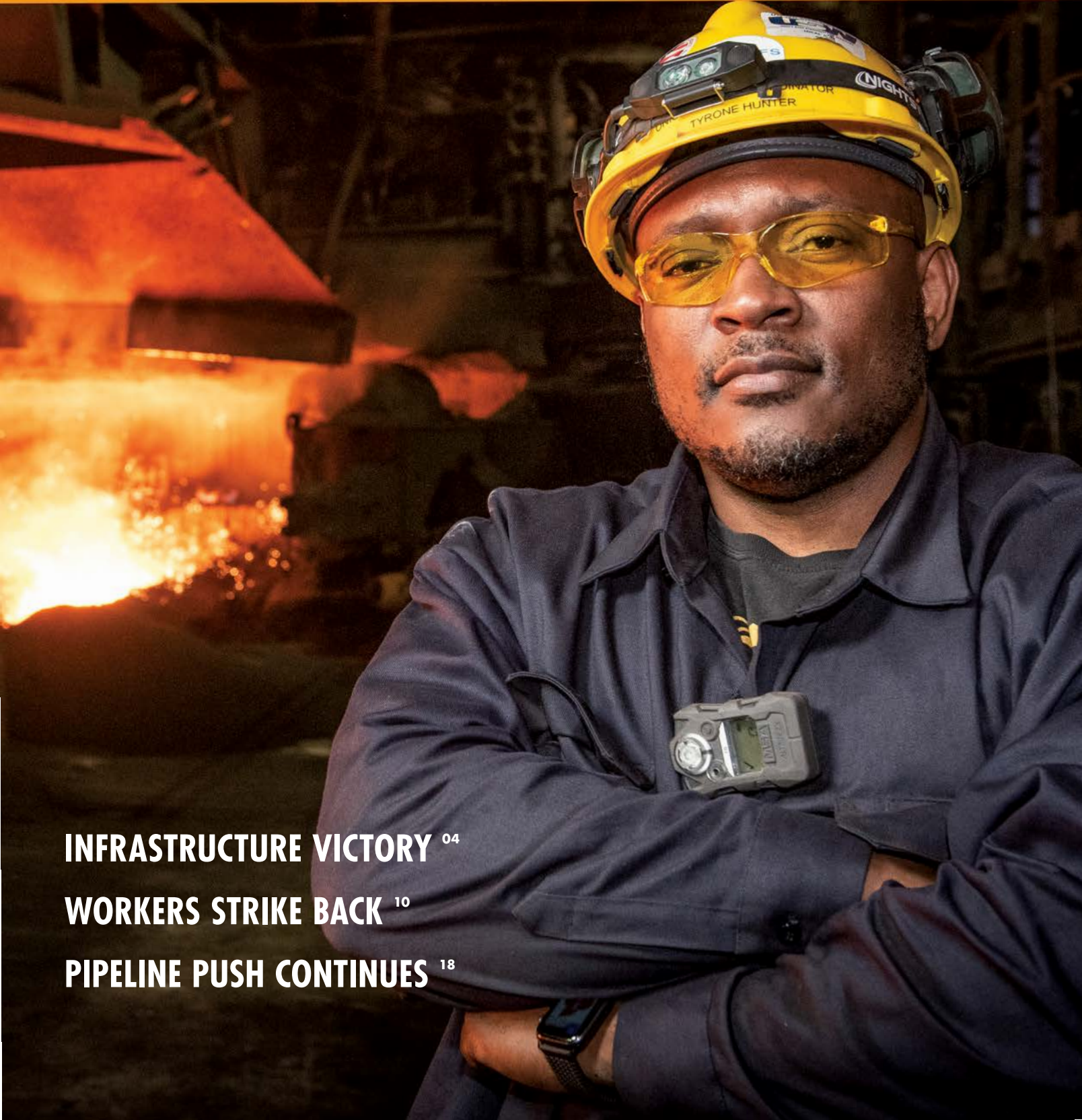


USW@Work

A Publication of the United Steelworkers

A Powerful Voice for Workers



INFRASTRUCTURE VICTORY ⁰⁴

WORKERS STRIKE BACK ¹⁰

PIPELINE PUSH CONTINUES ¹⁸

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"WE WILL FIGHT FOR OUR MEMBERS' JOBS. JUST AS WE WILL HAPPILY WORK WITH THOSE AMONG OUR POLITICAL LEADERS WHO CONSISTENTLY FIGHT ON THE SIDE OF WORKING AMERICANS, WE WILL HOLD THOSE ON THE OTHER SIDE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR EFFORTS TO HARM OUR MANUFACTURING SECTOR."

INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT TOM CONWAY, IN A LETTER TO MEMBERS OF THE U.S. SENATE AND U.S. HOUSE, JAN. 10, 2022

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USW@Work (ISSN 1931-6658) is published four times a year by the United Steelworkers AFL-CIO•CLC 60 Blvd. of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222. Subscriptions to non-members: \$12 for one year; \$20 for two years. Periodicals postage paid at Pittsburgh, PA and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: USW@Work, USW Membership Department, 60 Blvd. of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222

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USW@WORK
Volume 17/01
Winter 2022



A Great Victory at Pitt

Congratulations to the USW for leading the drive to organize the University of Pittsburgh faculty. This was music to my ears. A friend of mine and I began an early organizing drive, at the Johnstown campus, in the 1970s.

The labor board ruled that we couldn't have a union just at a single campus. So, we had to wait for the overall faculty to begin organizing. They did, but we lost election after election.

I also helped to organize the maintenance and custodial workers at the Johnstown campus. I left Pitt 20 years ago, but the university's callous and illegal union-busting behavior still rankles. (I also taught Steelworkers in Johnstown through a program at Penn State for many years.)

Everyone has their work cut out for them. Pitt will battle you at every turn, as I am sure you are aware. Still, let's relish this great victory.

Michael Yates, Professor emeritus and author of "Why Unions Matter" and "Can the Working Class Change the World?"

NAFTA Hurt Workers

I was a union worker for 27 years. I was a member of Local 63 at Northwestern Steel and Wire in Sterling, Ill.

In 2001, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) put the company out of business.

A lot of workers like me were forgotten. Now that we have a Democrat in the White House and a Democratic Congress, we should look into compensating the workers who lost their jobs because of NAFTA.

*Ron Hulteen
Sterling, Ill.*

Support 'Build Back Better'

My senator, West Virginia's Joe Manchin, said late last year he would oppose the Build Back Better Act passed by the U.S. House. He says he's not interested in politics, only the well-being of his constituents.

The debt, inflation and the economic burden on families seem to be his reasons for opposing this bill, but those are the exact reasons why he should support it.

The bill's cost is \$1.75 trillion – many see this as a high price, but compared to the trillions spent on COVID relief, or the \$2 trillion price tag of the big-business tax cuts in 2017, this is business as usual in Washington.

We seem to talk more frequently about the budget and the debt than we do about helping workers and the poor. This bill would help workers by reducing medical costs, providing access to affordable child care, and making higher education possible for everyone. It would also cut housing costs by expanding rental assistance and increasing the housing supply.

USW members should also support this bill because it strengthens the rights of workers to engage in collective bargaining. This would create good-paying union jobs, the kind that support families, extended families and communities.

Sen. Manchin has already endorsed most of the measures in the bill, but when push comes to shove, he seems to put political aspirations and public scrutiny ahead of his constituency.

We currently have an opportunity to change the lives and the futures of millions of Americans, and we need to take it. If the Senate fails to pass this bill, maybe we can understand why. But we should not forget.

*Matt Bills
Local 499, St. Mary's, W.Va.*

Support Striking Miners

Southeast Chicago SOAR, Chapter 31-9, sent striking Warrior Met coal miners in Alabama a check for \$330 and raised \$520 for USW Local 1010's fundraising effort on their behalf.

We also sent links to our video about the Memorial Day Massacre of 1937, which was referenced in a letter in the Summer 2021 issue of *USW@Work*. You can find it on YouTube.

In December, we heard an appeal from John Hawkins, a former Warrior Met miner. As USW retirees, meeting in the former Republic Steel union hall right across the street from the site of the massacre, we want to encourage the coal miners, who have been on strike since April, and to share our history with them. Republic Steelworkers didn't give up, and they did win a union.

We urge any USW locals who would like to participate in this solidarity campaign to visit the mine workers' website: umwa.org/umwa2021strikefund.

The Warrior Met strike is about basic union rights and corporations putting profits over people. Warrior Met is making unrealistic demands and turning its back on promises it made to the workers. These workers need to win, and they need our help to do so.

*Bill Alexander, President
Theresa McCulley, Vice President
SOAR Chapter 31-9*

Help America's Seniors

President Biden's Build Back Better plan has a lot of pieces that will help the working people of this country. But, especially for retirees like me, it would be a huge help at a time when we need it most.

The bill, which the House passed last year, would reduce and contain the cost of prescription drugs, expand funding for home-based health care, and expand Medicare benefits. These are all things that everyone in Washington should support, and things that used to get a lot of support from both parties. That's why it is such a shame to me when I see so many Republicans are saying no to it.

There are some things that are more important than party politics. Taking care of our seniors should be one of them.

*Anthony Pascarella
President, SOAR Chapter 29-4
Brownstown, Mich.*

STAY CONNECTED

We welcome correspondence from USW members, retirees and their families. Letters should be short and to the point. We reserve the right to edit for length. You can reach us via email at editor@usw.org or by mail at 60 Blvd. of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222.



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Building **THE** Future

INFRASTRUCTURE
LAW WILL BENEFIT
USW MEMBERS IN
COUNTLESS WAYS

When President Joe Biden signed the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act into law on Nov. 15, it marked the biggest single U.S. investment in physical infrastructure since the creation of the interstate highway system in 1956.

The new law also opened the door to new opportunities for thousands of USW members to contribute to rebuilding the country.

“Our members stand ready to produce the essential building blocks of a modern infrastructure, as we begin making long-overdue upgrades to the nation’s roads, bridges, broadband, public transit, ports, power grids, and more,” International President Tom Conway said following the passage of the new law. “These investments will help American workers, including hundreds of thousands of USW members, not only by making their communities safer but by promoting widespread job growth and economic opportunity.”

Victory for Workers

The passage of the infrastructure act was a major victory for USW members, who had led the way for years in calling on leaders in Washington, D.C., to invest heavily in federal projects to grow the economy from the ground up and bring the nation fully into the 21st century.

President Biden made the bill one of the cornerstones of his agenda during his 2020 campaign for the White House, and the USW launched a campaign last year called “We Supply America,” that culminated with a 2,300-mile bus tour of local unions to call attention to

the vital contributions that USW members make each day to the nation’s infrastructure needs.

“Washington has for years promised this type of once-in-a-generation infrastructure investment, but until now has failed to deliver,” said International Vice President David McCall. “Thanks to the vision and leadership of President Biden, Congress has come together, finally, and passed a bipartisan bill that will directly benefit American workers and ensure a strong future for the next generation.”

Local 6787 BURNS HARBOR, IND.

Among the workers who can see that future firsthand is Pete Trinidad Sr., president of Local 6787 in Northwest Indiana, where the local economy is tied in many ways to the success of the steel industry.

Trinidad represents about 3,300 members at the Cleveland-Cliffs Burns Harbor facility who produce steel used in the transportation, construction, shipbuilding and automotive industries, among others.

“Steel is crucial for infrastructure,” Trinidad said. “It forms the backbone of our nation.”

Trinidad and his fellow Steelworkers in Northwest Indiana have long been at the forefront of the USW’s campaign to secure major infrastructure investments. Those years of work meant that Trinidad was among the workers invited to witness, in person, President Biden’s signing of the bill last November at the White House.

“It made me proud,” Trinidad said.

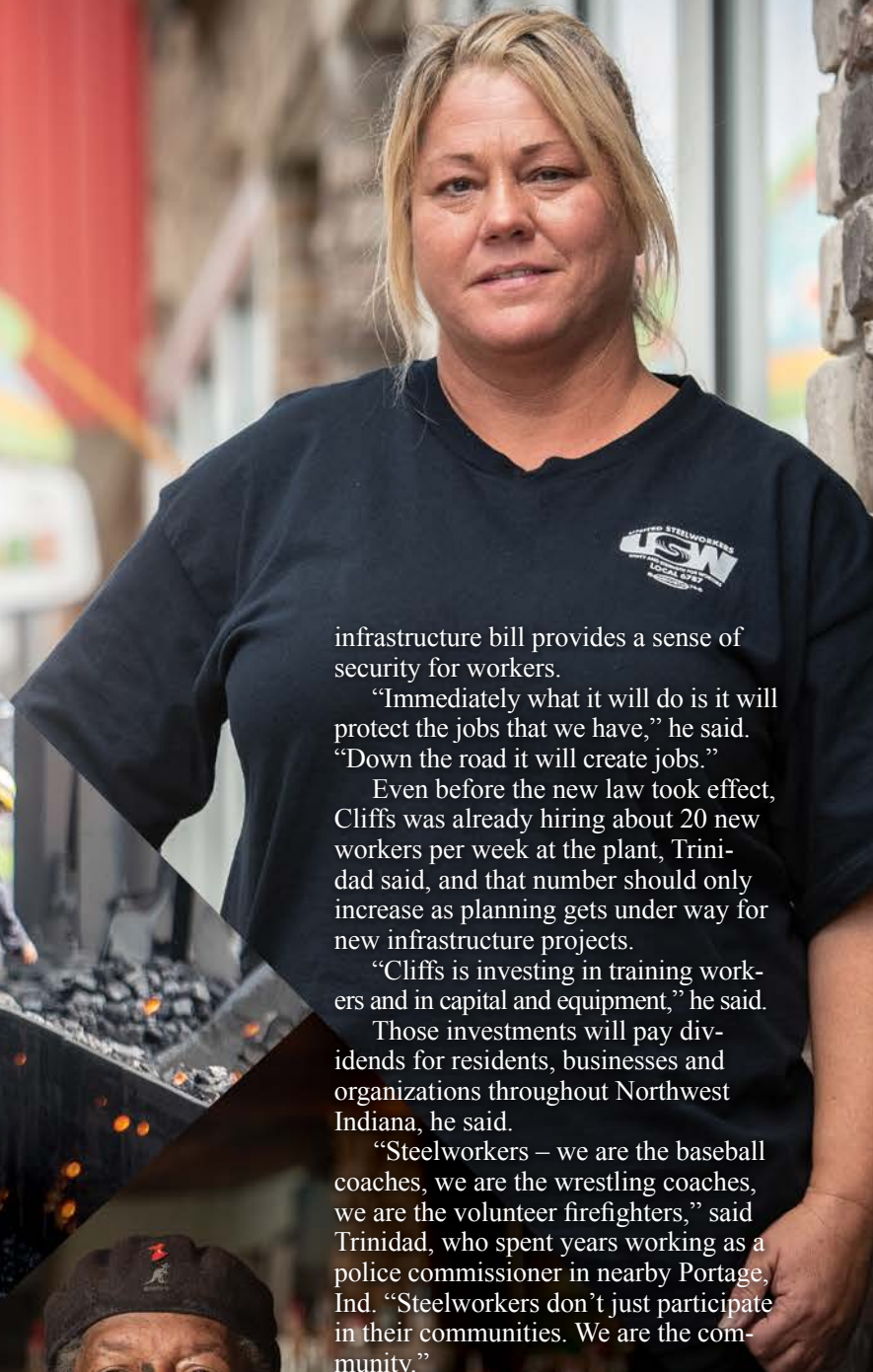
“ Steelworkers don’t just participate in their communities. We are the community.”

