

USW@Work

A Publication of the United Steelworkers

A Powerful Voice for Workers



ORGANIZING 04
EDUCATORS

EMERGENCY 18
RESPONDERS

INFRASTRUCTURE 22
BENEFITS



Book Review

A voice for forces of repairing and writing
 from Channy's Broken path, in comparison
 with this amazing memoir writing story.

Channy's Broken path is a memoir by Channy, a former steelworker, who shares his experiences of working in the steel industry and the challenges he faced. The book is a powerful and moving story that is a must-read for anyone interested in the steel industry and the lives of workers.

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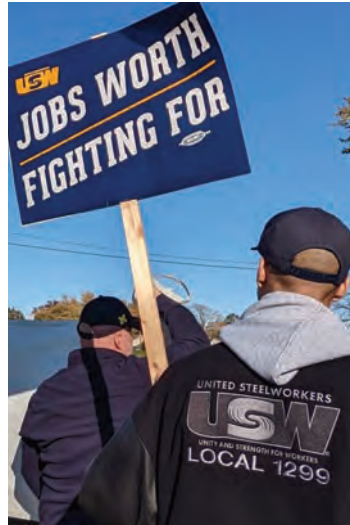
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“IN MANY WAYS, STEELWORKERS HAVE BEEN THE ENGINE OF OUR MANUFACTURING RECOVERY. THEY WILL BE A DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE RENEWAL OF OUR NATION’S OUTDATED INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUPPLY CHAIN.”

INTERNATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT DAVE McCALL, TO THE U.S. INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION, NOV. 15, 2022

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Rich Schiavoni, of Local 1088, teaches history and political science at Point Park University in Pittsburgh.

Photo by Steve Dietz

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COMMUNICATIONS STAFF

JESS KAMM BROOMELL
Director of Communications

R.J. HUFNAGEL
Editor

GREG COLE
AARON HUDSON
Graphic Designers

CHELSEY ENGEL, TONY MONTANA,
CHEYENNE SCHOEN, JOE SMYDO

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EMAIL: editor@usw.org
MAIL: USW@Work
60 Blvd of the Allies
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

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Job Training a Necessity

In 1988, after a copper strike in Arizona, where I had been president of USW Local 616, my family and I moved to Glendale, Ariz., where I worked for public employee unions until I retired in 2010.

Many young people then lacked training to get into trade jobs. When Joe Biden spoke about student debt relief, I thought it would give college students, graduates and their families a new chance in life.

I never gave up on my belief in people, especially young people. Maybe they dropped out of high school, or maybe they had unavoidable disruptions in their lives and weren't able to obtain financial means. Or perhaps they lacked the academic skills to go to college. There must be something to the proverb "give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."

Existing programs could be expanded to train people regardless of age in the trades (electricians, mechanics, plumbers, welders, machinists, ironworkers, heavy equipment operators, medical/dental assistants – you get the picture) so they can participate in the rebuilding of America and earn living wages with the dignity and pay of a skilled job that they can have for a lifetime.

This would require a government program of financial assistance so that cost would not be a barrier, something akin to the idea of free college. People who gain trade union job skills would not forget the government leaders who made this opportunity available. If FDR could do it for our country's needs at that time, why not now when the need is there?

*Angel Rodriguez
Glendale, Ariz.*

U.S. Must Fund NLRB

A lot of rank and file workers, even people who have been union members for a long time, might not know exactly what the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) does or why it's important. But, as anyone who has gone to Starbucks for coffee over the past year or so knows, workers are organizing unions in big numbers.

This is a good thing for all of us. But without the NLRB to have the backs of workers who want unions, and without the NLRB to enforce our already weak labor laws, unions would only exist on paper. The NLRB makes sure they have real power to help people.

That's why I was so glad to see that Congress voted in December for more funding for the NLRB. It was only a \$25 million bump, and they needed far more, but it was a step in the right direction, since it was the first increase in almost 10 years.

Unions need the NLRB to be on our side, and we need it to be fully funded so it can do the job it was intended to do – stand up for workers.

*Ronnie Wardrup
SOAR Executive Board
Indian Springs, Ohio*

Memorable Day Knocking on Doors

I have a number of memorable stories from my time knocking on voters' doors in this past political campaign, but one truly stands out.

At one door, I got no answer, so I put a leaflet on the door knob. As I walked away from the house, a man ran out, yelling at me to get off his property. I said, "have a good day," when he moved closer to me and started threatening my life.

He said he was going to call the cops, and I asked him to please do so, because he was breaking the law by

threatening to kill me. He finally went back inside and I could leave. I talked with my fellow union members, and we decided to call the sheriff's department, as we were afraid he might be a danger to himself or others.

About 30 minutes later, we talked to a deputy. I told them I thought the man, named Joe, lived there with his parents and probably felt alone and angry. I told her that if he apologized, I would consider not pressing charges.

An hour later the deputy called, and we returned to the scene. Joe was in the deputy's car in handcuffs. Talking to him, I could tell he knew he made a mistake. I gave him my condition of an apology to let him off the hook, and he eventually apologized.

Then I saw an older man outside the house, Joe's father. Talking to him, I learned he's a staunch Republican. We talked about why my fellow union members and I supported our candidates. I talked about the mental health legislation Republicans have blocked, and about the infrastructure bill and how the governor of Texas hasn't sent any money to Harris County.

I told him that the fact that I support these individuals, and the fact that I am trying to help your son might show you that the candidates we support have similar intentions.

Joe's dad said he wished his son would move on, but he is in his 40s, has no job and is angry. I said maybe we could help him together.

