

USW@Work

A Publication of the United Steelworkers

A Powerful Voice for Workers

GEORGETOWN MILL BACK ⁰⁴

NEW CONTRACTS IN STEEL AND OIL ⁰⁸⁻¹⁰

VICTORY AT NATIONAL GRID ¹²

PAPER, RUBBER, GLASS BARGAINING ¹⁴⁻¹⁷





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"THE MEN AND WOMEN WE ARE PRIVILEGED TO REPRESENT EARNED THESE CONTRACTS BY BEING THE MOST EFFICIENT AND PRODUCTIVE STEEL MAKING WORK FORCE IN THE WORLD."

INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT LEO W. GERARD, OCT. 1, 2018
ON THE RATIFICATION OF NEW CONTRACTS WITH U.S. STEEL AND ARCELORMITTAL.

CURRENT



STEEL CONTRACTS

USW members ratify new contracts with ArcelorMittal and U.S. Steel that increase wages, improve retirement provisions and maintain quality health care coverage.

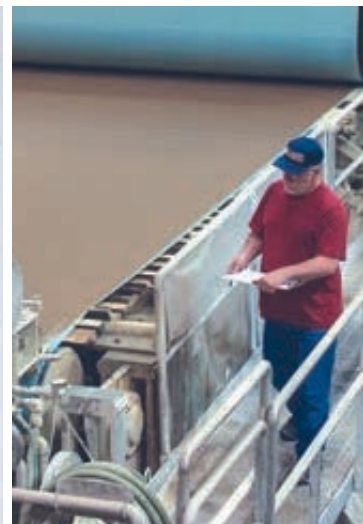
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Union Security Clause
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I Stand with Unions

Seldom do us non-union folk express our gratitude for union leaders in our world. I am a retired pastor and part of the Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network. In every way I possibly can, I try to stand with the USW and most other unions.

I shared International President Leo Gerard's recent article on "8 Holiday Gifts" on my Facebook page, and commented that he was sharing God's will for all workers. I only wish I could do more for the moral compass the USW shares.

I know of no other time in my life and I am 73, that unions have been more important than now. Democracy in the workplace may be the only way to redeem our democracy in this country.

Thank you and thank the USW for all you do and the more I hope we will be able to do in the future in these perilous times. I pray every day for you and the union movement, and am ready for any jail cell, if that will get us further in the movement.

*Rev. Dr. Ron Wanless, retired United Methodist Clergy
Ligonier, Pa.*

Reasons to be Thankful

Among the many things I was thankful for this past holiday season, three especially come to mind.

First is the twenty years my wife and I have been happily retired with a great pension negotiated by the Steelworkers.

Second is for the two local unions that have sponsored my SOAR Chapter for that period of time.

Finally, I'm thankful for the hard working/dedicated SOAR volunteers in Pittsburgh who help with mailings.

*Charlie Averill, SOAR Emeritus member
Knox, Ind.*

Rapid Response Works

I just returned from the 2019 Rapid Response Congressional Coordinator Training for District 10 in Atlantic City, N.J.

We had the opportunity to listen to some great speakers and participate in workshops that showed us how to empower other committee members.

The Rapid Response program is an issue-based, non-partisan program with proven results. Educational trainings like this are a very important part of our success as a union.

I look forward to using what I learned back in our local.

*Keli Vereb, Local 2227-01
McKeesport, Pa.*

Live Better – Work Union

I am proud to have been a USW machinist during my working life. I definitely live better in retirement than many of my non-union neighbors do.

After the major demise of union jobs in the Baltimore, Md., area in the 1980s, I had to settle for non-union jobs. For my remaining working years, I worked at the whims of my

bosses. Forget seniority rights, grievances or even decent pay raises. I worked under the constant worry of not pleasing the boss.

Decades back, unions were strong, and both workers and companies did well economically. Back then, we union members were proud to display on our vehicles and tool boxes the bumper sticker "Live Better - Work Union."

With a growing need for strong unions and an increasing public desire for them, I think it's time we revive the "Live Better - Work Union" bumper stickers. I would be proud to display them.

*Jim Atkinson
Elizabethtown, Pa.*

Buying Union Made

Your story on the Homer-Laughlin China Co., and Local 419 M in Newell, W.Va., will definitely steer me to Fiesta-ware for my family from now on, and to recommend it to couples setting up wedding gift registries.

Can I propose a regular feature: a shopping list of union-strong companies and the products they make? There's no reason not to celebrate and promote those situations.

*Louis Curran, Esq., retired Office of the Public Defender
Baltimore, Md.*

Buy American

My family has always been union supporters. When my husband started getting *USW@Work* I was excited, but this was quickly followed by disappointment.

You feature companies that produce union-made goods. My challenge to you is to tell us the name of the products and where they can be purchased. I purchase products made in America when possible. I believe with all my heart that this could increase purchasing power in the United States.

*Terry Grabosch
Davenport, Iowa*

Thank You

Our family would like to thank Leo Gerard and the USW for helping Tyler Winfield find his voice. Back on June 6, 2017, you sponsored a communication device for him through Variety, the Children's Charity of Pittsburgh.

Tyler used this device to help us understand his wants and needs. Hearing his own thoughts helped him to put his thoughts into words, and now he speaks full sentences. Without your help, he would not be where he is today.

*Nate, Jen, Ariel, Sienna and Tyler Winfield
Greensburg, Pa.*

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

COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN LED
BY LOCAL 7898 SAVES
50-YEAR-OLD
MILL

GEORGETOWN *is Making Steel Again*

Jeff Eaddy



Photo by Steve Dietz

In the summer of 2015, when the Georgetown, S.C., steel mill shut down for the third time in 12 years, it would have been easy for the quiet, coastal town of about 10,000 to simply give up on the industrial site.

The members of Local 7898 refused to let that happen. Led by their longtime president, James Sanderson, USW members launched a campaign to build community and political support for restarting the mill.

“We rallied like we never had in the past,” Sanderson said. “We knew we had the support of the community.”

That effort of nearly three years paid off last summer, when workers at the factory started producing wire rod again under the management of Liberty Steel, a subsidiary of the London-based Gupta Family Group (GFG).

“This was a long, long battle,” Sanderson said.

It’s a battle that Sanderson and his USW brothers and sisters had seen before, and one they knew how to win.

The Georgetown mill, built 50 years ago by West Germany’s Korf Industries, shut down temporarily in 2003 under the weight of unfairly traded imports from China and elsewhere. Wilbur Ross’ International Steel Group (ISG) purchased the plant in 2004 and restarted production.

IDLED BY IMPORTS

Mittal Steel purchased ISG in 2005 and then merged with Arcelor. ArcelorMittal ran the Georgetown mill until 2009, when it was again idled due to unfair competition from illegally traded imports.

ArcelorMittal restarted production the following year and continued running the plant until its 2015 shutdown, which some thought could be permanent.

“We didn’t know what was going to happen to us,” said Sanderson, who started working at the mill in 1974 and has served as local president since 1988. “We’ve had struggles in the past, and we’ve had to endure.”

Enduring their latest struggle took a lot of hard work by the members of Local 7898 and their allies. Hundreds of USW Rapid Response activists, SOAR members, and community and political leaders throughout South Carolina and across the country stepped up to help find a buyer and to guarantee that the site would remain viable for steel production well into the future.

Sanderson also credited ArcelorMittal and in particular Keith Nagel, the company’s director of environmental affairs and real estate, for working to ensure that steel would continue to be made in Georgetown.

“We wanted to make sure people understood that industry and tourism can co-exist,” Sanderson said. “It doesn’t have to be an either-or situation.”

One early supporter of the USW’s efforts was then-City Councilor Brendon Barber, a lifelong Georgetown resident and former member of the longshoremen’s union.

“We knew it was important to keep these good jobs here,” Barber said. “This mill has played an important part in the development of Georgetown. When you have workers making a decent salary, you see an increase in business everywhere.”



Photos by Steve Dietz

Kenneth Dozier



Bryan Buchanan



Sue St. Armour



Chase Funderburk

ZONING BECAME AN ISSUE

Some Georgetown business leaders and residents weren't convinced that they needed the mill. One group tried to persuade city planners to rezone the property to remove the "heavy industry" designation from the site.

Then-Mayor Jack Scoville supported the rezoning effort to make way for increased tourism. The community was divided.

"We tried not to build false hope," said Local Vice President Ed Green.

When Barber decided to challenge Scoville in the city's 2017 Democratic mayoral primary, the rezoning of the mill became a central issue in the race. With their future essentially on the ballot, USW members and workers throughout the community rallied behind Barber, who secured the nomination and ultimately won the general election.

That successful campaign all but cleared the way for Liberty to complete its purchase of the factory from ArcelorMittal and for Local 7898 members to make steel again. In June 2018, they began doing just that.

The USW worked closely with Liberty to ensure that the mill would be restarted in a safe and efficient manner. The company and the local union signed a new contract, which runs through Sept. 1, 2021, and largely mirrors the USW's master agreements with ArcelorMittal and U.S. Steel.

"There was a lot of cooperation from both sides," said Liberty's plant manager Rohit Gulve, who predicted a long and prosperous future for the plant. "Intelligence is the ability to learn from others' mistakes, and so we want to make sure that we are intelligent here."

Because it was unable to fill all of its positions from the ranks of members who lost their jobs in the 2015 shut-down, the company had to do some hiring to find the 150 employees it needed initially. Hundreds of workers from the Georgetown area and elsewhere applied for the jobs.

SHUTDOWN STRUGGLES

Gerald Rich, who started working at the mill in the late 1980s, said he always hoped to return, but that the three-year shutdown wasn't easy to take. Many laid-off employees struggled to make ends meet with lower-paying work.

"I managed. You know, life goes on," he said. "But when they opened back up, I was very happy."

Rich and his fellow experienced USW brothers and sisters took the new workers under their wings, making sure not only that they learned how to make high-quality steel rod, but also that they knew the important role the union played in the factory and in the community.

"We lost a lot of experience," said Green, who has worked at the mill since 1978. Still, the influx of new workers has helped to build a new generation of dedicated union members in Georgetown, he said.

One of those new members is Sue St. Armour, who came to work at the Georgetown mill from a nearby non-union manufacturing facility a few months ago because of the difference the union makes in the quality of life for workers.

