

Official Publication of District 11 United Steelworkers. Published four times a year and inserted in **USW@Work**.

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## Local 310L Next Generation Committee Leads Effort to Support Veterans

**The Next Generation Committee of Local 310L wrapped up this year's Solidarity for Soldiers drive.**

They were able to deliver two carloads of donated items and a check for \$2,000 to the Des Moines Homeless Veterans Stand Down, in addition to a previous contribution of \$1,000 and another two loads of donations.

This would not have been possible without the generosity of so many within the area labor community, and Local 310L would like to thank all who contributed to this worthy cause.

## Let's Hear from YOU!

USW@Work is published four times a year and we need the submissions for the Winter 2022 issue by January 11, 2022. Please submit them to **[D11news@usw.org](mailto:D11news@usw.org)**.

Also include a telephone number or active e-mail address in case we need additional information. We will try to include all submissions and we reserve the right to edit information in order to fit the allocated space.

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# USW REPORTER

## District 11 Conference

After being postponed multiple times due to the pandemic, delegates from local unions in USW District 11 were finally able to attend the eleventh District 11 Conference, which was held from Aug. 29 to Sept. 1, 2021, in Riverside, Mo.



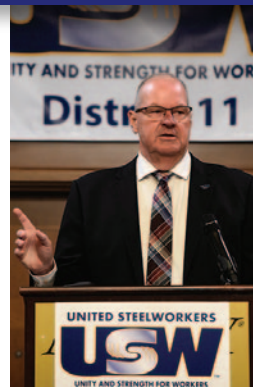
Day one of the conference was a general session that was kicked off with a welcome speech given by Patrick Dujakovich, the President of the Greater Kansas City AFL-CIO, who was followed by Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, II, from Missouri's 5th Congressional District.

The rest of the general session included presentations from the Tony Mazzocchi Center, the Institute for Career Development, USW Strategic Campaigns, Free College Benefit, USW New Media and the USW Health and Welfare Fund. There was also a presentation on PAC with recognition and awards given to Locals 307L, 105 and 560 for being the top three locals for PAC contributions in 2019 and 2020.

Day two started with a short general session covering national legislative issues and Rapid Response. After the general session, the delegates attended workshops on topics such as Building Power, Labor Law, Fundamentals of Health and Safety, and Organizing in Open Shops/Preparing for Right-to-Work Laws.

Day three consisted of a general session with presentations from the BlueGreen Alliance and USW Veterans of Steel, followed by the keynote speaker, International Secretary-Treasurer John Shinn. Shinn also presented Dan Jackson from Local 560 with the 2021 Jefferson Award.

The general session was followed by District 11 reports on Women of Steel and education in District 11. The morning ended by taking care of conference business by voting on resolutions that had been submitted and the election of the Welfare and Education Fund committee members.



John Shinn  
Int'l Secretary-Treasurer



Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Mo. 5th District



## Local 11-205 Earns Activist Award for Rapid Response

Engaging members in the last year has been more than difficult, but our activists know and understand that important work must continue.

We want to recognize the great work by Local 11-205 from Continental Cement in Hannibal, Mo., for stepping up and always knowing the most important thing is to always continue keeping USW members informed.

Congratulations for earning the Rapid Response Activist Award for District 11! Your work is important and appreciated!







## Focusing on the Future

The year 2021 continued to be a challenging year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but we were successful in having both the MINK and Ruttger's Educational Institutes for our members. In addition to the education institutes, over 250 delegates, staff and guests attended the District 11 and Women of Steel conferences in August.

Both conferences focused on offering educational opportunities through workshops and presentations from a number of presenters. My commitment as the Director of District 11 is that I will continue to focus on education for our members to make sure they have the tools to be successful in the future.

A number of the local unions in District 11 have been negotiating contracts this year, whether by Zoom or in person, and my hope is that all negotiations in 2022 will be in person. In my opinion, sitting across the table from the company in bargaining is the most effective way to achieve the goals that each local union sets in bargaining.

In 2022, there will be a number of major industry negotiations taking place. Healthcare, oil, steel, mining, aluminum and the rubber industries—just to name a few—will be

sitting down with their respective employers in hopes of achieving gains for their members.

Since COVID arrived in March 2020, USW members have been showing everyone what it means to be “essential workers,” and our employers in all of these industries need to take notice.