I thanked the deputy for helping, and she thanked me for showing grace to Joe and said she had never seen anything like what she saw that day. As we were leaving, Joe's dad told me that for the time in years, they would be voting for a few Democrats.

*David Beard
Local 752L
Texarkana, Ark.*

STAY CONNECTED

We welcome correspondence from USW members, retirees and their families. Letters should be short and to the point. We reserve the right to edit for length. You can reach us via email at editor@usw.org or by mail at 60 Blvd. of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222.



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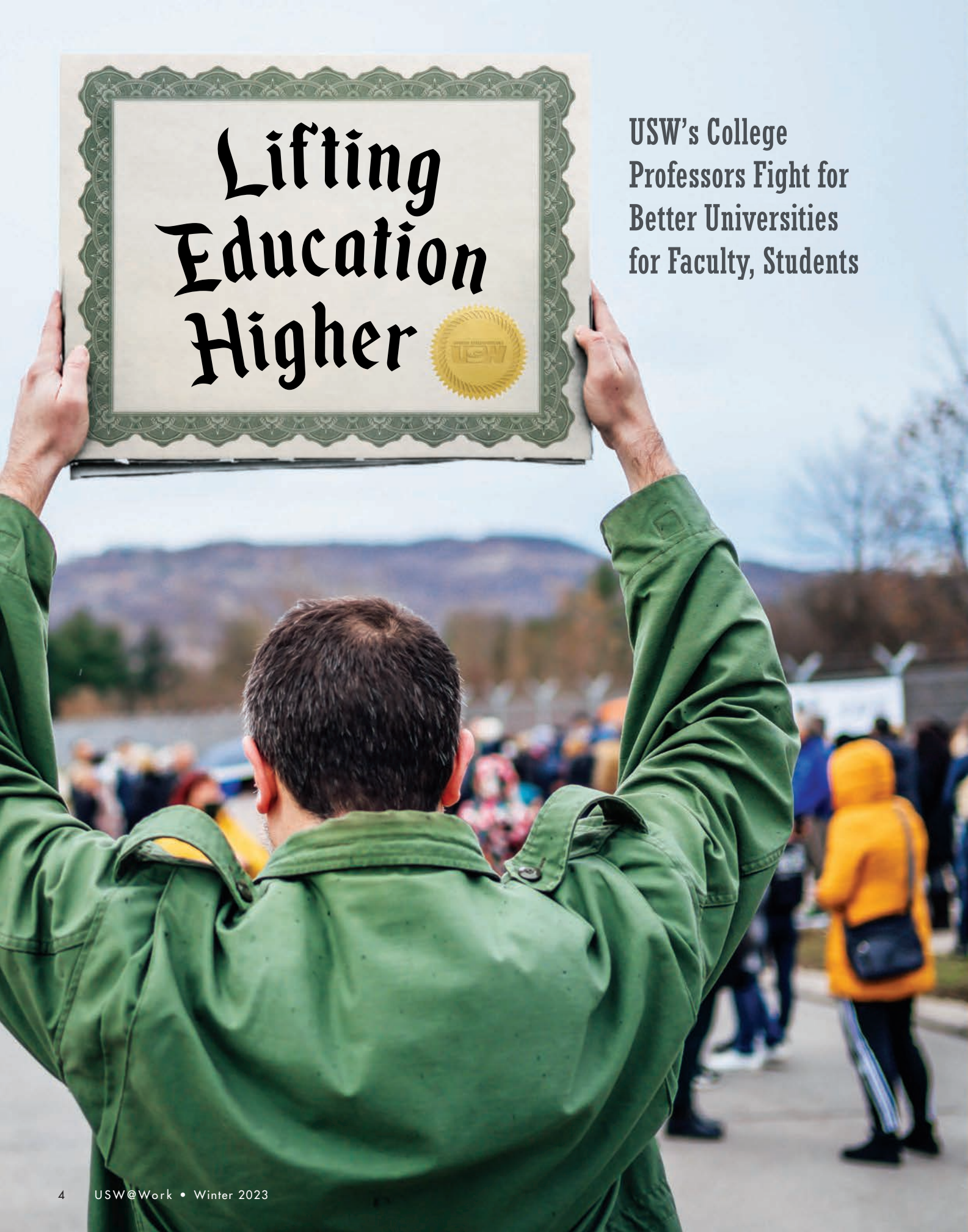
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A person wearing a green jacket is seen from behind, holding a large sign high above their head with both hands. The sign has a decorative green border and contains the text 'Lifting Education Higher' in a black, gothic-style font. To the right of the text is a circular gold seal with the letters 'USW' inside. The background shows a blurred outdoor setting with other people and hills in the distance.

Lifting Education Higher

**USW's College
Professors Fight for
Better Universities
for Faculty, Students**

When Rich Schiavoni tells people that he is a member of the United Steelworkers union, they often will ask him what he makes.

“I make college students,” is the answer he has at the ready, knowing that isn’t necessarily the response people expect.

“I’m constantly blown away by the diversity of what USW members do and what they make,” said Schiavoni, a part-time history and political science professor at Point Park University in Pittsburgh who grew up around family members who worked in Western Pennsylvania’s steel industry.

“They worked in the mills, they worked on the railroad, they were all in a union,” he said. “I’m proud that I get to carry on that tradition in a different way.”

Growing Contingent

As members of Local 1088, Schiavoni and his fellow part-time professors at Point Park and nearby Robert Morris University are among a growing number of higher education professionals who are part of the USW. In October 2021, about 3,500 faculty members at the University of Pittsburgh (known as Pitt) voted overwhelmingly to join the union. In addition, Local 1998 has represented about 7,000 staff members at the University of Toronto for the past 25 years, and Local 4120 represents 885 administrative and technical staff at the University of Guelph, also in Ontario.