"A lot of them just couldn't believe it," when workers learned of the strong wages and health and retirement ben-



Gerald Rich



Qulex Dickerson



Ed Green

efits that the union provided in Georgetown, Green said.

The USW difference will help to ensure that the mill remains safe, efficient and competitive, Sanderson said. It also has helped to ensure that Local 7898 remains strong and united, particularly in a right-to-work (for less) state like South Carolina.

WORKERS SHOW SOLIDARITY

All but one of the 150 hourly workers on the job at Liberty pays union dues, Sanderson said. That kind of solidarity is possible throughout the southern United States when members remain active and involved in their workplaces and communities, he said.

“South Carolina is ripe for organizing,” he said.

Gulve, the plant manager, believes that the mill’s long history ensures that the work force and the community will remain dedicated to its survival.

“These workers and retirees raised their families through this mill,” he said. “There’s an emotional attachment.”

The new owners say they are committed to the Georgetown mill for the long haul. The company has announced plans to invest \$5 billion in North American steel and aluminum production over the next several years, including \$1 billion in the U.S. this year.

Still, even with those positive signs, the USW’s and the Georgetown community’s work to ensure the mill’s long-term viability isn’t over. Another lingering issue – the plan to dredge Georgetown Harbor to make way for large, sea-going vessels – remains unresolved. That project – which would be overseen by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – would open a new avenue for transporting raw materials and finished products to and from the mill, making the plant more sustainable and reducing costs, Gulve said.

DREDGING HARBOR NEXT HURDLE

Like the restart of the mill, the harbor dredging plan has the support of many in the community, Sanderson said. But the project still faces a number of hurdles, in part due to its potential \$60 million price tag.

“They see the urgency of having the port dredged,” Sanderson said of local officials.

Gulve said that once the dredging project is completed, the mill could eventually employ an additional 100 USW members.

District 9 Director Daniel Flippo said that company’s willingness to cooperate with the USW to restart the mill is a good sign for the future.

“Liberty’s commitment to operate and invest in Georgetown shows great faith in our members, and we are dedicated to ensuring that that trust is rewarded,” he said.

Local 7898 members will do everything they can to keep the mill running safely and smoothly, Sanderson said.

“This mill has provided good jobs for decades, and I believe this company bought the mill for the right reasons,” Sanderson said. “We believe we will be here for the long haul.”

STEEL STRONG

NEW CONTRACTS RATIFIED
FOR 31,000 STEELWORKERS



Thousands of USW members voted overwhelmingly in November 2018 to ratify new master agreements with two of the country's biggest steel producers, ArcelorMittal and U.S. Steel.

The new four-year contracts increase wages, improve retirement provisions, ensure quality, affordable health care coverage and strengthen contract language for 31,000 members at 28 mills and mines across the United States.

"After years of hard work and tremendous sacrifice to keep these facilities running and these two companies viable through wave after wave of unfairly traded imports, it is right and just for steelworkers to share in the industry's success," International President Leo W. Gerard said.

"The men and women we are privi-

leged to represent earned these contracts by being the most efficient and productive steelmaking work force in the world."

The agreements came after a summer of contentious negotiations that started in July when the companies presented the USW with a series of concessionary demands. The initial proposals from Pittsburgh-based U.S. Steel and Luxembourg-based ArcelorMittal would have reduced members' take-home pay and eliminated years of progress at the bargaining table at a time when steel prices were high and both companies were reaping huge, even historic, profits.

"The USW did not come to the bargaining table looking for a fight," said International Vice President Tom Conway, chairman of the union's U.S. Steel bargaining committee. "We came ready to work

out an honest and fair agreement, but that is a far cry from what these two companies demanded, at least initially."

RALLIES AND MARCHES

As the contracts' Sept. 1 expiration approached, USW members held a series of rallies and marches, which drew thousands of workers and allies into the streets of steel towns across the country and generated national news coverage.

Still, the companies refused to budge from their concessionary demands even after the contracts expired and negotiations continued under temporary extensions. In September, members responded by voting unanimously to give the two bargaining committees the authority to call strikes.



Following those votes, the union's strength and solidarity began to pay off, and the two companies slowly softened their most onerous demands.

"Thanks to the unwavering support of our membership, we successfully defended all of the rights and protections that management sought to reduce, restrict and eliminate," said District 1 Director David McCall, chairman of the union's ArcelorMittal bargaining committee.

"On top of that, we were able to make improvements, fill gaps and fix the parts of our contracts that members identified as top priorities when we met before negotiations began."

By mid-October, the USW had reached agreements that included \$4,000 bonus payments, across-the-board wage increases amounting to 14 percent over four

years, no changes to health care coverage and increased pension contributions.

CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

The contracts also included commitments from both companies for much-needed capital investments in their facilities. In total, ArcelorMittal and U.S. Steel agreed to put \$5.6 billion into their U.S. operations over the next four years, ensuring that their mills remain efficient and competitive well into the future.

ArcelorMittal has said it will invest \$3.1 billion in its U.S. mills over the course of the contract, while U.S. Steel has pledged to spend \$2.5 billion on upgrades in the next four years.

"We welcome that money is being spent on equipment to revitalize the com-

panies' assets and make these steel facilities state of the art," Conway said. "This will put the two companies on a path to greater productivity and efficiency."

District 7 Director Mike Millsap, who served as secretary of both USW bargaining committees, said that the new contracts provide meaningful economic improvements without compromising job security or unfairly burdening current and future retirees by increasing benefit costs.

"From start to finish, we were committed to negotiating more security for our earnings, benefits and retirements while management demanded less," Millsap said. "We are proud to have achieved that goal and proud of our brothers and sisters who proved that they are willing to fight for fairness."



USW REACHES TENTATIVE PATTERN AGREEMENT FOR 30,000 WORKERS

Negotiators for the USW reached a tentative settlement with Shell Oil Co. on a pattern contract that raises wages, improves safety and maintains quality health care benefits for 30,000 union workers in the oil industry.

The three-year agreement with Shell, the lead negotiator for the industry, came a few hours before expiration of the previous four-year agreement at midnight on Jan. 31. The talks were held in Phoenix, Ariz.

“We’ve reached a tentative agreement because of our members’ solidarity and the industry’s willingness to negotiate a contract that is fair to both parties,” International President Leo W. Gerard said in a statement.

The contract raises hourly wage rates by 3.5 percent in each of the first two years and by 4 percent in the third and final year of the agreement. Other terms were withheld until USW members had the opportunity to review and vote on the proposal.

“We look forward to presenting the pattern to our membership,” said International Vice President Tom Conway, who participated in the negotiations. “The Policy Committee unanimously endorsed the final proposal.”

The pattern will affect USW workers at more than 220 locations across the United States including refineries, oil terminals, pipelines and petrochemical facilities.

USW members work in about 65 refineries, including some of the industry’s largest and most productive. In total, USW refineries account for roughly two-thirds of the total domestic refinery capacity.

Industry reports profits

National negotiations opened in mid-January as domestic oil refiners were experiencing strong profits, near-maximum utilization rates and record exports. Local unions addressed local issues with their employers at separate tables while the national talks progressed.

The union sought an equitable agreement that would benefit members and address the safety and health risks inherent in oil industry work while at the same time recognizing employers’ needs.

The union’s national contract proposals, known as the National Oil Bargaining Program (NOBP) Oil Policy, were developed at a two-day conference held in September and attended by more than 375 USW delegates from across the industry.

Next, the national pattern will be placed on local unit bargaining tables. Once local issues are resolved, the combined tentative agreements will be reviewed by Kim Nibarger, who chairs the union’s NOBP, to ensure all agreements include the national pattern.

Once Nibarger approves, the local contracts will be submitted to rank-and-file members for their review and ratification votes. “We think this proposal represents the desires of our members in the oil sector,” Nibarger said.

Steelworkers attend MARTIN LUTHER KING CONFERENCE



Tefere Gebre Fred Redmond



**“We are now faced
with the fact that
tomorrow is today.”**



Photos by ShaDonna Jackson
for the AFL-CIO

More than 200 Steelworkers led by International Vice President Fred Redmond participated in the AFL-CIO’s annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Civil and Human Rights Conference in Washington, D.C., this January.

Redmond was honorary chairman of the event, which has for more than 25 years annually brought together trade unionists to honor the life and legacy of Dr. King, to perform community service and to discuss current civil and human rights issues.

Redmond and AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Tefere Gebre greeted nearly 1,000 civil rights activists, labor leaders and working people on the opening night of the conference.

“Dr. King reminded us that the time is always right to do the right thing,” Gebre said. “Listen to our speakers. Participate in our workshops. March. Pray. Serve. And above all, have some fun.”

The theme of this year’s conference, *The Fierce Urgency of Now*, was taken from a speech made famous by Dr. King during the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. He told a divided nation that we need one another, and that we’re stronger when we march forward.

“We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today,” King said in his speech. “We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there is such a thing as being too late. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action.”

Now, more than 50 years later, his words still ring true.

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said he was inspired to feel a powerful energy among the activists and labor

leaders who attended the civil and human rights conference.

“This is our time to fight for the America Dr. King dreamed of and died for – to reclaim the fairer, more just country that we deserve,” Trumka said. “We’re going to win that fight for a better America, and the labor movement is going to lead the way.”

Never back down

Andrew Gillum, the keynote speaker and 2018 Democratic nominee for governor of Florida, reminded conference participants to never back down from a fight and never accept being denied a seat at the table.

“So often, people want to tell you what you can achieve based on where you come from and on your pedigree or lack thereof,” Gillum said. “You really can’t let people put limits on what your potential is.”

“Nobody understands the fierce urgency of now better than labor,” Gillum said. “Dr. King was laboring to build a better environment, that if you do an honest day’s work you ought to be paid an honest day’s wage, you ought to have access to health care, a wage you can live on, and your race, your gender and whom you love should not dictate how you get treated at work.”

Throughout the three-day conference, activists had the opportunity to attend workshops, including “This is America: Young, Black, and Union,” as well as a presentation by AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler about women in leadership.

On Saturday, Jan. 19, hundreds of participants rallied at the AFL-CIO headquarters in solidarity with federal employees affected by the government shutdown. Then they took to the streets with thousands of other activists from around the country to march for workers’ and women’s rights.

More than six months after multinational utility giant National Grid locked out over 1,200 USW members in Massachusetts, the natural gas workers approved a settlement and returned to work in January.

