



| United Steelworkers District 4 | January 2019 | Issue 6 |

Find a list of USW District 4 offices and a staff directory at <http://www.usw.org/districts/4/contact>

Director's Report

from USW District 4 Director John Shinn

First, I want to wish everyone a happy New Year. We had a very good year in District 4 in 2018, and I am so proud of the work the staff and local union leadership did last year on behalf of our members – negotiating many contracts, processing many grievances and handling many arbitrations.

We should all be proud of the volunteer and community service work that our union performed all over the district through our Women of Steel (WOS), Next Generation and Veterans Councils.

In 2019, we are looking forward to increasing participation and expanding programs such as Rapid Response, Women of Steel, Next Generation, Veterans Council and Civil and Human Rights programs. It is important for everyone to know that if they want to be active in the union, we have a position for each of you!

I want to congratulate the 1,250 members of USW Locals 12003 and 12012 in Massachusetts for securing a fair contact with National Grid to end a seven month lockout that was imposed on our members by the company. National Grid is a multinational, multi-billion dollar corporation that made a big mistake by thinking they could attack the retirement security, retiree benefits, time off provisions and seniority rights of our members for all future hires. Our members overwhelmingly rejected the greedy company's attempt to create a lower, second tier of union members.

We should all be extremely proud of the local union leadership and members of Locals 12003 and 12012 for standing up to National Grid and its pure greed. The solidarity that our members displayed to endure the seven-month lockout was absolutely incredible.

The international union ran a very successful campaign against the company, which drew outstanding support from the labor movement, our local communities and elected leaders. It is important to note that since National Grid is based in the U.K., the international support we received from "UNITE the Union" in the U.K. through Workers Uniting was a very important part of getting to a settlement.

We also should be proud that – because of our solidarity in the fight against National Grid – there is now a new law in Massachusetts that extends unemployment benefits for up to one year to union members who are locked-out by their employers.

When a union takes on struggle like this, it sends a strong message to corporate America that they cannot come to the bargaining table in bad faith and expect to get away with locking out their workers without paying a severe price for their actions.

I know the officers and members of Locals 12003 and 12012 want to make sure to let all of the locals and members how much they appreciate the support they received from everyone during the lockout.

In closing, I want to thank everyone for the important work they do each day in our workplaces and communities. The hard work and selfless dedication of our members are what make our union truly great.

USW District 4 Provides Education and Training for Local Officers

from Assistant to the Director Del Vitale

Happy New Year! This is the time of year when we reflect back on the accomplishments of the past year and look forward to the challenges ahead. Local union elections took place in 2018, so congratulations to all who participated in the democratic process and particularly to those who were elected. You will have your work cut out for you as you serve in the crucial role that is union leadership.

In order to effectively perform the functions of your office, it is vital that you receive proper training. I saw many of you at the District 4 Conference in August where we offered training in all the necessary subjects. I realize that not everyone was able to attend, so I want to point out that the district conference is not the only time we offer training. There is continuous ongoing training provided in each of the sub-districts. Training can be provided in any subject where there is a need. This includes steward training levels 1 and 2, financial officer training, trustee training, safety training, etc.

If there is a need in your local for a particular training, please reach out to your staff or sub-district director and let them know. When there are enough requests to make a reasonable class size, training will be scheduled. We want you to be equipped to do the best job possible for yourselves and for our members, so please don't be shy and let us know your needs.

In closing, I want to thank all the local union leadership for the many hours and hard work they put in to make the union the success that it is. Thanks also to all of our members in general for the support they give, without which we could not exist. Let's make this the greatest year ever!

Cheetowaga (Sub-District 1) Report

from Sub-District Director James Briggs

First, I would like to thank everyone in the Buffalo office for what I consider a great year.

We started the year with a commitment to address three important issues: the Supreme Court's Janus decision, organizing and PAC. We were successful in all 3 areas.

Following the Janus decision we continued our effort to stay in touch with our Locals this resulted in 100 percent of our members staying in the union. The only outstanding members are from Local 2001 where 3 members are away on military leave.

With regards to organizing, we had a number of leads that we worked on, two of which led to wins and we are negotiating first contracts.

The negotiations at Imery's are led by Joe Vertalino, and Welded Tube bargaining is led by Val Thomas. We are following up with other groups and working on a campaign at TELSA led by some great work by Dave Wasiura.

This is a joint effort with IBEW.

We also negotiated 11 other contracts for our members.

With regards to PAC, I don't know if we found the answer, but we are getting more people signed up than ever before my belief is that getting the local leadership on board leads to success.

With regards to Health and Safety, we are doing very well. We identified some serious issues at both Arkema and Dupont, which is one of our toughest companies.



District 4 Sub-District 1 Director James Briggs with his staff

Mark McDonald is spearheading the efforts at both sites. We have already conducted training at the Arkema site and are scheduling our first training at Dupont site in Tonawanda the first time in forever this will be done.