The influx of thousands of higher education workers into the USW makes perfect sense to International President Tom Conway.

“The USW is a union for all workers who want a strong voice in their

workplace and who want a large, diverse and dedicated group of people across North America who are committed to that same fight,” Conway said. “Ultimately, academic workers have a lot in common with everyone else who works for a living – they want a seat at the table for the decisions that affect their work, they want to build a better life for themselves and their families, and they want to be able to retire with dignity.”

Seeking Fairness

That fight for fairness and dignity was what led Melinda Ciccocioppo to get involved in the effort to organize the University of Pittsburgh faculty. Ciccocioppo, a full-time professor in the Pitt psychology department, has worked at the university in some capacity since 2006, and earned her PhD at the school.

While members are still in the process of bargaining their first contract, Ciccocioppo is confident that the USW will make a difference in at least two areas that make life challenging for higher education professionals – low pay and precarious, unpredictable work.

Part-time faculty members, she said, sometimes find out just a few weeks before a semester begins whether or not they’ll have a job, and often get paid so little that most of them are forced



“I’m constantly blown away by the diversity of what USW members do and what they make.”

Rich Schiavoni, Local 1088



Melinda Ciccocioppo

to seek second and third jobs to make ends meet.

“For full-time faculty, contracts can be as short as one year, and it could be renewed, but you don’t know for sure. There is no expectation of continued employment after that,” she said.

That kind of treatment is unnecessary, particularly for a major university like Pitt, with an enrollment of 35,000 students, an endowment of more than \$5 billion and an annual budget of more than \$2.4 billion.

“They know pretty well from one semester to the next how many students they’ll have, how much work there will be,” she said. “There really isn’t any reason for them to have us remain precarious.”

Major Pay Gap

Besides the constant uncertainty of their employment, non-tenure-track professors, particularly those who work part time, are paid significantly less than their tenure-track peers.

“The reality is that two-thirds of our faculty are non-tenure-stream faculty, which means we are on short-term contracts, typically one semester long,” Ciccocioppo said. “It seems absurd that if you’re doing a good job and there’s still work for you to do, that you should have to reapply for your job every year.”

The USW proposed automatic renewals this summer and is moving forward on other bargaining goals, so that instructors who are doing good work can have needed security and living wages. However, progress at the table has been slow.

“The university is able to make a huge profit by having a contingent work force that they can pay very little and continue to raise tuition every year,” Ciccocioppo said. “These are exactly the kinds of things a union can help us with.”

Progress at Pitt

To Marcelle Pierson, a professor of music theory at Pitt, the presence of the USW, even before a first contract is ratified, has already made a positive difference for the entire university community.

“The university is able to make a huge profit by having a contingent work force that they can pay very little and continue to raise tuition every year.”

Melinda Ciccocioppo, Local 1088

The union managed to reach several interim agreements with the university administration, including one governing COVID-19 protocols that helped to protect faculty members with serious health conditions.

“We were able to establish some common-sense guidelines,” Pierson said. “We were able to solve that problem in a practical way, and we were only able to do that because we had this leverage.”

The workers at Pitt also reached an interim agreement with the school on pay raises for part-time faculty, who previously had been excluded from such arrangements.

“They really are the backbone of



teaching,” Pierson said of part-time instructors.

When part-time professors from Point Park and Robert Morris joined the USW in 2016, their goals were much the same as those the Pitt faculty is fighting for now – more job stability and living wages for adjunct professors. Over the term of their first three-year contract, the professors saw an overall pay raise of more than 21 percent.

In December, Local 1088 reached a new contract agreement with Point Park that includes 12 percent in pay increases as well as paid sick days and job security protections that will guarantee course appointments.

The agreement is the third for the local, and it will bring the total wage increase over the terms of those contracts to 43 percentage points.

“Our members make up more than two-thirds of the teaching work force,” Schiavoni said. “The new agreement is a solid win for part-time faculty.”

Quality Education

Besides making life better for the workers at the front of the class, the presence of a union at institutions of higher education also helps to bolster the quality of education and the feeling of community on a campus, members say.

Pierson said the union brings together academic workers from across the university’s many departments who might otherwise never interact.

“One of the problems in higher education is that people often are operating in silos,” Pierson said. “With the union, it gives me so much more context to do my job and to act in ways that are beneficial both to myself and my colleagues.”

Regional Organization

The fact that the USW represents professors at three of the largest schools in Western Pennsylvania helps to ensure fair treatment for all higher education workers in the region, union or not, Ciccocioppo said.

“All of these universities are

sharing the same labor pool,” she said. “To have us be organized across institutions gives us more power. It provides us with an opportunity to set a floor that is more powerful.”

That power, along with the continuity and job satisfaction that comes with higher pay and more secure employment, also means better outcomes for students, she said.

A lack of job security means less time for instructors to develop their curriculum, and can mean delays in ordering books and other classroom supplies.

“It’s important to remember that our working conditions are student learning conditions, so when our jobs are precarious, it means students can’t count on us to be there in the future,” Ciccocioppo said. “Having that ownership of our classes is important as well, for the students as much as it is for the faculty.”

During a demonstration in December outside the Pitt provost’s office, Ciccocioppo joined about 75 of her colleagues to express their frustration at the slow pace of bargaining.

“It is our work that makes this university,” she said.

Emir Hinojosa

STEELWORKERS FORGED TOGETHER

Four-Year U.S. Steel Contract Makes Gains on Wages, Working Conditions

Steelworkers voted in December to ratify a new agreement covering members of 13 local unions at U.S. Steel mining and production facilities across the United States.