Members of Locals 12003 and 12012 voted overwhelmingly to ratify a new six-year contract that includes significant wage increases, preserves affordable benefits and improves health and safety protections for workers and residents.

"This victory is a testament to the commitment these hard-working union members have to their community and to each other," International President Leo W. Gerard said. "They demonstrated their strength and solidarity every day, and they should be proud of what they've achieved with

this contract."

National Grid, which employs 25,000 workers around the world and made nearly \$10 billion in net income in 2017, locked workers out of their jobs in June 2018, after the USW membership rejected the company's demands for deep concessions.

The company not only refused to compromise on its economic cuts, but it also rejected the union's proposals to improve worker and community safety. USW members offered to stay on the job while talks continued, but National Grid locked them out instead.

WIN FOR ENTIRE COMMUNITY

USW members, allies from other unions, local and state officials, and residents from across the community responded by standing behind the locked-out workers throughout their

seven-month ordeal and demanding justice.

"The bottom line is that when working people stand together and fight for each other, they win," said District 4 Director John Shinn. "This contract is a win for these workers and for the entire community."

The victory did not come without a struggle. Shortly after locking its doors, National Grid cut off health care benefits to the members and their families.

For Local 12012 member Eric Doren, that decision was particularly disheartening. Doren was diagnosed with aplastic anemia in 2008, and his wife was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2013.

"We work hard. We're the ones that are out there at 3:00 in the morning cracking frost. When something goes

VICTORY FOR NATIONAL GRID WORKERS



wrong, we're there," Doren said. "We have always had the company's back, and in an instant they just went and cut it all off on us."

Doren wasn't alone. Local 12003 member Brian Harvey's 20-month-old son was diagnosed with stage three cancer about a week before the family lost its insurance.

Harvey and his wife, Michelle, were among dozens of union workers and family members who testified during hearings before the Massachusetts Legislature last fall. Their stories helped to generate public and political support for the locked-out union members.

PERSONAL ATTACK

"They made it personal when they came after our families," said Local 12012 member David Monahan, who was diagnosed with bladder cancer

shortly before the company cancelled his health care.

“ THIS VICTORY IS A TESTAMENT TO THE COMMITMENT THESE HARD-WORKING UNION MEMBERS HAVE TO THEIR COMMUNITY AND TO EACH OTHER. ”

Local, state and national officials, frustrated with the company-imposed lockout, took steps to help the workers and their families.

About two weeks before workers' unemployment benefits were set to expire, Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker signed a bill extending those benefits for the length of the lockout. That decision helped the union reach a favorable settlement.

"We want to thank all of our elected officials, including Gov. Baker, Attorney General Healey, Secretary of State Galvin, Sens. Warren and Markey and our whole congressional delegation, Speaker DeLeo, Senate President Spilka, Boston Mayor Marty Walsh, our local mayors and town officials, the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, the Greater Boston Labor Council, and all of our union and community partners for their tremendous support," John Buonopane, president of Local 12012, and Joe Kirylo, president of USW Local 12003, said in a joint statement.

"Our first priority is the safety of our communities, and we look forward to returning to our crucial work of providing the safe natural gas service the Commonwealth of Massachusetts deserves," they said.

MEMBERS APPROVE NEW CONTRACT, ENDING SIX-MONTH LOCKOUT



Locked-out USW members on the picket line last summer
Photo by Steve Dietz

111 CONTRACTS UP FOR RENEWAL

PAPER SECTOR PREPARED FOR BUSY BARGAINING YEAR

The USW's paper sector faces a busy year of bargaining in 2019 with 111 contracts in the industry up for renewal including bargaining with four major paper companies – WestRock, Domtar, Resolute Forest Products and Expera Specialty Solutions.

Although bargaining in the paper sector is constantly developing, it has become more coordinated since the 2005 merger of the United Steelworkers and PACE, giving paper workers more bargaining power.

In 2003, prior to the merger, PACE formed the National Paper Bargaining Program to eliminate company-dominated, table-by-table, location-by-location negotiations, where management would implement a national agenda by bargaining with local unions by themselves at the beginning of a cycle of expirations.

In effect, the pattern for everyone was set early in the cycle at the local level. That setup allowed the industry to systematically implement substandard wages and retirement packages along with health care plans that employers could later change without penalty.

That meant workers could unexpectedly get hit with larger deductibles, out-of-pocket expenses and ever larger premium shares. On retirement, employers were systematically implementing simple 401(k) match programs for new hires that threatened the retirement of existing employees.

The union confronted this system by coordinating bargaining with all locals in each company. Working together to implement the union's agenda, members began to speak with one voice on the issues.

In the early years, the union built a bargaining infrastructure and strategically aligned and condensed expiration dates of contract agreements. Today, pattern agreements in various forms spell out wage increases, health insurance premiums, retirement and other key economic benefits for the major paper companies and allow each unit to focus on local issues important to them.

MAJOR BARGAINING SHIFT

In many cases today, all the locals within a company now sit down with management at a common bargaining table. That represents a major shift in paper industry bargaining.

"We have come a long way in a relatively short period of time," said International Vice President Jon Geenen, who oversees bargaining in the paper sector. "But our work is never over. The rapid consolidation of most of the paper industry and close coordination among companies make it imperative that we continue to build our program."

"Setting standards with the larger companies in whatever





Photo by Steve Dietz

form helps the union hold all of the other companies in the industry to those standards,” said Leeann Foster, assistant to President Leo W. Gerard and a veteran paper union leader. “The key is that we continue to evolve and consider ways we can maintain standards and make sure bargaining remains relevant at the local level.”

The largest company the USW will bargain with this year is WestRock, a paper and packaging company formed in 2015 as a result of the merger of MeadWestvaco and RockTenn. The USW represents 7,600 members at 64 WestRock facilities, including 23 paper mills and 40 converter operations. The 64 locals will work together to implement their bargaining agenda.

Under USW contracts, paper mills provide high-quality manufacturing jobs, typically located in rural communities. Converting sites are often smaller and located closer to customers in metropolitan areas, where they produce end products such as boxes and adult incontinence or feminine hygiene products.

The USW locals representing 2,300 members at nine locations across the United States will also bargain with Domtar, the largest manufacturer of uncoated freesheet paper and a major pulp manufacturer.

Locals at three mills covering 1,150 members at Expera will also sit down together with the company. Expera, sold last summer to Finnish company Ahlstrom-Munksjo, produces food packaging and processing papers and other specialty items.

Talks with Resolute Forest Products, formed through the merger of Bowater Inc., a paper and pulp business headquartered in Greenville, S.C., with Abitibi-Consolidated in 2007, will address the concerns of 600 members at three locations.

GOALS SET AT CONFERENCE

Goals for this round of negotiations were established at a National Paper Bargaining Conference held last summer and attended by representatives from approximately 600 U.S. paper locals.

“Since 2003, we have met every two years and set the union’s agenda and standards rather than just responding to the company’s agenda. This also allows our staff and locals to deliver the same message across the country at every bargaining table on the issues important to paper workers,” Foster said.

Paper locals have also been working diligently to improve safety. Last year’s bargaining conference updated the safety agenda with items such as making sure members have the right to refuse unsafe work, the right to participate in and develop safety programs, and the right to know what materials they are working with. A number of collective bargaining issues have safety-related aspects to them including overtime, job training and scheduling.

The International also coordinates bargaining with local unions that are not part of large master agreements. Letters go out to each local that has contracts set to expire to remind them of paper bargaining standards set at the bargaining conference, and there are regular conference calls set up to answer questions and consider emerging issues.

In addition to the master contracts, significant local expirations this year include Flambeau River in Park Falls, Wis.; Huhtamaki in Sacramento, Calif., and Waterville, Maine; New Indy in Catawba, S.C. (recently purchased from Resolute); Twin Rivers in Madawaska, Maine; Finch Paper in Glens Falls, N.Y.; Procter & Gamble in Green Bay, Wis.; Pixelle Special Solutions in Chillicothe, Ohio, and Neenah Paper in Appleton, Wis.

The USW reached a tentative agreement in late January on a new contract covering about 1,400 members of Local 752L at the Cooper Tire and Rubber Co. plant in Texarkana, Ark.

The agreement with Cooper, which members were voting on as *USW@Work* went to press, marked the beginning of a year that will also see the union negotiate a new agreement with BF Goodrich/Michelin.

The USW bargaining committee is expecting to open negotiations in the spring with BFG/Michelin on contracts covering about 1,800 workers at rubber and tire plants in Tuscaloosa, Ala., and Fort Wayne, Ind.

The agreement with BFG/Michelin is scheduled to expire on July 27. Those talks will take place in Knoxville, Tenn.

“These contracts have provided good-paying jobs with strong benefits and protections for union members for decades, and we look forward to working with the company to make sure that continues for the next generation,” said Secretary-Treasurer Stan Johnson, a former rubber worker who chairs the union’s Rubber/Plastic Industry Council and is the USW’s lead negotiator with several major tire producers.

Johnson said the union has worked hard in recent years and will continue to seek stronger safety and health protections at tire plants and to fight unfair and illegal trading practices in the industry, particularly in China.

“American tire makers work as hard as anyone and can compete with anyone in the world, as long as the playing field is level and they get a fair shot,” Johnson said. “Our job as a union is to fight for more than just good wages and benefits – we need to make sure that the playing field remains level and that all workers are treated with dignity and fairness.”

In addition to the Texarkana plant, the USW also represents about 65 members at a Cooper Tire mixing operation in Clarksdale, Miss., and about 1,000 members at a Cooper facility in Findlay, Ohio. The Clarksdale agreement is set to expire at the end of February 2019, and the Findlay agreement expires in 2020.

Overall, the USW represents about 18,000 workers in the tire industry, including about 7,200 workers at Goodyear plants in Topeka, Kan.; Fayetteville, N.C.; Danville, Va.; Gadsden, Ala.; and Akron, Ohio; about 4,500 Bridgestone-Firestone workers at plants in Akron, Ohio; Des Moines, Iowa; Russellville, Ark.; La Vergne, Tenn.; Warren County, Tenn., and Bloomington, Ill.; and about 2,000 workers at Titan Tire plants in Des Moines, Iowa; Freeport, Ill.; and Bryan, Ohio.

The USW’s contract with Titan expires in 2021, and the union’s contracts with Goodyear and Bridgestone-Firestone run through July 2022.

