Now, more than ever, the White House needs to act with urgency to level the playing field for American workers, invest in our country’s decaying infrastructure and create good, sustainable manufacturing jobs.

International President Leo W. Gerard
Oct. 18, 2017

TIRE CONTRACTS
USW members vote overwhelmingly to ratify contracts at Goodyear, Bridgestone-Firestone and Sumitomo.

IMPORT PROBE
Steelworkers from around the country stormed Capitol Hill demanding action from the White House on delayed investigations into the national security implications of imported metals.

REWRITE NAFTA
The USW and other labor unions are stepping up their efforts to ensure that any new revision of NAFTA prioritizes the rights and well-being of workers and their communities.

WORKING TOGETHER
When a tornado devastated Naplate and Ottawa, Ill., a local union and Pilkington Glass worked together to save jobs, rebuild their factory and help the community recover.
Puerto Rico Will Recover

To all of those USW brothers and sisters in Pittsburgh and around the country who made a contribution, or stopped by, called or e-mailed to wish us well, please know that words cannot describe how grateful we are for your incredible generosity, kind words and support shown not only to us but to the entire Puerto Rican community.

Not one day has passed since Hurricane Maria that you have not asked how you can help in supporting the efforts in Puerto Rico and inquired on how our relatives on the island are doing.

The people in Puerto Rico are facing some very big and serious challenges, especially when it comes to power, water, food, housing and other basic necessities.

Puerto Rico will bounce back because of people like you who feel their pain and are always eager and willing to help not just a fellow American, but a human being in need. We will always be proud to be associated with this great union and all of our sisters and brothers.

Between bucket drops, people stopping in to see us, and a donation from Local 3657, we collected nearly $5,000 for supplies that are now in Puerto Rico helping our family and the community of Aguada, where they live, with water, food and solar lighting, courtesy of your generosity.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Luis and Cindy Mendoza
(Luis is a member of Local 3657)
Pittsburgh, Pa.

NAFTA Must Benefit Workers

Isn’t insanity defined as doing the same thing again and again and expecting the results to be different? If that’s true, then our country’s trade policies have been the definition of insane for more than 20 years.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect in 1994. Since then, this country has lost hundreds of thousands of good-paying jobs and seen tens of thousands of factories close for good.

This is not an accident. It happened because big businesses wrote the rules so they could make bigger profits – without a care for how the rules would affect working people.

The good news, now that Washington is renegotiating NAFTA, is we have a chance to fix this mistake. We have to make sure the new agreement supports working people and ensures that wages and standards of living are lifted up, rather than pushed further down in a race to the bottom.

We’ve tried that, and it was a disaster. I think we are all tired of our leaders in Washington looking out for big businesses and millionaires and ignoring the needs of working people.

It’s time for working people in this country, whether they are in a union or not, to stand up and demand trade policies that look out for their interests and make sure that their standard of living and their way of life is improved, not destroyed.

Charlie Averill, SOAR Chapter 30-18
Knox, Ind.

Buy Clean Act

A critical bill, the Buy Clean Act, was recently signed into law here in California by Gov. Jerry Brown. This bill is important for all workers in steel, rebar, glass and insulation.

For far too long cheap manufacturers of these products who operate the most polluting plants in the world and charge less for their products have had an unfair advantage in bidding on projects over clean manufacturers.

The Buy Clean Act means that California’s infrastructure dollars are spent on products made by clean plants that emit as little as half the carbon dioxide pollution of dirty plants. Also, contractors bidding on state projects have to disclose greenhouse gas emissions produced during the manufacturing and transport.

This bill is a win for U.S. workers, our jobs, communities and clean plants like the one I work in. Congratulations to those who testified in committee hearings and to Rapid Response for running a successful campaign to guarantee this win for those of us who work in “clean” steel and who take great pride in our work. Let’s hope other states follow in our footsteps.

Demerian Palmer, President Local 5632
Fontana, Calif.

Support American Manufacturing

I read in USW@Work about Harley-Davidson laying off 180 hard-working Americans in Missouri. I called the plant and told them I bought my first Harley in 1963 and that I would quit buying from them if they laid people off and moved to Thailand. They said the only reason was because of shipping. I said I retired out of the steel mill in Cleveland, Ohio, which is still operating today, and there were no problems shipping anything. I still support the USW and always will.

Gene Cozart
Willis, Texas

Union Proud

I am an 82-year-old female and accidentally got your magazine in my mailbox. I read it from cover to cover and enjoyed it very much.

I come from union people and am proud of America, and I always try to find out where our products are made. I love our country, our union workers and wish everything was union made. I wish more people understood that unions always stand up for their workers.

E. Betts
Trinity, Texas
DRIVEN BY
SOLIDARITY
In October 1946, the first tire rolled off the production line at the BF Goodrich factory in Tuscaloosa, Ala.

Only a matter of months later, in 1947, the workers at the factory became union members, joining a forerunner of the United Rubber Workers, which later became part of the USW.

Since then, union membership and tire production in Tuscaloosa have gone hand in hand. Today, despite operating in a right-to-work (for less) state, more than 99 percent of the Local 351L membership pays dues, making the local a strong and active partner in the company’s success.

“We support this company,” said Joe Taylor, a 31-year employee and Local 351L division chair. “And we support doing the right thing every day.”

For Taylor, that mission includes providing a safe and healthy work environment, protecting workers from unfair treatment, ensuring good wages and benefits, and honoring the 70-year history of union activism in Tuscaloosa.

“I tell people, ‘you’re here because somebody who came before you did something for you,’” Taylor said. “‘Now it’s time for you to stand up.’”

That approach has led Local 351L to a near-perfect membership record, with only seven freeloaders out of a union workforce of 1,150, as well as a position of power at the factory that helps provide security both for labor and management.

“The union helps to run this plant,” said former Local 351L President Mark Williams.

**Working together**

Williams has seen labor-management relations at the facility evolve from contentious to cooperative over his 41 years there, improving the way of life for workers while boosting efficiency and product quality for the company.

“Our goal has always been to keep people employed and to keep the company successful,” he said. “We still have problems, but we work on them together.”

John T. Camp, the company’s labor relations manager in Tuscaloosa, has seen the situation from both sides, having worked in a number of union jobs across the plant before joining management.

“We’ve worked hard to build this relationship,” Camp said of the productive labor-management partnership.

The factory includes about 40 acres of workspace under its roof, and about 12,000 tires go through its doors each day. Even with constant upgrades in technology and increased automation, each tire passes through human hands at every step in production.

Regardless of the final product, tire building in Tuscaloosa follows the same basic steps. The first involves a tire builder wrapping multiple layers of rubber around a drum to form what is known as a carcass.

Steel belts and other pieces are then added to form a “green tire,” which moves on to the curing process, where the product takes its final shape.

“Building high-quality tires is a skill that requires years of training and experience to perfect,” Camp said. “For some of these folks, this is an art form.”

**Quality control key**

One aspect of tire production in Tuscaloosa on which both union members and management see eye to eye is quality control. Inspectors look at the tires throughout the process to see that every product stamped with the BF Goodrich (BFG) label is flawless.

Once curing is complete, workers thoroughly inspect and test the tires for flaws. Workers inflate and spin each tire, trimming excess rubber and simulating road conditions to ensure proper balance and performance.

“They’re trained to know what to look for,” said Local 351L Treasurer Michael Clark, explaining that the workers responsible for quality control attend three-week courses to become experts in the process.

The inspectors in Tuscaloosa even cut tires apart every now and then to study cross-sections under magnifying glasses. Even a small defect, such as misaligned lettering on a logo, will cause a batch to be scrapped.

“‘We don’t take any chances,’” Clark said.

Barcodes embedded in each tire allow workers to track every piece of information about the product, from the origin of the rubber to the date and time that the tire made it to each part of the production line.

Amy Nell Green was conducting...
visual inspections and preparing tires for shipment to customers during a recent USW@Work visit to the factory. “I check each one to make sure every tire is ready to go,” she said.

Between 10 percent and 20 percent of the tires produced in Tuscaloosa are for placement on new vehicles. The rest are for use as spares or replacements.

Producing a diverse array of products has helped the factory weather difficult economic conditions. Plants that produce tires only for new vehicles are more susceptible to downturns in the market, Clark explained.

“If they’re not selling cars, you’re not making tires,” Clark said.

The workers believe so strongly in the products they produce that most of them make sure to drive vehicles outfitted with BFG tires.

“People here are proud to say they work at BF Goodrich,” said Dori Hughes, a 29-year employee.

Clark, who has worked at the BFG factory for 13 years, drives a Ford F-150 with BFG’s all-terrain KO2 tires, one of the company’s best-selling models.

The popularity of that product has helped the company withstand an onslaught of unfair imports from China and elsewhere in recent years, a problem that has plagued the U.S. rubber industry.

Confronting trade problems
Addressing the trade imbalance with overseas competitors is one issue on which Local 351L members have been particularly active.

For decades, the USW has been laser-focused on ensuring a level playing field for its members. The member-driven Rapid Response program has been a large part of that effort, which paid off in 2015 when the International Trade Commission (ITC) issued a decision that imposed tariffs on passenger vehicle and light-truck tires from China.

Those tariffs leveled the playing field not just for the workers in Tuscaloosa, but also for rubber and tire workers across North America.

George Montgomery, who has worked at the plant for 31 years, has traveled to Washington, D.C., with his USW sisters and brothers to lobby Congress on fair trade issues.

“I tell them we can outperform anybody if we’re given a level playing field,” Montgomery said. “The USW stood up and fought for us in Washington, and we are benefitting from that.”

About 200 new workers have been hired in Tuscaloosa since the 2015 tariff ruling, said Local 351L Division Chair Stanley Shinholster.

“It’s a never-ending struggle,” Local 351L President Brandon Hamner said of the fight for fair trade. “A lot of workers don’t understand the attacks that we’re under.”