Pete Trinidad Sr., President, Local 6787

“The president personally thanked the Steelworkers for leading the fight over the years, and other unions recognized the Steelworkers as being at the forefront of this fight.”

Steel forms the economic foundation for families, businesses and communities in Burns Harbor and other similar towns across the United States, said Trinidad, who grew up in the area and has worked at the Burns Harbor mill for 27 years under four ownership groups. He said the

Rhonda Majchrzak (top right)
Ray Jackson (bottom right)
Photos by Steve Dietz



infrastructure bill provides a sense of security for workers.

“Immediately what it will do is it will protect the jobs that we have,” he said. “Down the road it will create jobs.”

Even before the new law took effect, Cliffs was already hiring about 20 new workers per week at the plant, Trinidad said, and that number should only increase as planning gets under way for new infrastructure projects.

“Cliffs is investing in training workers and in capital and equipment,” he said.

Those investments will pay dividends for residents, businesses and organizations throughout Northwest Indiana, he said.

“Steelworkers – we are the baseball coaches, we are the wrestling coaches, we are the volunteer firefighters,” said Trinidad, who spent years working as a police commissioner in nearby Portage, Ind. “Steelworkers don’t just participate in their communities. We are the community.”

Locals 4950 & 4974 NEGAUNEE, MICH.

Just down the road from the USW local union hall in Negaunee, Mich., a marker stands on the spot where iron ore mining began in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula following the discovery of the first deposits in 1844.

From then on, the people of Negaunee, now known as “Iron Town,” have depended on iron and steel for their economic well-being, and the mining industry, in turn, has depended on the people of the Marquette Range. Since 1850, when it was chartered in





Donneta Williams,
President, Local 1025
Photo by C-SPAN

Michigan, Cleveland-Cliffs Inc. has been there, too.

Today, the company, its workers and the surrounding community are all looking forward to the shot in the arm that the new infrastructure law will provide, both in the jobs it will secure for USW members and other workers, and in the economic benefits it will have for the region.

“To say mining is ingrained in our community would be an understatement,” said Michael Grondz, training coordinator for Local 4950, which represents Cleveland-Cliffs mine workers and others in the region. “This is where it started, and we take a tremendous amount of pride in it.”

Because so many of the projects in the infrastructure law will require steel made in America, Tricia Anderson, president of Local 4974, expects the recent uptick in hiring at the Cleveland-Cliffs Tilden Mine to continue.

“This has been our first hiring in quite some time,” Anderson said. “It all starts here. We want good U.S.-made steel made from our ore.”

The Tilden mine is one of two USW-represented iron ore mines in the area. The other, Cliffs’ Empire mine, just a few miles away, was idled in

2016. There is still plenty of ore there, but it was then deemed too expensive to extract.

Grondz is hoping the company changes that assessment with the increased demand created with hundreds of billions of dollars in new infrastructure projects.

“Every chance we get, we bring it up,” he said of re-starting the Empire facility.

The region’s economy, including local townships and school districts, suffered from a decline in business and tax revenue when the mine shut down, Grondz said.

“We’re still feeling that ripple effect today,” said Local 4950 President Chad Korpi, noting that the jobs added as a result of the infrastructure act would have the opposite effect.

Andrew Bryant

“It’s going to be a boon for our industry,” Korpi said.

Locals 2102 & 3267 PUEBLO, COLO.

The members of Local 2102 and 3267 at Evraz in Pueblo, Colo., expect to see

a similar boon for their community, known as the “Pittsburgh of the West,” as a result of the new law.

“This positions us in a very good place,” Chuck Perko, president of Local 3267, said of the infrastructure investments that are on the way. “Across the board, the products we make here are going into infrastructure in some way or another, so I am excited.”

Those products include steel used in railroad construction, rebar used to fortify roads,

“ Keeping more employees making that union wage means more business for everyone.”

Chuck Perko, President, Local 3267



bridges and buildings, and tubular goods used both in the oil and gas industry and in various construction projects.

Perko, a fourth-generation steelworker, said that the new investments will make jobs like his at Evraz, already “some of the best jobs in the state,” even better.

Moody's Analytics predicts that, by 2025, the new law will create at least an additional 872,000 jobs, many of them in manufacturing and construction.

To Perko, whose local represents about 150 clerical and quality-control workers at Evraz, the \$110 billion planned for road and bridge construction, along with \$66 billion in passenger and freight rail upgrades, represent future jobs and job security for workers throughout Pueblo.

“We have a lot of small business here,” he said. “Keeping more employees making that union wage means more business for everyone.”

Evraz is one of only two mills in the United States that makes the type of product needed for long-rail projects, Perko said.

“Manufacturing is still the

big economic driver in this town,” he said.

Local 2102 President Eric Ludwig, who represents Evraz production and maintenance workers, said strict “Made in America” provisions are an important part of making sure the \$1.2 trillion infrastructure package directly benefits U.S. workers.

“We have seen our city build a bridge with imported rebar when we make the exact same thing in town,” Ludwig said. “So that is a key stipulation.”

Local 11-205 HANNIBAL, MO.

Strict Made in America rules could mean more jobs, and greater job security, for members of Local 11-205 at Continental Cement in Hannibal, Mo. The members there create the “glue” in concrete, which plays a part in the foundation of almost every physical infrastructure project in the country.

The company increased its sales last year significantly enough that it is considering doubling its production capacity by adding a second production line to keep up with continuing strong demand, said Chris Dietle, Local 11-205 president, an electrician with Continental for 17 years.

“There are several countries in the world that produce a surplus of cement that can be imported into the U.S.,” Dietle said. “Therefore, ‘Made in the USA’ stipulations help us keep our customers from buying elsewhere.”

That means more jobs, more thriving families, more successful businesses, and a brighter future for everyone in the Hannibal area, he said.

Shane O'Connell
Tiffany Fields
Quentin Jennings

“Having good-paying union jobs means more members spending money and paying taxes in the community,” Dietle said. “If we double our production capacity, that would create even more good union jobs.”

Local 1025 WILMINGTON, N.C.

At the White House on Nov. 15, as President Biden was preparing to sign the infrastructure bill into law, Local 1025 President Donnetta Williams kicked off the ceremony, all the while wearing her USW “We Supply America” sticker, with remarks that touted the innumerable contributions of USW members.

“Our members and the Steelworkers throughout our great union supply America,” Williams said. “That’s why I was so proud to join them in helping to pass this bill.”

Williams and her 325 USW siblings in Wilmington produce optical fiber, the backbone of broadband internet service, which carries voice, data and video to U.S. households, schools and businesses.

As the pandemic made painfully clear, the availability of high-speed broadband remains grossly uneven, and even some of Williams’ co-workers have been unable to access it for their own families.

The infrastructure act earmarks \$65 billion to extend affordable, high-speed broadband internet to underserved communities across America.

“This is not just an investment in broadband internet,” Williams said. “It’s an investment in jobs and in my fellow North Carolinians.”

The new law, Williams said, will provide more access to the internet for underserved communities, security for Corning’s current workforce, and a bright future for the next generation of USW members.

“Investments in infrastructure are critical to workers like me and to my brothers and sisters in other industries,” she said.

“Everyone benefits,” she said, noting the infrastructure program will create and sustain millions of union manufacturing and construction jobs while modernizing the nation and revitalizing its manufacturing base. “It’s not about one particular party or one particular person. It’s about the nation as a whole and our future and what can be accomplished when everybody works together.”

Essential USW Workers

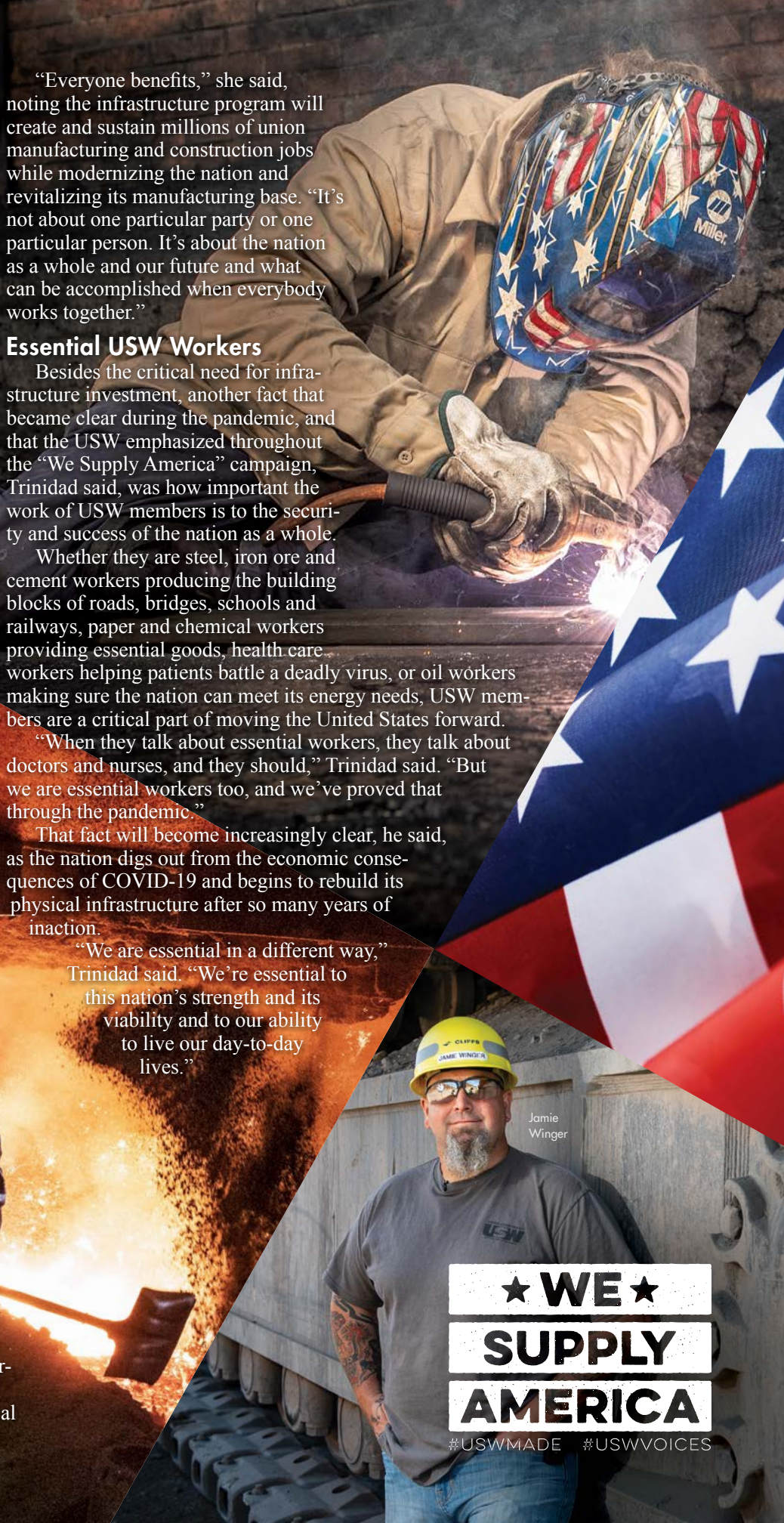
Besides the critical need for infrastructure investment, another fact that became clear during the pandemic, and that the USW emphasized throughout the “We Supply America” campaign, Trinidad said, was how important the work of USW members is to the security and success of the nation as a whole.

Whether they are steel, iron ore and cement workers producing the building blocks of roads, bridges, schools and railways, paper and chemical workers providing essential goods, health care workers helping patients battle a deadly virus, or oil workers making sure the nation can meet its energy needs, USW members are a critical part of moving the United States forward.

“When they talk about essential workers, they talk about doctors and nurses, and they should,” Trinidad said. “But we are essential workers too, and we’ve proved that through the pandemic.”