TIRE BARGAINING *Underway*



The USW's glass sector is bargaining this year with two of the nation's largest glass container manufacturers, Owens-Illinois (O-I) and Ardagh Group, for new contracts covering thousands of union workers at two dozen locations.

The USW represents all of the union workers at those two companies as a result of the 2018 merger between the USW and the Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastics and Allied Workers International, now known as the USW GMP Council.

With the merger, the GMP members joined thousands of glass and related workers already in the USW, many of whom became members through mergers with the American Flint Glass Workers in 2003 and the Aluminum, Brick and Glass Workers International in 1996.

Two former GMP contracts with O-I and Ardagh that cover Automatic Machine Department workers and Production and Maintenance Department workers expire on March 31. Those agreements together cover some 7,500 USW members, about equally divided between the two companies, said GMP Council Chairman Bruce Smith.


In addition, contracts for skilled mold makers at Ardagh, O-I and Anchor Glass expire on Aug. 31. Those contracts cover some 400 USW members who are part of the existing USW Glass Conference.

The two councils had a history of cooperating in bargaining before the merger and that continues with this year's round of talks, Smith said.

To mobilize members in preparation for this year's bargaining, the USW Strategic Campaigns department offered Building Power training. That included the development of Communication and Action Teams to increase meaningful communication with members and harness the power of unity to promote and defend the rights of workers.

As part of bargaining preparations, the GMP Council hosted the Owens-Illinois Global Glass Network and Glass Container Industry Conference last November in Toledo, Ohio. It was the first gathering of all the GMP Council and USW Glass Conference container local unions.

Local union leaders from O-I, Ardagh, Anchor, Gallo Glass, Longhorn Glass, Libbey Glass and Gerresheimer Glass were joined by international representatives of the IndustriALL Global Union and Unite the Union of Britain and Ireland, a USW partner in Workers Uniting.



**GLASS
WORKERS
SEEK CONTRACTS**
with
CONTAINER MAKERS



UNIVERSITY FACULTY FILE FOR UNION ELECTION



Faculty organizers and staff



International President Leo W. Gerard,
Rachel Wilkinson, Tyler McAndrew,
Caroline Brickman, Tyler Bickford

After nearly a year of collecting union authorization cards, faculty at the University of Pittsburgh filed for a representation election on Jan. 18, seeking transparency and a greater say in governance from the university.

“The work this faculty does as researchers and educators is what makes Pitt a world-class institution,” International President Leo W. Gerard said. “They deserve a seat at the table and a voice in deciding how the university is run.”

The petition filed with the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board (PLRB) requests a union vote for about 3,500 full- and part-time faculty across Pitt’s five campuses in Western Pennsylvania. Approximately 35,000 undergraduate students and 10,000 graduate students are enrolled in the university system.

Transparency needed

Concerns over pay and job security for adjunct and part-time faculty are at the forefront of the campaign, but the biggest goal in organizing is to increase transparency, said Tyler McAndrew, a visiting lecturer in the department of English and a member of the faculty organizing committee affiliated with the USW.

“Specific faculty needs differ so much by department and rank,” said McAndrew. “But even for people on the tenure track, transparency is so important: with regard to tenure requirements, how everyday decisions are made at the university, and who’s deciding to put what money where and why.”

“All this stuff ripples out to the students whether they realize it or not,” McAndrew said. “A union is not just good for us, but will be a positive thing for the students and the university as a whole because our interests are with the students.”

Pitt faculty also hope that the union will be a democratizing force on campus, breaking down the isolation of silos and opening more conversations about how to make the whole university better.

“We’re organizing in the spirit of recognizing the intellectual labor all of us do,” said Mrinalini Rajagopalan, associate professor in the department of history of art and architecture. “A union is a way to bring back a level of dignity

to scholarly work and teaching that we’re not seeing. It’s also about preserving what’s working, what’s viable and sustainable and humane in our university atmosphere.”

Fostering unity

Pitt faculty organizers cited an increasing corporatization of higher education as one of their main concerns. They also believe that the university is happy to exploit a perceived divide between full-time tenure stream faculty and the part-time and contingent workers who are often piecing together work, and unsure of how many classes they may teach in any given semester.

“I think the administration prefers that we stay atomized and not talk to each other,” said Rajagopalan, who also serves on the organizing committee. “The organizing campaign has already fostered a sense of unity.”

A fully functioning union, said faculty organizer Caroline Lemak Brickman, a part-time instructor in the English Department, would go even further.

“In the academy, there’s a really unequal two-tiered system,” Brickman said. “A union could forge a real bond of solidarity between these two artificially created groups.”

The unity will improve faculty and student experiences across the university, she predicted.

“The people who do the labor in any organization should have a much greater say in how that organization is run, and that’s what’s been so great about organizing,” Brickman said. “Everyone has different issues based on department and job status, but at the end of the day, it’s really fun to talk to people about the prospect of a body where we can all work together.”

Legal process ongoing

Graduate student workers who are conducting a separate campaign at Pitt filed for their own union election in December 2017.

The university administration objected, necessitating a hearing before the PLRB. The proceedings began in October and concluded Nov. 1. At press time, the grad student workers were waiting for the PLRB’s decision.



Health Care Council Charts Future Course

When the steering committee for the Health Care Workers Council (HCWC) held their inaugural meeting in December 2017, they set a wide-reaching and ambitious mission: to engage and unify USW health care workers.

This past November, the group reconvened in Pittsburgh to evaluate their progress and make a strategic plan for the future.

This includes working with the union's Rapid Response program to help push legislation to protect and benefit health care workers, as well as looking for opportunities for health care workers to engage in organizing.

"We need to take chances. We need to be daring. We need to take on fights down the line to eliminate injustices members are facing in their workplaces," said International Vice President Fred Redmond, who coordinates bargaining in the health care sector.

The HCWC steering committee was a result of a resolution passed at the 2017 Constitutional Convention. It called for each District Director with



Members of the Health Care Workers Council pose in the USW lobby.

health care locals to appoint a staff and member coordinator to the committee.

The work the coordinators did over the past year has looked slightly different in each district, based on their needs and resources.

Success stories

Nicole Greene, member coordinator for District 7, said that even though there are only a handful of health care units in her district, she and her director, Mike Millsap, were committed to visiting each one in person so they could

better understand their concerns.

"We got great feedback," said Greene. "There was one nursing home where they were holding members' paychecks the day we visited. Director Millsap was able to get involved right away and give them justice."

The group also counted the 2018 Health Care Conference that was held in Lexington, Ky., to be one of their big successes, delivering sector-specific information on bargaining, health and safety, workplace violence and more to a record 180 participants.

As the council continues its work, both staff and member coordinators are looking forward to more of these kinds of interactions, both one on one and through regional trainings, to help disseminate the information from the health care conference.

"My goal for the coming year is to try to work on engaging our millennial members," said Audra Nixon, member coordinator for District 6. "All the coordinators are working so hard to get their members interested in the union. I'd like to have a proper way to train and engage our younger members."

With flags raised and chants echoing across Toronto's skyscrapers, more than 1,000 Women of Steel spilled onto the streets of Canada's largest city to support a \$15 minimum wage and labor rights that are under increasing attack by conservative political leaders.

The show of people power came Oct. 16, the opening day of the USW's triennial Women of Steel conference, after International Vice President Carol Landry urged delegates to get off the sidelines of



ANSWERING THE CALL

WOMEN OF STEEL PREPARE FOR ACTION

justice and onto their feet.

"We are all being called to action here. This is not a sit-down conference," Landry told a hotel ballroom packed with USW members from the United States and Canada.

The three-day event, one of the largest gatherings of working women in North America, focused on the many battles women face, both in and out of the workplace, and how the union can continue fighting for equity for workers in both countries.

The majority of minimum wage workers are women, and they are all too often victims of domestic and workplace violence, Landry noted. On any given day in Canada alone, more than 3,000 women seek refuge in women's shelters, along with some 2,500 children.

"Unions have fought for respect, for civil rights, and freedom from violence, so there should be no need to ask why we as a union are committed to ending violence against women," Landry said.

STRUGGLES AROUND THE WORLD

Delegates also heard from a panel of international labor union members who discussed the trials endured in their home countries and how so many of the labor movement's struggles are the same or similar around the globe.

In Bangladesh, where the minimum wage is \$68 per month, activist Kalpona Akter fights on behalf of garment workers, 85 percent of whom are women who work in typically dangerous conditions.

Akter witnessed the deadly collapse



Photos by Steve Dietz

Photos by Steve Dietz

of the eight-story Rana Plaza building near Dhaka on April 24, 2013, a disaster that killed 1,134 workers who produced clothing for major international brands. Many more were injured.

Deep cracks had appeared in the building the day before it fell. That morning, workers begged not to be sent inside, but their managers would not relent. Soon after work started, floors in the Rana Plaza began to drop and workers started falling. It took less than 90 seconds for the building to completely collapse.

"The garment industry is the backbone of our economy, but workers have been left out," Akter told the conference. "But are we sitting down? No! We are fighting every day."

MUCH MORE TO DO

Louisa Bull, a representative from Unite the Union, the USW's partner in the United Kingdom and Ireland, spoke on the condition of labor in her home country.

"We've got good structures and we're proud of those, but we have more to do," said Bull, who came from the U.K.'s paper and packaging sector, an area where women make up 17 percent of the work force.

In Mexico, women have been taking action by speaking up on assault and harassment at work. Josefina Martinez, a member of the Mexican mining and steelworkers' union Los Mineros, shared how women in Mexico wanted a new government and organized "house by house" in her district to get it.

"We needed 42,000 votes," Martinez said. "We didn't get 42,000, we got 90,000!"

With a new government in Mexico, Los Mineros' General Secretary Napoleón Gómez Urrutia has left exile in Canada and is now an elected senator in Mexico's Congress. "Thanks to the work that was done by women, we brought down barriers," Martinez said.

Delegates benefitted from two afternoons of workshops covering topics from gender diversity and communications to the rights of indigenous people and racism in the workplace.

On the second morning of the conference, International President Leo W. Gerard reminded the already fired-up activists why they were there and urged them to go home with a plan of action to

affect change.

"There's so much to talk about, but there's so much more than talk that has to take place. If we're going to make the difference that we need to make, we're only going to make it through activism," Gerard said.

"Take the solidarity and relationships you have gained here and go back to your region, your district, your country, and fight like hell for the future," he said.