The USW difference
BFG produces some of the best tires in the world in large part because the USW’s presence in a factory means workers have the time and energy to focus on the well-being of their customers as well as their own.

In addition to passenger vehicle and light-truck tires, the Tuscaloosa facility produces lines of specialty and off-road tires.

Local 351L member Brian James, who has worked at the plant for 12 years, said that even with such advanced technology, tire building can be
physically demanding, making health and safety a top priority for Local 351L.

“Of course, people can make mistakes and get hurt sometimes,” James said. “But that’s why it’s important to have the union. Without the union, there’s nobody to stand up for you when something goes wrong.”

Over the years, as the USW’s influence over health and safety has grown and automation has increased, jobs have become less dangerous and taxing, Hughes said.

“We have better ergonomics, a better work environment,” she said. “A lot of that has to do with our safety programs. I don’t know where we would be if we didn’t have the union.”

Community ties

The sisterhood and brotherhood of Local 351L is strengthened by the fact that so many members have had family and friends working side by side over the years.

Local 351L member Scott Dockery has worked at the factory for 31 years. His son was hired on in February.

Hughes, the local’s financial secretary and first woman division chair, met her husband, Dave, at the factory. They’ve been married for 18 years.

Those strong bonds have for decades extended into the community as well. The local raised more than $4,000 this summer for a community cancer charity, as well as nearly $5,000 for relief after a series of hurricanes slammed the nearby Gulf Coast.

“Our local is part of this community,” Taylor said. “We do everything we can to help.”

Local 351L is also in the process of constructing a new USW Institute for Career Development (ICD) training center on a plot behind the local union hall, across the street from the BFG factory. The center is scheduled to open in January 2018.

The ICD, part of a joint labor-management program, offers workers a range of classes in which they can learn new job skills or brush up on old ones.

While the nearby University of Alabama is by far the region’s largest economic driver, BFG’s 1,500 employees pump an estimated $145 million into the region’s economy each year, Hamner said.

Diversity and solidarity

None of the work that Local 351L members do inside or outside the plant gates would be as effective without a strong local union. That strength begins with having such a large percentage of dues-paying members.

Taylor credits the local’s long history in the community, as well as a strong multi-media orientation program for new hires, for that level of success.

“We get about four hours to explain the benefits of the union, the history of the union, the history of the labor movement,” Taylor said. “A lot of young people don’t realize that unions built the middle class in this country.”

Hamner said the local’s diversity and solidarity have been the keys to the success that USW members and their families have enjoyed in Tuscaloosa for the past 70 years.

“Diversity is one of the key issues in building solidarity,” he said. “Regardless of our skin color, our age, our gender – we are all different, but we know we’re all in this together.”
USW members voted overwhelmingly to ratify new contracts covering nearly 12,000 workers at three tire companies – Goodyear, Bridgestone-Firestone and Sumitomo.

The agreements, which cover 7,200 members at Goodyear, about 3,500 members at Bridgestone-Firestone and about 1,000 members at Sumitomo, include wage increases and enhancements to retirement, health care and safety language. Members at the three companies all voted in August by more than a 3-1 margin to approve the contracts.

“Our negotiations this year were successful not only because of the strength and solidarity of the USW membership but also because our local union leaders have continuously worked to improve relationships between the union and management at all of our locations,” said International Secretary-Treasurer Stan Johnson, a former rubber worker who oversees the union’s tire bargaining. “Both sides showed a willingness to work together to find jointly beneficial solutions to our issues.”

All three agreements run through July 29, 2022.

**Goodyear Tire & Rubber**

After two months of tense bargaining with Goodyear management, the USW reached an agreement at the end of July on a new, five-year contract covering about 7,200 workers at the company’s tire plants in Akron, Ohio; Danville, Va.; Fayetteville, N.C.; Gadsden, Ala.; and Topeka, Kan.

International Vice President Tom Conway, who chairs the union’s Goodyear negotiations, said that solidarity within and between the five local unions throughout the bargaining process put the negotiating committee in position to achieve the goals the membership identified as important.

“We were able to negotiate the best contract in recent memory because our membership was united, and from the outset, our priorities were clear,” Conway said. “We are always strongest when we speak with one voice, and we proved once again that we can accomplish great things when we stand together.”

The five-year contract includes significant wage improvements, retains cost-of-living adjustments, closes gaps between labor grade tiers and extends plant protection guarantees that none of the facilities will close during the term of the agreement.

The contract also includes a commitment from Goodyear to invest in the future of the facilities to enhance the long-term job security of the union work force; maintains quality, affordable health care; and resolves a variety of local issues.

During negotiations, the committee worked with local union officers and volunteer activists to keep members at all locations up to date and on the same page, providing regular bargaining updates, even when progress at the table was slow.

The membership ratified the new agreement on Aug. 24.

**Bridgestone-Firestone**

The Bridgestone-Firestone bargaining committee began negotiations committed to closing the gap in the two-tier system that had existed for more than a decade.

Due to the committee’s hard work and solidarity, USW members in almost all jobs will be making the same wage before the end of the new agreement.

The new five-year contract covers members at Bridgestone-Firestone facilities in Akron, Ohio; Des Moines, Iowa; Russellville, Ark.; LaVergne, Tenn.; Warren County, Tenn.; and Bloomington, Ill.

The previous agreement with Bridgestone-Firestone, which took effect in August 2013, was set to expire on July 29. Talks on a new contract opened in mid-June and continued through the summer.

The contract includes across-the-board wage increases in each year of the
The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has made it easy to find USW-made tires by requiring that each tire carry a code that shows the company and the location of the plant that manufactured the tire. DOT requires that each tire sold in the United States carry a code that looks something like this: DOT BE XX XXX XXX. The two letters or numbers that follow the DOT identify a particular USW factory as listed below.

BE: B.F. Goodrich, Tuscaloosa, Ala.
BF: B.F. Goodrich, Woodburn, Ind.
VE, YE, YU, 8B: Bridgestone/Firestone, Des Moines, Iowa
D2, E3, W1, Y7: Bridgestone/Firestone, La Vergne, Tenn.
2C, 4D, 5D: Bridgestone/Firestone, Morrison, Tenn.
UP: Cooper, Findlay, Ohio
UT: Cooper, Texarkana, Ark.
JU, PC, UK: Goodyear, Medicine Hat, Alberta
JJ, MD, PU: Goodyear, Gadsden, Ala.
DA: Dunlop, Buffalo, N.Y.
JF, MM, PJ: Kelly-Springfield, Fayetteville, N.C.
CF: Titan Tire, Des Moines
B plus serial #: Titan Tire, Bryan, Ohio
CC: Yokohama Tire, Salem, Va.

The USW is pressing the U.S. Court of International Trade (CIT) to reverse an International Trade Commission (ITC) decision that denied import duties on truck and bus tires from China.

In a 52-page memorandum filed with the court on Sept. 1, the union laid out its arguments as to why the ITC erred last February when it declined to order tariffs on truck and bus tires from China.

On Feb. 22, the ITC reversed itself and ruled against the USW in a 3-2 vote that found imports of Chinese-made truck and bus tires were not causing material injury to the domestic tire industry. The commission had voted the opposite way a year earlier.

The ITC’s negative determination stalled the USW’s push to give tire workers relief even though the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) had earlier ruled favorably in determining potential duties.

In its complaint, the union argued that the ITC’s decision contradicted all of the relevant evidence in the union’s anti-dumping and countervailing, or anti-subsidy, cases.

agreement and maintains quality, affordable health care coverage, with a cap on premium increases of 4 percent in the first two years and 7 percent thereafter.

Sumitomo Rubber

The Sumitomo agreement covers members of Local 135L at the Tonawanda, N.Y., factory near Buffalo. Until recently, the company held joint ownership of the plant with Goodyear.

The five-year deal includes wage increases in each year of the agreement, an increase in company 401(k) contributions, and small increases in health care premium costs.

Members also will now have the option of enrolling in a high-deductible health plan with a health savings account available to those who choose that option.

Johnson said the activism of USW members on trade issues made for a more productive round of bargaining with all three companies.

“We have done a lot of work over the last several years pursuing trade cases,” he said. “We think that has contributed substantially to the success these three companies have had.”

Overall, the USW represents about 18,000 workers in the tire industry and about 12,000 more in other rubber, plastics and related industries.
When Hurricane Harvey devastated the U.S. Gulf Coast in late August, USW members immediately jumped into action to help rescue people trapped by unprecedented flood waters and to provide relief to those displaced from their homes.

Little did they know that was only the beginning – within weeks, two more massive storms, Irma and Maria, slammed Florida, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, and USW members again made sure they were there to help however they were needed.

“This is what sisterhood and brotherhood are all about,” International President Leo W. Gerard said. “We are there for each other – whether it’s in the workplace or when disaster strikes at home, this is what we do.”

Local 13-1 member Kellen Hartnett had seen the solidarity of USW members in her local tested numerous times over the years, but the strength of the union bond was never as clear as it was in the aftermath of Harvey.

“I saw us come together during the oil strike (in 2015), and I was wondering if we’d be tested again,” Hartnett said. “We all just bind together and help each other out.”

“...I saw us come together during the oil strike (in 2015), and I was wondering if we’d be tested again."
Marcos Velez, D13 Staff

Marcos Velez

Deborah Kasinger’s father

Photos by Steve Dietz

UNPRECEDENTED STORM SEASON SLAMS CARIBBEAN, SOUTHERN U.S.
Local union halls were converted into temporary shelters and distribution centers for supplies. Individual union members headed out into rising floodwaters in boats and trucks to pick up their neighbors and bring them to safety. Groups of union nurses, utility workers and others traveled to disaster-stricken areas to provide much-needed help.

There were more acts of heroism and generosity on the part of USW members over the past two months than could be included in one issue of USW@Work.