Let's make sure that the employers don't forget the sacrifices our members have made over the past twenty months. It's time to stand together in solidarity for and with each other.

Lastly, I want to thank you for supporting me over the last eight years as the Director of District 11 and for allowing me to run unopposed for another term as the leader of the district.

On behalf of myself, Assistant to the Director Cathy Drummond, and all of our staff, our most sincere and heartfelt thanks.

We look forward to facing the challenges of the future and remain committed to continue working to improve our contracts and build our union stronger for the members every day.

## Real Rangers: *Steelworkers and the School Supply Drive*

Hoping to include more districts in the drive to collect school supplies to donate this year, Local 2705 (Hibbing Taconite) Women's Committee Chair Jessica Rootes reached out to Local 6860 from United Taconite, Local 1938 at MinnTac and Local 2660 from Keetac on the Iron Range to see if their committees would want to join this effort.

Jessica told WDIO news that “the community supports us, so we want to support the community as much as we can.”

“Our sisters and brothers stepped up to provide that support as they knew that funding to the schools had been cut with many teachers having to purchase supplies and that there are so many new challenges for teachers, students and families due to COVID-19.”

These phenomenal sisters and brothers raised over \$14,400 in contributions through gate collections, local small business donations and customers purchasing a hanger frog at the local grocery stores. In addition, local business donated school supplies with an estimated cost of over \$2,000. We want to thank all the local businesses for their generous donations!

Delivery of the school supplies were made to the following Iron Range school districts: Hibbing, Chisholm, Rock Ridge, Greenway, Cherry/MIB, Grand Rapids, Nashwauk/Keewatin, and Mesabi East.

We want to recognize the following sisters and brothers who volunteered their time to make this drive a success.

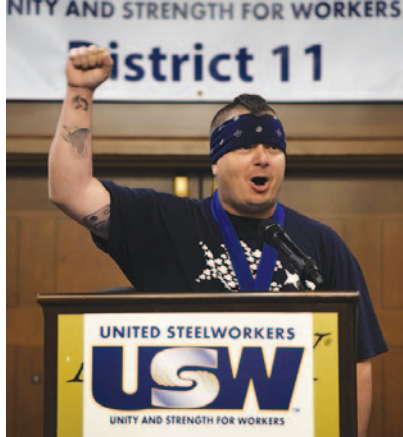
**Local 2705:** Jessica Rootes, Kristy Klimek, Dan Klimek, Chad Van Reese, Andy Fisher, Ben Mancini, Rich Jacklen, Christina Sturgis, Rocky Boriin, Amy Hiatt, Carrie Johnson, Frank Lamusga, & Gregg Roy

**Local 1938:** Kori Meskill

**Local 6860:** Amy Hutkowski and Wendy Erickson

**Local 2660:** Tawnya Gustafson, Jake Friend, Justin Savaloja and Jeremy Fredette





## District 11 Honors Local 560's **DAN JACKSON** with USW Jefferson Award

The USW is proud to have generous and compassionate members who foster a culture of giving back in our union.

Since 2015, the USW has partnered with the Jefferson Awards Foundation, recently renamed Multiplying Good, to celebrate Steelworkers who do amazing works of community service, and to show the world that Steelworkers have big hearts.

Through our partnership with Multiplying Good, the USW Cares program awards members with the prestigious Jefferson Award for community service. Our union has repeatedly risen to the top, winning national awards for all the things we do to help lift up the communities where we live and work.

The unofficial "Noble Prize of Community Service" has been presented to previous Jefferson Award recipients that include Supreme Court Justices, major corporations and icons like the late, great John L. Lewis.

This year, one candidate stood out amongst many worthy nominees for the award in District 11.

Dan Jackson from Local 560 received the 2021 award for the countless contributions he's made to the union and his community.

"Dan is the symbol of solidarity. He is continuously looking for people and helping to build activists inside the union and in communities," his nomination letter said. "He does post-prom games, has helped Toys for Tots, serves on

labor councils across the state and is always looking for people and ways to help. He is truly an inspiration and a leader worth following."

Jackson has raised thousands of dollars over the years to purchase holiday gifts for children who need them. He organized post-prom events to keep young people safe, while providing prizes to ensure they have money needed for gas and books for college.