The conference concluded with a session devoted to delegates queuing up to microphones in the hall and declaring how they would answer the call to action, a theme Women of Steel Director Ann Flener said was chosen strategically and with great purpose.

"When you're fighting as many battles as we are fighting in this movement, it can be overwhelming if you don't have a plan," Flener said. "That's why we chose to build this conference around a call to action, a way to steady our focus and move forward with specific goals and with confidence that we can, and will, make a difference."

Delee Nikal from Canada's District 3

“Take the solidarity and relationships you have gained here and go back to your region, your district, your country and fight like hell for the future!”

began with a moving and emotional plea to take action on murdered and missing indigenous women and girls (MMIWG), an issue affecting First Nations, Inuit, Metis and Native American communities in both countries.

ASKING FOR SOLIDARITY

Julie Charbonneau, a member of the Telecommunications Workers Union National Local 1944 in Canada, shared her own plan motivated by losing a union sister to addiction.

"The call to action for me will be for Local 1944 bargaining in 2021," Charbonneau said. "I'll be putting forward a proposal to have domestic violence leave

in our next agreement."

Lisanne Corriveau and Jennie Vallee-Boucher, from Local 9700 in District 5, also took to a mic to ask for solidarity as they and their fellow union brothers and sisters have been locked out by Alcoa and Rio Tinto since January 2018.

"We need you to help us continue," Corriveau said to a delegation roused to their feet. "Go back to your union and tell those men you need to support our local. It's been so hard on our families."

Many sisters thanked the USW for hosting women's conferences and providing the opportunity for women to connect, inspire one another and build a network of ideas and support beyond their WOS committees and local unions.

A sister from District 8 spoke of encouraging the women in her local. "I'm going to set a plan. Start the actions. Invite the women and encourage those within my local to get moving," she said.

POLITICAL ACTION SUPPORT

There was widespread support for Women of Steel and political action. In addition to supporting local candidates, sisters are also stepping up to put their own names on the ballot.

"If you don't like the lack of diversity on your executive board, run! If you don't like the makeup of your government, run!" said Tanya, from District 2.

Canadian National Director Ken Neumann addressed the sizzling room with a final keynote speech that touched on how Steelworkers can and should stand shoulder-to-shoulder with women who helped build the union.

"Women's equality is about the presence of respect and opportunity, not just the absence of violence and harassment," Neumann said. "That is part of what unions deliver and why the work of our union is so important."

Neumann also recounted his visit to Bangladesh on the one-year anniversary of the Rana Plaza collapse. Visibly moved, with his voice breaking, he told of how he was with the families who had lost loved ones at their first opportunity to visit the rubble since the tragedy.

The solidarity needed to overcome these challenges can only be strengthened with more women in leadership positions, Neumann said.

"There is nothing stronger than a Woman of Steel!"

LABOR PROTECTIONS INADEQUATE

MORE WORK NEEDED ON NAFTA REPLACEMENT

Work to reform the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is not over despite the signing of a tentative new agreement late last year between the United States and its continental neighbors, Mexico and Canada.

The USW and other unions that long criticized NAFTA for its inadequate labor protections vowed to continue the fight for a better agreement that creates good jobs and raises wages at home while protecting the rights and dignity of workers on all sides of the borders.

The “signing is an important milestone, but it’s only another step in the process to reform NAFTA,” International President Leo W. Gerard said. “For roughly 25 years, workers have struggled under the oppressive weight of NAFTA, which has suppressed wages, living standards and opportunities.”

Leaders of the three countries accepted the revised agreement just hours before a U.S.-imposed deadline of Sept. 30. It was signed on the sidelines of the Group 20 summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on Nov. 30, one day before Mexico’s new president, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, took office.

The tentative trade agreement was signed the same week that General Motors announced it would close assembly and propulsion plants in the United States and Canada by the end of 2019, eliminating nearly 15,000 jobs.

The United Auto Workers said GM’s decision to idle the plants shows the new trade deal among the United States, Canada and Mexico is not strong enough to stop jobs from moving across the border to Mexico.

THUMBING ITS NOSE

The union said GM is “thumbing its nose” at the trade deal.

“We were hopeful that this new agreement would rein in the corporate greed that has bled manufacturing in the United States,” said UAW President Gary Jones. “Unfortunately, as GM’s idling of plants in Ohio, Michigan and Maryland showed, the ‘new’ NAFTA, as it now stands, is not enough to protect American workers.”

Gerard said GM’s pre-Christmas announcement was “clear evidence” that corporations pursue profits and fail other stakeholders such as workers and communities.

“NAFTA and implementing legislation must reverse the corporate incentives to outsource production and, instead, promote investments in plants, equipment and people domestically,” he added.

The main structure of the new agreement looks largely unchanged. Changes include higher North American origin requirements for auto parts, additional U.S. access to the dairy market in Canada, and virtual elimination of the investor-state-dispute settlement process.

**“WORKERS IN MEXICO
MUST BE ABLE TO FORM
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THE UNITED STATES.”**





Despite those improvements, more work is required to stop NAFTA's ongoing job outsourcing, and its downward pressure on wages and environmental damage, said Lori Wallach, director of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch.

"More work remains to be done," Wallach said. "Unless there are strong labor and environmental standards that are subject to swift and certain enforcement, U.S. firms will continue to pay Mexican workers poverty wages, dump toxins and bring their products back here for sale," she said.

The AFL-CIO also believes American jobs will continue to drain away unless the new agreement is made more pro-worker. The old NAFTA caused the loss of at least 851,700 factory jobs in the United States over more than two decades.

"As it stands, this agreement has not earned the support of America's working families," AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said. "Without major improvements, this supposed overhaul will prove to be nothing more than a rebranded corporate handout."

APPROVALS PENDING

The ceremonial signing does not mean the agreement will take effect. The legislatures of each country must approve the pact, and for the United States, that means votes in a Congress that was changed by the 2018 mid-term election.

Congress is likely to wait until the United States International Trade Commission (ITC) releases a report on the economic impact of the new deal. The ITC was delayed by the federal shutdown and now has until April to deliver its report.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, then the minority leader, met in December with U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer to discuss the new agreement. Afterwards, she said changes were necessary for the Democrats to support it.

"While there are positive things in this proposed trade agreement, it is just a list without real enforcement of the labor and environmental protections," Pelosi said in a statement.

The AFL-CIO contends changes to the new deal must include strong enforcement provisions to maintain the labor protections that it does have.

"Any progress made by this deal is

meaningless without swift and certain enforcement tools to safeguard key labor protections. Real steps forward start with changes in the text, comprehensive labor law reform from Mexico and a strong implementation bill from the United States," Trumka said.

Some of the most important changes involve Mexico, which would be required under the new deal to pursue labor law reforms to encourage independent unions that could bargain for better wages and conditions for Mexican workers.

The agreement also requires that 40 to 45 percent of all auto content be made by workers earning at least \$16 an hour, which should keep more manufacturing in the United States. The minimum wage in Mexico last year was 88.3 pesos a day, about \$4.71 depending on the exchange rate.

"Mexico must pass legislation to enforce the labor and environmental standards to which it committed. And, mechanisms must be established to ensure provisions are aggressively implemented, monitored and enforced," Gerard said.

"Mexico has made commitments to its people. We have every reason to believe that the new political leadership will faithfully adopt strong provisions to implement its constitutional commitments."

STRENGTHEN WORKER RIGHTS

Gerard said it is in the best interests of all workers in the participating countries to ensure that Mexico adopts strong workers' rights provisions and enforces their implementation.

"Workers in Mexico must be able to form labor organizations and collectively bargain for better wages and working conditions to stop downward pressure on wages in Canada and the United States."

Gerard said the USW would continue to work with Lighthizer, the Department of Labor and Congress to promote manufacturing and jobs that can sustain a family.

"Only when all the issues have been resolved and it's clear that Mexico is fully and faithfully recognizing workers' rights should Congress vote on the agreement and implementing legislation," he said.

FEDERAL SHUTDOWN DELAYED TRADE ENFORCEMENT CASES

It didn't take long for the federal government shutdown to delay U.S. trade enforcement cases involving USW employers, prompting International President Leo W. Gerard to push the president and congressional leaders for a resolution.

"Our union urges action to get the men and women working again at all impacted federal agencies," Gerard said in a mid-January letter to President Trump, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer and House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy.

In the letter, Gerard said he was speaking on behalf of 850,000 USW members and in solidarity with the 800,000 federal workers "impacted by this unnecessary shutdown" in nine of 15 federal departments.

"Government workers should not be pawns in a policy debate far removed from the day-to-day of their jobs, nor should Americans who rely on them pay the price for this political fight," Gerard wrote. "End this senseless shutdown."

The union, Gerard said, is deeply concerned that trade relief was set back by the longest government shutdown in history and the subsequent idling of the Department of Commerce's (DOC) International Trade Administration (ITA) and the International Trade Commission (ITC).

OVERSIGHT NECESSARY

"Workers and their employers need their federal government to analyze and determine if dumped and subsidized goods are impacting their jobs and to take corrective action," Gerard wrote.

"Without the enforcement and compliance units working at the Department

of Commerce and the ITC to determine the impact of imports on U.S. industries and direct actions against unfair trade practices, we allow unfair trade practices to continue and ravage domestic production and employment," he added.

Using Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, the president imposed tariffs against steel and aluminum imports that the Department of Commerce had concluded threatened U.S. national security.

"In order for tariff relief to work, our country needs effective oversight and DOC staff doing their job with pay,"

Gerard said. "Oversight of the implementation of the steel and aluminum 232 relief measures, including the exclusion process, was effectively halted."

Anti-dumping and countervailing (anti-subsidy) trade cases were delayed because of furloughs at the ITC, including one involving USW members at Maxion Wheels in Ohio, which faces an onslaught of dumped and subsidized steel wheel imports from China.

HEARING POSTPONED

A Jan. 8 hearing was postponed indefinitely on the steel wheel case brought by Maxion and another U.S. company, Accuride Corp. of Evansville, Ind. Petitions in the case were filed with the ITC nearly a year ago on March 27, 2018.

The Commerce Department had been scheduled to issue final anti-dumping and countervailing duties against Chinese wheel importers on the same day as the ITC hearing, but trade

U.S. Rep. Conor Lamb, D-Pa., speaks to union members protesting the government shutdown at the Pittsburgh International Airport. USW photo by Ike Gittlen.



functions at Commerce were suspended by the shutdown.