That fact will become increasingly clear, he said, as the nation digs out from the economic consequences of COVID-19 and begins to rebuild its physical infrastructure after so many years of inaction.

“We are essential in a different way,” Trinidad said. “We’re essential to this nation’s strength and its viability and to our ability to live our day-to-day lives.”



Jamie
Winger

★ WE ★

SUPPLY

AMERICA

#USWMADE #USWVOICES

Even as Americans celebrated passage of the national infrastructure legislation, one Democratic U.S. senator helped Republicans block another historic bill aimed at creating jobs and supporting working families.

The House passed Build Back Better – a bill combining long-overdue resources for families with workplace safety measures and provisions to battle climate change and energize the economy – in November.

To pass in the Senate, where Republicans lined up to vote against it, the bill needed the votes of all 48 Democrats and two Independents.

As *USW@Work* went to press, the legislation remained stalled because one of the Democrats, Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia, refused to support it. Manchin announced his decision in December, stunning his colleagues in Congress and angering millions of workers in West Virginia and across the nation.

The infrastructure legislation and Build Back Better would work in tandem to invigorate the economy and level the playing field for average Americans. That's why the USW and other unions strongly advocated for Build Back Better and called on Manchin to vote for the bill.

"There is simply too much at stake for him to walk away from his responsibility to our nation: to meet today's challenges while ensuring a more secure future for all Americans," International President Tom Conway and District 8 Director Billy Thompson emphasized in a joint statement.

Build Back Better would provide access to affordable child care and up to four weeks of paid family leave, enabling more people, especially single parents, to enter and remain in the work force. America remains one of the few industrialized nations without paid sick and



family leave, a failure that has endangered workers and fuel the spread COVID-19 through many workplaces.

In addition, the legislation would make universal preschool available to 3- and 4-year-olds, giving all of America's children a more equitable start in life, while continuing tax credits for struggling families and lowering health care premium costs for many consumers.

"It will do nothing but help the working people and middle class of West Virginia," observed Ed Barnette, president of Local 5668, which represents hundreds of workers at the Constellium plant in Ravenswood, W.Va.

Many of the bill's provisions aim to help America's seniors, such as expanding Medicare to cover hearing aids and other auditory services for the first time. Right now, millions of Americans delay getting hearing aids, or forgo them entirely, because of out-of-pocket costs exceeding thousands of dollars.

"It's a quality of life issue. You don't even know when people are telling you they love you, if you can't hear," explained Bill Alexander, president of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) Chapter 31-9 in southeast Chicago.

"If Medicare will give us a blood pressure monitor, why can't it give us a hearing aid?" asked Alexander, who retired from Acme Steel and Iron and predicts that he'll need hearing aids one day. "It's just as important. I know high blood pressure is a silent killer. But I don't know what life would be like not being able to hear."

In addition to providing long-overdue resources for families, the bill would pave the way to safer workplaces, helping to ensure workers return home at shift's end. It includes funding for the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) to boost enforcement, develop new safety and health standards and save lives.

"They've been woefully understaffed for a long time," Local 14614 President Ron Brady said, referring to the diminishing ranks of OSHA inspectors.

"They don't have the resources to really do the job," added Brady, who represents about 1,200 members in the chemical, construction, gaming, manufacturing and other industries in West Virginia. "There simply aren't enough of them to cover it."

The bill would not only put

more inspectors on job sites but empower them to impose significantly higher fines on employers who violate safety laws. Right now, the low fines—less than about \$16,000 for some violations—provide little incentive for employers to prioritize safety.

"Everybody's cutting corners and cutting budgets and trying to do more with fewer people," Brady said of employers. "It's something that's going to get worse and worse."

As the national infrastructure program creates new demand for domestically produced raw materials, parts and components, Build Back Better has the potential to create even more jobs and position the U.S. for long-term prosperity by incentivizing clean energy and clean manufacturing and providing tax credits to consumers who purchase electric vehicles made by union workers.

Among other criticisms of Build Back Better, Manchin complained about the tax credits favoring union-made vehicles. That, Barnette and others noted, is a slap in the face to union workers who not only built the country and the middle class but steadfastly supported Manchin's political career.

"It's almost like he forgot where his roots are," Barnette said.

In the weeks after walking away from the bill, Manchin faced a growing chorus of voices demanding he correct course.

"Joe Manchin now has the chance to join his Senate colleagues to make this a reality, not only for the hundreds of thousands of workers in West Virginia who voted for him, but for working families across our nation, who are depending on our elected officials to finally put their well-being ahead of that of the already rich and powerful," Conway and Thompson said.



Striketober



WORKERS RISING UP

As Pandemic Shines Light on Injustices, Union Members Fight Back

When the 450 members of USW Local 40 walked off the job at West Virginia's Special Metals on Oct. 1, they were fighting back against their employer's unfair labor practices and unnecessary demands for deep concessions.

They also, without knowing it at the time, were at the forefront of a wave of fed-up workers taking bold action across the United States – a movement since dubbed “Striketober” – that has grown even stronger in the months since.

“They’ve tried to pit us against each other, and it hasn’t worked,” Local 40 member John Lange said of his employer, Special Metals. “If anything,

it’s made us stronger. I don’t think they counted on that.”

Demands for Concessions

Local 40 member Shannon Ramey and his co-workers were among thousands of Americans in the labor movement who, nearly two years into a pandemic that has fueled frustration, fear and economic anxiety, responded by demanding justice and fairness from their employers.

At Special Metals, Ramey said that, in addition to wage cuts and freezes, the company’s initial contract proposals demanded significant increases to the cost of health care benefits and the elimination of life insurance for retirees, among other cuts.

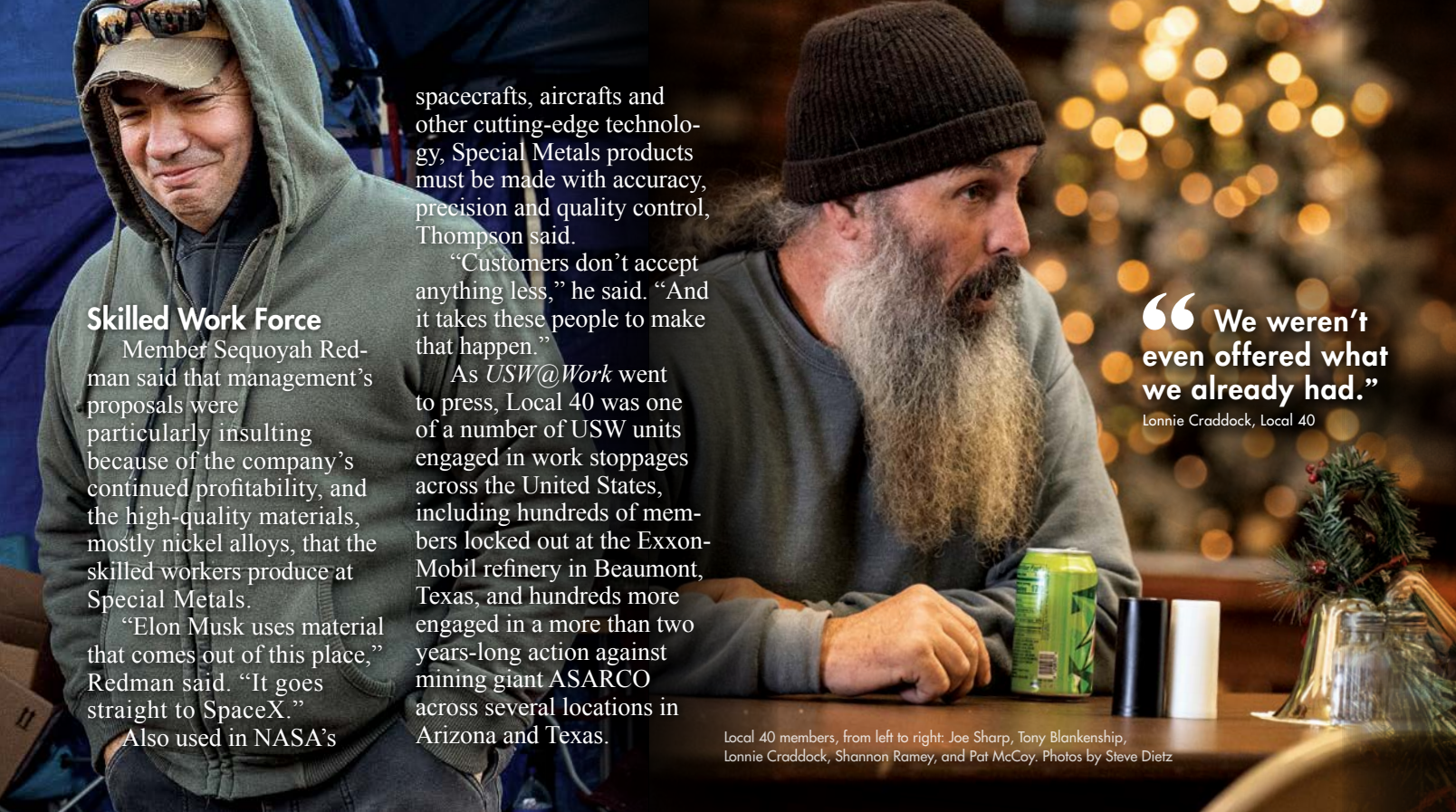
“We weren’t even offered what we already had,” said Local 40 member Lonnie Craddock.

Local President Chad Thompson said that, considering the economic climate, many workers would have been content to preserve the hard-fought contract gains they’d made in past rounds of bargaining. But the company, owned by Warren Buffett’s \$875 billion holding company Berkshire Hathaway, instead demanded deep cuts the workers were not willing to accept.

“They wanted a 3 percent reduction in wages, and then a zero percent increase during the rest of the term of the contract,” said Thompson, who offered a simple response from members to the company’s wage proposals: “No.”

The company added to its disrespectful behavior, Ramey said, when management came up with excuses not to schedule negotiating sessions for several weeks during the holiday season.

“It’s just kind of a spit in the face when their people say they don’t have time to negotiate with us because their people are going to be spending time with their families,” he said. “A lot of people here, they might not even get to have a Christmas.”



Skilled Work Force

Member Sequoyah Redman said that management’s proposals were particularly insulting because of the company’s continued profitability, and the high-quality materials, mostly nickel alloys, that the skilled workers produce at Special Metals.

“Elon Musk uses material that comes out of this place,” Redman said. “It goes straight to SpaceX.”

Also used in NASA’s

spacecrafts, aircrafts and other cutting-edge technology, Special Metals products must be made with accuracy, precision and quality control, Thompson said.

“Customers don’t accept anything less,” he said. “And it takes these people to make that happen.”

As *USW@Work* went to press, Local 40 was one of a number of USW units engaged in work stoppages across the United States, including hundreds of members locked out at the Exxon-Mobil refinery in Beaumont, Texas, and hundreds more engaged in a more than two years-long action against mining giant ASARCO across several locations in Arizona and Texas.

“ We weren’t even offered what we already had.”

Lonnie Craddock, Local 40

Local 40 members, from left to right: Joe Sharp, Tony Blankenship, Lonnie Craddock, Shannon Ramey, and Pat McCoy. Photos by Steve Dietz

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown visits Local 3057 members in front of ArcelorMittal. Photo by Jason J. Molyet



ArcelorMittal Victory

On Nov. 1, about 500 members of Local 3057 launched a strike at ArcelorMittal Tubular Products in Shelby, Ohio.

That action very quickly got the attention of management and resulted in a settlement that delivered a number of gains for the workers.

Less than two weeks after the strike began, Local 3057 reached an agreement on a four-year contract that provides wage increases of 13 percent, along with increases in pension benefits, lower health care costs and additional time off for holidays.

The brief strike included

a visit to the picket line from U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown of Ohio, along with significant public support from local USW members and other workers in the area.

Local 3057 President Dwight Gregory said he was grateful for the support the community showed to the workers.

“Everyone around here has been very supportive of us,” he said. “The community has been great.”

In addition, 7,500 members of Local 7600, along with tens of thousands of their co-workers, used the threat of a strike against their employer, health care

provider Kaiser Permanente, to fight for major contract gains in their new four-year deal. The members voted by 98 percent in early October to take the strike-authorization action after the company dragged its feet for months at the bargaining table. (See story, Page 14)

The Striketober Effect

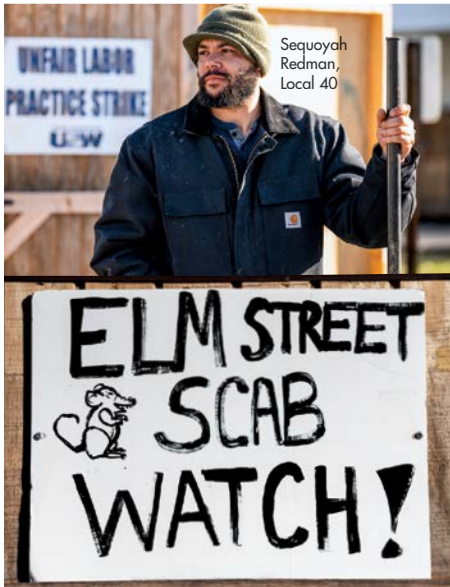
The fights at Kaiser, Special Metals and elsewhere were part of a growing movement of frustrated workers throughout the country realizing that, together, they had the muscle to fight back and win.

Just during the month of October 2021, more than 100,000 workers in the United States either participated in strikes or began preparations to go on strike before winning strong new contracts.

Like the members of USW Local 7600 at Kaiser, many of those groups of workers gained national attention and significant public support for their efforts, which helped to fuel the “Striketober” phenomenon well beyond the end of that month.