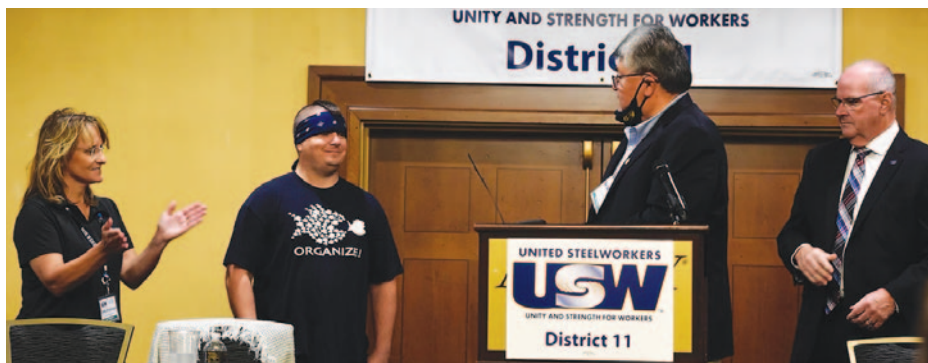
USW Local 560 President Will Wilkinson thanked Jackson for his contributions to the USW and the community.

"Dan Jackson signed me into the Union when I started, and as a leader of a union, I wish I had twenty more of him," Wilkinson said. "His endless commitment to the labor movement is invaluable, and with his activism we do so much good for all our surrounding communities."

On receiving the award, Jackson enthusiastically shared credit with his fellow USW Local 560 members.

"With all the greatness that surrounds us and support from other workers, I'm proud to say that our local truly is a union that cares!"

**You can learn more about this special program and how to nominate yourself or a fellow Steelworker at <https://www.usw.org/uswcares>.**





# Empowered Women Empower the World

**Empowered Women Empower the World was the theme of the eighth District 11 Women's Conference held in Riverside, Missouri, where sixty-one sisters and brothers from across the district gathered for a weekend of educational workshops, informative speeches, community service and solidarity.**

Our keynote speaker was the USW's amazing Vice President At-Large Roxanne Brown. In recognizing our conference's theme, she quoted Toni Morrison stating that "if you have some power, then your job is to empower somebody else."

She explained that it is every sister's job in this room to help our sisters find and cultivate that power from within and every brother's job to support their sisters.

"It's all of our jobs to have each other's backs and push each other, which is why conferences like this are so important. Sometimes we forget our power and that our sisters are right next to us because life is happening to us and around us, and this pandemic period really highlighted this," she said.

Delegates received overviews of the USW Free College program, Veterans of Steel program and the USW "We Supply America" initiative.

Each delegate participated in four workshops that focused on personal growth, leadership styles and skills and building connections within the community and our union. One of the workshops offered focused on building connections with our members, others and taking our union into our communities with meaningful service.

AFL-CIO President and Sister Liz Shuler was unable to be with us but shared a welcome video. President Shuler recognized in her opening remarks that this conference was "an incubator for the organizing and activism that is moving women from the margins to the center in our unions, at work and in the economy."

She shared that it is so inspiring to see women of every color, age, faith and background claiming their power through our unions. She noted that one of our superpowers is how we connect with each other by networking, supporting each other, lifting each other up and helping each other navigate difficult terrain.

Community service was an important part of the agenda. We know that community service not only grows our union but benefits the communities where we live and work. Our sisters and brothers volunteered at two local organizations, The Harvesters and the Kansas City Chapter of Sleep in Heavenly Peace.

The Harvesters' mission is to feed hungry people today and work to end hunger tomorrow. They are a regional food bank serving a 26-county area of

northwestern Missouri and northeastern Kansas. The Harvesters provides food and related household products to more than 700 nonprofit agencies including emergency food pantries, community kitchens, homeless shelters, children's homes and others. They also offer education programs to increase community awareness of hunger and teach about good nutrition.

The Kansas City Chapter of Sleep in Heavenly Peace's mission is to end child bedlessness and ensure that no kid sleeps on the floor in our town! They state that the most profound way to end the national crisis of child bedlessness is to unite the country in one common goal of building the most amount of beds possible and getting thousands of children off the floor. This organization builds the bunk beds and provides the mattresses, sheets, blankets and pillows. Volunteers then go into the homes to set up the beds for the children. The waiting list is at 230 needed beds and that does not include foster care and shelters. Each bed has a cost of \$250.