Last August, the Commerce Department levied preliminary countervailing duties ranging from 48.75 percent to 172.5 percent against Chinese steel wheel importers. In November, Commerce declared a preliminary anti-dumping duty margin of 231 percent. In both cases, the agency had instructed U.S. Customs and Border Patrol agents to collect cash deposits from Chinese importers.

Another trade enforcement delay, this one involving cast iron soil pipe from China, hit USW-employer Tyler Pipe, a division of McWane in Tyler, Texas. Soil pipe is a critical product for Tyler, which employs nearly 300 USW members in a mostly rural part of Texas.

A Jan. 7 deadline for final anti-dumping and countervailing duty determinations on the Chinese cast

iron pipe was missed because of the government shutdown. The next related deadline is Feb. 20.

“Continuing imports of unfairly traded products will only further jeopardize their jobs and the company’s viability,” Gerard wrote.

Gerard was also concerned that the shutdown could delay an expected report by the ITC on the renegotiated trade agreement with Mexico, renamed the United States Mexico Canada Agreement.

“While the union believes the ITC report is only one component of the evaluation process to ensure that the agreement is in the interest of working people, senseless delays only complicate the critical work needed to improve labor standards, stop outsourcing, and ensure our country does not make the same trade agreement mistakes again,” Gerard wrote.



USW FORCES REVIEW

ITC REVERSES DECISION ON CHINESE BUS AND TRUCK TIRES

The U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) on Jan. 31 reversed an earlier decision and ruled that the U.S. tire market is being harmed by illegally subsidized bus and truck tires imported from China.

The U.S. Court of International Trade (CIT) forced the ITC to re-examine its 2017 decision not to impose tariffs on the Chinese tires. The CIT acted on an appeal filed by the USW.

“The ITC finally acknowledged what our members have known since we filed this case in January 2016: that illegally subsidized bus and truck tires coming to our country from China hurt domestic manufacturing and good-paying jobs,” said Secretary-Treasurer Stan Johnson, who oversees the USW’s rubber and tire sector.

“We welcome this decision, but this case represents much of what is broken about our trade enforcement decision,” Johnson added. “Three years is too long to wait for relief.”

The case began in January 2016 when the USW filed a complaint alleging China’s improperly subsidized bus and truck tires harmed the domestic tire market. The ITC’s initial decision in February 2017 prevented the U.S. government from enacting anti-dumping and countervailing (anti-subsidy) duties on the tires. The USW had sought the penalties to protect U.S. producers and USW members’ jobs.

The USW appealed, and on Nov. 1, the CIT, formerly known as the United States Custom Court, sent the case back to the ITC for reconsideration. The ITC’s new ruling didn’t include tariff rates or a timeline for imposing them.

WISCONSIN LOCAL 319

Wins Safety Award Named for Union Activist



Whenver ash chutes jam in the wood-burning cogeneration plant serving Domtar's pulp and paper mill in Rothschild, Wis., USW members must brave intense heat and manually clear the obstructions with a long steel rod.

It's a hazardous task. Operators stand in awkward positions atop a small two-step platform and wear an uncomfortable head-to-toe aluminized suit to get the repair done and protect themselves from sparks, molten sand and ash.

"When you unplug the opening, when it falls, there's a free flow of hot ash and sparks coming your way," said Steve Krautkramer, a member of Local 319 and a former full-time safety representative at the plant. "You are actually in a line of fire."

Working together, labor and management came up with an ingenious fix that seems to have ended the need for rod work and won the facility an award named after a union activist, Velma Marie Perkins, who was killed on the job at another Domtar mill in 2015.

"Velma's activism continues through this award because she was a person who identified hazards in her own workplace and worked to get them corrected," said Leeann Foster, an assistant to International President Leo W. Gerard who is working to improve safety in the union's paper sector.

Established in the USW's 2015 master contract agreement with Domtar, the Perkins award is given annually to one of the company's nine unionized pulp

and paper locations that exhibits the most collaboration in developing ways to positively improve safety.

Pulp and paper mill

The Rothschild mill employs approximately 410 employees in producing 380 tons a day of non-coated paper and 200 tons of paper pulp. The mill operates a circulating fluidized bed boiler that every day burns approximately 1,500 tons of wood waste from local logging, sawmill and paper operations to produce steam for papermaking and electricity for the local utility.

The furnace operates with a bottom ash bed that is essentially molten sand. Sand or dirt embedded in the wood can accumulate and is removed through four bottom ash chutes. Large chunks of agglomerated sand called clinker or spalled furnace refractory can plug the chutes.

Clearing rock-like clinker with a rod is an intense manual task, especially since the material that comes out of the chute is red hot and can be flowing in the direction of the operator.

After a successful test run in the spring of 2017, a union-management team at Rothschild installed cone-shaped strainers resembling witches hats over the four chutes located at the bottom of the ash bed. The strainers, designed by an onsite mechanic, have eliminated jamming and the need for dangerous repair.

The strainers stop the large clinker from getting into the chutes. As Krautkramer describes it, the clinker lays up against the strainers and is eventually

broken down by the rest of the ash that flows past it.

"Since the strainers have been installed, we haven't had to rod any of the holes," he said.

The award was developed at a labor-management conference in 2015, the same year that Perkins, a union member with 24 years of experience, was killed in a Sept. 18, 2015, train accident at Domtar's plant in Ashdown, Ark.

The award was developed to honor Perkins, 51, who was secretary-treasurer of Local 1327, a dedicated Women of Steel member and a safety-conscious leader at work, said Keith Frazier, president of sister Local 1329 at Ashdown.

"We do this every year at our safety conference. The mills put together a safety plan or program, some accomplishment they have made, and then it is voted on by the whole group," Frazier said.

The award both honors Perkins and continues her activism in health and safety, added Local 1327 President Gary Heinerman, who worked with her on the job and as a member of the local's executive board.

"This has been a good award," he said.

Following presentations by each of the organized mills, union and management attendees vote for a winner. The award, embedded with a photo of Perkins, travels each year to the winning facility.

Equipment helper

An equipment helper on the switch engine in the shipping department,



Brian Reamer, new USW safety advocate; Steve Krautkramer, former USW safety advocate; Dave Faucett, mill manager; Steve Lewens, safety and environmental manager.



Photo by Gary M. Baranec/Altoona Mirror via AP

Perkins was killed when higher-than-normal rail cars struck an overhead structure at the Ashdown warehouse. The shed-like structure acted as an awning where the engine could be parked for maintenance.

As per standard procedure, Perkins would ride on the side of rail cars, breaking them apart and hooking them together. The day she was killed, she was riding the lead car as the train headed toward the warehouse.

“The train caught the top of the shed, and knocked it down on top of her,” Heinerman said. “She fell off the car and underneath the car at the same time, and the engine couldn’t stop.”

The first award named for Perkins went in 2016 to Locals 1356 and 1423 and Domtar management in Plymouth, N.C. In 2017, the award went to Local 10-701 and management at Domtar’s Johnsonburg, Pa., mill.

Rothschild Mill manager Dave Faucett called the 2018 award an honor and said operations and maintenance crews worked together to come up with a solution to a difficult problem.

“We must also keep in mind this is a memorial award in honor of Ashdown, and Velma Marie Perkins, and our never-ending journey to make our workplace safe for all Domtar employees.”

The USW strongly supports a lawsuit filed on behalf of Appvion employee shareholders who lost millions of dollars when the paper company was liquidated in bankruptcy court last year.

The lawsuit, filed last November, accuses Appvion’s former management team, its board of directors and certain financial advisors of breaching their fiduciary responsibilities and misrepresenting the value of the company to its employee investors for the purpose of fraud.

Through the ESOP, unionized hourly employees as well as salaried personnel purchased Appvion in 2001 and continued to buy its stock for nearly 16 years until the company filed for bankruptcy court protection in 2017.

The USW has been a staunch advocate for the interests of its members and retirees throughout Appvion’s bankruptcy process, said District 2 Director Michael Bolton. Through the years, the USW and its predecessor unions have represented thousands of workers at Appvion operations in Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Ohio.

“The ESOP was rendered worthless by the company’s liquidation, and too many of our families lost a large portion of

their life savings. Although the lawsuit may be complex and may not be resolved quickly, the USW will continue to demand justice for those who were harmed in the ESOP’s collapse,” Bolton said.

“We are grateful that the administrative committee has stepped up to protect the interests of the workers and retirees who are now dealing with the consequences resulting from the tragic collapse of what was once and should still be a successful, employee-owned paper company,” Bolton said.

The lawsuit accused the defendants of fraudulently persuading employees to buy stock in Appvion’s former parent company, Paperweight Development Corp., and concealing the stock’s true value. As a result, the ESOP and its participants suffered hundreds of millions of dollars in losses, according to the complaint.

The lawsuit was filed by Greg Lyon, an independent financial advisor who was appointed in August 2017, prior to the company’s bankruptcy filing, to replace the entire Appvion ESOP committee, according to court documents.

“The employees are the beneficiaries of this lawsuit,” Lyon said. “The goal is to help them recover.”



VETERANS *of* STEEL

USW CONTINUES SUPPORT FOR EXPANDING VETERANS PROGRAM

Standing up for those who fought for our country is a core goal behind a new Veterans of Steel council that the USW is developing for Steelworkers who are military veterans.

Authorized by the 2017 Constitutional Convention, Veterans of Steel is growing under the guidance of International Vice President Tom Conway, who served as a sergeant in the U.S. Air Force in the 1970s before his union career.

In a Veterans Day message posted on the USW website (usw.org), Conway said he would like to see the program develop in a grassroots way at local unions and at the district level rather than be directed from International headquarters in Pittsburgh.

"We have a lot of veterans who are Steelworker members in a lot of different sectors across our union," Conway said. "We want it to grow up out in the field, out of the shops and the locals."

Interest in the council has also drawn particular involvement from the USW's "Next Generation" program. The armed forces have in recent years been discharging many veterans who are exceptionally qualified for many of the open positions in the industries where the USW has a presence.

The Veterans of Steel council is envisioned as a place where those who served or are serving in the military can find resources, camaraderie, support and ways to fight for important issues such as a fully funded Veterans Administration (VA) or protecting and creating family-supporting jobs for veterans after their service.

Military leave

So far, Conway said, the council is working to identify ways to help USW veterans through collective bargaining. In addition to contractual items like pay, benefits, overtime rules and vacation, the union can help military families by negotiating stronger contract language on military leave.