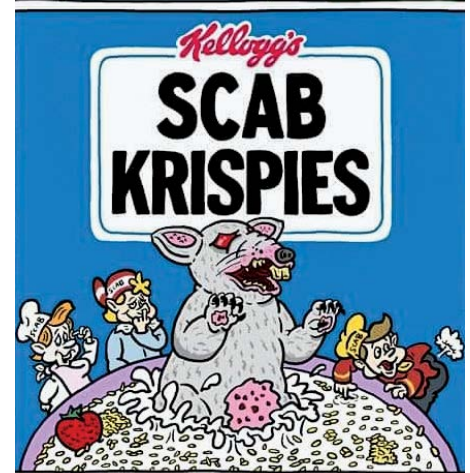
Local 7600
Photo by Chelsey Engel



Sequoyah Redman, Local 40

One of the most high-profile efforts began just days after the Local 40 strike started at Special Metals. On Oct. 4, about 1,400 members of the Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM) walked off the job at four Kellogg’s plants, in Battle Creek, Mich., Memphis, Tenn., Omaha, Neb., and Lancaster, Pa.

The Kellogg’s workers were fighting back against concessionary contract proposals that would have imposed higher health care and benefit costs, cut vacation time and created a two-tier wage schedule that would have divided the work force.



National Attention

Because of the widespread popularity of Kellogg's products, which include Corn Flakes, Pop Tarts and other breakfast and snack foods, the strike gained attention almost immediately, resulting in nationwide boycotts and statements of support for the workers from all corners of the United States, including the White House.

"Unions built the middle class of this country," President Joe Biden said after the company threatened to permanently replace the workers. "My unyielding support for unions includes support for collective bargaining, and I will aggressively defend both."

After rejecting a settlement offer in early December, the workers finally ended their work stoppage with a new agreement on Dec. 21 that included none of the concessions the company initially sought.

Members "stood their ground and sacrificed so much in order to achieve a fair contract," said BCTGM International President Anthony Shelton.

10,000 at John Deere

Another strike that gained nationwide attention began Oct. 14 with about 10,000 workers at John Deere manufacturing facilities in five states taking to picket lines in response to the company's unfair contract demands.

The members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) rejected a string of sub-par offers by the company before agreeing to a strong settlement a little over a month after the strike began. Throughout their effort, members received support from leaders and rank-and-file workers inside and outside the labor movement.

Signs of solidarity were evident throughout the fall, at John Deere and elsewhere. Workers on picket lines reported trucks, many driven by Teamsters union members, turning around instead of making their scheduled deliveries. Polls showed that nearly 70 percent of Americans supported the Striketober movement. And, in Washington, pro-labor Democrats took advantage of the moment to push for

the passage of the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, which would strengthen worker protections. The bill, passed by the House, is awaiting action in the U.S. Senate.

In one case, an economist from Iowa State University publicly noted that John Deere's own numbers proved that the company could afford to offer the workers the fair contract they sought



while continuing to maintain a profitable bottom line.

Ultimately, the members' new contract provided wage increases amounting to more than 20 percent over six years, as well as a signing bonus of \$8,500.

Bernie Sanders Letter

Though the Special Metals strike kicked off Striketober, it took some time for the relatively small group in West Virginia to gain national attention. But they eventually did, at the end of December, with help from Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders.

Sanders wrote a letter to Berkshire Hathaway's Buffett, who as the world's ninth-richest person is worth nearly \$110 billion, asking him to intervene to ensure a fair and equitable end to the strike. Buffett refused to get involved, and the squabble made national news.

"Mr. Buffett is one of the wealthiest guys on the planet," Sanders said following publication of his letter. "There is no reason that Steelworkers at Special Metals, a company that made \$1.5 billion in profits last year, should accept an insulting contract that includes significant pay cuts and major cuts to their health care."

The Great Resignation

Just as union members were ramping up their activism, other American workers were also expressing their own frustrations with the treatment they receive on the job.

In late October, thousands of McDonald's workers in 10 major U.S. cities staged walkouts and protests in response to allegations of sexual abuse and harassment by restaurant managers. Meanwhile, student workers at Harvard and Columbia universities, who are members of the United Auto Workers, voted to stage brief strikes following their employers' lack of movement at the bargaining table.

In mid-December, in a decision that gained significant national attention, Starbucks workers at a shop in Buffalo, N.Y., voted to join Workers United, an affiliate of the Service Employees International Union. It was the first time baristas at one of the coffee giant's U.S. stores were unionized.

About a month later, Starbucks workers in Calgary filed an application to join the Steelworkers. The USW already represents workers at one of the company's drive-through shops in Victoria, B.C.

In addition, U.S. Labor Department data showed that, in November 2021, a record 4.5 million workers left their jobs to seek new employment. Fueled by low unemployment and a near-record number of job openings, the "great resignation" as it became known, has helped to shift the balance of power in the workplace back toward working Americans for the first time in decades.

According to a report from the online job-search site Indeed.com, that is likely to remain true through the coming year.

"Workers are likely to continue to have considerable bargaining power in 2022," the report said.



KAISER WORKERS RATIFY CONTRACT

Members Show Unwavering Solidarity Through Tough Bargaining

Photo by Chelsey Engel

Members of Local 7600 joined thousands of other workers at Kaiser Permanente health care facilities in voting last December to ratify a new four-year contract after months of tense negotiations.

“Not only were our members able to avert a strike,” said Local 7600 President Michael Barnett, “but they gave zero concessions, fought off two-tiered wages, and secured permanent wage improvements over the life of the contract.”

The new contract covers about 7,500 members of the USW at 72 Kaiser Permanente locations around Los Angeles. Local 7600 members work in a wide range of job classes, from respiratory care practitioners to surgical technicians, engineers, pharmacy technicians and assistants, licensed vocational nurses, dietary aides, environmental service workers, medical assistants, appointment clerks, phlebotomists, and more.

Safe staffing and wage justice were among the membership’s top priorities throughout the negotiations, which began in the spring of 2021 and stretched well into the summer with the company making minimal movement at the bargaining table.

In October 2021, as bargaining entered its sixth month, USW members and other workers across the Kaiser system voted overwhelmingly to authorize a possible strike against the health care gi-

ant. The strike was set to begin on Nov. 15, but the two sides reached a tentative agreement with two days to spare.

The members of Local 7600 are part of a larger coalition of more than 50,000 union members who are known as the Alliance of Health Care Unions and who work in nearly every geographic area where Kaiser Permanente has a presence. Based in Oakland, Calif., Kaiser is one of the largest health care organizations in the United States, operating 39 hospitals and more than 700 medical offices.

Members entered bargaining determined not only to fend off the company’s demands for a two-tier wage system, but to establish long-term wage justice for workers in job classifications that have historically been paid less than others in the area. A series of solidarity actions through the summer and fall, culminating in the strike vote, strengthened the local’s bargaining position, attracted national attention from the media and gained the support of other workers across the country.

“This group of hard-working USW members demonstrated a level of strength and solidarity that should be an example for health care workers everywhere, and for the labor movement as a whole,” said International Vice President Fred Redmond, who oversees bargaining in the USW’s health care sector. “Essen-

tial workers like the members of Local 7600 have been pushed to the brink by this pandemic, but when they fight back together, positive change is the result.”

The union’s strength and solidarity resulted in an agreement that satisfied members’ core concerns. In addition to across-the-board increases, the contract addressed the vital issue of wage justice with a provision that sets aside about 3 percent of Kaiser’s payroll over the next two years to permanently adjust wage rate differences for the system’s historically lower-paid workers.

The new contract also includes staffing improvements, increased transparency around job postings and a comprehensive line-by-line review of the contract to address outdated language, processes and procedures.

For a work force that continued to be stretched thin throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, only to be met with concessionary demands at the table, the new contract represents a major step forward, said Barnett, who described the union bargaining committee as “relentless.”

“We overcame because of our unity with one another and because we came together with all Alliance members,” he said. “We’re so proud of our membership for sticking together. This is what solidarity looks like.”

As many USW members know, the benefits of being in a union extend far beyond a collective bargaining agreement.

Unions also lift up the economic well-being of entire communities as well as the health of the nation’s democracy, according to a newly released report from the Economic Policy Institute (EPI).

States with higher rates of union density, where members have more power on the job, are more likely to advance policies that benefit workers, their families and communities than states with lower rates of unionization.

According to the report, the 17 U.S. states with the highest rates of union representation also have 19 percent higher minimum wages than the national average, and 40 percent higher wages than states with low union representation.

The report from the EPI, a non-profit think tank supported by the USW and other labor organizations, also found that states with higher unionization rates have better health care benefits, access to paid sick and family leave, access to unemployment insurance and fewer voting restrictions than low union-dense states.

District 4 includes tens of thousands of USW members in the northeastern states



WHAT A DIFFERENCE A UNION MAKES

Benefits Extend to Well-Being of Workers, Communities, Democracy

AVERAGE STATE MINIMUM WAGES

High Union-Density States	\$11.40
National Average	\$9.57
Medium Union-Density States	\$9.22
Low Union-Density States	\$8.10

Source: Economic Policy Institute

of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont, as well as Puerto Rico.

The states in Director Del Vitale’s district are among those with the highest union density. New York is at the top of the list with 24.7 percent of the state’s workers covered by a union contract.

“This study provides yet another example of the benefits that a union provides,” Vitale said. “We have always known that there are tangible benefits that we get from our union membership, and this report is a valuable lesson in all of the other, more intangible benefits that unions bring

to workers and families.”

Even non-union workers benefit from the effects of unionization. To keep up with their unionized competition, employers are pressured to provide comparable working conditions, higher wages and more comprehensive benefits to non-union workers.

“We know that unions don’t just benefit the workers under contract. They also have a profound impact on the health of families and communities around them,” said USW Vice President at Large Roxanne Brown.

The EPI report reinforces the continued importance of organizing workplaces in states with extremely low

rates of union density – largely concentrated in the U.S. South – where the rate of unionization falls between three and nine percent. Nationally, that number is around 12 percent.

For District 9 Director Daniel Flippo, whose district includes Steelworkers in the southern states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee, as well as the U.S. Virgin Islands, the EPI report is a call to action.

“There is only one conclusion we should reach as a union after looking at this report, and that is that we must organize,” said Flippo, whose district has seen

an increasing number of USW organizing victories in recent years.

“The South is full of workers who are hungry for the benefits that a union provides for them and their families,” he said.

According to the EPI, most of the states with low union rates also have more restrictions on voting, further emphasizing the importance of unions to preserving democracy.

“All workers deserve the protections and benefits that a union provides,” said USW International President Tom Conway. “The only way to get there is to organize.”

SHIPBUILDERS RAMP

Members of Local 8888 in Newport News, Va., were ramping up their public mobilization efforts as *USW@Work* went to press a few months after members rejected a contract settlement proposal from the company.

The more than 10,000 members of the USW's largest U.S. local held a series of public rallies and marches and other activities as negotiations continued on a new contract with their employer, Newport News Shipbuilding.

The workers at the company, a division of Huntington Ingalls Industries,

produce nuclear submarines and aircraft carriers for the U.S. Navy.

"This is a proud group of hard-working union members. Their solidarity has been the driving force behind their success in the past, and it will be the same this time," said International Vice President Fred Redmond, who leads the union's negotiations on behalf of the shipbuilders. "We will keep working until we achieve a fair and equitable agreement."

Because of the size of the local, its contributions to the local economy, and its mission as an essential

component of U.S. national security, members of Local 8888 enjoy significant public support throughout Newport News and its surrounding communities.

Local President Charles Spivey said that support would help union members as they pushed toward a more favorable contract settlement.

As negotiations resumed in January, members were continuing to work under the terms of the agreement that expired on Nov. 14.

Meanwhile, members escalated their public campaign, taking to the streets

in December and January to call attention to what they said was a disrespectful settlement offer from the company last fall.

"We do essential work here," Spivey said. "There's pride here. We know that we're the best shipbuilders in the world."

That hard work, through two years of a pandemic, however, was not evident in the company's contract offer, he said, noting that the company paid shareholders \$130 million in dividends in the past year.

The company generated more than \$9.3 billion



UP CONTRACT FIGHT

in revenue and nearly \$700 million in net income in 2020, the most recent year for which data were available.

Given the company's recent success and strong prospects for a profitable future, workers deserve a fair piece of the pie, Spivey said.

That was the message members and their community supporters delivered during a holiday-themed public rally in December and another as negotiations were set to resume in January.

Just days before Christmas, demonstrators marched through the streets holding

signs and chanting, calling on Huntington Ingalls not to act like "Scrooge" and settle a fair contract with its workers.

Spivey, who has worked at the Newport News shipbuilding facility for more than 40 years, said he has seen difficult rounds of negotiations before, with strikes occurring in 1979 and 1999, but that the workers' solidarity has always prevailed.

"The bottom line is that

workers deserve to share in this company's success," he said. "And we will continue to negotiate until we achieve

“THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT WORKERS DESERVE TO SHARE IN THIS COMPANY'S SUCCESS.”

Charles Spivey, Local 8888 President

an agreement that reflects the sacrifices and contributions that Local 8888 members have made.”

Spivey said that the local has reached out to leaders in the U.S. Senate and U.S. House who lead committees

that help to determine U.S. Navy appropriations, and those leaders have expressed support for the workers in Newport News.

Spivey said that the local union members are determined

to make sure the company recognizes their contributions as essential workers.

"They've been told that they are essential workers," he said. "And they should be treated as essential workers."