"We want all our sisters to know that they have a place in our union and conferences such as this provide them with the education, tools and networking opportunities for each of them to grow as leaders not only in their union but within their personal lives and in their communities," said Cathy Drummond, the District Assistant to the Director and Women of Steel coordinator. "As we move forward through these difficult times of the pandemic, we look forward to being back in-person and scheduling our Regional Women's Conference meetings and Women's Leadership course in the near future."

USW District 11 Director Emil Ramirez said that engaging members, educating them and developing the next generation of leaders has been one of the keys to the union's success through the years.

"We are building a union stronger that represents members from a diverse and wide range of industries and vast array of working environments," he said. "Every worker deserves a union, and the USW is a union that is truly for every worker."





By-Laws, Duties of Local Union Officers, FMLA/NLRB Information, Research Methods for Bargaining and Civil and Human Rights.

The fourth year students welcomed Meredith Stepp as their new instructor. They focused on the arbitration

**After the cancellation of all in person trainings in 2020, we were excited to be back together at the sixth annual Charley Richardson Fall Educational Institute at Ruttger's Bay Lake Lodge in Deerwood, Minn., from Sept. 19 to 24, 2021. We had 89 local union officers, committee members and activists from Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota and Wyoming, along with 20 instructors and presenters.**

The institute consists of courses designed to build skills and educate USW officers and activists over a four-year period. The general session

topics covered presentations about USW programs which support our members and their families.

The first year courses had a record number of participants. Year one curriculum consists of Steelworker History, Basic Contract Administration & Grievance Handling, Communications and Public Speaking.

The year two curriculum offered Using Safety and Health to Build Your Local Union, Confronting Work Place Change, Effective Communications and Continuous Bargaining.

The year three curriculum featured USW Constitution & Local Union

process and studied, trained and presented an actual case. The students presented their case in a mock hearing, in front of all students during the Friday closing session.

We are excited to bring in person training back to the District again and hope your local will participate in next year's Charley Richardson Fall Educational Institute scheduled for Sept. 18-23, 2022. Watch for the call letter and registration form, which will be mailed to your local union president and recording secretary in April 2022.

## Minnesota Women of Steel Share Their Stories

**When Tawnya Gustafson decided to run for vice president of USW Local 2660, she did it with her young daughters at the forefront of her mind. She wanted to prove to them that women could do and be anything.**

Gustafson won and is now the first woman to ever serve as vice president of the U.S. Steel taconite mining local in Minnesota.

"It's always been a male-dominated environment here," Gustafson said. "Women just traditionally have not worked in the mine."

That's changing, of course, with women like Gustafson stepping up. This shift, along with her personal passion for talking with and inspiring others, led the mother and miner to reach out to her daughter's high school and organize the first-ever Women in the Workforce event, held on Wed., Sept. 29, 2021.

"We Can Do It! The Sky's the Limit" was the theme for the inaugural program, co-sponsored by Hibbing Community College, that provided an opportunity for ten women in traditionally male-dominated jobs to share their stories with

young women in grades 10-12 at Hibbing High School.

USW District 11 also assisted the local with planning the event, with Assistant to the Director Cathy Drummond sharing her career story as part of the panel.

"I started in a more traditional role for women in health care, then moved into a union position at the Steelworkers," said Drummond. "I never envisioned being where I am now and being able to speak on behalf of women in labor. It was an empowering day."

Local 1938 Women of Steel Chair Kori Meskill also graced the stage to share her experience as a millwright in the maintenance department at U.S. Steel Minntac.

Journeys like these are why Gustafson is driven to stay engaged with the community and with the next generation, reminding them of their endless possibilities.

"Even if we touched one young woman's life to inspire her to follow her passion, it was worth it," said Gustafson.





## MINK Renamed in Honor of

## JERRY JOHNSON

Delegates to the eleventh USW District 11 Conference passed a Resolution renaming the MINK (Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas) District 11 Educational Institute the USW District 11 Jerry Johnson Educational Institute. Jerry retired in 2004 after serving the USW for 28 years as a Staff Representative, Sub-District Director and Education Coordinator.

Throughout his career as the Education Coordinator for USW District 34 and USW District 11, Jerry's leadership helped guide the District towards making education of our members a priority.



Director Emil Ramirez presenting a copy of the Resolution to retired Sub-District Director Jerry Johnson.

