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Labor 2020 Wrap Up

The 2020 General Election was one of the most, if not *the* most, challenging elections the USW has played a role in over the past few decades.

With COVID-19 safety protocols in place, operations were obviously a little different than in other years, but activists met those challenges and kept their focus on helping elect labor-endorsed candidates, including Joe Biden and Kamala Harris to be the next President and Vice President of the United States.

In Minnesota, USW members helped U.S. Senator Tina Smith retain her seat and elected more working family and labor-friendly House and Senate members at the state level. Unfortunately, the movement lost a good friend, Congressman Colin Peterson, in the 7th District, but held on to five other seats.

While labor had high hopes in Montana, Kansas and Iowa, several seats were lost, including the governorship in Montana. In Kansas, volunteers helped re-elect Sharice Davids, but came up short on an open congressional seat. In Iowa, Congresswoman Cindy Axne retained her seat, and results are still pending in Iowa Congressional District 2 as a recount is still in play.

The district would like to thank the members who took the time to lend a hand, as well as all the staff who volunteered, and all of those throughout District 11 who helped during this election.

Let's Hear from YOU!

USW@Work is published four times a year and we need the submissions for the Spring 2021 issue by April 13, 2021. Please submit them to 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

Boulton Retires

One of the phrases that resonated the most with Randy Boulton as he came of age was, “You could lose everything with the stroke of a pen.” For more than four decades, he has dedicated his life’s work to ensuring workers and their families do not suffer that fate.

Through countless arbitration victories and organizing wins, Boulton has channeled his passion for improving people’s lives and making a tangible difference any way he can. Now, after 43 years of service, Boulton is retiring from his role as District 11 Sub-Director, as of March 1, 2021.

Boulton attended the University of Illinois and the University of Iowa before joining up with the United Rubber Workers (URW) at age 22, eager to get to work for the labor movement. He wore many hats in his early

years with the URW before the union merged with the USW in 1995, from organizer to staff representative to arbitrator, a self-professed “Jack of all trades, master of none.”

Boulton began working with the USW as District 11 Sub-Director after the volatile, 16-month-long Bridgestone-Firestone strike that began in 1994 and bled into 1995, in time with the merger. Boulton also worked through the Titan Tire strike, which started on May 1, 1998, and ended in 2001.

District 11 Director Emil Ramirez first met Boulton during the Bridgestone-Firestone strike, and since then he has seen the long-time activist and organizer go above and beyond for the members he has served.

“His arbitration skills and knowledge of analyzing contract language are unlike any

other,” said Ramirez. “He spread that knowledge around by being a mentor to many staff throughout the years, and he will be greatly missed. We all wish him the best.”

For Boulton, everything he has done in the movement has been about making sure workers have a voice and a fair shake.

“I truly believe knowledge is power,” Boulton said, who was also passionate about electoral politics. “Workers need to be engaged and informed.”

Boulton has also been heavily involved with the Iowa AFL-CIO and the Iowa Democratic Party throughout his career. He plans on remaining active in the movement, but looks forward to enjoying more time with his wife, grandchildren, and horses.



District 11 VIRTUAL TRAINING

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way District 11 members are able to gather, but it hasn’t slowed the work of the USW, which adapted to serve local unions safely through a number of virtual events for education, stewardship and collective bargaining.

The USW held its first ever virtual education conference Smarter is Stronger online last November. The conference drew 850 registered members, including 77 from District 11, with many more watching together in union halls. It included 90 different sessions covering health and safety, bargaining, organizing and more.

The District has now begun a five-week online Steward Education Program, running Jan. 19 through Feb. 23, with the goal of providing a detailed overview of the rights, roles and responsibilities of stewards.

Stewards are on the front lines in local unions and are essential for representing and defending members. The 90-minute sessions train stewards to advocate for members by employing the grievance procedure, investigating concerns and handling contract violations.

The District is also looking ahead and plans to organize a virtual Collective Bargaining Training for local union members to learn about making bargaining demands and negotiating effectively with employers.

More information will soon be available about this and other future virtual trainings.

Locals are encouraged to contact Cathy Drummond at cdrummond@usw.org, or Joyce Russotto at jussotto@usw.org, for more about virtual education opportunities.

2021 UPCOMING EVENTS

- ▶ **WOS Conference:** August 26-28
- ▶ **District 11 Conference:** August 29-Sept. 1
- ▶ **MINK:** June 5-11
- ▶ **Ruttger’s:** September 19-24



Ambitious Infrastructure Investments Will Create Jobs in District 11

First, I'd like to wish everyone a healthy and happy 2021 and pause to remember everyone we have lost during the first year of the ongoing pandemic.