“There have been more stories of selflessness on the part of our members than we could possibly count,” said International Secretary-Treasurer Stan Johnson. “It’s truly awe-inspiring to see how strongly USW members step up for their brothers and sisters in need.”

Brandon Parker, a Texas refinery worker and USW member, joined an armada of civilians with boats in south Texas to make sure nobody — union members, family members, neighbors or strangers — would be left behind in Harvey’s rising waters.

Even before an official evacuation was ordered, Parker urged those he saw to leave while they could.

“But all the professional resources were being used, it might be hours before they could be rescued,” he said.

Tyler Kasinger, a member of Local 13-1 in the Gulf Coast town of Texas City, escaped rising water through the roof of his home.

Roman Leviege, of Port Arthur, Texas, a member of Local 228, said brothers and sisters from his union contacted him every day for several days after the hurricane to ask how they could help. Several of his fellow USW members came by boat to rescue him and others in his neighborhood.

“There was no doubt in my mind, when they told me they would be here, that they were going to arrive,” he said. “That’s unionism. That’s brotherhood at its highest form and definition.”

**Devastation unprecedented**

The devastation from all three storms, both in human and financial terms, was massive and heartbreaking. Harvey and Irma each killed more than 70 people. The death toll from Maria in Puerto Rico alone was 45 at press time and likely to rise. Homes, vehicles and other possessions were swept away. Mills, refineries and other USW workplaces were idled.

Those plants included paper mills across Georgia, Florida and Texas, oil refineries along the south Texas coast, as well as countless other workplaces in Louisiana, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and elsewhere.

Members and locals across Districts 4, 9 and 13 pitched in to help, as did members in other locals and unions and many USW employers across the country.

“In my heart, I just wanted to help people,” said Leonardo Sampson of Local 895. “I’m part of this union, and they’re helping me at the same time. It feels good to do my part, even if it’s just a small part.”

Some pitched in by assisting their fellow members and other victims in finding shelters or hotels in which to stay. Others helped to provide supplies including food, batteries, clothing and sanitary items.

Members from Local 620, Local 13-447 and Local 750 raised cash, cooked food and gathered supplies for victims of Harvey.

“This was member driven, and it always has been,” said District 13 Director Ruben Garza of the relief efforts.
Money, supplies donated

Local 9360 in Boston, with help from co-workers at the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, donated money and filled pick-up trucks with food, diapers, cleaning supplies, clothes, pet food and other necessities and sent them to the hardest-hit areas of the southern United States.

“I’m part of this union, and they’re helping me at the same time. It feels good to do my part, even if it’s just a small part.”

Local 8888, one of the USW’s largest, amassed more than $3,500 in donations for hurricane victims in just one day of gate collections. Local 8888 President Arnold Outlaw said members were eager to do their part.

“When our own sisters and brothers have been the victims of disasters, we’ve been there for them at one of the most difficult points in their lives,” Outlaw said. “This shows the true character and compassion of Steelworkers.”

Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands were devastated when Maria arrived in September, right on the heels of Hurricane Irma. Their isolation from the mainland complicated rescue efforts.

Luis Mendoza, a USW staff member, was visiting family on the island of Puerto Rico when Maria hit.

“What I saw was like a horrific movie scene,” Mendoza said. “I can’t even find the words to describe what I saw.”

Mendoza, armed with about $5,000 in donations collected at the International headquarters in Pittsburgh and at USW offices around the country, returned to Puerto Rico in October to deliver supplies to devastated communities.

USW nurses pitch in

Assistance came in many other forms. A.J. Fitzpatrick, Kenni Soyinka and Esmeralda Valle, Local 4-200 members who work as registered nurses at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick, N.J., volunteered to help care for sick and injured patients in Puerto Rico.

They were among more than 300 union nurses, doctors, firefighters, electricians, engineers, carpenters and truck drivers who were flown to Puerto Rico on a flight donated by United Airlines to assist people in need of medical and humanitarian assistance. Each union member pledged to help for two weeks.

The flight, operated by union pilots and flight attendants, also transported more than 30,000 pounds of emergency relief supplies. District 4 sent some 400 water purifier kits, 500 solar-powered lights and 400 emergency chargers that are powered by solar panels and hand cranks.

“Steelworkers can be counted on to step up when there are members in need,” District 4 Director John Shinn said.

Despite all of these efforts, the hard work of relief and recovery is likely to continue for months, if not years. Thousands of USW members and their families still need help. To contribute to the union’s emergency fund, the United Steelworkers Charitable and Educational Organization, visit usw.org/relief. All donations go directly to USW members.
As negotiations for a new North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) continued this fall, the USW and other labor unions stepped up their efforts to ensure that any new deal prioritizes the rights and well-being of workers and communities.

Meanwhile, multinational corporations and Wall Street tycoons, the only true beneficiaries of NAFTA, continued to push for more of the same failed policies of the past 23 years.

“Businesses have set the agenda for far too long, and the result has been higher trade deficits, lost jobs, devastated communities and rising income inequality,” said International President Leo W. Gerard.

Growth and opportunity

“Organized labor is working with the administration to advance proposals that will promote growth and opportunity for workers in all three countries. A deal that achieves those goals would be worthy of our support,” he said.

Those goals include the following:

- Limit the power of corporations and restore power to workers, communities and sovereign governments. The current agreement contains a provision, called the Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) system, that allows companies to sue governments to overturn laws and to force taxpayers to give corporations unlimited millions to compensate for speculated lost profits.
- Eliminate rules that create incentives for companies to move jobs to lower-wage countries. One step toward this goal would be to raise minimum wages and bolster union rights for workers in Mexico.
- Include enforceable standards that promote strong and independent labor unions in all three countries.
- Improve programs for workers displaced by trade, including retraining and job placement, and ensure any jobs that are lost are replaced with similar family-sustaining, community-building jobs.
- Include strong “rule of origin” language to ensure that products that get NAFTA duty-free status are mostly made in the three partner countries. This must cover how and where all materials are made, not just where final products are assembled.
- Create a common, consistent trade enforcement strategy with enforceable standards to control currency manipulation, illegal dumping, subsidization and state-owned enterprises.

Persuading lawmakers

USW members across the United States have attended town hall meetings, written letters and signed petitions to lawmakers over the past several months to push those objectives.

The fourth round of talks to update NAFTA took place in mid-October, during which U.S. negotiators presented proposals that the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other big-business advocates immediately attacked as undermining their ability to make profits.

“We’ve reached a critical moment,” Chamber of Commerce President Thomas Donohue complained. “The Chamber has had no choice but to ring the alarm bells.”

President Gerard responded to those “alarms” by reminding negotiators and business leaders of the devastating
Much of the criticism of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has come from American workers who rightly argue that the deal allows U.S. companies to significantly cut labor costs by moving to Mexico.

As the three partner countries renegotiate the deal, Canada is making a similar argument to urge American lawmakers to scrap right-to-work (for less) laws.

Unionized Canadian workers say they can’t compete with non-union workers south of their U.S. border, so their negotiating team is urging Americans to scrap the anti-union laws as part of an updated NAFTA.

Right-to-work (for less) laws allow workers to opt out of paying union dues, although federal law still requires unions to represent workers at the bargaining table and in grievances. Such laws are designed to starve unions of funds and weaken the labor movement.

While there is little chance that such union-busting laws would disappear as a result of a new NAFTA, labor leaders on both sides of the border welcomed the sentiment, which also provided a timely reminder that American workers don’t necessarily enjoy the highest standards in the world.

“Canada’s got two problems: the low wage rates in Mexico and the right-to-work states in the United States,” said Jerry Dias, president of Unifor, Canada’s largest private-sector union.

Emily Davis, a spokesperson for Lighthizer’s office, said NAFTA has been a disaster for workers and that opposition from the business community was anticipated.

“Achieving these objectives requires substantial change,” Davis said. “These changes, of course, will be opposed by entrenched Washington lobbyists and trade associations.”

If the administration’s objectives can be achieved, it could signal a new era of international trade that raises standards for workers around the world and reverses the decades-long trend of rising income inequality and diminishing workers’ rights.

“Unfair trade means fewer families being able to afford the always-increasing cost of higher education and fewer opportunities for individuals to improve their standard of living,” Gerard said.

“Now more than ever, the White House needs to act with urgency to level the playing field for American workers, invest in our country’s decaying infrastructure and create good, sustainable manufacturing jobs.”

The three NAFTA partners agreed to postpone the fifth round of talks to give their negotiators more time to address contentious issues. The next round of meetings is scheduled for Nov. 17 to 21 in Mexico. Officials from all three countries said that additional rounds of talks will be necessary next year, so the original Dec. 31 deadline will be missed.

The three countries now have given themselves until March to reach a new agreement, U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said.
Steelworkers from around the nation stormed the halls of Capitol Hill in late September demanding immediate completion of investigations into whether steel and aluminum imports threaten national security.

“The time to act is now,” International President Leo W. Gerard said as several dozen Steelworkers confronted legislators with first-hand descriptions of the industries’ devastation and the critical need for relief from surging imports.

As a Republican candidate in 2016, the president talked tough on trade and promised working people he would revive steel, aluminum and other basic industries to help them and their long-suffering communities.

That rhetoric and the administration’s decision to use an obscure trade provision to investigate steel and aluminum imports sparked optimism in industries that spent years lobbying for tougher trade measures to combat Chinese overcapacity and dumped subsidized steel and aluminum.

In April, the president launched separate Commerce Department probes into whether steel and aluminum imports endanger national security under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962. Under Section 232, the president has broad powers to impose trade remedies such as tariffs and quotas if the Commerce investigation finds that imported products threaten U.S. national security.

The administration promised to unveil findings of the investigation in steel by July 1. That deadline was missed. By September, that self-imposed deadline was long gone.