The four-year deal includes a total wage increase of more than 20 percent over the life of the contract, a \$4,000 signing bonus, retirement plan increases, and no major changes to health care coverage or costs.

The agreement covers about 11,000 workers at the company's steel production and iron ore facilities in Alabama, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

Protracted Talks

The new agreement came after a difficult summer and fall in which U.S. Steel management repeatedly rejected USW members' proposals for wage and benefit increases while negotiations continued for several months past the Sept. 1 expiration of the previous contract.

"These should have been straightforward negotiations, given the strength of the industry and U.S. Steel's financial position," said International President Tom Conway. "Instead, the company made sure the process was difficult and prolonged."

Conway said he was proud of the way USW members fought back against the company's schemes to weaken contract language and cut benefits.

"As a result, our members have won major economic and contract language improvements that will raise the standard of living of USW members and their families," he said.

In July, as negotiations were getting under way, U.S. Steel reported a record \$1.1 billion in second-quarter earnings. Still, U.S. Steel unnecessarily dragged out the process for several more months, despite the fact USW members at its closest competitor, Cleveland-Cliffs, settled a four-year agreement in August with very similar terms to those to which U.S. Steel ultimately agreed.

"Steelworkers continued to report to work, put ourselves on the line, day in and day out, to keep the company operating during a global pandemic," said bargaining committee Chair and District 7 Director Mike Millsap. "As a



“As a result of the hard work of USW members, U.S. Steel saw record profits, and the future looks bright.”

Solidarity Pays Off

Despite their strong position, U.S. Steel took a hard line from the start, with proposals that didn’t come close to what USW members deserved.

In the face of a rigid stance from the company, members stayed strong. Throughout the negotiations, the USW bargaining committee was committed to achieving wage increases and contract improvements that reflected members’ hard work and sacrifices. The company, meanwhile, insisted on increases in profit sharing, which are often unpredictable, instead of significant raises.

As members ramped up their public demonstrations of solidarity through the summer and fall, they continued to deliver a strong, unified message to U.S. Steel management: Profit sharing is no substitute for a substantial wage increase.

Community Support

In October, hundreds of demonstrators – USW members, their families, their neighbors and workers from several other unions in the area – marched through the streets of Virginia, Minn., in the heart of the Iron Range, to demand a fair contract.

The Iron Range event was part of a nationwide display of solidarity that played out in steel towns across the country, ensuring that the company eventually paid attention to members’ demands.

In Hobart, Ind., members confronted U.S. Steel CEO David Burritt directly while he was in town to speak to the Association for Iron and Steel

Technology. Holding signs that read “Forged Together,” “Fair Contract Now,” and “Jobs Worth Fighting For,” members marched in the rain outside of the meeting, chanting union slogans and making sure that Burritt got the message.

Essential Workers

As Millsap pointed out, besides working through the COVID-19 pandemic, USW members also agreed to wage freezes and other concessions in past rounds of bargaining while the company was struggling. This time, Millsap credited USW members for sticking together in solidarity for a fair contract through a difficult few months.

“With the new contract ratified, union members will be safer at work and our jobs and benefits more secure than they have been in the past,” Millsap said. “Our continued solidarity will ensure that we keep the tradition of steelmaking alive in our communities for another generation of Steelworkers.”

District 9 Director Daniel Flippo, who served as secretary of the bargaining committee, said that in addition to the bonuses and pension and wage increases, the new agreement includes an additional holiday and bolsters existing health insurance provisions for workers and retirees, without premiums.

“Our members have faced challenges in the past and know what it takes to lead the industry through its up and down cycles,” Flippo said. “Our nation’s defense and ongoing critical infrastructure projects need a robust domestic steel industry with highly skilled and experienced workers prepared to respond to changes in the market.”



MASTER CONTRACT LOCATIONS

The master agreement with U.S. Steel covers workers in production, maintenance, office and technical, plant protection, emergency services, fire and security in the following local unions: Local 1299, Ecorse, Mich.; Locals 1014, 1066, 2695 and 6103, Gary/Portage, Ind.; Local 1899, Granite City, Ill.; Locals 1013 and 2122, Fairfield, Ala.; Local 1219, Braddock, Pa.; Local 1557, Clairton, Pa.; Local 2227 and Local 2227-1, West Mifflin, Pa.; Local 4889, Fairless Hills, Pa.; Local 1938, Mountain Iron, Minn.; Local 2660, Keewatin, Minn.; and Local 1104, Lorain, Ohio.

'Part of the Family'



Member-Driven
Organizing Effort
Already Delivering Wins

Teiya Hangsleben got involved in the labor movement before she was even old enough to sign a union card. At the age of 12, she started helping her father, a local union officer, write grievances.

So when the USW offered rank-and-file members like Hangsleben the opportunity to be trained as organizers and put those skills to use in workplaces across North America to grow the union, she “jumped at it,” she said.

Hangsleben attended training sessions alongside her USW siblings last spring in Ohio, then hit the ground running over the summer, helping the USW achieve its largest industrial organizing victory in 19 years, bringing 700 members at the Bobcat plant in Bismarck, N.D., into the union.

Rank-and-File

That vote by Bobcat workers last fall was a huge success largely because

of the effort, launched a year ago by International President Tom Conway, to bring rank-and-file members onto the union’s organizing staff and ask them to talk to people in shops just like their own, where they can relate directly to their fellow workers about their struggles.



Hangsleben and several other organizers on the campaign came from another Bobcat plant in Gwinner, N.D., just 200 miles southeast of Bismarck, where more than 1,000 USW members

work. The workers were able to speak with authority about the union difference because their experiences at work were so similar.

“It was definitely a benefit being from a Bobcat shop,” said Hangsleben, whose father still serves as president of Local 560 in Gwinner. “We were able to relate to them all the more.”