Charles Spivey





Left to right, Matt Pietscher, Dave Morland, Justin Donley, Matt Velker, Victoria Monhollen-Bandein, Santa Claus (portrayed by Trent Taylor) and Tim Marshall

PIPELINE PUSH CONTINUES

MEMBERS PETITION MICHIGAN GOVERNOR TO PRESERVE SUPPLY LINE

USW members got an assist from a jolly old elf last December as they delivered a holiday-themed message to Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

The group, led by members of Local 912 who work at Toledo Refining Co., held a demonstration outside Whitmer's Lansing office, where they also delivered, with Santa's help, more than 1,000 gift-wrapped pages of petition signatures calling for the continued operation of the Enbridge Line 5 pipeline.

"Line 5 is essential to both our environmental and economic future," said Local 912 President Justin Donley. "Workers at the Toledo Refining Co., and families and communities throughout the states of Michigan and Ohio, will benefit if the pipeline is allowed to continue operating."

The members at the Toledo refinery have led the USW's effort over the past two years to preserve the pipeline while a new tunnel is built. The 350 union members, along with dozens more salaried employees at the facility, depend on the pipeline to do their jobs and support their families and communities.

Whitmer revoked Enbridge's ease-

ment in 2020 and has since supported legal action seeking the closure of the pipeline, which passes through the Straits of Mackinac. Whitmer's original order was due to shut the pipeline down in May 2021, but it has remained operational as court and legislative battles continued.

After Canada invoked a 1977 treaty in an attempt to start negotiations over the future of the pipeline, a White House spokesperson promised in November 2021 that the Biden administration was not interested in shutting Line 5 down.

According to Toledo Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz, the Toledo refinery alone generates \$5 billion in economic activity for the surrounding community, which includes parts of southern Michigan.

"This is a region where hard-working people have done the work to provide the energy that has helped build America," Kapszukiewicz said.

In addition to supporting hundreds of jobs and families in the Toledo area, Line 5 is crucial to future supplies of jet fuel for carriers at Detroit Metropolitan Airport as well as of heating oil for

residents of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The pipeline moves more than a half-million barrels of crude oil and natural gas, as well as other vital utilities, back and forth through the upper Midwest and Canada.

Last spring, Local 912 members gained critical support in Ohio when both houses of the state legislature passed resolutions, following testimony from USW members, urging Whitmer to keep the pipeline running.

Donley, who lobbied and testified in favor of those measures, argued that the pipeline is both a necessary and safe alternative to moving oil and gas products over land.

District 1 Director Donnie Blatt said shutting down Line 5 would not only eliminate hundreds of vital jobs but create new safety risks.

"Shutting this line down could be disastrous," Blatt said. "It would mean more tanker trucks moving petroleum products across our railways and highways, which creates an additional risk of accidents and spills. Keeping the product in the pipeline is the best way to move forward."

NEW DOMTAR AGREEMENT RATIFIED

FOUR-YEAR CONTRACT FOLLOWS
ANNOUNCEMENT OF PAPER
EXCELLENCE SALE

USW members at nine Domtar Corp. facilities voted last fall to ratify a new master agreement with the company just months after Domtar announced it would be acquired by Canadian firm Paper Excellence.

The contract, which took effect Jan. 1, 2022, will provide about 2,200 USW members with wage increases totaling 10.75 percent over the four-year term of the agreement.

The new master agreement also includes the continuation of members' health care coverage with no changes, as well as an increase in retirement benefits.

Perhaps most importantly, the contract included successorship language to ensure that both the master agreement and individual local agreements would continue despite the sale of the company.

Under the terms of its \$3 billion acquisition by the British Columbia-based conglomerate, Domtar will continue to operate as a stand-alone subsidiary of Paper Excellence.

International Vice President Leeann Foster, who oversees bargaining for USW members in the paper sector, said that once Domtar announced the acquisition in May 2021, it became a top priority for the union to negotiate a new agreement prior to the closing of the sale at the end of November.

"If we had waited to negotiate a new agreement after the sale closed, it could have presented significant risks for USW members," Foster said. "We determined that it would be in the best interests of the work force to lock in as much security and as much certainty for as long as possible."

Foster said that, particularly with the COVID-19 crisis introducing even more uncertainty into an already declining paper market, the contract represents a significant step forward for USW members.

"The bargaining committee set out to win protection for members during an unprecedented time, and also to make sure workers were recognized for their contributions to the company's success over the past two years, given the additional hours of work and sacrifice it took to keep mills running through the pandemic," she said.

Foster said that the new agreement also makes progress in the important areas of health and safety, training, and recruitment and retention of workers.

“If we had waited to negotiate a new agreement after the sale closed, it could have presented significant risks for USW members.”

Leeann Foster, International Vice President

"We insisted on a package that addressed these challenges," she said. "Although this round of bargaining was not easy, through the solidarity of our members and the hard work of our bargaining team, we were able to achieve a fair agreement that addresses our core concerns while providing security for the hard-working USW membership."



Luis Mendez

Leeann Foster,
International
Vice President

John Carroll
Jones

Randy
Knott



LIBRARY WORKERS RATIFY CONTRACT

Workers at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh voted in January to ratify a four-year contract that will cover approximately 300 workers across 19 branches as well as the library support center.

“I am beyond proud of our bargaining committee and all of our workers who stood in solidarity to win this contract,” said Emily Miller, Adult Programming Librarian at the Office of Programs and Partnerships. “We’ve learned so much and we are excited to continue moving forward with our work as a union.”

Some of the highlights of the agreement include standardizing positions into “job grades” and increasing starting wages, most significantly among the lowest-paid positions; four wage increases for current workers over the life of the four-year agreement; limitations to

health insurance rate hikes, and the addition of Christmas Eve and Juneteenth as paid holidays.

“Along with the individual gains we made that are unique to our work, we also now have the power that comes from our collective bargaining agreement—a proper grievance procedure,” said Kira Yeversky, who works as a clerk. “These wins alone will go a long way toward creating a more equitable and just library for everyone.”

The workers voted to join the USW in August 2019, seeking a seat at the table when it came to decisions that affect their working conditions and the library community.

Yeversky said the group’s first contract achieves a number of significant gains on those issues and more, including workplace health and safety, pay equity and

affordable health care.

“I’m so proud of every worker who shared their stories and fought for our first contract,” said Yeversky. “They displayed true solidarity, and I can’t wait to see what this next chapter brings for all of us.”

The workers strengthened their bargaining position with a rally in November that coincided with the Carnegie libraries’ and museums’ celebration of their 125th anniversary. Dozens of workers and community supporters rallied together to call on management to settle fair contracts.

In December 2020, about 500 workers at the Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh voted to join the USW. They are now in the process of bargaining their first contract.

White-Collar Growth

The International Broth-

erhood of Teamsters and the Service Employees International Union currently represent the Carnegie Library’s drivers and environmental service workers. The newly ratified USW agreement covers all remaining eligible library staff who are among a growing number of white-collar USW members.

In October 2021, faculty members at the University of Pittsburgh, whose main campus is adjacent to that of the flagship branches of the Carnegie library and museum, voted by a more than 2-to-1 margin to become USW members.

The Pitt faculty group is now beginning preparations on bargaining a first contract that will cover more than 3,300 people. The USW also represents faculty members at Point Park and Robert Morris universities in the area.

GROUP URGES GITI TO END MISTREATMENT

WORKERS LAUNCHED USW ORGANIZING DRIVE AT S.C. PLANT IN 2021

Giti Tire workers joined a coalition of local civic, faith and government leaders in calling on the company to end the consistent mistreatment of its employees and begin showing them the dignity and respect they deserve.

Members of the community coalition wrote a letter to Giti CEO Phang Wai Yeen, which they attempted to deliver during a rally outside Giti's Richburg, S.C., plant on Nov. 23. They were turned back by security, but a smaller group was eventually able to meet with plant managers.

"As members of the community, we share in the mutual commitment to recognize the dignity of all labor and the rights of each worker to freedom of association," the group wrote. "We also believe in the importance of mutual dialogue where all parties work together to address common concerns and where all have a seat at the table."

The letter condemned the low wages, unpredictable schedules and oppressive amounts of mandatory overtime that leave workers at the Giti factory with no time for their families.

Union Drive

Those conditions were among the reasons why, in 2021, the workers publicly

launched their campaign to organize as members of the USW. While that effort is still in its early stages, it has gained support both inside and outside the factory, and that support was on full display during the letter-delivery event.

"We strongly request that you immediately cease this immoral activity in our community that defeats the common good," the group wrote to the Giti CEO.

The coalition's letter was signed by state Reps. Annie McDaniel, John King and Gilda Cobb-Hunter, along with Mayor Wanda Stringfellow of neighboring Chester, S.C., and other local officials, faith leaders and activists committed to building stronger families and communities across the state. The group also is seeking a meeting with Giti management to address its concerns.

Millions in Tax Breaks

The Singapore-based tire maker announced in 2014 its intent to build a new plant in Richburg. As it did so, the company took advantage of tens of millions of dollars in state tax incentives.

In addition to mistreating its workers while reaping those tax benefits, Giti mispent millions in COVID-19 stimulus funds. According

to a report released in March 2021 by a corporate watchdog group, Giti took nearly \$10 million in funds intended to help small, independent businesses keep workers employed during the pandemic.

After pocketing the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funds, Giti, a company that made \$3.26 billion in revenue in the most recent fiscal year, still threw about 100 workers out of their jobs.

"This company betrayed the public trust long before COVID-19," said District 9 Director Daniel Flippo. "Giti accepted \$60 million in tax breaks to build a plant and then broke its promise to create 1,700 jobs for the community. Giti never came close to that number, and when the pandemic hit, Giti permanently laid off many of the workers it did have despite taking the PPP funds."

The company must stop its mistreatment of workers, allow them a free and fair union election, and begin to fulfill the promises it made to the community when it arrived eight years ago, he said.

"The leaders of Richburg and Chester County have put Giti on notice," Flippo said. "Our community will not tolerate the mistreatment of workers who only seek fairness and a voice on the job."

Making Progress

At the November rally, library and museum workers rallied together and pointed out that, even before bargaining their full contracts, they were able to reach agreements to raise wages and fight for safer working conditions through the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We're working so hard for a fair and equitable contract," said Jenise Brown, a museum educator and bargaining committee co-chair.

Brown said that museum workers decided to join the USW to, among other things, increase transparency and improve communication from management.

"We want clear communication, and we want a seat at the table for decision-making," Brown said.

For additional coverage of the library workers' contract win, check out the USW podcast, *Solidarity Works*, by visiting usw.to/podcast.



TOTAL DEVAS

MEMBERS HELP NEIGHBORS RECOVER FROM TORNADOES, WILDFIRES

USW members pitched in to help in a big way this winter when disaster struck their neighbors in Kentucky and Colorado.

In Kentucky, Local 550 members at the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant had neighbors in their region who lost everything when a massive, mile-wide tornado and other storms swept through the region on Dec. 10 and the early hours of Dec. 11.

The storm was one of the largest of its kind, roaring for more than 165 miles through 11 counties. The disaster killed at least 77 people and left a trail of destruction across several communities.

Local 550 member Greg Enlow took off work for the rest of the year following the disaster. Even though the storm missed his Mayfield, Ky., home by two blocks, he knew that the entire community would have to rally behind those who were less fortunate than he was.

"I'm trying to help people out where I can and get things back to normal as quickly as possible," Enlow said. "It was pretty chaotic."

While the tornado did not claim the lives of any Local 550 members or retirees, at least one local member lost

a relative in the storm.

Home Destroyed

USW members Jackie and Trent Campbell were able to weather the storm without physical injuries, but their home was destroyed.

Jackie Campbell said she was grateful that she, Trent and their two grandchildren who were with them that night did not get injured or killed. She said it has been amazing to see the generosity of people willing to help.

"Everybody has pitched in and helped, and it makes you think, 'We're not as bad off as we thought we were,'" Jackie Campbell said.

Trent Campbell is a member of Local 727-04 at Wacker Chemical Corp. in Calvert City, Ky., and Jackie is a member of Local 727-00 at Evonik Chemical Co. in the same complex.

When Trent Campbell heard the

sound of the tornado barreling toward his house the night of the storm, he ran to his basement and placed himself over top of his wife, Jackie, as she held their two grandchildren on the floor.

TATION



“All of my union members have called me, even those who have retired call and check on me,” Jackie Campbell said. “It makes you feel so good that you work with good union people. They don’t think of themselves. They think of what do you need, what can we do for you?”

After the storm, a crew of Evonik workers, both union and management, helped the Campbells clean up and salvage what was left.

“I’m blessed to be able to work with so many good people,” Jackie Campbell said.

“As union brothers and sisters, we always need to help out and help each other whenever and however we can,” Local 727-00 trustee Wade Kennedy said. “We may not be blood family, but we’re a family because we work together.”

In addition to the physical help that members offered to each other, monetary donations poured in both locally and from across the country.

In the wake of the destruction, Local 550’s membership voted to donate up to \$5,000 to local disaster relief efforts. Local 3657, the USW’s staff union, donated \$2,000 to help the Campbells, and the local unions in Calvert City donated gift cards to replace the belongings they lost.

Members also used paid time off and vacation to help friends and neighbors with cleanup efforts and to find homes for those who were displaced.

Enlow said that in the early morning of Dec. 11, he called his family and fellow union members to check in and see what they needed. He wired up generators for residents without power and checked on others to see if they needed food and water.

Enlow said other USW members were also on the ground soon after the storms to bring water and other aid.

“I was overwhelmed how the membership took care of people,” he said. “The volunteers that first day were essential because no one else was here.”

The tornado destroyed Enlow’s daughter-in-law’s business in Mayfield, and he lost a vehicle because the storm destroyed the auto shop where it was being repaired. “I was very fortunate, and thank God every day,” he said.

“I didn’t know if we were gonna make it or not,” Jackie Campbell said.