“People are frustrated right now,” said Tom Duffy, a safety inspector at U.S. Steel facilities in Pittsburgh’s Monongahela River Valley. “There is not enough being done for the steel industry. We are looking to see this big light of hope that Trump said was going to save the steel industry, but we’re just not seeing action.”

The USW’s lightning round of lobbying took place from Sept. 18 to Sept. 20. On Sept. 22, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said the long-delayed reports would not be delivered until after Congress deals with tax reform. He said the administration does not want to “unnecessarily irritate the Senate.”

Delays hurt industry

The administration’s delay prompted steel importers to rush product into the U.S. market before any restrictions that could result from the investigation are imposed. Steel imports surged upward by 21 percent after April, when the investigation began, and could go higher while a tax overhaul winds its way through Congress.

“By publicly affirming a Section 232 review and relief, the administration may be laying out a welcome mat for a surge in steel imports,” said Scott Paul, president of the Alliance for American Manufacturing.

International Vice President Tom Conway, who oversees the USW’s bargaining in steel and aluminum, said the delay is devastating.

“Plants are closing, jobs are lost and communities are injured while politicians delay,” he said.
“We’re urging Congress to press the president and the Department of Commerce to get this moving, get it over with, and keep your promise to do something,” Conway added.

As cheap imports rise, domestic employment falls. “It has hurt everyone in the steel industry, not just my plant,” said Marcelina Brown, who lives in Hobart, Ind., and works for Arcelor-Mittal at Burns Harbor.

“When production goes down, people get laid off. And if production doesn’t go back up, they start to idle furnaces, and before you know it, the plant gets shut down.”

**Thousands out of work**

With hundreds of his members on long-term layoff, Dan Simmons, president of Local 1899 at Granite City, was optimistic last April when the administration launched the Section 232 investigation.

Within weeks of April’s announcement, U.S. Steel was promising to restart two idled blast furnaces at Granite City and recall hundreds of experienced union workers.

Granite City employed roughly 1,800 USW members when U.S. Steel announced the idling of steelmaking there during Christmas week in 2015, furloughing 550 workers. That same week, 300 hot strip mill workers were also let go.

Successful trade cases kept cold mill operations going. In January, more than a year after the original layoffs, another trade case win opened the doors for the return of some 230 hot strip mill workers. By late September, 700 of 1,800 Granite City members were working.

As summer turned to fall, with hundreds of members still laid off, Simmons was left to wonder what happened to the promises the president made in the spring.

“I feel President Trump has been talking about this since April and here we are kicking this can down the road,” Simmons said. “In the words of Elvis Presley, ‘we need a little less talk and more action.’”

Without suggesting specific remedies like tariffs or quotas, USW worker-lobbyists asked Congress for bold action to stop unfair trade and curb global overcapacity in steel to protect American jobs and security.

“Typically, I shy away from politics,” said electrician Billy Neal Phillips, a third generation steelworker from Michigan. “But this is something I feel so strongly about that I wanted to come here. I wanted to push them to do what they need to do for our industry, and really for our country too.”

“We’re not against trade, but we want fair trade,” Phillips added. “We can’t compete with China when they subsidize their steel mills and they dump steel on our shores. It’s not right.”

**Massive overcapacity**

China and other countries have built up their steel sectors with government support and subsidies. Since 2007, China alone added over 550 million metric tons of capacity, more than six times total U.S. production. This massive overcapacity led to a surge of dumped and subsidized steel into the United States, forcing the closure of U.S. mills and the loss of jobs.

They spoke for steel towns like River Rouge, Mich.; Cleveland, Lorain and Marion, Ohio; Birmingham and Tuscaloosa, Ala.; Braddock, Clairton and Fairless Hills, Pa.; Ashland, Ky.; Gary, Indiana Harbor, and Burns Harbor, Ind.

“We’re the people in the trenches. We’re the ones whose lives are affected by these decisions,” Clifford Tobey, president of Local 2660 in Keewatin, Minn., said as the marathon lobbying began. “All we can hope is that we can find some of our legislators in Washington who have an open ear and an open mind to our plight.”

Tobey works on the Iron Range in northern Minnesota, where U.S. Steel’s Keetac iron ore mine and processing operations in Keewatin, Minn., said as the marathon lobbying began. “All we can hope is that we can find some of our legislators in Washington who have an open ear and an open mind to our plight.”

Now you have to act

Traveling in groups, USW members visited every Senate office and some House offices where possible, Conway said. One group visited the U.S. Department of Commerce, where they spoke by telephone to Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, who was in New York with the president. “We told them, ‘You said you were going to do something, now you have to act,’ ” Conway said.

A few days before Steelworkers converged on Washington, ArcelorMittal told its customers it would idle a rolling mill at its Conshohocken, Pa., plant next year because of limited demand for plate steel from manufacturers who build bridges, ships, tank cars and military equipment, coupled with the ongoing surge of unfairly priced steel.

Essential to national defense

As far as national defense, steel is used in everything from ships, tanks and weapons, to bridges, rail systems and energy infrastructure. It’s essential that America have its own production capacity in times of crisis because a steel plant can’t be built overnight in an emergency.

If American manufacturing capabilities deteriorate further, Conway suggested the United States may have to ask other countries, like Russia or China, to supply steel for key military and infrastructure needs.

William “Billy” McCall, president of Local 1066 at the U.S. Steel Gary Works in northwest Indiana, said the American steel industry today is lean and innovative, capable of competing as long as the playing field is level.

The mill where McCall works produces lightweight, high-strength steel for the auto industry that allows car companies to lower vehicle weight and improve gas mileage while maintaining strength and stability.

“We are being very innovative in steel right now,” he said in an interview with Scott Paul, president of the Alliance for American Manufacturing.

Yet McCall was eager to tell legislators that national security has more to do with the American family than ships, planes and the military equipment used to protect our national interests.

“I don’t want to use the negative catch phrase of terrorism, but the American worker is being terrorized in terms of their jobs and being able to support their families in America,” he said. “Our jobs are being exported at an astronomical rate, and we need it to stop.”
The USW has condemned as “reckless and expensive” a presidential commission charged with investigating wild and unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud. “It doesn’t take rocket science to figure out that this investigation is all just an effort to eventually legalize voter suppression, one of the most pressing civil rights issues of our time,” International President Leo W. Gerard said.

The Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity has its roots in a claim by the new administration that Hillary Clinton would not have won the popular vote if “millions” of undocumented immigrants had not voted illegally, a claim repeatedly debunked by fact checkers.

The commission is officially tasked with ferreting out “widespread voter fraud,” which Republicans have called a cancer on democracy and opponents believe is a pretense for discouraging Democratic-leaning voters, including minorities and young adults, from going to the polls.

**Slim evidence**

Evidence of any vote manipulation “is nearly non-existent,” International Vice President Fred Redmond said on The Leslie Marshall Show, a radio broadcast. “This commission, we strongly believe, was put together for the sole purpose of legalizing voter suppression.”

Voter suppression can take many forms, including limiting or eliminating early voting, purging legitimate voters from rolls, instituting photo identification requirements, reducing polling places and voting machines, and deliberately making ballots more complicated.

As far as fraud, it is more likely that an American would be struck by lightning than impersonate another person at the polls, according to a report by the Brennan Center for Justice at the New York University School of Law. The report found only 31 credible instances of voter impersonation in federal elections between 2000 and 2014.

Republicans have long tried to solidify their power base—mostly white, older, suburban and rural Americans—with schemes to disenfranchise likely Democratic voters. Their newest targets include the nation’s millennials, the largest and most diverse generation in America.

In the years leading up to the 2016 general election, Republican governors and state legislatures implemented new laws restricting when, where and how people could vote—laws that disproportionately harmed students, the poor and people of color.

**Younger voters targeted**

The requirement in some states that voters show a photo ID with a current address can affect young voters, who are more likely to move away from home to attend school or strike out on their own. Most college-age students move from their home state with only about one month to register or update their registration.

Restricting the number of poll locations near colleges and universities predominantly affects students and younger voters who are without cars.

In addition to voter ID laws, residency requirements and targeted polling place closures, some Republican-dominated legislatures prohibited pre-registration, same-day registration, early voting, and provisional ballots—methods favored by younger voters.

Vice President Mike Pence serves as the commission’s chairman. The vice chairman is Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, who has helped to create some of the nation’s most restrictive voter ID laws.

Kobach uses his state position as a soapbox from which he advocates for tough restrictions on voting rights and immigration. Though a favorite of the Republican Party, he is a target of civil rights lawsuits.

“The aggressive tactics that he used in Kansas were a clear sign when he was appointed to this position of what this commission is all about,” Redmond said.

Gerard called the commission a violation of civil rights that aims to weaken, rather than strengthen, the voting process. “Strengthening the voting system is something we all want,” Gerard said, “but this fraud squad is doing just the opposite.”
Tim Brown was working atop a 260-foot tower at the U.S. Silica plant in Ottawa, Ill., last Feb. 28 when he saw a massive tornado moving toward the small village of Naplate, located along the north bank of the Illinois River.

As Brown watched the rapidly advancing dark funnel cloud brightened by sparking transformers, USW members working the afternoon shift at the NSG Pilkington Glass factory scrambled for shelter.

According to the National Weather Service, the first significant damage came when the tornado threw a minivan about 30 yards near a LaSalle County nursing home and lifted a house off its foundation.

The tornado then slammed into Naplate and NSG Pilkington, completely destroying one section of the factory before crossing the river to the south side of Ottawa, where it left a path of destruction 800 yards wide.

It all happened quickly. A tornado watch was issued at 3:19 p.m., followed by a severe thunderstorm warning. Employees were told to take shelter at 4:33 p.m., a minute before the Naplate tornado warning sounded. The factory was hit at 4:48 p.m. It was over seven minutes later.

“It was pretty horrific, a dramatic day all the way around,” said Brown, vice president of USW Local 31G at U.S. Silica, which supplies NSG Pilkington with the sand it needs to make energy-efficient architectural glass.