That ability for rank-and-file members to grow the USW ranks through direct conversations with their fellow workers is the key to the USW’s organizing push.

“It’s a genius idea,” Hangsleben said. “You’re going to relate to people better who are just like you. It puts people more at ease and makes them more

open to conversations.”

Those conversations came easily for Hangsleben and her co-worker and fellow USW organizer Derrick Anderson.

“We speak the same language. We

have the same concerns,” said Anderson, who spent 14 years working in a non-union factory before coming to work at Bobcat. “We know how a union can benefit them, because we live it.”

The grassroots nature of the USW’s organizing plan was a major key to success, members said.

“Some conversations start out cold,” Anderson said. “But then when we say where we are from, they start talking more openly.”

The Bobcat facility in Gwinner has been part of the USW family for nearly 55 years and is well known in the area for being a good place to work thanks in large part to the union.

“We have a long history, so it’s not just a new fad,” Anderson said. “We’re here to stay, and we can say we make your home life, your work life, your whole life better with the union.”

National Trend

The USW victory in Bismarck was part of a national trend that began even before the COVID-19 pandemic. A Gallup poll taken in August 2022 showed that 71 percent of Americans hold a positive view of labor unions – the highest level in 57 years.

In addition to the 700 workers in Bismarck, the USW has achieved several other high-profile organizing victories in recent years. In October 2021, 3,400 faculty members at the University of Pittsburgh voted by a nearly 3-to-1 margin to join the Steelworkers, overcoming a relentless anti-union campaign by the administration that lasted years and cost the school millions of dollars.

Elsewhere, interest in unions remains high. More than 6,800 workers at 263 Starbucks locations in the United States have joined unions, and

workers at an Amazon warehouse that employs 6,000 people in Staten Island voted last spring to unionize their shop.

Union History

The facility that the USW team was successful in organizing in Bismarck had been unionized in the past before shutting down and reopening without union representation.

“That was pretty personal to us,” Hangsleben said. “That kind of got the fire going in my opinion.”

That fire spread quickly through the Bismarck factory. District 11 Director Emil Ramirez said the employees at the factory recognized that a strong union would provide them with a collective voice on the job and also would empower individual employees, who became closer as a group during the organizing effort.

“As employers continue to urge more and faster production, it is absolutely essential for workers to have a say on issues that could impact their occupational health and safety,” Ramirez said. “Fair pay and benefits will help retain loyal, experienced workers, and ensuring adequate staffing numbers will keep the plant running as safely and efficiently as possible.”

Contract Talks

Now that the work of organizing the facility is behind them, the workers in Bismarck are in the process of bargaining a contract.

“Bobcat workers deserve a fair union contract that provides fair pay and promotes a healthy work-life balance with limits on mandatory overtime and provisions for paid time off,” said new member Jacob Klein. “We are proud to join the United Steel-

“

Bobcat workers deserve a fair union contract that provides fair pay and promotes a healthy work-life balance with limits on mandatory overtime and provisions for paid time off.”

Jacob Klein



workers and look forward to the next step of the process – working together to negotiate a fair first collective bargaining agreement.”

Hangsleben said she hopes that the big victory in Bismarck spreads to other non-union facilities in the area so that everyone can reap the benefits of a strong union contract.

“I had a lot of satisfaction when the election results came in,” she said. “You’re not just helping those 700 people. You’re helping those 700, plus their families, as well as future generations.”

USW organizers in Bismarck, N.D., (left to right), Wes Rojas, Matt Cawley, Teiya Hangsleben, Jason Crosby, Carlos Arocho Vazquez, Jason Hendrick, Tom Ricker and Derrick Anderson helped workers at the Bobcat plant there achieve the union’s biggest industrial organizing victory in 19 years last summer when 700 Bobcat employees became Steelworkers.





UNITED STEELWORKERS



Promoting Comprehensive Health and Safety in Wake of Pandemic

The USW has a long legacy of fighting for safer workplaces that come with having a voice on the job, oftentimes fighting an uphill battle to ensure employers and regulators give workplace safety and health the consideration they deserve.

Over the past three years, however, the COVID-19 pandemic drew widespread attention to occupational health and safety, and as workers and their representatives grappled with new challenges, the union adapted to continue ensuring all workers had safer workplaces.

“The USW was already one of the leading voices on health and safety before the pandemic broke,” said International President Tom Conway. “Now, as we look back on the lessons we learned over the past two years, we’re even better equipped to hold management accountable and fight for safer working conditions.”

This spring, the USW will hold in Pittsburgh its first in-person health, safety and environment conference

since 2019, which will run from April 16 to 21. Districts and locals also resumed in-person trainings to help workers advocate for a wide range of resources.

This includes essentials like worker-centered health and safety plans and paid time off for addressing illnesses and injuries, as well as ways to address concerns about workers’ mental health and burnout.

District 7 Conference

District 7 held its first annual health and safety conference since the start of the pandemic in Michigan City, Ind., Oct 6 and 7, providing an opportunity for nearly 500 delegates to share their experiences and learn from one another.

“As a district, we’re working to create a comprehensive health and safety system,” said District 7 Director Mike Millsap. “This means we’re not just keeping workers safer from hazards in the workplace, but we’re also looking at the whole-worker ex-

perience. We need to understand how a range of factors on the job and at home can impact workers’ well-being.”

Workshops not only covered essentials like lock-out/tag-out, fall protection, respiratory health and ergonomics, but a wide range of topics including recognizing and responding to mental health concerns, marijuana in the workplace and even breast cancer awareness.