I would also like to thank our locals for all they do in their communities to help those who are struggling. Our union gives selflessly without fanfare from Olean to Tonawanda and right up to Niagara Falls.

Thank you all for doing the right thing.

I would like to thank Locals 12003 and 12012 at National Grid for standing up to a company that chooses to attack the next generation of workers. Your fight is important and appreciated. We are proud to have stood with you.

Syracuse (Sub-District 3) Report

from Sub-District Director James Valenti

USW District 4 Veterans Council Coordinator, Cary Eldridge, reported that the Veterans Council raised over \$8,000 at its first annual golf tournament.

The tournament was a great success with eighteen teams enjoying a beautiful day at the Pompey Golf Club.

Over twenty-five local unions, companies and organizations from the District sponsored the event and sent participants to the tournament. The money raised will be used throughout District 4 to support veterans in need.

This holiday season, they will be purchasing coats for the Syracuse Veterans Hospital as well as donating to VA organizations in New Jersey and New England.

The council will also be making a contribution to the Local 135L drive to raise money to purchase service dogs for disabled vets.

The Sub-District 3 office held more than fifteen training sessions for local union officers at the USW Training Center in Syracuse in 2018.

The classes covered topics such as bargaining, stewards training, health and safety and effective use of new media for local unions.

The Central NY Women of Steel were busy this year as well.

They collected a truckload of food for a local food bank, participated in a benefit at Local 955 for a nine year-old with cancer, made Jammin' Meatballs for the United Way cook-off fundraiser and joined the Women's March in Seneca Falls and the Labor Day Parade.

The WOS is again working with the Veterans Council on its Operation Bundle-Up, collecting coats for Vets.

The Local 1000 WOS committee hosted its annual t-shirt sale for breast cancer awareness, and Local 420A WOS raised money for breast cancer awareness and are doing a Christmas toy drive for foster kids.

After Carthage Specialty Paperboard declared bankruptcy, Staff Rep. Jack VanderBaan worked with the USW Legal Department and the federal bankruptcy court to negotiate its sale to Hanover, Pennsylvania-based Ox Industries in October 2018, preserving the jobs of 63 members of Local 276.



District 4 Director John Shinn addresses participants during training for local union presidents.

Milford, Mass. (Sub-District 5) Report

from Sub-District Director Steve Finnigan

The most important news from Sub-District 5 is that the 1,250 members of USW Locals 12003 and 12012-4 have ratified a fair contract with National Grid after enduring a seven-month lockout that began on June 25, 2018, after three months of negotiations.

National Grid cut off their health care benefits on July 1 and hired temporary replacement workers to perform jobs with responsibilities that include reading meters, responding to and repairing gas leaks, installing new gas mains and services, regulating the pressure for the flow of gas and taking customer bill related complaints.

National Grid is a multinational corporation that made \$4.8 billion dollars in profits in 2017, yet believed it needed concessions from our members and their families. The concessions were targeted at any new employee hired after ratification of the new agreement. Some of the concessions were restricting job bidding, reduction in sick time benefits, life insurance and elimination of the defined benefit pension plan.

The company's final offer did not address any of the union's main proposals of insourcing of work and many safety related issues. Fortunately, for our members in the state of Massachusetts, any employee who is locked out of work by their employer is eligible for unemployment insurance compensation.

On behalf of all the members of Local 12003 and 12012-4, I would like to thank all the locals and individuals who donated financial assistance and support to our members in this fight against corporate greed.

In the end, our solidarity prevailed!

Edison (Sub-District 7) Report

from Sub-District Director Michael Fisher

The Edison Sub-District has had the opportunity to provide training for shop stewards, with three classes being held due to the overwhelming number of participants – two classes in Northern New Jersey and one in Southern New Jersey – with as many as 71 attendees.

We are also proud to announce that the Edison Sub-District Scholarship Fund was able to provide three \$1,000 scholarships – two from the members of Local 200 and one from Local 870.

With growth in mind, the Edison Sub-District had organized two units: Staff Rep. Ken Gomeringer helped organize 80 new members at Savage Services, and Staff Rep. Luke Gordon assisted three workers at Action OSH form a new unit that will potentially grow. Both of these groups have negotiated their first contract.

We all are still praying for our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico and hoping that progress toward recovery continues in that part of the Edison Sub-District.

On Oct. 25, 2018, USW sisters from New Jersey and Delaware came together for a day of Women of Steel learning and planning.

The agenda included workplace safety training, a roundtable discussion about combating income inequality and corporate greed, a presentation from a local women's shelter and a sub-district charity planning session.

Our next WOS meeting is scheduled for Feb. 27, 2019.



Edison Sub-District Women of Steel working to improve our workplaces and communities