In a matter of minutes, much of the Campbells’ home and belongings were gone.





Colorado Wildfires

Just a few weeks after the Kentucky storms, on December 30, disaster struck again when wildfires roared out of control in the Boulder, Colo., area.

The fires ultimately destroyed more than 1,000 homes and businesses and, at their peak, occupied more than 6,000 acres of land. At least two residents were reported missing, and one of them died in the fire.

When news of the fires broke, five members of Local 13417 who work at Kansas Gas Service, a division of Oklahoma-based ONE Gas, Inc., joined a group of five members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and headed for neighboring Colorado to help restore utility service to more than 13,000 customers.

Lucas Nease is one of the USW members who installs and maintains natural gas lines for Kansas Gas Service, so he is used to working from the road, but that didn't prepare him for what he saw when he reached the site of the wildfires.

"I would describe it as destruction on a random scale," Nease said. "There were some houses that were perfectly fine while others were completely destroyed. We were all kind of awestruck by what we saw."

Nease said that when the call came in from his employer that help was needed, he didn't hesitate.

"They needed a helping hand, and I was able to help them," he said. "I just said, 'Sure, let's do it.'"

Nease and other workers helped to restore utilities to thousands of customers over about four days. He said that his work as a union steward has demonstrated to him the importance of being there to help others when they are in need.

"Being in a union, everybody is there for everybody," Nease said. "If one of our members is down, we help them up."

'Total Devastation'

Local 550 member Ike Murphy, a 25-year member who is also a full-time preacher, took in people to his church's community center in Mayfield, fed them and took care of them for five days until he and his volunteers were able to relocate them to state park lodges.

"We had a lot of homeless folk without power, water," he said. "It was total devastation."

The Red Cross brought cots, and local stores donated mattresses to give displaced residents a place to sleep. Murphy and his volunteers fed more than 120 people three times a day with donated supplies and ran buses in the morning and evening to the church so people could shower.

Now, Murphy's focus is on expanding his church's food pantry to operate twice a week.

"I'm thankful that I work in a facility that had people who donated vacation time to me so I could help others," Murphy said. "We haven't done anything heroic. We did what the Lord wanted us to do."

Jeff Wiggins, secretary-treasurer of the Kentucky AFL-CIO and a member of USW 9447-4, worked full time to help tornado victims, including coordinating with the national AFL-CIO to get needed personnel on the ground. He and Gerald Adkins, who works with the state AFL-CIO, helped Local 550 retiree Ray Coffey salvage what little remained of his home. Coffey, his wife and grandchildren huddled in the basement as the tornado ripped apart the house.

"It's Christmas time," Wiggins said. "You can't give enough to help out."



Power of Solidarity

Secretary-Treasurer John Shinn said that the relief efforts USW members participated in during December 2021 were just a small part of a long list of examples of Steelworkers pitching in to help others in recent years, including during the winter storms that caused power outages across Texas last winter and the series of devastating hurricanes that tore

through Puerto Rico and the Gulf Coast of the United States in 2017.

“One of the best parts of being in a union like the USW is knowing that people have your back, and your neighbor’s back, when times are at their worst,” said Shinn. “Steelworkers have proven time and again that they will move mountains to help others when they are in need.”

Members from Local 13417 drove from Kansas to help aid in the recovery effort. From left to right, Lucas Nease, Derrick Dodson, Taylor Morris, Greg Rice, and Jaden Schryock.

How You Can Help

Members who want to help ongoing relief efforts can do so by making donations to the USW Charitable and Educational Organization, writing

“Disaster Relief” in the check memo line and mailing it to: United Steelworkers, c/o Steelworkers Charitable Fund, 60 Blvd. of the Allies, Pittsburgh, Pa., 15222.



TEST OF STRENGTH

Local Wins New Contract After Lengthy Fight at Sloan Valve in Illinois

In 2013, the 400 members of Local 7999 were bargaining a new contract with their employer, Sloan Valve in Franklin Park, Ill. They didn't know it at the time, but they were just at the beginning of a fight that would ultimately take eight years and put them through a momentous test of their strength and solidarity.

"This has been one of the hardest-fought contracts I've been a part of, and these members and leaders deserve a tip of the cap for what they've done," District 7 Director Michael Millsap said of Local 7999's contract fight, which ended with a new agreement last summer. "They managed to not only survive this long ordeal, but come out even stronger."

In May 2014, the members initiated a strike against Sloan, which produces bathroom and plumbing fixtures at a plant outside Chicago.

The nearly 120-year-old company pushed the work force to the picket line with demands for concessions, including increased health care costs, unnecessary changes to attendance policies, and an expansion of the use of non-union contractors.

From the outset, the group had the support of the community, other USW locals, retired members and other workers throughout Illinois and elsewhere.

As the strike stretched on, Sloan began to operate the plant with management and scabs. Members began to struggle, and slowly some of them began to return to the factory.

Eventually, the local membership agreed to return to work under the terms of the expired agreement as

negotiations continued.

Years passed, with the company content to live under the existing terms, and members unwilling to accept a contract that would represent a step backwards.

"We really didn't know what would become of our union," said bargaining committee member Barry Spencer.

Rebuilding the Union

While the union wasn't able to reach a settlement in those intervening years, the local did manage to negotiate bonuses to get extra money into members' hands.

Meanwhile, local leaders knew what they had to do – organize. Local 7999 leaders began rebuilding the union, reigniting member engagement in their shared struggle, assembling a diverse leadership team, and signing up members who had walked away.

"Through it all, we have preserved, prevailed and gotten stronger," Spencer said. "It has meant everything to see the local coming together so strongly."

Local 7999 leaders brought members back into the USW fold, with workers not only signing up but getting involved in the contract campaign and bringing others along as well.

"Each year, we are making the situation better and adding to the size of the bargaining unit," said sub-district Director Anthony Alfano, who helped lead negotiations.

As the local grew stronger, communication was the key to maintaining solidarity, Spencer said.

"Local union leaders kept members informed about everything," he said. "We had meetings every week, and that kept us motivated and in good spirits."

Gaining Momentum

As the local gained momentum, members began to believe in each other and in the idea that they could

win a contract.

"Through many years of bargaining, and even a year of COVID, nothing was stopping us," said bargaining committee member Chris Penge.

In July 2021, those years of hard work and unwavering solidarity paid off with a new agreement, one that provided wage increases, health care coverage with no concessions, and a system of reducing the number of temporary employees.

"It took a while for the members who left and the new members to believe in the union again," Spencer said.

A Bright Future

Spencer's advice to other locals in the midst of similar protracted battles: Be honest, trust in each other, and don't give up.

"I see a new beginning and a great future for our local because of all we endured," Spencer said.

Local President Jerry Mastny credited district and international leaders for their help.

"Our membership stayed strong throughout," Mastny said. "I'm proud of how our members stayed strong. Even though people were frustrated, they hung in there."

Spencer and other local leaders said that the ordeal made the union stronger and helped the company grow stronger as well, because workers can see they have a bright future.

"We have a new feeling of self-worth," he said. "There is renewed life in the membership. We are looking forward to carrying the torch of the members before us, and we won't let that fire die."

Penge said the workers will use that fire both to grow the local union and to ensure that the company thrives for the next generation.

"We will go to work and keep making them money," Penge said. "And then we'll fight for our fair share."



20 YEARS AFTER WTO DECISION, USW SEEKS STRONGER EFFORTS TO CURB TRADE, HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

Twenty years after China gained entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO), the USW called for stronger measures to curb the nation's state-led, market-distorting trade practices and new efforts to fight its human rights abuses.

"It's long been clear that China's entry into the WTO two decades ago was a mistake," International President Tom Conway said in marking the Dec. 11 anniversary. Conway added that, since that decision, the Chinese Communist Party has leveraged its predatory trade practices against other WTO nations, even while it has continued to exploit workers in its own country.

"As we now look to confront Chinese overcapacity and other global distortions, we cannot simply count on the CCP's willingness to adapt to international norms or the WTO to hold it to them," Conway said. "We must instead deploy our own defense mechanisms to safeguard our workers and industries and the communities they support."

The decision to admit China to the WTO in December 2001 came after lengthy negotiations and a decades-long relaxing of trade practices related to the communist nation, by the United States

and other Western countries.

Still, the results two decades later have shown that the decision hurt U.S. workers and led to a distorted global market as a result of China's illegal dumping of manufactured goods, currency manipulation, unfair subsidies and other practices designed to gain market share at the expense of U.S. companies.

In 2000, China was the world's seventh-biggest exporter of manufactured goods. Its membership in the WTO allowed it to ascend to the top spot and gave it an opening to insert itself, and its deliberate distortions of the global marketplace, into supply chains for some of the world's largest companies.

"Twenty years ago, leaders like Speaker Pelosi predicted that China's entry into the WTO would stifle the interests of both American workers and the Chinese people," Conway said. "As the CCP continues to rely on massive industrial subsidies, opaque laws, state-owned enterprises and even forced labor, her leadership and that of many of her colleagues will be sorely needed as we push to reframe our engagement with China so we can truly compete on a level playing field."

One measure designed to accomplish that goal is the aptly named "Leveling the Playing Field Act 2.0," legislation co-sponsored by Ohio Sen. Sherrod Brown, a Democrat, and Sen. Rob Portman, a Republican. The U.S. House is considering a similar bill, sponsored by U.S. Rep. Terri Sewell, an Alabama Democrat, and Rep. Bill Johnson, an Ohio Republican.

Among other remedies, the legislation would crack down on repeat offenders and speed the process manufacturers and workers must go through to gain relief through the U.S. Commerce Department.

"These bills represent a much-needed, bipartisan opportunity to strengthen our domestic trade remedy laws and protect American jobs," Conway said.

Besides addressing trade abuses, the United States and its allies must also confront China's abysmal human rights record, the USW president said.

"We must redouble our fight against the CCP's well-established record of human rights abuses and attacks on democratic freedoms: from genocide against the Uyghurs to denying the people of Hong Kong the rights they were promised," Conway said.

USW WELCOMES UPDATED 'MADE IN AMERICA' WAIVER PROCESS

The USW applauded the Biden administration's new streamlined approach to granting waivers to "Made in America" requirements, saying that the updated process will help to close loopholes and make the system more transparent.

"As recent supply chain strains have clearly demonstrated, the costs and logistics of reliably importing products into the United States continues to grow," International President Tom Conway said. "The new waiver process will be crucial as our nation begins to re-shore some of these goods and rebuild our domestic industries."

In the past, government agencies have been allowed to waive Made in America requirements when critical U.S.-made components couldn't be found or weren't available at a reasonable cost. Under previous administrations, the White House said, the process has been handled independently and with little transparency.

The new rules, announced by the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Made in America Office in November, will streamline the waivers and ensure consistent enforcement of the requirements throughout the federal government.

The new process will help protect American jobs, Conway said.

"Manufacturing is the backbone of our economy, and workers and communities across the country depend on the good, family-sustaining jobs the sector provides," he said. "If we're going to be spending taxpayer dollars, it's essential that we support domestic industries first."

Making sure that happens is particularly important now that Biden has signed the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act into law. Taxpayers want to make sure that money is used to support American jobs and companies, Conway added.

"The administration's whole-of-government approach will help ensure that this monumental investment directly benefits our workers and jobs," he said.

“ We have never before had an administration explicitly committed to this kind of enforcement of Buy America.”

Roxanne Brown, International Vice President

"While there may be instances when required materials are not available, by now making information about waivers public and consistent, the Made in America Office is helping to close loopholes and position domestic businesses to better connect with opportunities to fill these needs."

As part of the USW's "We Supply America" campaign launched last year, local unions and employers have been working together to send letters to the OMB's Made in America Office to help identify where end users can find the U.S.-made products they need.

"We have never before had an administration explicitly committed to this kind of enforcement of Buy America," said International Vice President Roxanne Brown.

★ WE ★
SUPPLY
AMERICA
#USWMADE #USWVOICES



Photos by
Steve Dietz

CONWAY CALLS ON LAWMAKERS TO SUPPORT TARIFFS

USW International President Tom Conway sent a letter in January to members of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House calling for their continued support for tariffs that ensure a level playing field for U.S. manufacturing workers.

In particular, Conway was responding to calls from importers and other free trade advocates who cited inflation pressures in their calls to lift Section 301 tariffs that protect against Chinese intellectual property theft and Section 232 tariffs that safeguard industries like steel and aluminum that are deemed essential to national security and infrastructure needs.

The United States imposed 25 percent tariffs on steel imports, along with 10 percent duties on aluminum, in 2018 under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act as a means to protect U.S. national security.

“Efforts to undermine enforcement actions under the guise of addressing inflationary pressures are an insult to workers and their employers in the impacted sectors who work hard, play by the rules, and simply expect their elected leaders to stand by their sides,” Conway said.

USW members, he said, are all too familiar with the effects that unfair trade has had on U.S. workers in steel, aluminum, paper, glass, rubber and tire, and other vital sectors in recent years.

“We fought for decades to level the playing field, all too often resorting to filing trade cases because we were unable to rely on our own government,” Conway said.

“As outsourcing and offshoring have become

ever more commonplace over the past two decades, our members witnessed the hollowing out of their communities as wages were depressed and jobs disappeared.”

Rather than revoking tariffs, Conway said, the U.S. government should focus on common-sense policies to ensure a robust domestic manufacturing sector.

USW BACKS CONTINUED DUTIES ON UNCOATED PAPER

The USW joined employers in the paper industry in successfully calling on the International Trade Commission (ITC) to continue antidumping duties on certain uncoated paper imports from Australia, Brazil, China, Indonesia and Portugal.

