an appeals system under which challenges to the reduction percentage determination must be filed within 30 days of the Notice of Determination and are to be decided by an impartial arbitrator appointed by the American Arbitration Association. Disputed amounts are escrowed pending appeal. While a notice must be individually signed and timely mailed, there is no form for a notice. Processing is faster, however, when the notice contains the objector’s name, address, local union number, and employer.

“1 Any right of a resignee to pay a reduced amount under this Procedure may or may not be superceded by the resignee’s check-off authorization.”

Have You Moved?

Notify your local union financial secretary, or clip out this form with your old address label and send your new address to:

USW Membership Department,
60 Blvd. of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Name _____

New Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

You may also email the information to membership@usw.org



Matthew Avery



John DeHan



Justin Donley



OHIO
REFINERY'S
FUTURE IS ON THE LINE
THE TOLEDO REFINING CO. IS HOME TO MORE THAN 300 MEMBERS OF
LOCAL 912, WHO HAVE SUPPORTED THEIR COMMUNITY FOR GENERATIONS.
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