Charva Jones, District 7 Education Coordinator, said that when she first started overseeing the district’s health and safety conference planning, “the safety part was pretty well covered,” including a needed emphasis on helping workers in industrial workplaces.

Jones said that taking a holistic approach toward health and safety allows workers to focus on improving their overall well-being both in and out of the workplace.

Tanisha Williams of Local 7336 in Hammond, Ind., was a first-time participant in the district’s conference.

As a member of her health and





safety committee at Unilever, she said that her biggest concern with occupational health and safety was that “the people who don’t work on the front lines are still usually the first to tell you what to do.” Hands-on training for management is important, but at the end of the day “workers themselves know the most about safety.”

Williams said the information she gained at the conference will be invaluable as she prepares for new comprehensive communications to help connect the roughly 250 members of her local. “We need to create longevity and push self-care.”

Sector-Specific Training

New sector-specific training is also helping health care workers promote their own health and safety.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed many of the vulnerabilities health care workers faced long before the spring of 2020, from workplace violence to a lack of essential supplies to short staffing.

To support these front-line work-

ers, the union launched a pilot program in District 12 focused on improving health and safety and building strong committees for the thousands of essential workers in the health care sector.

“This is a larger effort to raise the bar on health and safety for the entire sector,” said Vice President Kevin Mapp, who oversees bargaining for the USW’s more than 50,000 health care workers. “It’s our job as a union to reimagine what health care looks like for everyone.”

One of the goals of the new program is to improve connections between workers to talk about common concerns and learn from one other.

The union’s Health, Safety and Environment Department, along with the Tony Mazzocchi Center, adapted the curriculum for a one-day training focused on health care using grant funding from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) Worker Training Program.

The pilot program began in Southern California on Oct. 3 and included

thirty health care workers in a wide variety of job classes, from paramedics, nurses and mobility techs to Emergency Department financial counselors, housekeeping, and nutrition service workers.

“We know how to build a smart, activist-powered health and safety culture,” said District 12 Director Gaylan Prescott. “We’ve done it in every industry where we made the effort. Health care workers deserve the same focused initiative and education.”

USW Health Care Workers Council Coordinator Tamara Lefcowitz said much of the conversation during this first training was focused on breaking down the many ways health care managers have failed the very workers they count on every day.

“The question to injured workers is always: What could you have done differently?” Lefcowitz said. “The right question is: What does management need to do to better protect you?”



2023 Health, Safety and Environment Conference

Online registration is open until April 10th for the USW’s 2023 Health, Safety and Environment Conference. The conference will take place from April 16 to 21 in Pittsburgh. Visit usw.org/events/health-safety-environment-conference for more information.

A NEW DAWN MISSOURI

LOCAL UNION ENJOYS RESURGENCE AS ALUMINUM SMELTER RETURNS

By the time Noranda Aluminum filed for bankruptcy in February of 2016, Cameron Redd and his fellow Local 7686 members at the plant had seen their share of hard times.

Over the years, pressures from unfair trade, economic downturns and high utility costs brought periodic layoffs to the smelter that once employed 1,000 workers along the Mississippi River in Marston, Mo. But the Chapter 11 filing was more than a temporary problem.

“There were a lot of bad decisions,” Redd said of the company’s actions leading up to the bankruptcy. “We could kind of see it coming as a union.”

While that awareness couldn’t prevent bankrupt Noranda from idling and selling the facility, it did give Redd and his USW siblings the experience to persevere and ultimately prevail during the next few years, as the smelter reopened and the union settled a first contract with the new owner, Magnitude 7 Metals LLC, known as Mag 7.

Good Union Jobs

When Redd landed a job at the smelter more than 15 years ago, he thought he’d reached a place where he could have a rewarding career and then retire comfortably.

“I got on, and I figured, ‘Hey, I made it,’” Redd said.

He wasn’t alone. Thanks to the strength of the USW, the jobs at the smelter were among the best in the area, good enough to draw in workers from across the “boot heel” area of southeastern Missouri as well as from neighboring states including Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky and Tennessee.

“From my perspective, I had one of the two best jobs in this area,” Redd said, noting that a nearby electrical plant, built in large part to provide the power that is essential to aluminum production, also offered good union jobs, to members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

Still, as a result of unfairly traded imports, high utility costs, and owners who seemed more interested in extracting profits than investing in the future of the plant, Noranda would ultimately shut down.

“At some point, I realized that I was going to have to move on,” Redd said. “I was there right up until the last week.”

Looking for Answers

The smelter’s shutdown hit the region hard. In rural Missouri where the facility sits, several hundred industrial jobs can mean the difference between a thriving community and a ghost town.

The loss of Noranda’s \$100 million payroll devastated local small businesses. Homes were put up for sale by the dozens, causing values to drop. Taxes that came in because of the plant had accounted for nearly 20 percent of the local school district’s budget, leaving the entire community searching for answers.

“When you take 847 good jobs out of a community like this, I don’t know how you can even measure it,” Redd said. “A lot of people who once had disposable income, suddenly they couldn’t make their car payments, couldn’t make their house payments.”

The Missouri smelter was far from

the only aluminum facility to face difficult times. U.S.-based aluminum production has declined from 3.7 million metric tons from 23 smelters in 2000 to just 880,000 metric tons in 2021. Today, only five primary aluminum production sites are in operation in the United States, with two others currently idle.

Meanwhile, over the same period, China expanded its primary aluminum production from 2.8 million metric tons in 2000 to 38.8 million metric tons in 2021. China is now the world’s largest producer of the metal by a more than 10-to-1 margin over its closest competitor, Russia.

In response to that widening gap, in 2018, citing national security concerns, the United States imposed 10 percent tariffs on aluminum imports under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act.