Officers' training  
in Billings, Mt.



## Financial Officers' Training

In August the District continued its commitment to providing education to the local union officers and members by holding a two-day financial officers' training in Minneapolis, Kansas City, Mo., and Billings, Mt. With a total 153 participants that included local union presidents, financial secretaries, treasurers and trustees, the training, presented by USW International Auditors, covered the fiduciary responsibilities of the financial officers.

It shall be the duty of the President, Financial Secretary and Treasurer to insure that the funds and property of the Local Union are preserved, managed, invested and expended in accordance with the International Constitution and policies and Local Union By-Laws. If your local union needs additional training please contact your staff representative or the District office.

## Welcome Liza DeCoursey to District 11!

Sister Liza will be working in the Minneapolis office as a Senior Administrative Assistant. Liza has worked as an Administrative Specialist and Project Coordinator for over 25 years with experience in both construction and bio-research environments.

Outside office hours Liza spends most of her time volunteering with Safe Hands Rescue as a foster coordinator, transport driver and foster home. Over the past nine years, she and her partner, Brian, have welcomed over 250 dogs into their home while they look for their FURever families.

In addition to volunteer work, Liza enjoys fishing, gardening, motorcycling, stained glass, and snuggling with her pack over a good book or movie.



## Gene Szondy Retires

Gene started his career at Conwed Plastics in 1974, and began serving the members of the union as a steward almost immediately. He was elected to the position of unit chairman in December 1977 and led two strikes.

He was elected president of Local 409 in 1982, participating in many organizing drives and contract negotiations.

Gene earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Labor Relations from Metropolitan State University. From 1980 to 1985, he served as a trustee and a recording secretary for the OCAW District 6 Council before his election as Secretary Treasurer in 1985 and President in 1990.

Since joining the staff of the international union in 1991, he has served members in what are now USW District 7 and USW District 11, and participated in Washington, D.C., lobbying efforts on behalf of the Nuclear Council.

*We thank Gene for his many years of dedicated service to our union and its members.*



# Local 307L Volunteers Make Kansas AFL-CIO Outing Successful

First, we extend our thanks to the Women's Committee at Local 307L (Goodyear) in Topeka, Kansas who stepped up to make a difference in their community by volunteering at the Kansas AFL-CIO's fourth Annual Golf Tournament at the Greatlife Shawnee Country Club in Topeka.

These amazing sisters and brothers helped operate every aspect of the tournament, from the registration desk to the beverage carts, the volunteers served breakfast before the start of the tournament as well as the barbecue lunch afterwards.

This tournament helps fund the AFL-CIO's continued efforts on behalf of "Kansas' Working Families." A portion of the proceeds from the tournament will go to support The Boys and Girls Club of Kansas Alliance.

The purpose of this event is to continue the mission on behalf of the hopes and aspirations of the working people of all America, but specifically for Working Kansas Families; to the achievement of higher standards of living and safe working conditions; to the attainment of security for the rights, recognition, dignity and respect to which they are justly entitled; and finally, the enjoyment of the leisure for which their skills make possible.



## ON the LINE



USW District 11 Staff Representative Tom Ricker stopped at the BCTGM picket line at Kellogg's in Omaha on Oct. 20, 2021. He was there to show solidarity and deliver donations of money, bottled water and soda on behalf of the NPULC Central Labor Council. The union encourages members to find alternatives to Kellogg's products until this labor dispute is settled.



## PAC Gives USW Members the Strong Voice We Need

Our USW PAC makes it possible for our union to run the most effective, member-driven program in the labor movement, and it is funded entirely by voluntary contributions from members like you.

Contributions are used to keep members informed and support member-based programs to combat attacks on worker rights. A portion of these monies are also used to support political candidates who have pledged to represent USW values and protect our right to negotiate for fair pay and safer working conditions on the job.

During our 2021 District 11 Conference, the following locals were recognized for their 2019-2020 Political Action Committee (P.A.C.) contributions:

- Local 307L (Goodyear in Topeka, KS)**
- Local 105 (Arconic in Bettendorf, IA)**
- Local 560 (Bobcat in Gwinner, ND)**



*NOTE: Federal law prohibits our dues dollars from being used for many political purposes, which is why our union established the United Steelworkers' Political Action Committee (USW PAC).*