Following a sunset review, the ITC determined that revoking the existing antidumping duty orders on those nations, as well as countervailing duty orders on China and Indonesia, would harm the U.S. paper industry, so the commission ruled that the existing orders should remain in place.

In written testimony before the ITC on Nov. 18, Interna-

tional Vice President Leeann Foster said jobs in the uncoated paper industry support countless American families and in many cases provide the economic backbone for entire communities.

“I have seen firsthand how generations of families depend on the U.S. paper industry,” Foster said, “and how the industry’s good wages and benefits have built and sustained communities across the country for decades.”

Those good union jobs, however, face a consistent threat from overseas competitors seeking to gain greater access to the U.S. market through unfair trade practices, including dumping and

illegal subsidies. Dumping occurs when a foreign producer sells imports at less than their fair market value.

The original duties, imposed following a USW-supported case filed in 2015, have provided paper workers with some security and allowed U.S. producers to compete on a level playing field, Foster told the ITC during the hearing, which was part of the commission’s five-year sunset review investigation of the trade measures.

“If the orders were revoked, unfairly traded imports would quickly accelerate the losses in the domestic uncoated paper industry, just as they did in the original investiga-

tion, putting these jobs and the communities that rely upon them in jeopardy,” Foster said.

USW employers in the uncoated paper industry include Boise Paper, Domtar, Sylva-mo, Twin Rivers and Pixelle, among others.

“The orders have created a much more steady market than we had when the commission looked at this industry during the original investigations,” Foster said. “Revoking the orders now as the domestic industry is still facing the effects of the pandemic would be devastating to domestic workers, who would again face accelerated job and wage losses.”

USW HONORS VETERANS OF STEEL

USW locals are stepping up their efforts to honor Steelworkers who have served or are serving in the military, through the union's new Veterans of Steel program.

Leading the way in the effort is the USW's District 9, which includes members throughout the states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee, as well as the U.S. Virgin Islands.

"The Veterans of Steel program is helping us to grow the reach of the union," said District 9 Director Daniel Flippo, himself a former Army military police officer. "We love doing it, and the veterans appreciate the much-deserved recognition of their service."

One of the union's largest units in North Carolina, and one with a high number of Veterans of Steel, is Local 959, which represents about 2,200 workers at the Goodyear Tire and Rubber plant in Fayetteville.

The plant sits just a few miles to the east of Fort Bragg, an Army base with

about 54,000 active personnel, making it a natural place for veterans to find good-paying union jobs, Flippo said.

With bargaining set to get under way soon for members at Goodyear, International Vice President Dave McCall and Flippo were planning a visit to the plant as *USW@Work* went to press, where they hoped to also make a push for members to get involved with Veterans of Steel.

The district, Flippo said, has been honoring its veterans by presenting each member with a lapel pin in recognition of their service, along with a letter from the director. So far, the district has handed out 1,000 pins and has another 2,000 ready to go.

Among those at the forefront of the effort to recognize veterans have been Local 1423 at the Domtar mill in Plymouth, N.C., and Local 8309-01 at Prince Mineral in Leesburg, Ala.

"This program has worked really well for the locals and our members," Flippo said.

In District 8, Local 8888

in Newport News, Va., also has a large contingent of veterans active in the union. Local 8888 members produce U.S. Navy ships and submarines not far from a number of large bases, including the Norfolk Naval Station, that support 85,000 military personnel and their families.

Looking for a Kick-Start

Kevin Key, a Navy veteran who serves as the District 9 Veterans of Steel coordinator, said the USW is hoping to use such outreach programs to local unions to build a database so veteran members can eventually hold international-wide meetings.

"This is kind of the first big step to really getting that off the ground," Key said. "We're hoping this will kick-start the program."

The creation of the Veterans of Steel program stems from the passage of a resolution at the 2017 USW Constitutional Convention, where members decided to ensure the union had a dedicated place where members who served or who are currently serving in the military could find resources,

es, camaraderie, support and a way to fight for core issues such as a fully funded Veterans Administration (VA) and protecting and creating family-supporting jobs after service.

Locally Driven Program

International President Tom Conway, who served in the Air Force from 1970 to 1974, said he hopes to see rank-and-file members at the local level leading the way in making the Veterans of Steel program a success.

"This isn't something we want to see driven out of the union's headquarters," Conway said. "We want it to grow out of the shops and the local unions."

Conway said that the Veterans of Steel program



Army veterans Mitchell Roberson and Travis Brown with Local 1423 President, Jamie Asby

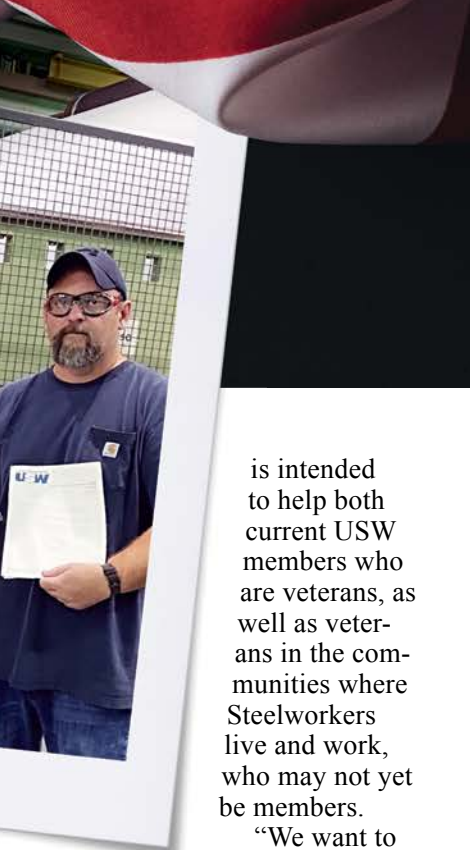
Get Involved

Members who would like to participate in the USW Veterans of Steel program can text VET to the number 47486. Each member who signs up receives a free "Veterans of Steel" dog tag. Canadian veterans can text VET to 32323.*

Members can also visit usw.org/vetsofsteel for other resources, including model contract language, sample presentations for locals to use, and other resources.

The USW is also an affiliate

of the AFL-CIO Union Veterans Council, which works to provide career opportunities and other financial benefits for union veterans. Members can find out more about that program at unionveterans.org.



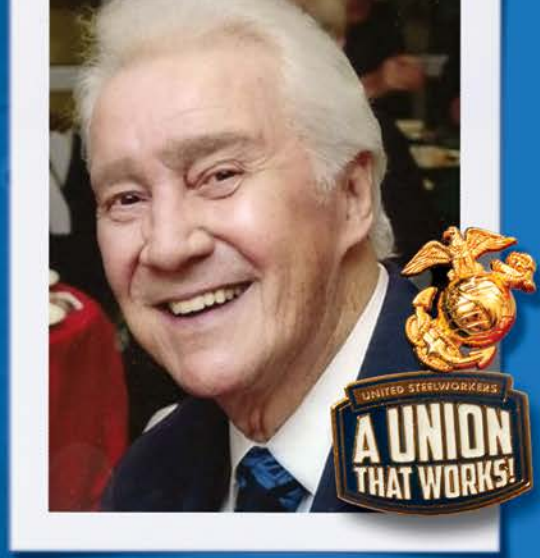
is intended to help both current USW members who are veterans, as well as veterans in the communities where Steelworkers live and work, who may not yet be members.

“We want to reach into our communities to help people who really need it,” Conway said.

The program faced some roadblocks to its progress in recent years, most notably the shift from in-person to virtual gatherings due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but that hasn’t dampened the enthusiasm USW members feel for honoring their siblings who have served.

The program is designed for both U.S. and Canadian military veterans.

“There’s a lot of work to do,” Conway said. “There are a lot of veterans who are really struggling, and these are people we may know and people we can help.”



OBITUARY

LONGTIME DISTRICT DIRECTOR FRANK VALENTA

Former District Director Frank Valenta, a leader for decades in the Cleveland-area labor movement, passed away in early 2021. He was 93.

Valenta began his career as a laborer and eventually became a Hulett operator at the U.S. Steel Central Furnace Plant in Cleveland after serving in the U.S. Marine Corps.

He was extremely proud of his service in the Marines and of his membership in the Steelworkers’ union. As a Hulett operator (the 100-foot-tall, 800-ton ore unloaders) he often bragged that he was the best at the job on the Great Lakes. Although his co-workers suspected he may have been blustering, they attested to his prowess as an operator and, indeed, he might have been the best.

He rose through the ranks of USWA Local 2287 to eventually become local union president and, later, a member of the international union’s staff.

Valenta was elected Director of District 28 in 1977, representing USW members across northeastern Ohio, including Cleveland, Akron and Lorain.

In his capacity as District Director, he served as the union’s chairman of negotiations for numerous companies, including Jones and Laughlin Steel.

He was faced with many challenges as Director, including the restructuring of the steel industry in the early 1980s. As Director, he fought plant closings and had success in securing aid for many

failing enterprises, saving countless Steelworkers’ jobs. He was active in the Democratic Party in Ohio and ran for Congress in Ohio’s 19th Congressional District in 1992.

He served as president of the Cleveland AFL-CIO from 1970 to 1974 and again from 1986 to 1997. As AFL-CIO president, he was instrumental in working to pass the Gateway Project Referendum, which led to the building of the new arena and ballparks, which spurred the revitalization of downtown Cleveland.

Early in his career, Valenta served as labor liaison during the successful re-election campaign of U.S. Sen. Stephen Young against the son of a Republican icon in Robert Taft Jr.. Valenta struck up a lifelong friendship with the late Sen. Howard Metzenbaum, who was then Young’s campaign manager. Metzenbaum credited Valenta’s work, and the support of organized labor, with helping to secure Young’s re-election.

Valenta retired in 1995 but remained active in SOAR and participated in many USW and organized labor events, including the “Save Our Steel” campaign in the early 2000s, in which he camped out in Washington D.C., with 1,000 members who helped rebuild the industry.

Valenta was an eloquent spokesperson for workers and never shied away from a TV camera. His legacy will long be remembered.

VIRTUAL RAPID RESPONSE CONFERENCE SET

The USW will hold the 2022 Rapid Response, Legislative and Policy Virtual Conference from Feb. 22 to Feb. 24.

The conference is designed to give local USW activists a chance to expand their knowledge on key issues so they can engage on those issues with their fellow union members and, together, the USW membership can advocate for

worker-friendly policies in Washington, D.C., and throughout the country.

All locals are invited to participate in the three-day event, which will include plenary sessions, workshops, meetings with lawmakers, and much more.

Members can register for the conference by Feb. 15 at usw.to/RR2022. Please register for each session and

make sure you are filling in all required fields.

There is no fee for delegates to register, but participants will need an active Zoom account to register and take part.

For more information on Zoom, visit usw.to/3Ef.

Watch for Rapid Response announcements at www.usw.org/RR-conference and sign up for mobile alerts by texting USWRR2022 to 69866.

(MSG. & DATA RATES MAY APPLY).

USW WELCOMES RENEWABLE FUEL STANDARD PROPOSAL

The USW welcomed the Environmental Protection Agency's proposed rule, issued in December, on the renewable fuel standard (RFS) renewable volume obligations.

The rule, which sets annual renewable fuel volumes and percentages for biofuels, is traditionally updated every year, but a new rule has not been issued since 2019.

"This is an important step in providing needed clarity for the oil industry, one that will help companies make plans for the future and which in turn will help create a

more favorable environment for job retention and creation," said Mike Smith, who chairs the USW's National Oil Bargaining Program.

The EPA also announced an informal proposal on small refinery exemptions alongside the RVO rule, which the USW will review. These exemptions have historically been an important tool to retain union-represented oil refinery jobs given the inconsistency in implementation of the RFS.

Smith said that while the USW applauded the Biden administration for finally putting out an RVO

proposal, the rule does not address what the union sees as fundamental flaws with the RFS, including the unregulated market for renewable identification numbers (RIN).

"High and fluctuating RIN prices jeopardize USW members' jobs at independent refineries," Smith said. "While it was clear that our industry was long overdue for guidance in this area, our union will also continue to push Congress and the administration for larger reforms to the RFS so that workers and their communities have even more long-term stability."

MOTIVA TERMINAL GROUP REACHES FIRST CONTRACT

Motiva Terminal operators in Port Neches, Texas, voted overwhelmingly in November to ratify their first contract.

The agreement raised wages for the Local 13-423 unit by 10.75 percent over the four-year term, which runs to November of 2025.

The swift ratification resulted in an immediate 2.75 percent wage increase and preserved the workers' strong benefits. Starting in February, the members also will receive a 2 percent wage increase.

The 13 process operators unanimously voted April 23, 2021, to join the USW, and Local 13-423 Committee Chairman Austin Sangster said many of the goals in negotiations, which began Aug. 16, centered on security.

As a result of their first union contract, for example, the unit will now have a formal grievance and arbitration procedure.

"While we felt we needed a wage increase, gaining the grievance and arbitration procedure was a big one because we felt like we needed something in place to protect us and to give us a chance to hold the company accountable," said Sangster.

TITAN TIRE WORKERS RATIFY NEW CONTRACTS

Members who work at Titan Tire Corp. factories in three states voted in January to ratify new three-year contracts with the company.

The new agreements will cover a total of about 800 members of Local 890 in Bryan, Ohio, Local 745 in Freeport, Ill., and Local 164 in Des Moines, Iowa.