"Outside of that, there are veterans who are really struggling, people you may know or people who were in the military around the same time you were," Conway said.

Conway applauded local unions that are reaching out to help veterans by working with Wounded Warrior projects and with homeless vets in their communities. Homelessness continues to be a major issue facing returning soldiers, and it's particularly true for female veterans.

"They're working to help women and men who are struggling on the

outside," Conway said. "Those are all good efforts for veterans to do, and so we encourage you to be part of that trend. We encourage you to reach out."

There were nearly 20 million veterans in the United States in 2017, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Their service ranges from World War II, the Korean Conflict, Vietnam and more recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Too many veterans are living under the poverty line, particularly those 65 and older. Others struggle to match military skills with civilian jobs, and there are those with lingering physical disabilities and mental health issues.

Jobs are important

"The one thing that clicks most for me is lining up veterans with good-paying jobs," said Travis Lohmann, a Navy veteran and District 11 staff rep who helped to form a veterans' council a few years ago at Local 418, which represents employees at the 3M manufacturing complex in Cottage Grove, Minn.

"I hate to see somebody who used to drive a tank and was in charge of a group of men, a leader, having to come back and work for 10 bucks an hour," he said. "We need to get those people good-paying union jobs."



Photo by Steve Dietz

District 4 has been a pioneer in helping veterans.

Cary J. Eldridge, an Air Force veteran, organized a District 4 Veterans Council at the suggestion of District Director John Shinn in 2015. The effort was backed by a district conference resolution calling for the union to recognize and protect members who are veterans.

One of the first steps was to promote contract language that allows active duty members to use vacation time or paid leave of absence to spend more time with their families after serving in a war zone and before returning to the job.

"Most contracts have Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) language and counseling services, but we found that not every FMLA or Employee Assistance Program is designed to handle the special needs of veterans," Eldridge said.

While the military does a good job of training civilians for combat, it can fall short in helping veterans return to their jobs and re-enter civilian life after their service.

"The big issue is how to reprogram myself from being in the military to civilian life and become a fruitful member of society," Eldridge said. "That's the biggest thing."

Problems at work

Some situations require intervention. Eldridge recalled one instance where a Vietnam-era veteran had flashbacks long after his service ended and was terminated for walking off his job.

"I investigated and discovered he was still suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder 40 years after Vietnam, and it was affecting his job. I was successful in guiding him down a path to get proper help," Eldridge added.

"We want to recognize the fact that if an individual gets into trouble at work, some of his issues may stem from his military duty and could be out of his control. We need to make sure he or she gets the assistance they need."

More than 20 agreements now allow veterans some type of leave. "It gives them time to acclimate and deprogram back into the functions they were doing before they were called to duty," Eldridge said.

Volunteer services

A Veterans First training program brought in volunteer services to explain VA benefits. Another program provided a range of legal services for veterans at no cost to them.

Help can be big or small. Volunteer programs in District 4 have ranged from an ice cream social for residents

of a veterans' home to an organized golf tournament that raised funds for veterans' assistance.

Union veterans in the district working hand-in-hand with Women of Steel have collected coats, hats, gloves and other items through Operation Bundle Up for veterans undergoing treatment at VA hospitals.

Local 1351 in Buffalo, N.Y., organized a one-day, one-stop veterans' center that included breakfast and free haircuts. Local 1988 in Lowville, N.Y., erected a billboard outside their plant to recognize their veterans. Members of Local 3298 in Seneca Falls, N.Y., collect money at their annual picnic for a recreational fund at a local VA hospital.

Eldridge cautioned that it takes time, as well as trial and error, to develop a council that involves members and takes on projects. He envisions collaborating with other USW districts if the program takes off.

"It is important," he said.

How to Sign Up

Those who are interested in participating can go to the USW website, www.usw.org/vetsofsteel, to sign up and receive a free Veterans of Steel sticker. Members can also join by texting VET to 47486.

Organizing Drive Underway at Tesla Solar Factory in Buffalo



Production and maintenance workers at Tesla's solar roofing factory in Buffalo, N.Y., launched an organizing drive with support from the United Steelworkers and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

"The only way we can ensure that we have a voice in the company and have equal rights across the board is with a union contract," said Aaron Nicpon, a member of the internal organizing committee. "We want to have a voice at Tesla so that we can have a better future for ourselves and our families."

The drive kicked off on Dec. 13 after Tesla employees reached out to the USW about organizing at the \$750 million state-funded facility on the site of a former USW-represented Republic Steel mill.

District 4 Director John Shinn said the workers' concerns can be addressed while still maintaining the long-term viability of the new green energy components factory.

Committed to success

"We're committed to the continuing success of this facility, and to making sure that Tesla's highly skilled work force has good, family-sustaining jobs," Shinn added. "This historic site will be the model of how emerging clean technology manufacturing can provide such an opportunity for its workers."

A committee of pro-union workers is working to build strong majority support among employees before an election petition will be filed with the National Labor Relations Board, Organizing Coordinator Dave Wasiura said.

The 1.2 million-square-foot plant is a centerpiece of New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo's Buffalo Billion, a plan announced in 2013 to improve the economy of Buffalo, the largest city in western New York, located on the eastern shore of Lake Erie some 16 miles south of Niagara Falls.

Employees in Buffalo are seeking a fair wage.

"I wanted to work at Tesla because I wanted a job in green energy, a job that can change the world," said Rob Walsh, another organizing committee member. "But I also want a fair wage for my work."

The organizing drive in Buffalo is open to about 400 people who work for Tesla, which assumed operational control of the state-owned facility some two years ago to manufacture solar roofing tiles.

Well known for manufacturing electric cars in California, Tesla has been slower than anticipated in ramping up its Buffalo solar factory, known as Tesla Gigafactory 2. The company's Gigafactory 1 is a lithium-ion battery and electric vehicle subassembly factory near Clark, Nev.

In mid-January, Tesla CEO Elon Musk notified employees that the automaker and solar power company was laying off 7 percent of its full-time work force, more than 3,000 people. The cuts include the Buffalo factory. Musk said the layoffs are part of an effort to streamline the company and prepare it for tough times. Tesla's contract with the state requires the company to have

500 workers by this spring and 1,460 by 2020. Failure to meet those goals could lead to financial penalties.

Union tradition

Rev. Kirk Laubenstein of the Coalition for Economic Justice told local media that Tesla is paying workers less than originally promised when the project was announced. Tesla has defended its wages as comparable to other manufacturing jobs in the region.

"Family-sustaining jobs, especially when there's a huge \$750 million investment from us, the taxpayers, are really crucial. Having a union allows people to be able to do that," Laubenstein said.

"Governor Cuomo gifted \$750 million in public money to this project with the promise of family sustaining wages in the renewable industry. This promise was not delivered," said Rebecca Newberry, executive director of Clean Air: Organizing for Health and Justice. "We see the unionization of Tesla as a way to fix this broken promise, and as a strategy to build a just and equitable renewable energy economy."

The USW and the IBEW have partnered with the Clean Air Coalition of New York and the Coalition of Economic Justice "so together we can build a brighter Buffalo," Shinn said.

"Western New York has a long tradition of unionization, and we want to see that tradition carry forward into the green jobs that are our future," he added.

The DOW logo is displayed in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font. It is set against a dark, textured background that resembles a stylized building or industrial structure. The logo is partially enclosed by a yellow circular shape that overlaps with the main title area.

DowDuPont Unions Prepare for Corporate Split

The DU PONT logo is shown in a dark, serif font, enclosed within an oval border. The background is a teal-colored circular shape that overlaps with the main title area. The logo is partially obscured by the circular design.

Unions representing thousands of chemical and related workers from around the world are joining forces to minimize the impact on employment caused by the 2017 merger of Dow and DuPont and its pending breakup.

Affiliated member unions of the global alliance IndustriALL, including the USW, met in Pittsburgh in October to discuss common issues and pledge unity as they prepare for the corporation to split into three distinct companies – agriculture, material sciences and specialty products.

DowDuPont was formed in 2017 through a \$150 billion merger between Delaware-based DuPont and Michigan's Dow Chemicals. It has since traded on the New York Stock Exchange as DWDP.

The material science division, to be based in Michigan, will be the first to split. That will occur around April this year. The agriculture division, to be called Corteva Agriscience, will separate by June 1. The specialty products unit, to be called DuPont, will follow. Corteva and DuPont both will be based in Delaware.

"The workers of DowDuPont are facing many changes and challenges in the coming months, and the unionized sites of DowDuPont around the globe will be working together to ensure the members' best interests," said Kent Holsing, president of Local 12075 in Midland, Mich., and chair of the DowDuPont North American Labor Council.

"We are speaking not only for the unionized employees of DowDuPont, but also for the non-union employees who don't have that voice. DowDuPont workers from around the world are rightfully concerned about taking a step back in their livelihoods at a time of record profits for the corporation, and we are preparing action items to address these concerns," Holsing added.

Cost cuts underway

After the merger was completed, the company said it plans to reduce its global work force and shut down facilities to help reach a goal of \$3 billion in cost savings while it completes dissolution. The company also intends to save

"Now the company's breakup into three separate segments will again affect working men and women all over the world," he said. "The demand from those workers' national unions and the international trade union IndustriALL is to have their voice heard through the restructuring."

Much discussion among the union leaders focused on the pending split of DowDuPont and its potential effect on staffing, working conditions, and employees' pensions, benefits and insurance.

Union leaders also discussed workplace safety, organizing, and the need for increased and proactive communication between the corporations and unions.

Representatives from the following unions participated in the meeting: the USW; the International Union of Operating Engineers; Texas City Metal Trades; the International Chemical Workers Union Council/United Food & Commercial Workers; National Conference of Firemen and Oilers; the Amptill Rayon Workers Incorporated; the Dow Chemical European Employee Forum; the Dow Chemical-Stade Works Council (Germany); UNITE the Union (United Kingdom and Ireland); the Global Union Federation IndustriALL (Switzerland); the Union of Workers and Employees Petrochemicals States-SOEPU (Argentina), and the Chemical, Energy and Mines Workers Union (Indonesia).



Union members attend IndustriALL meeting in Pittsburgh.

money in procurement costs, building and facility consolidations.

"The DowDuPont merger created the world's biggest chemical company and has triggered other major restructuring in the industry," said IndustriALL Assistant General Secretary Kemal Ozkan.