Naplate damaged

Naplate, population 523, was severely impacted with houses structurally damaged or completely destroyed. Debris, downed trees and power lines blocked the streets.

“It was a direct hit,” said Naplate Mayor James Rick.

The glass factory was badly damaged, though no one inside was injured. The tornado ripped off most of the roof, knocked down walls and tossed tufts of pink wall insulation into trees.

It tipped a tractor trailer over in the parking lot, where cars and pickup trucks were left scrambled, and turned a forklift upside down inside the plant. Fortunately, a new batch plant under construction to store and mix raw materials escaped harm.

Early the next morning, John Roth, six-term president of 130-member Local 19G, took his first look at the damaged factory where he has worked for decades, as his father did before him. Roth lives on the far west side of Ottawa next to Naplate.

“It was emotional to see the devastation of a place you take for granted, where you work, a place you go to every day,” Roth said. “It was just torn apart. Half of the plant didn’t even have a roof.”

No lights, no heat, no water

Rather than walk away from the destruction, NSG Pilkington decided to rebuild the old yet highly automated factory. It enlisted its union employees to help in the recovery of both the factory and the village.
“We recognized that we will need our employees when we start back up, so we tried to take a unique approach,” said HR Director Sean Maltby, who credited NSG Pilkington for “supporting us in trying to retain jobs.”

Paychecks continued without interruption for all the local union members willing to work in the cleanup and reconstruction. Voluntary layoffs were available as an alternative.

There was no light, no heat and no water when the recovery work began, so work was confined to daylight hours. The company brought in catered food for the first few weeks since there was no way to store or refrigerate lunches. They also supplied gloves, hand warmers and other equipment.

Roth helped to organize work crews, some of whom were sent into the village to assist with that cleanup while others worked in the plant performing light demolition, cleanup, and removal of unneeded machinery. Training was provided.

“It was very gracious of Pilkington to keep their employees working and also offer to do general maintenance in the village,” the mayor said.

Skilled trades members worked when needed with contractors and specialists who were brought in for the reconstruction. Some volunteers were trained to be industrial painters. Others helped out in the office with administrative tasks.

“It’s been a ‘working together thing’ to keep everyone employed who wants to be there,” Roth said. “It’s a two-way street.”

The factory specializes in float glass, a sheet made by floating molten glass on a bed of molten metal, typically tin. The method produces a very flat glass with uniform thickness for modern windows.

**Glass tank furnace**

As part of the reconstruction, the company decided to take advantage of the downtime to rebuild the glass tank furnace early. This is a task usually performed every 12 to 15 years.

“They are doing a complete rebuild of the tank,” Roth said of the company. “They put a lot of money into the place, which is good for the members.”

To keep the plant’s customers satisfied, two other union NSG Pilkington facilities, one in Rossford, Ohio, and another in Laurinburg, N.C., are temporarily helping fill orders, Roth said.

“Our customers are so important, both to the union and the company,” Roth added.

If everything goes as planned, NSG Pilkington will start the rebuilt glass tank before year’s end and resume making glass with the same dedicated employees who were there when the tornado hit. A celebration is planned.

The village is rebuilding too. The mayor said in October that eight homes are being constructed or rebuilt to replace 21 that were lost, with work on another four or five expected to soon start. He estimated that 75 to 80 percent of the structures damaged by the tornado have been repaired.

Tim Tuttle, chairman of the USW Glass Industry Conference, and District 7 staff representative Mark Trone praised Roth and the local union for working cooperatively with NSG Pilkington, and the company for investing in the facility and the employees.

“This is a great story about our members and the local union, how they worked with the company to bring this factory back on line when it would have been easy to walk away,” Trone said.
USW members across the United States joined nearly 200 other activists in Olympia, Wash., to explore infrastructure, transportation, clean energy and other initiatives that could create jobs while addressing the climate crisis.

The 2017 Clean and Fair Economy Summit, sponsored by the BlueGreen Alliance (BGA), which was founded by the USW and the Sierra Club, included workshops, training sessions, panel discussions and speeches aimed at finding solutions to environmental and economic challenges.

The event was held over two days in September. In past years it was known as the Good Jobs, Green Jobs conference. “This year, we decided to be a lot more strategically focused … to help labor union members, environmentalists, business leaders and civic leaders build real connections,” BGA Executive Director Kim Glas said.

“We’re going to need to lean on each other in the coming years. It’s no secret that our backs are against the wall and that the news coming out of Washington, D.C., creates enormous challenges for all of us.”

Those challenges include the basic steps of convincing leaders in Washington that climate change is real and that taking the necessary steps to address it will create good jobs and grow the economy, Glas said.

“Now, more than ever, blue-green alliances are vital to the future of our nation,” she said.

Partner with employers

Workers across all industries must partner with employers, political representatives and allies nationwide if real change is going to happen in time to make a difference, Glas said.

With that goal in mind, the BGA conference included representatives from each of those groups. In addition to the USW, delegates included members of the Communications Workers of America (CWA), the Utility Workers Union of America (UWUA), the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU).

USW employers also played a significant role in the conference, including Arconic, Goodyear, ArcelorMittal, AK Steel, Kaiser Aluminum, International Paper, and Domtar.

Other participants included the Union of Concerned Scientists, the National Wildlife Federation, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and the Sierra Club.

District 12 Sub-Director Gaylan Prescott told the conference participants that while the interests of industrial workers and environmental activists may sometimes seem to be at odds, the two groups know that there is no choice between fighting for good jobs and a clean environment. Those fights must be waged together.
For Bob Guenther, of IBEW Local 77, which represents more than 7,000 workers in Washington state, Idaho and Montana, collaboration is the only way to successfully address environmental and economic challenges.

**Working together**

Guenther spoke of the cooperation among unions, businesses and political leaders involved in planning a pilot program for a 13,000-panel solar farm at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, a USW workplace and mostly decommissioned nuclear complex in Washington.

“I’m so proud of what we’ve done,” Guenther said. “We’re not taking no for an answer. We’re moving the ball ahead.”

In addition to green energy projects such as the one in Hanford, the conference also focused on the importance of infrastructure investments. Those include not only improving transportation systems, but also water and power delivery and other methods to reduce waste and curb pollution while creating jobs.

Other topics of workshops and training sessions included the labor movement’s role in addressing climate change, efforts to reduce carbon emissions in the manufacturing sector, fair trade, opportunities for job creation in the clean energy economy and the importance of political action.

One consistent political supporter of both the labor and environmental movements has been U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley of Oregon, who has introduced legislation that would create thousands of good-paying jobs and invest in retraining programs to help workers transition to a clean economy.

Merkley told the conference participants that while the climate crisis is a real threat, it also presents an opportunity to create a new economy that works better for all Americans while maintaining the nation’s manufacturing base.

“Let’s seize this opportunity,” Merkley said. “We should make sure that workers have the right to organize in this new economy so they get a fair share of the wealth they create. That’s the vision that we should carry forward.”

**Awards reception**

The opening day of the conference ended with an awards reception honoring the BGA’s 2017 BlueGreen Champions, one of whom was Steve Garey, retired president of Local 12-591 at the Tesoro refinery in Anacortes, Wash. Garey fought for years to improve health and safety standards for refinery workers, and to ensure a just transition to cleaner energy that doesn’t leave workers behind.

USW members David Campbell of Local 675 and Mike Smith of Local 5 presented another champion award to the Sierra Club for the organization’s help in fighting to strengthen California’s oil refinery safety regulations, which hadn’t been updated in decades.
At the huge Newport News Shipbuilding yard in Virginia, USW-represented workers use abrasives to blast rust from the steel surfaces of Navy ships or submarines that are under construction or being renovated.

One commonly used abrasive medium is coal slag, which naturally carries trace amounts of beryllium, a light metal that can cause a crippling and sometimes fatal disease that ultimately robs sufferers of the ability to breathe.

In his decades of work in shipbuilding, Allen Harville, a safety and health representative with Local 8888 at the Newport News yard, said he has “thousands of times” witnessed clouds of dust from blasting waft over the shipyard and the nearby James River.

“They try to blast at night so people don’t notice, but if you are in the shipyard with lights, you can see the clouds rise and drift all over the place, in the community and in the river,” said Harville, who chairs a joint union-management safety committee.

The dust clouds blasting produces can be large enough to expose workers who are not specifically engaged in the work. The blasters themselves are protected by air-supplied respirators and body suits, but other crew members have been exposed to blast abrasion dust over the years with little or no protection. There are no systems in place to monitor exposure to beryllium or to monitor the health of workers.

Dust escapes containment

Today, blasting takes place under protective covers much like a highway bridge getting a new coat of paint, but Harville said the dust can and does escape.

“Even though they try to contain it, if you are blasting out a hull area, there are openings that let that stuff migrate up to boat spaces like the hangar deck,” he said. “You’ve got people going by, people in the yard – they are all exposed.”

The USW represents about 10,000 workers at the shipyard and is concerned about the new administration downgrading OSHA standards introduced by the Obama White House that were originally meant to protect all workers from beryllium exposure.

After decades of study, OSHA under the Obama administration on Jan. 9 published a final rule in the Federal Register that established new and stronger protections for workers who are exposed to beryllium in general industry, construction and shipyards.

But on June 27, the new administration in the White House cancelled most of the provisions from the Obama rule that would have protected shipyard and construction workers from the hazards of beryllium exposure. The USW has members in both sectors, including Newport News shipyard workers.

The changes are significant. Employers would no longer have to measure beryllium levels in the workplace or provide medical testing to workers at risk of fatal lung disease. In addition, workers lost the right to wear protective clothing or to shower at the end of the work shift, making it possible for beryllium to be carried home, exposing spouses and children.