We face many challenges as a union and as a country in the months and years ahead. Too many of our neighbors are living in poverty and many others, including numerous USW brothers and sisters, are insecure in their employment due to the pandemic, unfair trade and other factors outside their control.

Recent headlines have spurred research that shows that many thousands of Americans' physical health and safety are at risk due to our aging and long-neglected infrastructure.

Our elected leaders need to act now to prevent the nation's roads, bridges and dams from turning into crumbling hazards that put American lives and dreams at risk.

Our union has long stood with industry groups and other organizations to promote government policies to stabilize our economy and create good jobs. We are hopeful that our elected leaders will work together under the leadership of President Joe Biden, who made investing in infrastructure a major theme of his election campaign.

Now, as the country struggles to rebound economically from the COVID-19 pandemic, an infrastructure campaign is more essential than ever. Rebuilding the nation's transportation and energy systems would provide work for millions of Americans who lost jobs—or risk losing them—because of the economic slump triggered by the coronavirus.

Upgraded roads, bridges and waterways would facilitate an expansion of commerce for years to come. And a major infrastructure push will protect the lives and investments of Americans who are tired of being placed in harm's way.

The nation's roads, bridges, harbors, electrical lines, airports and water systems are also in deplorable shape. In 2017, the American Society of Civil Engineers gave U.S. infrastructure an abysmal "D+" rating.

Americans make 188 million trips across thousands of deteriorating bridges each day. Breaks in aging pipes waste more than two trillion gallons of treated drinking water every year. The nation depends on electrical lines that are quickly reaching the end of their life expectancy, bringing the possibility of more frequent power outages.

Infrastructure failures threaten lives and property. They also disrupt the operation of entire cities and stanch the flow of commerce.

A long-term infrastructure program is now a national imperative, essential to protect Americans from failing bridges and dams, ensure the steady flow of commerce and jump-start an economy hobbled by COVID-19.

"Buy It Here" provisions will be crucial to the program's success.

Federal, state and local governments must rebuild roads, bridges and other assets with American labor and U.S.-made materials. That will ensure the highest-caliber craftsmanship while expanding the nation's manufacturing capacity and putting Americans to work.

In 2017, researchers at Georgetown University calculated that a \$1 trillion infrastructure program would create more than 11 million jobs over 10 years. Biden's even more ambitious plan would provide the resources to create millions more.

Many of those jobs would be in the building trades, material handling, transportation and other fields directly related to construction, but others would be in iron ore and steel, aluminum and other industries along the supply chain.

Still more positions would be created in fields like architecture and engineering, and in the training programs needed to prepare workers for infrastructure jobs.

Many of these would be family-sustaining, middle-class jobs, the kind the country lost by the millions in recent years as manufacturing declined. Now, America needs these jobs to move forward in the post-COVID-19 world.

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, What are you doing for others?"

Martin Luther King, Jr.



This year has been especially hard due to the pandemic, but many of our Women of Steel committees are still finding creative ways to help those in need within our communities.

For example, Local 310L Women of Steel from Bridgestone-Firestone in Des Moines, Iowa had a busy holiday season.

In October, they held a gate collection that raised over \$900, which would be used to adopt families for Thanksgiving and Christmas!

They began with sponsoring three families through the Home Connection Program, and providing each of them a full, traditional Thanksgiving meal and other goodies.

For Christmas, they adopted six children at the Orchard Place and provided them with a variety of presents that were delivered via a drive-up drop-off due to the pandemic.

Local 105's SOAR chapter from Arconic's Bettendorf, Iowa, plant recently delivered a generous contribution to the union hall to support the United Way.

Their donation will help fund tutoring for students who are struggling in school through the Quad Cities Tutor Connection, an easy-to-access tutor connecting site for parents with students in grades K-12.

The tutors are college students, experienced teachers and retired teachers with the experience and knowledge to assist with a range of coursework and learning challenges.

For more information about the tutoring services, visit qctutorconnection.org.



The brothers and sisters at Local Union 560 in Gwinner, N.D., worked hard to bring some cheer to their community this holiday season.

The members receive a turkey from Bobcat every year around Thanksgiving. This year the local leadership felt that they could help the surrounding food pantries, nursing homes, state veterans' homes and families in need in their surrounding area. They asked their membership to donate their turkeys back to the local if they were not needed for their own families. The local donated an astonishing 560 turkeys to those who needed them!

Once again, their Women of Steel (WOS) committee was hard at work and raised \$5,200 to purchase gifts for local children in need. The aluminum can recycling program was also able to add another \$600, which equaled another 19 kids who received much holiday surprise and joy.



Major congratulations are in order for Local 30 from Ardagh in Pevely, Missouri!

Local 30 doubled its "Toys for Tots" collection from last year and filled six boxes.

They knew there were more families in need during the pandemic and wanted to help put smiles on the faces of the children in the community.