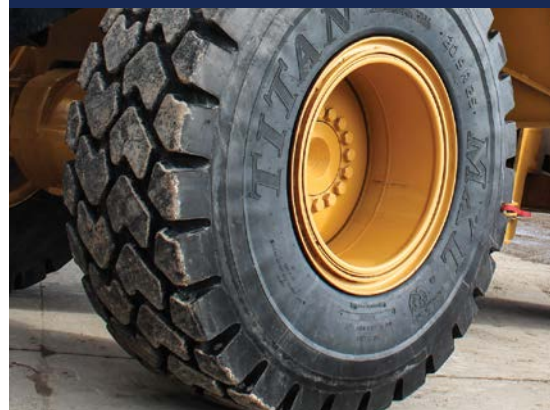
While the members have separate contracts to cover each work site, the agreements all include significant wage increases in each year of the contract, along with signing bonuses, a continuation of the existing health care coverage, improved retirement benefits, increased reimbursements for safety equipment, and additional vacation.

District 7 Director Mike Millsap, who chaired the negotiations for the USW, credited the solidarity of the USW membership for the successful negotiations.

"This is a challenging time for rubber workers, and for all workers, as we continue to navigate our way through the uncertainty of the pandemic and economic recovery," Millsap said. "These hard-working members managed to continue to work together to meet those challenges and achieve a strong agreement."

Titan management said the new contract gives both the company and its work force the chance to continue to thrive.

"We look forward to moving ahead under these contracts and appreciate working with the leadership of all our unions," said Titan's President and CEO Paul Reitz.



NEW CHARGES IN EXXONMOBIL LOCKOUT

Local 13-243 filed new unfair labor practice (ULP) charges with the National Labor Relations Board against ExxonMobil in connection with the company's nine-month lockout of its USW work force as well as a company-driven decertification effort.

About 500 members of the local union remained on the picket line as *USW@Work*

went to press after the company locked them out of their jobs on May 1, 2021.

The unfair labor practice (ULP) lockout followed months of tense negotiations, beginning in January 2021, during which the company demanded numerous major contract language changes that would have dismantled members' safety, job security and seniority.

Members voted last fall to reject an unacceptable offer from the company and reiterat-

ed their commitment to bargaining in good faith toward a fair and equitable agreement.

Meanwhile, members made their voices heard during the World Petroleum Congress, held in December in nearby Houston.

Local 13-243 members and their allies demonstrated outside the oil industry conference, which was being held in the United States for the first time in more than three decades. USW members and others used

the occasion to demand that ExxonMobil end the lockout and bargain in good faith for a fair and equitable contract.

"We just wanted to take an opportunity to get the word out once again that we are ready to get back to work," said Local 13-243 bargaining committee chair Mark Morgan.



UNIONS SEEK PERMANENT COVID-19 STANDARD

As coronavirus infections and hospitalizations were on the rise across the country, the AFL-CIO, National Nurses United, and other unions representing health care workers petitioned a U.S. Appeals Court to order the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to issue a permanent standard that requires employers to protect health care workers against COVID-19.

OSHA announced on Dec. 27 that all of the non-recordkeeping provisions of the health care emergency temporary standard (ETS) issued by the labor secretary in June 2021 would be expiring, despite a surge of new COVID infections.

The labor groups' petition

asked the Washington, D.C., circuit court to order OSHA to retain and enforce the ETS until it is superseded by a permanent one.

"In the face of the Omicron variant, it is not the time to roll back protections, but to fully enforce and make them permanent," said AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler. "We have no choice but to turn to the courts to ensure that our healthcare workers are protected as they provide such critical care throughout this pandemic."

This petition came after multiple unions, including the USW, released a statement on Dec. 28 denouncing the decision to discontinue the ETS.

3M CONTRACT RAISES WAGES, IMPROVES LANGUAGE

Members voted by a 3-to-1 margin in November to ratify a new three-year agreement with 3M that covers Local 4-753 members at the company's Meriden, Conn., plant.

The new agreement includes wage increases and other improvements to working conditions for about 100 members at the facility.

"I firmly believe that we now have a better contract than the previous one," said Local 4-753 President Mike Laurelo. "It is fairer to the work force, we were able to get a few little extras passed, and we did not give up a lot in return."

Workers will receive a 2.5 percent wage increase each year. The local also negotiated increased pay for trainers on top of their regular wages.

Other improvements in the new contract include enhancements to retirement benefits, an additional personal day, fewer contingent workers, and contract language on the right to refuse unsafe work.

"The new contract will make overtime distribution fairer and equitable and boost morale by addressing the pension plan," Laurelo said.

NEWS BRIEFS

GLOBAL SOLIDARITY LIFTS DS SMITH WORKERS

Members of Local 1419 ratified a new agreement after an often tense round of negotiations with management at their workplace, DS Smith, in Reading, Pa.

USW members spent six months across the bargaining table from the London-based packaging manufacturer before reaching a new agreement with the help of an appearance from the USW Bat Light team for the first time in paper bargaining, and support from their fellow union members in Unite the Union of Great Britain and Ireland, the USW's partners in the trans-Atlantic union Workers Uniting.

The new contract includes significant wage increases, continued affordable health care, and improvements to vacation and sick and accident language.

Unite the Union members' public show of solidarity in calling for a fair contract helped push the company to settle a fair agreement with Local 1419.

"Rest assured that all Unite organized plants in the UK have been fully informed and stand in solidarity with you," Unite General Secretary Sharon Graham wrote in a letter to USW members. "We strongly affirm our full support and solidarity with the USW and its members."

INDUSTRIALL TAKES AIM AT INEQUALITY

Union leaders from around the world recommitted themselves to leading the fight for economic justice during the IndustriALL Global Union's first executive committee meeting under the direction of its new leadership team in December.

The IndustriALL coalition was created in 2012 with the merger of the International Metalworkers' Federation, the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions, and the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation.

IndustriALL consists of 600 unions representing more than 50 million workers in the manufacturing, mining and energy sectors across 140 countries. The USW's Anna Fendley serves as the organization's vice president for North America and sits on the IndustriALL executive committee along with International President Tom Conway.

Atle Høie of Norway will serve as the coalition's new general secretary. Høie took office with a pledge to make more effective use of global solidarity to confront corporate greed and aid struggling workers around the globe.

"Rules are urgently needed to confront global corporate power," the group stated in its four-year action plan unveiled last fall. "As global corporations tear up the social contract, calls for more control and regulation of multinational corporations are growing stronger."

In addition to leading the fight for economic justice, a major focus of the coalition's work is building networks of union members at multinational companies that allow workers to share strategies and achieve fair treatment from their employers.

IndustriALL also works to establish global framework agreements with global corporations to establish high standards for workers' rights, safety and environmental practices, and trade rules that benefit workers.

"The financial crisis exposed the inherent market failures," the IndustriALL action plan states. "Inequality has intensified and the richest one percent of people now control over half of the wealth globally."

USW MEMBERS PUSH FOR VOTING RIGHTS

International President Tom Conway marked the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday in January by calling for the U.S. Senate to pass the Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act.

"The freedom to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy, but it is now in grave peril as Republican-led state legislatures chip away at this foundational right," Conway said.

Between Jan. 1 and Dec. 7, 2021, at least 19 states passed 34 laws restricting access to voting.

In conjunction with Conway's statement, activists in the union's Rapid Response program launched an effort to push for legislation to protect access to the ballot box for voters across the country.

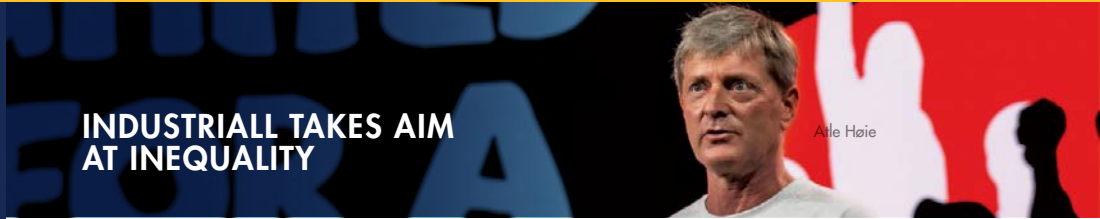
U.S. House of Representatives passed the voting rights legislation, which would institute national standards for voting, including early voting and automatic voter registration in all 50 states, consistent rules for mail-in ballots, and the creation of a holiday on Election Day.

As *USW@Work* went to press, the legislation faced an uncertain future in the U.S. Senate, where outdated filibuster rules make it easier for a minority of senators to prevent the rest of the body from taking action.

To join your fellow USW members in calling on the Senate to ensure that all Americans can have their say on Election Day, visit: usw.to/3Ai.

"There is no better way to honor civil rights heroes like Dr. King and Rep. Lewis than by passing common-sense voting rights legislation," Conway said.

Michael McFerren, left, and Ramon Sanjiago



NURSING HOME WORKERS VOTE UNANIMOUSLY TO JOIN USW

Workers at four assisted-living facilities in Western Pennsylvania achieved a remarkable organizing victory in January when they voted – unanimously – to join the USW.

Of the approximately 500 workers at the four nursing centers, 370 voted “yes” to join the union. There were zero “no” votes. The members now will begin the work of preparing to bargain a contract.

The newest USW members work at county-run Kane Community Living Centers in the Pittsburgh-area neighborhoods of Glen Hazel, McKeesport, Ross and Scott.

Throughout their yearlong organizing campaign, the

workers’ unwavering dedication to the USW was evident in the huge participation they showed in member-driven solidarity events.

Debbie Blakeley, a recreation aide at the Kane facility in Ross, north of Pittsburgh, said that she and her colleagues voted to join the USW in order to pursue workplace rights and a voice on the job as well as stronger wages and benefits.

“Respect is a big thing for all of us,” said Blakeley, who has worked at the Kane Centers for 37 years. “I’m looking forward to working with the union to get what we deserve, because we all work really hard.”



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 2020 that the reduction percentage under the Procedure is 12.64% (20.11% 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 20.11% figure to most current and future objectors. Therefore, an objector will be charged 79.89% 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 _____

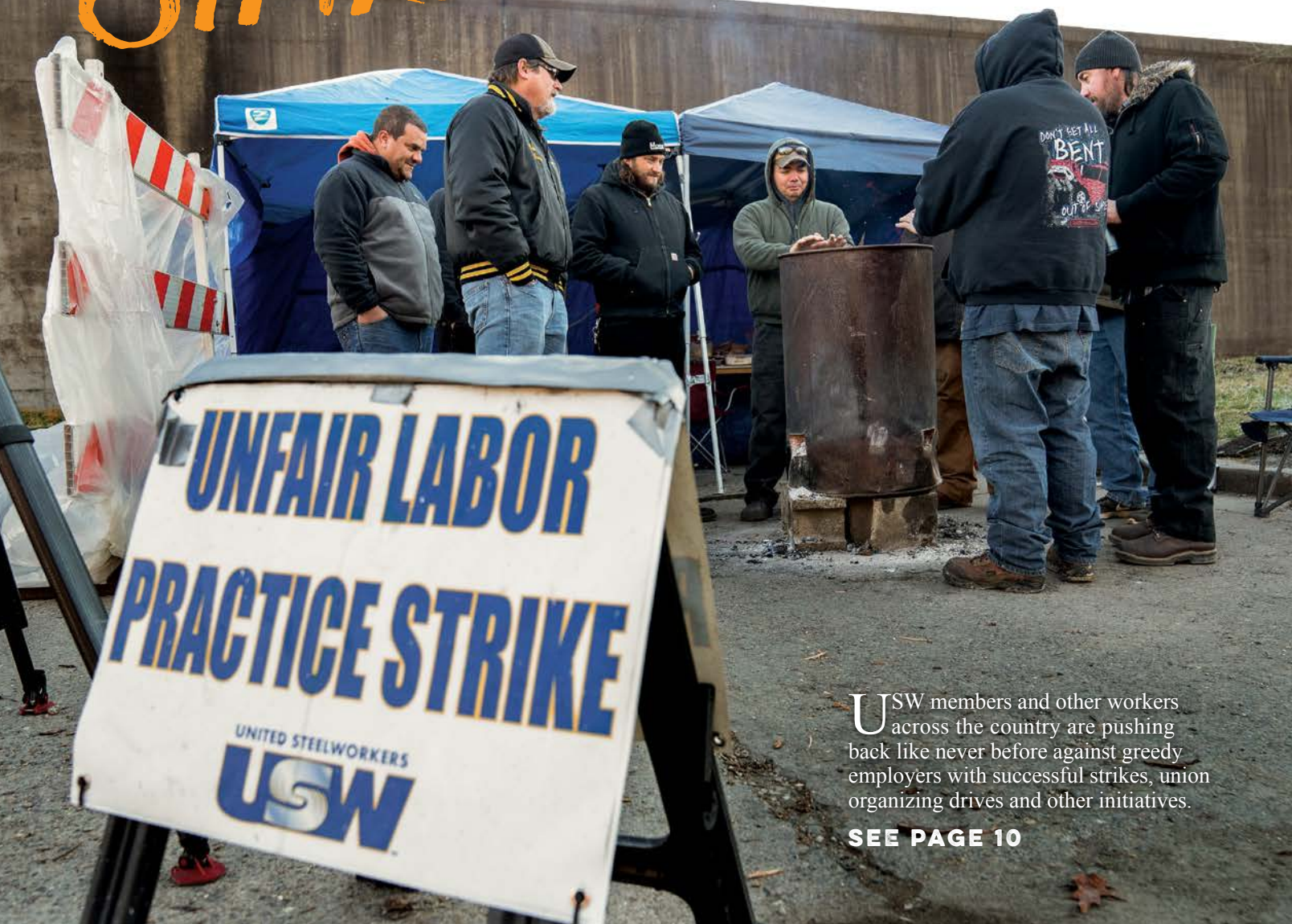
City _____

State _____ Zip _____

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

Striketober

**ROLLS
ON**



USW members and other workers across the country are pushing back like never before against greedy employers with successful strikes, union organizing drives and other initiatives.

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