The USW submitted extensive comments opposing the administration’s June 27 proposal. In support of the union’s position, Local 8888 quickly collected 1,600 signatures over two days from workers entering the shipyard’s gates.

“No worker should have to die from chronic beryllium disease,” said Michael
Strong beryllium standards have long been part of the USW’s agenda. Local 8888 has been working on the beryllium issue for at least a decade, ever since a blaster at the shipyard expressed concerns about his health and that of other blasters who were using abrasives made from coal slag.

Since then, the local union’s safety committee has been working to assess the beryllium exposure to its members while attempting to track occupational health concerns and search for safer alternatives.

Alternatives to coal slag, which is sold under several brand names, include aluminum oxide, recycled glass pellets and garnet, an abrasive mineral known mostly as a gem stone.

General industry would remain subject to the full force of the standard if the revision stands. That would include beryllium metal production, nonferrous foundries, fabrication of beryllium alloy products, secondary smelting, refining and alloying, copper and copper rolling, drawing and extruding, welding, and dental laboratories.

Construction and shipyard employers would still have to meet the permissible exposure limits for beryllium set by OSHA under the revised rule, but they would no longer have to comply with provisions that relate to medical monitoring, protective equipment and housekeeping measures.

Local 8888 and the international union are fighting for engineering controls to reduce exposure in addition to employee monitoring and company-paid testing of employees. The beryllium exposure test, Harville said, can be expensive, with costs ranging from $400 to $500 each, but he argues employees have the right to know.

“You deserve to be tested,” Harville said. “You deserve to know if they are overexposing you to beryllium. If they don’t want to do the testing, they should find an abrasive product that doesn’t have beryllium in it.”
The White House is scaling back information made available to the public on work-related deaths and injuries, operational events at petroleum refineries, and what workers of different races and genders are paid. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the federal department charged with protecting workers, erased data on workplace deaths from its website homepage in August and will disclose fewer accidents in the future.

The Department of Energy (DOE) also quit reporting refinery fires, toxic releases and other operational incidents that had been previously made available to the public through the DOE’s website.

In addition, the administration is blocking an Obama-era rule requiring businesses with more than 100 employees to track what they pay workers of different genders, races and ethnicities. The rule was adopted last year by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which sought the information to identify and address discriminatory wage gaps.

Workplace safety advocates, including the USW, saw the fatality and injury incident data as a tool to keep companies accountable.

Full-time USW health and safety representatives at paper mills and converting facilities around the country spent a week together learning how to improve safety, in part by identifying and addressing hazards.

The program, held from Sept. 11 to Sept. 15 in Pittsburgh, was offered by the USW Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) Department and the Tony Mazzocchi Center for Health and Environmental Education (TMC).

Making and converting paper to products has the unfortunate distinction in recent years of being the most dangerous of all the industries where the USW represents workers. Some 36 local union safety and health representatives from 13 local unions and 13 different employers in the paper sector participated in the training.

Chris Braley, an environmental health and safety representative at Twin Rivers Paper Co. in Madawaska, Maine, said it was reassuring to know that the fight for safe workplaces is a shared struggle.

“The input from some of the other seasoned brothers and sisters was priceless,” Braley said. “We have already begun sharing that knowledge on the shop floor with our local leaders.”

Nancy Lessin, a senior TMC staff member, said new and experienced representatives worked in groups on addressing safety issues that could lead to fatalities and life altering injuries.

The informal setting provided an opportunity for participants to learn from each other on how to be more effective in the day-to-day work of eliminating, reducing and preventing hazards.

“Most safety representatives, new or experienced, have been confronted with some of the worst issues common to the paper industry. They include hazardous substances, combustible dust, mobile equipment, falls, and incidents where workers are caught in or struck by machinery and other objects,” said HSE specialist Steve Sallman, who is the health and safety lead for the paper sector.

The course reviewed specific strategies for addressing hazards and working with management to improve condi-
Fines have limited impact

Fines are often too small under the 1970 Occupational Safety and Health Act to have anything but limited impact. The average federal fine for a serious workplace safety violation was $2,402 in fiscal 2016, according to the AFL-CIO. The median penalty for a workplace death was $6,500.

“OSHA fines after fatalities aren’t enough” of a deterrent, Frederick said. “Part of the thinking was employers don’t like the publicity that comes from being a bad actor or being seen as a bad actor.”

New website information on accidents and fatalities excludes incidents where workers were killed but OSHA did not issue a citation. The agency also removed a scrolling list of victims’ names.

The listing of names was added in 2010 to ensure people knew the extent of workplace fatalities in the United States, according to Jordan Barab, a senior fellow at the National Employment Law Project. “It’s a conscious decision to bury the fact that workers are getting killed on the job,” he said.

Refinery data withheld

Meanwhile, the DOE also stopped publishing its Energy Assurance Daily (EAD) web page, which alerted the public to refinery fires, toxic releases and other operational incidents.

Kim Nibarger, chair of the USW’s National Oil Bargaining Program, has relied on the Energy Assurance Daily page to track operational incidents at refineries.

“It helped to illustrate the lack of attention the oil industry paid to process safety, and the repeat accidents proved that the oil companies failed to learn from previous accidents,” Nibarger said.

The discontinuation will limit the union’s ability to identify trends in the oil industry and follow a company’s history of incidents, he said. The DOE suggested the public could use internet search engines instead.

“Discontinuation of this page is a disservice to workers and the public in general,” Nibarger said. “If you have searched the internet for events in the refining sector, you know it can be looking for a needle in a haystack.”

Equal pay dealt setback

Equal pay advocates decried the administration’s decision to stay the rule, requiring larger employers to collect pay data, saying it would sweep unequal pay under the rug.

The rule, which had been set to take effect next spring, was meant to encourage companies to identify and correct pay disparities and allow the EEOC to find and address pay discrimination.

Without the reporting requirement, Amanda Green-Hawkins, the USW’s director of civil and human rights, said employers will be free to ignore the undeniable wage gap that exists for women and minorities.

Women in the United States are paid on average 80 cents for every dollar men earn, federal data shows. The pay gap for women of color is even worse. Hispanic women earn 54 cents on the dollar, while black women make 63 cents.

“The EEOC reporting requirement is crucial to identify wage disparities, which may then spur inquiries into the basis for those differences,” Green-Hawkins said. “With no accountability, employers can easily pay discriminatory wages in the dark, and this current administration has just turned off the lights.”
It pays to belong to a union in more ways than money. “Unions raise workers’ wages and strengthen their rights at work, but they also give working people a voice in our democracy,” said Lawrence Mishel, president of the Economic Policy Institute (EPI).

A new report from EPI, a think tank in Washington, D.C., explains how labor unions help low and middle-income workers improve their jobs, maintain fair standards of living and defend their rights in an economy that all too often appears to be rigged in favor of the rich and politically powerful.

“Unions are a dynamic and ever-evolving institution of the American economy that exist to give working people a voice and leverage over their working conditions and the economic policy decisions that shape these conditions,” the report said.

A worker covered by a union contract earns on average 13.2 percent more in wages than non-union workers in the same industry with similar backgrounds in education and experience.

Union members are more likely than their non-union counterparts to have benefits – including health care and retirement plans – that support families and improve job security.

Because of collective bargaining, union members are also more likely to have safer workplaces and more reasonable and predictable schedules than non-union workers.

Importantly, collective bargaining also raises wages for non-union workers. EPI explains: As an economic sector becomes more unionized, non-union employers pay more to retain qualified workers, and norms of high pay and better conditions become standard.

If union density had remained at its 1979 level, weekly wages of non-union men in the private sector would be 5 percent higher today.

Despite the effectiveness of unions, or perhaps because of it, decades of anti-union campaigns have made it much harder than before for workers to use their collective voice to sustain American middle-class living standards.

“The attacks have succeeded in increasing the gap between the number of workers who would like to be represented by a union and the number who are represented by a union,” the EPI said.

Where there are unions, membership today is diverse, just like America. While it was once true that union workers were predominantly white men, today roughly 10.6 million of the 16.3 million workers covered by union contracts are women or people of color.

Women or people of color aged 18 to 64 make up about two-thirds of union workers. EPI said 14.5 percent of black workers are covered by a collective bargaining agreement, compared with 12.5 percent of white workers and 10.1 percent of Hispanic workers.

Hourly wages for women who belong to unions are 9.2 percent higher on average than for comparable non-unionized women. Black and Hispanic workers typically get a disproportionate boost from unionization compared with their white counterparts.

Manufacturing remains an important source of work for union members in the United States, but today workers in many different occupations are protected by the union umbrella.

Nearly two in five workers with union contracts work in education or health services. One in seven union members works in public administration. One in eight works in transportation and utilities, and one in 11 works in manufacturing.
A new Gallup poll found that a solid 61 percent of Americans approve of organized labor this year, a 14-year high. The poll also showed they want unions to be stronger.

“The resurgence of labor-union popularity is good news,” said International President Leo W. Gerard. “With a Gallup poll showing the approval rate for organized labor at 61 percent, unions are much more popular than Congress. This may be because unions get things done.

“They increase wages for all workers – union and non-union alike. They work to create safer workplaces. They’ve campaigned against efforts to suppress voting.

“And union members in Texas, including members of the United Steelworkers, helped to rescue flood victims and are raising money for restoration of communities” impacted by Hurricane Harvey.

The current labor union approval is up five percentage points over 2016 and is 13 points above the all-time low recorded in 2009. A new high of 39 percent of Americans believe unions should have greater influence than they do.

Historically, unions have enjoyed strong support from the American public. In 1936, when Gallup first polled on the issue, 72 percent of Americans approved of labor unions.

Union approval peaked in the 1950s. It reached 75 percent in 1953 and 1957. Approval remained in the 60 percent range throughout the 2000s, right up until the official end of the recession in 2009. That year’s survey was the first and only time that support for unions fell below 50 percent.