Only a few smelters are capable of producing the kind of high-grade aluminum used in military vehicles, armor and aircraft, one of the reasons for the product’s designation as vital to U.S. national defense.

The Section 232 measures, which coincided with a corresponding action in support of steel producers, helped to slow the industry’s slide and paved the way for Mag 7 to restart the former Noranda facility.

USW Support

Still, preventing unfair imports is only one piece of the puzzle when it comes to the struggles aluminum producers face. Aging facilities and the large amount of electricity required in the smelting process can also be road-



blocks to efficient production.

When Mag 7 took over the smelter in 2018, USW members, including International President Tom Conway, District 11 Director Emil Ramirez and other leaders, worked to ensure that the new owner could clear regulatory hurdles and other obstacles in order to restart.

“This country needs as much aluminum production capacity as we can get,” Conway said. “When we have an opportunity to restart an idled facility, this union is going to do everything we can to put our members back to work in good jobs, producing American aluminum.”

With Mag 7 determined to restart the smelter, workers were optimistic, believing they had an understanding with the company that it would recognize the union, but that didn’t happen.

Redd, who went on to become a USW staff representative, had a handful of members still working who were keeping him informed as they maintained the grounds and kept the facility viable for a possible restart.

“We just tried to keep our ears to the ground. The company was steadily sowing discord,” Redd said.

Ultimately, while Mag 7 was legally obligated under Burns successorship rules to recognize the USW, the company did not do so until the USW took legal action.

Obstacles Mount

The USW filed a series of successful charges with the National Labor Relations Board, and Mag 7 ultimately agreed to meet the union at the bargain-

ing table. Even then, however, management continued to drag its feet, eventually supporting an effort to decertify the union.

“The company just kept moving the goalposts,” Redd said.

Despite efforts to bust the union, USW members repeatedly made it clear to the company that they were committed to acting collectively. Thanks to the members’ solidarity, the union won the decertification vote decisively, and the company returned to the table ready to work toward a new collective bargaining agreement. By then, though, another major obstacle was on the horizon.

“No sooner than we got started, and we were faced with COVID,” Redd said.

Face-to-face meetings couldn’t take place for months, so bargaining stalled. And because the economy slowed down considerably as the pandemic continued, Mag 7 soon faced the possibility of having to shut down the facility yet again.

Through the determination of the Mag 7 work force, members kept the plant running. And the union ultimately reached a new two-year agreement with the help of a federal mediator, a contract that now covers about 465 USW members with the plant operating at a reduced capacity.

“Putting members back to work making aluminum in southeast Missouri, and making sure they have good, community-supporting jobs, was a tremendous victory,” Director Ramirez said. “This was an opportunity to help keep hundreds of families afloat and

put a community back on its feet.”

National Security

The Mag 7 restart also was an opportunity to push the United States closer to fulfilling its own aluminum needs, a goal that was the driving force behind the Section 232 tariffs.

While those measures managed to restore some capacity to the U.S. aluminum industry, there is still more work to ensure that American producers are competing on a level playing field, that they can meet their energy needs in a cost-effective way, and that they can support hard-working communities like those in the Marston area and elsewhere.

“China’s dumping is still happening,” Redd said. “The price of electricity is a tremendous cost in the calculation of whether a facility can be profitable. That’s always a consideration.”

The United States needs producers willing to build new smelters, and more idled facilities to return to full production, Conway said.

“We are still not as self-sufficient as we ought to be as a nation,” he said.

For now, though, the workers at Mag 7 have turned their attention to producing aluminum rather than fighting for their very survival.

“These workers were able to really do something that’s hard to do, and that is to reorganize a facility of this size after it shut down,” Redd said. “The bottom line is that the workers have a voice, and we’re making metal again here in southeast Missouri. The fight goes on.”

UNION APPROVAL HIGHEST SINCE 1965

GALLUP POLL SHOWS 71% HOLD POSITIVE VIEW OF ORGANIZED LABOR

Nearly three-quarters of Americans hold a positive view of unions – the highest level in 57 years – according to a new Gallup poll.

The 71 percent result, combined with the fact that only about 10 percent of American workers belong to unions, presents a historic opportunity, said International President Tom Conway.

“American workers are hungry for unions, and we must be there for them,” he said. “They face greedy employers and politicians who fight them every step of the way.”

Petitions Rise 58%

Workers’ desire to join unions is reflected in anecdotal and statistical evidence. According to the National Labor Relations Board, union petitions increased 58 percent through the third quarter of 2022, compared to 2021.

“During the first nine months of fiscal year 2022,” the NLRB said, “union representation petitions filed at the NLRB have increased to 1,892 from 1,197 during the first three quarters of 2021.”

That jump is in part due to a rise in union drives among traditionally low-wage workers, such as those at Starbucks and Amazon.

By the end of 2022, more than 6,800 workers at 263 Starbucks locations in the United States voted to join

unions by a more than 4-to-1 margin, on average.

The 263 victories represented a success rate of more than 75 percent, with another 44 locations with ongoing organizing campaigns.

In addition, in April, 6,000 workers at an Amazon warehouse in Staten Island voted to unionize, and in June, workers in Towson, Md., became the first Apple Store employees to form a union.

Pandemic Concerns

One reason for the spike of activity was the COVID-19 pandemic and the inequities it revealed, such as the need for paid sick time, health care and safety protections.

Prior to the pandemic, the same Gallup poll revealed that 64 percent of Americans approved of unions – a 7 percent increase in two years.

One Starbucks employee, Laura Garza, said the pandemic led workers to realize the value of unions. “It made a lot of workers that continued to work during the pandemic reevaluate what is most important to them,” she said.