Worker representatives must play a role in the decision-making that will affect them and their communities, Ozkan said in a statement.



USW Scores Win in Chemical Rule Case

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in December annulled a portion of the Environmental Protection Agency's 2017 final chemical risk evaluation rule that penalized the public for providing incomplete information about a chemical to the agency.

Mike Wright, head of the USW Health, Safety and Environment Department, said the annulled provision would have made it easy for the government to go after unions, environmental groups or individuals for testimony or petitions the EPA did not like.

The now invalid rule said that people or groups filing "inaccurate, incomplete or misleading" information to the EPA could face civil or criminal penalties. Wright said imposing penalties on the public for not providing enough voluntary information would have a chilling effect on public participation.

The provision was one of the targets of a wider legal challenge by environmental, health and labor groups to EPA's failure to adequately implement the 2015 Toxic Substances Control Act amendments. Most of that lawsuit is still pending.

The group Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families is suing the EPA. The USW, a member of the group, is a party to the lawsuit.

USW Condemns Assassination

The United Steelworkers condemned the brutal assassination of Abdullah Karacan, general president of the Turkish Rubber and Chemical Workers' Union Lastik-İş.

Karacan was murdered in November while visiting workers at the Goodyear factory in the city of Adzapari. The union's regional president Mustafa Sipahi and shop steward Osman Bayraktar were wounded.

"We are outraged by this vicious assault on our sister union, which reflects the erosion of democratic rights under the Erdogan government in Turkey," said International Secretary-Treasurer Stan Johnson. "The Turkish authorities must immediately investigate, arrest and prosecute the criminals who are responsible for this attack."

Johnson co-chairs the rubber industry section of IndustriALL Global Union, of which both the USW and Lastik-İş are affiliated. Karacan, a member of IndustriALL's executive council, led the fight against contracting out by major tire companies in Turkey including Bridgestone, Pirelli and Goodyear, winning permanent jobs for thousands of union members.

Union Membership Steady

The percentage of workers who are union members fell slightly in 2018 to 10.5 percent, according to data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Union workers made up 10.7 percent of the work force in 2017.

Overall, membership numbers held about steady. The total numbers of union members were roughly the same in 2018 as 2017 with 7.2 million workers in the public sector and 7.6 million in the private sector.

New USW Members at Dura-Bond

Workers at a Pennsylvania pipe plant operated by Dura-Bond voted overwhelmingly to join the USW in a quick campaign that showed their determination to be union.

Employees of Dura-Bond in McKeesport, Pa., contacted a District 10 staff representative, filed their petition for an election with the National Labor Relations Board about a week later and by Dec. 20 had voted yes. The vote was 50-9 for a bargaining unit of 64.

Dura-Bond, a family-owned pipe maker and coater, acquired the manufacturing assets of an idled U.S. Steel tube plant in McKeesport in 2017 and resumed production after the plant had been idled for about two years.

Safety and job protection were the main issues in the organizing drive. Electing a bargaining committee and negotiating a first contract were the next steps.

2019 Civil and Human Rights Conference

Save the Date: The USW's 2019 Civil and Human Rights Conference is scheduled for July 21 to 25, 2019, in Minneapolis. Stay tuned to the USW's social media accounts (@steelworkers on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), *USW@Work*, and www.usw.org for more details and registration information as it becomes available.



USW Welcomes Permits for Minnesota Mine

The USW welcomed the news that the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources had issued permits for a planned mining project in northeastern Minnesota.

After a lengthy review, the state DNR late last year approved the permits for PolyMet Mining's proposed copper-nickel mine in northeastern Minnesota. The USW has represented mining workers in the state for more than 75 years.

"The members of this union have a long and proud history of mining in Minnesota, and we are excited to continue that tradition," said Emil Ramirez, director of District 11, which includes Minnesota and eight other states.

"We're confident that this work can be done in a way that provides hundreds of good, community-supporting jobs to the people of this region while also safeguarding our precious natural resources."

PolyMet's proposal is for a massive open pit mine near the Iron Range town of Hoyt Lakes. The company intends to repurpose an old LTV Steel taconite mine and processing plant.

Ramirez said communities across Minnesota depend on mining as a way of life, and we need to work together to make sure that continues in a sustainable way.

"We also want our children and grandchildren to have access to clean water and unpolluted air. We believe that this project will satisfy both of those goals," he said. "The choice between good jobs and a clean environment is a false one – we must have both, or we will have neither."

The PolyMet project still must clear additional regulatory hurdles, including air and water quality permits from the state's pollution control agency as well as a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers, among others.



Former LTV processing plant.



Napoleón Gómez Urrutia
Photo courtesy of Los Mineros

USW Congratulates Los Mineros

The USW congratulated Napoleón Gómez Urrutia, president and general secretary of the Mexican mining and steelworkers' union Los Mineros, on the union's Nov. 20 election victory at the El Boleo Mine in Santa Rosalia in the State of Baja California Sur.

By a vote of 280-238, the workers at El Boleo voted for Los Mineros over a company union that was installed by a labor contractor without consulting the workers. The mine is controlled by Korea Resources Corp., which is owned by the government of South Korea.

"This victory shows that the workers' courage and determination can overcome corporate repression and government collusion," said International President Leo W. Gerard. "But it also underscores the fundamental unfairness of Mexico's repressive labor law system that condemns its workers to poverty level wages while threatening the jobs of Canadian and U.S. workers."

"Mexico's new government must move quickly to reform its labor laws and end the practice of company-dominated unions, and the proposed U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade agreement must include effective enforcement provisions to prevent and punish violations of workers' rights."

On April 20, 2016, the workers went on strike to demand free elections and the removal of the company union. The strike was broken by a large force of police on May 5, and a month later the company fired 130 Los Mineros supporters. Federal labor authorities then blocked the Mineros' demand for an election for 2.5 years.

NEWS BRIEFS

Violence against Health Care Workers Rises

A new report published late last year revealed that violence against health care workers was on the rise while much-needed protections for workers had declined.

A study published by Newsy, a national news network run by E.W. Scripps Co., found that incidents of workplace assault have risen 30 percent since 2012, with about 2,400 nurses suffering from violent crimes on the job each year.

However, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in the current administration has scaled back inspections and other efforts to protect health care workers.

OSHA decided in 2016 that violence against nurses was an issue that required more attention, but since then the agency has abandoned its effort to establish an anti-violence standard that could hold employers accountable, the report found.

The U.S. House, with a newly elected Democratic majority that took office in January, is considering legislation to address the issue. The proposed Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act would direct OSHA to issue an enforceable standard that would require employers to write and implement violence prevention plans and protect workers from violent incidents.



WHERE UNIONS MEET THE OUTDOORS!



Did you know...

there is a conservation organization dedicated to union sportsmen and sportswomen?

The Union Sportsmen's Alliance (USA) unites union members who share a love of the great outdoors and a commitment to help preserve North America's outdoor heritage. USA members WORK hard and PLAY hard, and the USA serves their passion with clay shoots, dinners, a union-dedicated TV series, community-based conservation projects and many great benefits.

USA MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

- 3 digital issues of the *Union Sportsmen's Journal*
- Free shipping at UnionSportsmenStore.com
- 10% discount on Worldwide Trophy Adventures TAGS program
- USA member discounts on hunting and fishing trips
- Money-saving discounts on outdoor gear and services
- Chances to win prizes and trips all year
- Opportunity to participate in USA conservation projects and events
- Chance to apply to be a guest on the USA's outdoor TV series

Additional Benefits
with Upgraded Membership



10% USA E-STORE OFF PURCHASES



YOU DESERVE AN OUTDOOR ORGANIZATION TO CALL YOUR OWN
LEARN MORE AT UNIONSPORTSMEN.ORG/JOIN



LOCAL 155

Local 155 community service team: (l-r) Vincent Cartwright (with his arms around two unidentified participants), Richard Beckmann, Kathy Boswell, Stacy King, Tony Johnson, Kendra Johnson, Darlene Hall, Demetrius Montgomery and Pat Bullard.



Kentucky Local Gives Back

Volunteers from amalgamated Local 155 in Kentucky believe in giving back to the community.

Local 155 represents approximately 450 members who work at Reynolds Aluminum and Eckert America in Louisville, Ky., and at Ryerson in nearby Shelbyville.

Over the past two years, the local's community service team has, for example, provided clothing, food, backpacks, school supplies and toys to approximately 200 children and their families.

Food and toys were sent to the local boys and girls club. Backpacks and school supplies were collected for local students as part of a back-to-school drive.

Winter coats were sent to local school family resource centers for distribution to children in need. In addition, the children of a woman from Somalia who was tragically killed on railroad tracks near the Reynolds plant were surprised with Christmas gifts.

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.¹

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."

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 Stanley W. Johnson has determined, based upon expenditures for the calendar year 2017 that the reduction percentage under the Procedure is 12.24% (21.75% 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 21.75% figure to most current and future objectors. Therefore, an objector will be charged 78.25% 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?

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NLRB ATTORNEY GOING AFTER “SCABBY”

If Peter Robb, the general counsel for the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), gets his way, it could soon become illegal for labor unions to demonstrate alongside “Scabby the Rat.”

Despite several recent rulings affirming the use of the giant inflatable rodent as free speech protected by the First Amendment, sources with the NLRB told Bloomberg Law that Robb has been looking for a way to outlaw the use of Scabby.

The rat, who has been showing up at union picket lines and demonstrations in various forms since 1990, has grown popular enough with the labor movement

to have 8,300 followers on Twitter.

But the NLRB’s Robb, appointed by President Trump, is no fan. He recently revived a complaint against Scabby by an Illinois excavation company. The Obama-era labor board had dismissed the case, but with a new Republican majority, the current board could see things differently.

The new filing argues that the use of Scabby is “unlawfully coercive” under rules established in the National Labor Relations Act.

Prior to his appointment by President Trump in 2017, Robb worked for more than three decades as a management la-

bor lawyer. Before entering private practice, Robb was a government lawyer with the Federal Labor Relations Authority and spearheaded a case that led to the decertification of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization and the banning from federal employment of nearly 11,000 workers who struck in 1981.

Most observers recall the PATCO strike as one of the most important labor disputes of the latter 20th century because the Reagan administration’s conduct was seen as opening the door for other employers to viciously oppose strike efforts, including by hiring permanent replacements.