“It is gratifying to see that the popularity of unions has risen 13 points since 2009, particularly when wealthy, right-wing groups like ALEC and the State Policy Network are working every day to crush unions,” Gerard said.

“The USW, the AFL-CIO and all of its member unions will continue working to end income inequality and improve the lives of all workers by ensuring they receive a fair share of the bounty created by their labor,” he added.

Democrats in Washington, D.C., introduced legislation this summer that would raise the federal minimum wage to $15 an hour by 2024, up from its current level of $7.25. The bill, called the Raise the Wage Act, has 35 co-sponsors in the Senate and 152 in the House.
District 1:

DEIDRIA COLLINS, Local 731

A union steward and Women of Steel member, Deidria Collins of Chillicothe, Ohio, works with four organizations that aid the homeless, fund a local community center, provide in-need children with school supplies and help people who are struggling abroad.

She does much of her work through Five Loaves Chillicothe, which provides food and other necessities to a local shelter. She also supports Two Fish Coffee, which buys coffee from women growers in Africa.

Collins works for Glatfelter, a manufacturer of specialty papers and engineered products.

District 2:

JACKIE ANKLAM, Local 9899

Jackie Anklam collected and delivered safe drinking water to the people in Flint, Mich., when a state of emergency was declared due to water contamination.

Anklam and WOS Coordinator Linda Lucas distributed lead-detection kits, faucet filters and coordinated a clean water drop-off at Local 12075 in Flint.

“Locals from all over poured in money. We used it to purchase water filters, cases of water, sanitary wipes, paper plates… anything we could think of that (Flint residents) were living without because faucet water wasn’t an option,” she said.

District 3:

NANCY MCCURRACH, Local 1944

Jefferson Award Overall Winner

Nancy McCurrach, a senior customer care representative at TELUS Mobility and a member of Telecommunications Workers USW Local 1944 in Port Coquitlam, British Columbia, founded Tri-Cities Refugee Welcome Wagon to help Syrian and Turkish refugees.

For this, and for her many other charitable deeds, McCurrach was the USW Jefferson Award winner for District 3 and was chosen as the overall USW Champion Volunteer. She then went on to snag the national Jefferson Award for Outstanding Public Service by an Employee at the foundation’s annual awards ceremony.

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

The summer issue of USW@Work featured Nancy McCurrach, a USW member from Port Coquitlam, British Columbia, Canada, who won the 2017 national prize for community service. She founded a Welcome Wagon program that provides aid and friendship to Syrian and Turkish refugees.

“We are the only union who participates in the Jefferson Awards Foundation,” said USW International President Leo W. Gerard. “I am so proud of everything our members do for their communities. It shows what true solidarity looks like.”

In this issue, USW@Work features award winners from each of the USW districts in the United States and Canada, USW staff, and the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR).

The Jefferson Awards Foundation is the country’s longest standing and most prestigious organization dedicated to activating and celebrating public service. The foundation, through its programs, trains and empowers individuals to serve and lead in their communities, and amplifies that work through a network of media partners, mentors and volunteers.

The USW participates in a program that was created to recognize our members. However, the Jefferson Awards has many branches and provides numerous ways to nominate individuals for their service.

For more information, you can visit www.usw.org and the Jefferson Awards Foundation website at www.jeffersonawards.org
District 4:

BRIGITTE WOMER, Local 1000

Brigitte Womer leads her local’s Women of Steel and Next Generation committees in service projects that have rebranded the union in Corning, N.Y., as community-builders.

Womer helped guide the two committees through several projects that put more than $34,500 into the community in 2016.

Womer and Next Generation members also established a Global Solidarity Day where volunteers do physically demanding chores for retired Steelworkers, veterans and widows such as lawn care, home painting and wood chopping.

District 5:

MARIEN LANDRY, Local 6951

Marien Landry, a retired member in Quebec, Canada, dedicates his time and money to building and repairing schools and health care facilities to benefit children in Guatemala.

Landry spends approximately six months a year in Guatemala and has successfully constructed 10 new school houses. At home in Quebec, he organizes fundraisers for his organization, The Guatemala Project.

“My main goal is to give education to the greatest number of children by building schools,” said Landry.

District 6:

DARREN GREEN, Local 5328

Darren Green, president of Local 5328 in Hamilton, Ontario, has a list of accomplishments that is seemingly endless.

Sprucing up the local union hall, buying more than 1,000 backpacks and filling them with necessities for students, and creating and pushing the #CommunityMatters hashtag on social media to shift the perception of labor are just a few items on his massive community service resume.

Green is also president of the Hamilton Steelworkers Area Council and chairman of the building committee at the USW Centre in Hamilton.

District 7:

EPHRIN JENKINS, Local 1014

Ephrin Jenkins founded an annual Black Labor Week in 2012 to uplift and empower the community in Gary, Ind. It’s a time when members of Local 1014 can connect with the community through activities that help retirees, veterans, seniors, homeless people and children.

The week is full of activities for all ages including free haircuts for retirees, free movie showings, and educational panels on women’s issues. Volunteers also address school assemblies on black history and offer mentorship to students.

“I want to create more activists. I want people to be a part of something they can be proud of,” Jenkins said.

District 8:

CRAIG BAILEY, Local 1693

Craig Bailey has given his all to starting a popular and successful fundraiser in Louisville, Ky., that helps kids with cancer go to camp.

Every year since 2011, Bailey has organized a motorcycle poker run, live auction, and raffles to pay for kids with cancer to go to Camp Quality Kentuckiana, partnering with local businesses to donate prizes, food and venues. This year, he raised $71,000, enough to pay for 71 children.

At Camp Quality, children with cancer get to go to baseball games, swim in ponds, fish, roast marshmallows, and compete in talent shows.

District 9:

LINNEA HECTOR, Local 9489

Linnea Hector, president of Local 9489, truly lives out the power of unity through her work in the Virgin Islands. After uniting eight Steelworker locals to form a regional Rapid Response committee, Hector led a campaign that won the Virgin Islands a $3 increase in the minimum wage.

The regional committee monitors bills scheduled to come before Virgin Islands legislature and lobbies for or against the ones that affect working people.

Hector encourages members to get involved with the union by taking a position, joining a committee and participating in local events that benefit the community.
District 10:
**JOHN AND JIMMY BEIDLER, Local 10-00086**

Brothers John and Jimmy Beidler joined forces with Local 1219 Next Generation Chairman Mark Simko in August 2016 to help fellow Steelworkers impacted by the devastating floods in Louisiana.

The Beidlers collected donations at every gate location at Merck & Co. in Pennsylvania, where they work, as well as other sites around the state. In the end, they were able to send a 26-foot truck to Louisiana full of goods with the help of USW members and Teamsters Local 107.

The Beidler brothers are involved in many other projects that benefit local animal shelters and the Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful program.

District 11:
**LOCAL UNION 105 WOMEN OF STEEL**

Local 105 Women of Steel (WOS) are District 11’s 2017 USW Jefferson Award winners for their relentless compassion and giving. This past year, they raised more than $16,000 to help their community.

Co-Chairs Sandy Conway and Jane Bailey said that they are almost always selling raffle tickets to help one of the many different causes they support. Most of the profits are donated where the women see the greatest need, from breast cancer awareness to replacing the roof of a local homeless shelter.

District 12:
**JAMES WILLIAMS, Local 8599**

Jim Williams, president of Local 8599, is always organizing a project or fundraiser for his community in Fontana, Calif. One of his favorites is collecting socks and other items for homeless shelters as well as the Child Welfare and Attendance Community Clothes Closet.

Since starting the project two years ago, they have collected over 6,500 pairs of new socks in all sizes.

The local also founded the Community Alliance for Fontana Students (CAFFS) and annually supports the 24-hour American Cancer Society Relay for Life in Fontana.

District 13:
**SOUTH LOUISIANA WOS**

The South Louisiana Women of Steel Regional Council came together in true solidarity fashion to refurbish the “living room” at a women’s shelter.

In what turned out to be a year-long project, the council adopted and refurbished Room #13 at the Iris Domestic Violence Center in Baton Rouge, La., using $3,200 in donations from USW locals.

WOS members, their families and union colleagues installed new wood flooring, painted walls and replaced old furniture and bedding with new materials.

**USW Staff:**
**PAULETTE BATTISTI, Local 3657**

In addition to her work with Local 3657 at the USW headquarters in Pittsburgh, Paulette Battisti is the president of Just Harvest, an organization that educates, empowers and mobilizes people to eliminate hunger, poverty and economic injustice in the Pittsburgh region.

She also sits on the board of directors of the Center for Hope in Ambridge, Pa. The center offers a monthly food pantry, after-school tutoring, cooking classes, job training and much more.

**SOAR:**
**DON KELLNER, Chapter 8-1
LENA SUTTON, Chapter 10**

Lena Sutton and Don Kellner were chosen as the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) Jefferson Awards Winners for 2017.

Sutton, president of the SOAR chapter in Hamilton, Ontario, was honored for her continued commitment to those in need. In her more than 40 years of activism, she has held multiple positions at the local union level. She is active with the Hamilton Area Women’s Committee, the United Way and other local charities. She also volunteers as a tax preparer for low-income families and retirees.

Kellner, a veteran of the 1959 steel strike, served his local in several positions, including president of the local and, after retirement, president of SOAR Chapter 8-1.

One of his most notable community service projects was a food bank begun during the 1980s steel crisis for laid-off members. The program has since grown outside the union to serve the eastern Baltimore County community.
Solvay, USW Working Together in North America

Solvay, a worldwide chemical and plastics corporation, promised to respect international social and labor standards when it signed a cooperative labor agreement in 2013 with IndustriALL, a global union federation.

But some of Solvay’s U.S. managers didn’t think the IndustriALL agreement applied to them and their USW-represented workplaces, behavior that created undue delays in reaching fair contract agreements.

So when Solvay and IndustriAll renewed the agreement this year, the USW made sure it included a memorandum of understanding (MOU) preventing managers from ignoring the agreement in the United States.

“Over the past few years we urged Solvay corporate management to ensure their American managers adhere to the Global Framework Agreement (GFA),” said International Vice President Carol Landry, who oversees the USW’s chemical sector.

“We are hopeful that the additional memorandum pertaining just to the United States will send a clear message to Solvay’s American management that corporate leadership expects them to follow the GFA just like the European managers,” Landry said.

The MOU brings special attention to Solvay’s labor relations in the United States, where the company has grown through mergers including the $5.5 billion purchase of Cytec, which makes lightweight composite materials for cars and airplanes and chemicals used in industrial and consumer products.

The USW is an affiliate of IndustriALL, which fights for better working conditions and trade unions around the world. It represents some 50 million workers in 140 countries in the mining, energy and manufacturing sectors.

The first GFA signed in 2013 created the Solvay Global Forum, which has eight union representatives from Solvay facilities in the United States, Brazil, China, France, Germany, Italy and South Korea, plus management representatives. The union representative for the United States is Jeff Hill of USW Local 14200 in Marietta, Ohio.

The global forum meets face-to-face once a year in Brussels, Belgium, and conducts three video conferences in between. Participants review Solvay’s operations including financial results, investment plans and safety records.

“The Solvay Global Forum creates a two-way street where employees can learn more about the company’s global operations and make connections with their fellow employees from every corner of the world, while also giving workers in North America an opportunity to voice their hopes and visions for the company’s future,” Hill said.

Union Plus Helps Members With Disaster Relief Grants

The AFL-CIO’s benefit program, Union Plus, offers a $500 grant to union members who are affected by a natural disaster. Payment extensions may also be provided to participants of Union Plus’s auto insurance and mortgage programs.

To be eligible for a disaster relief grant, one must either be a Union Plus credit card holder for at least three months, or participate in Union Plus mortgage and life insurance programs, have a Union Plus auto insurance policy, or be a Union Plus personal loan recipient for at least 12 months with the account or policy in good standing.

Visit https://www.unionplus.org/hardship-help/disaster-relief-grants to learn more about disaster relief grants, and for Union Plus contact information.
Members of Local 5668 ratified a new five-year contract with Constellium Rolled Products in Ravenswood, W.Va. The agreement took effect on Sept. 19 and runs through 2022. The aluminum facility employs more than 825 members.

The future of a Pennsylvania mill that is the largest supplier of armored plate to the U.S. military was put in jeopardy as the White House delayed a national security investigation into steel imports.

ArcelorMittal announced on Sept. 15 that it intends to idle the rolling mill at its plant in Conshohocken, Pa., within a year, a move that could impact an estimated 150 of 205 bargaining unit jobs.

International President Leo W. Gerard called the company’s decision “another direct blow to our national security.”

Located along the Schuylkill River adjacent to the city of Philadelphia, the Conshohocken plant is capable of producing 500,000 tons of plate steel annually.

In its statement, the company blamed the closure on “limited demand from key manufacturers that build bridges, ships, tank cars and military equipment, coupled with the ongoing surge of unfairly traded imports of steel.”

The announcement came as the USW was pushing Congress and the White House to unveil the findings of a national security investigation into unfairly traded steel imports under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act.

The delay is frustrating to Kameen Thompson, the president of Local 9462, which represents about 200 USW members who work at the Conshohocken mill.

“It doesn’t take that long to investigate this,” Thompson said. “We are losing jobs. They are dropping like flies. The administration needs to act now to prevent these unfair imports from killing more American jobs.”

Members of Local 5114 continue to maintain a strong picket line at the Lucky Friday silver and zinc mine in Mullan, Idaho, where an alleged unfair labor practice (ULP) strike has been underway since March 13.

The local, whenever possible, has continued a corporate campaign against Hecla Mining, which owns the Lucky Friday mine as well as mines in Alaska, Canada and Mexico. At press time, a solidarity rally was scheduled at Hecla headquarters in Coeur D’Alene, Idaho, for Oct. 31.

Negotiations were scheduled to be held in late October. Locals from Districts 3, 5, 11 and 12 have been essential to the campaign’s success.

Region 19 of the National Labor Relations Board issued a ULP complaint against Hecla last June. The work stoppage began March 13 and, in apparent retaliation, the company then implemented terms of a “final” offer that had been rejected in February by a vote of 244-2.

Members of Local 9899 in Saginaw, Mich., participated in the dedication of The Last Whistle, a statue honoring workers, which was unveiled as a part of the community’s Labor Day celebration.

The local, which is comprised of some 600 health care workers at Saginaw’s St. Mary’s Hospital, set up a table at the event and handed out USW items such as keychains, t-shirts, and lanyards.

Local 9899 President Jackie Anklam said the event was well-attended and led to meaningful conversations about what the local does for the people in Saginaw. “I had a lot of people say, ‘I will wear this with pride!’” Anklam said.

Anklam said the local’s participation in the statue dedication is part of a wider outreach effort, which has included a presentation she recently gave to the city council.

“I told them where we were and who we were. I told them that almost every hand that touches you in that hospital is a union worker until the time you go out that door,” Anklam said.

Members of the USW and seven other unions overwhelmingly ratified a new collective bargaining agreement covering about 2,000 workers at five ASARCO copper mining and processing facilities in Arizona and Texas.

District 12 Director Bob LaVenture, who chairs negotiations with the Grupo Mexico subsidiary, credited local union leaders and volunteer activists who kept the combined union membership together.

During the campaign, the ASARCO unions participated in a series of international solidarity actions and cross-border trainings with members of Los Mineros, the union that represents workers at Grupo Mexico facilities in Mexico.

Hourly production and maintenance employees continued to work under the terms and conditions of a labor agreement that originally expired in June 2013 but was extended until the parties terminated it in June 2015. The new contract runs through Nov. 30, 2018.
DOC Finds China Dumped Foil

The U.S. Department of Commerce issued a preliminary finding that China dumped aluminum foil on the U.S. market. Duties ranging from 97 percent to 162 percent were imposed.

The Oct. 27 decision is a victory for the Aluminum Association, a trade group that filed a complaint with regulators last March on behalf of its member companies. A final determination is expected on Feb. 23, 2018.

The department placed preliminary anti-subsidy duties last August of about 17 percent to 81 percent on Chinese foil. China exported $389 million worth of foil to the United States in 2016.

Former PACE Treasurer Christie Dies

J. “Jo” Christie, the last secretary-treasurer of the Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers Union (OCAW), died on Sept. 16.

Christie was OCAW’s treasurer before its 1999 merger with the United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU) that formed the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers Union (PACE). He became the merged international union’s treasurer and retired in 2000. PACE merged with the USW in 2005.

Made in America

Some 280 members of Local 7772 at Taylor Machine Works in Louisville, Miss., build fork-lifts and truck-lifts, including log, container and reach stackers that can lift up to 120,000 pounds.

Local members represented the company and their town at “Made in America” week, a product showcase held in Washington, D.C., at the White House during July.

“We are proud of our members and the quality products they make,” said District 9 Director Daniel Flippo. “If you drive a fork-lift, check for the TM sticker to see if it’s #USWMade!”

Sumitomo Tire Expands in New York

Sumitomo Rubber officials, including CEO Ikuji Ikeda, joined Local 135L President Tom O’Shei and other USW members at a ribbon-cutting ceremony unveiling the first phase of a planned expansion at Sumitomo’s production facility in Tonawanda, N.Y.

Sumitomo announced the expansion plan in 2016 after it retook full ownership of the former joint venture with Goodyear. Sumitomo originally bought the factory in 1986 and entered into the Goodyear partnership in 1999.

The company’s planned $87 million in investments, which include upgrades to production technology, are expected to eventually double capacity for car and light truck tires to 10,000 tires per day by the end of 2019.

Local 135L represents about 1,000 members at the plant. “This is great news for us,” O’Shei said. “Now we have a chance to be here for many years to come.”

TOP Locals Recognized

Two local unions were recognized for accomplishments at a Triangle of Prevention (TOP) safety conference sponsored by the USW’s Tony Mazzocchi Center (TMC) in Philadelphia this September.

The 2017 Glenn Erwin Award, named for a retired former TOP program director, went to Local 9-675 at the 3M chemical plant in Guin, Ala., for completing an investigation that resulted in a significant safety improvement through a design or engineering change.

Local 1-912 at the PBF refinery in Toledo, Ohio, received the Fallen Workers Memorial Award for using the TOP program to build solidarity, to gain management acceptance and support for conducting investigations and meetings, and to strengthen collective involvement through active communication with the membership and management.

Conference attendees elected Lori Aldridge-Smith of Local 9-1535 at Essity paper company, and John Henninger of Local 10-1 at Philadelphia Energy Solutions, to the TOP advisory committee.

TOP is a union-led, company-supported safety program that began with the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW). It became part of the USW through the 2005 PACE merger.
Have You Moved?
Notify your local union financial secretary, or clip out this form with your old address label and send your new address to:

USW Membership Department,
60 Blvd. of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Name ______________________________________
New Address ________________________________
City ________________________________________
State _________________________   Zip _________

Thousands of USW members were directly impacted this year by weather disasters including devastating tornadoes in the Midwest and powerful hurricanes that battered the Atlantic Coast and Puerto Rico. In some places, entire neighborhoods were under water or destroyed.

Aiding our USW brothers and sisters at a difficult time in their lives can make a tremendous difference. You can help by donating to the non-profit United Steelworkers Charitable and Educational Organization. All donations go directly to USW members.

To contribute online go to www.usw.org/relief. Checks can be made payable to: United Steelworkers Charitable and Educational Organization and mailed to the USW at 60 Boulevard of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222. Please note “Disaster Relief Fund” in the memo line of your check, and include your full name, address, phone number, and email address in the envelope.