USW Organizing

Meanwhile, unions like the USW ramped up organizing in nontraditional sectors, such as high-tech and education, while

still pushing to unionize manufacturing workers.

USW members ratified a first contract with Google contractor HCL America in 2021, overcoming a relentless anti-union campaign.

About 700 Bobcat workers in Bismarck, N.D., voted last fall to join the USW, and the October 2021 victory for 3,500 new USW members at the University of Pittsburgh was one of the largest organizing wins for a U.S. labor union in years.

Attacks Continue

In part because of that progress, corporations and right-wing politicians are still on the attack. In the same time that organizing petitions increased 58 percent, unfair labor practice complaints against employers rose by 14 percent.

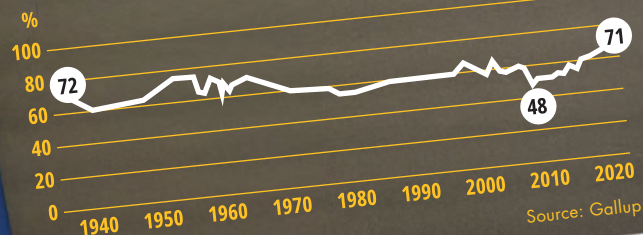
That is evidence that workers’ rights still need protection. The Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act would remove obstacles to union organizing and increase punishments for employers who try to silence workers.

“We owe it to every worker who wants a union to pass the PRO Act and other worker protections,” said Secretary-Treasurer John Shinn. “Then, every worker who wants to be a union member can do so without intimidation and interference.”



AMERICANS' APPROVAL OF LABOR UNIONS 1936-2022

Do you approve or disapprove of labor unions?



Source: Gallup



WHO THEY ARE LOCAL 9555

WHERE THEY ARE DANVILLE, VA.

WHAT THEY DO PRODUCE PASTA, SAUCE AND CHEESE FOR BUITONI FOODS CO.

#USWMade is a feature focusing on products made by USW members that consumers can purchase in stores or online.

Follow the #USWMade hashtag on social media and check out the #USWMade playlist on YouTube to learn about other products made by USW members. If your local makes a product that you would like to feature in *USW@Work*, send an email to: editor@usw.org.

MAKE IT A

Union-Made PASTA NIGHT

For USW members looking to extend their union solidarity to their family dinner table, Buitoni pastas and sauces might be one of the most popular – and tastiest – ways to do so.

Nikia Watkins and her fellow members of Local 9555 in Danville, Va., work for Buitoni Foods Co., a company that traces its origins to Italy in 1827 and produces a wide variety of refrigerated pastas, sauces and cheeses sold in grocery stores around the world.

Watkins, the local president, has worked at the factory for 19 years. She said she and her co-workers take pride in being part of an organization that is dedicated to making sure the quality of their products is second to none.

“It makes me feel good that the quality of the food that we’re making is the best that it can be,” said Watkins, who served as local recording secretary before her term as president began last year.

It also is a good feeling, Watkins said, to know that she and her 350 fellow Local 9555 members have the strength and solidarity of the entire USW behind them on the job.

“The union gives us a voice,” she said. “That’s our strength.”

It also helps to have other unions, including large USW locals, in the region, she said. Just down the road from the Buitoni plant, 1,850 members work at the Goodyear Tire and Rubber plant, Danville’s largest employer.

Watkins’ reasons for becoming a USW leader were simple. “I just want to make sure we have fairness and consistency all across the board,” she said.

That consistency extends from the bargaining table to the food that members send out the door of the factory to store shelves. In addition to the popular line of Italian cuisine, USW members in Danville – for the next few months at least – also make Nestle Toll House refrigerated cookie dough.

In June, however, Nestle, the former owner of the Buitoni line, will begin producing the cookie dough elsewhere. Watkins and her co-workers will focus solely on rolling out the best pasta products they possibly can.

“We’re just like everyone else,” Watkins said. “We want to make sure we’re doing everything right.”



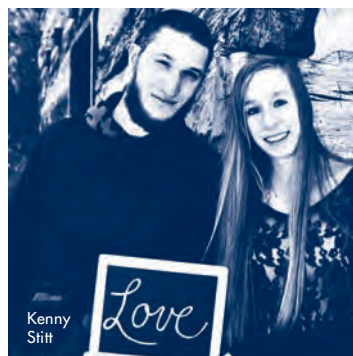


'The Best of Us'

Emergency Response Team Helps Workers, Families After Devastating Events

Kenny Stitt was only 32 when he lost his life in a workplace tragedy on Oct. 12, 2021. He left behind a wife and two young kids, as well as hundreds of members of his extended USW family, who made sure that his spouse and his children would never have to face such a devastating loss alone.

In addition to his Local 1016 siblings, one of the first USW members to respond following Stitt's death at the NLMK steel facility in



Farrell, Pa., was Duronda Pope, who oversees the union's Emergency Response Team (ERT).

Pope traveled to Mercer County, Pa., just across the Ohio border near Youngstown, to help with a number of important tasks – making sure family members and friends had all the food and housing they needed, providing them with information on legal assistance, stress and grief counseling, and, ultimately, simply offering a friendly



UNITED STEELWORKERS
USW
Emergency Response Team

“The [ERT] program is one of a kind. Having an organization that responds to our members at this level is unheard of.” Duronda Pope

face of a fellow USW member who could shoulder a piece of their burden.

“The program is one of a kind. Having an organization that responds to our members at this level is unheard of,” Pope said of the ERT. “It speaks on a high level to the character and integrity of the Steelworkers to have this program in place.”

Long History

The USW’s ERT program has

existed in some form since the union’s merger with the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers International Union (PACE) in 2005. The program’s coordinators respond any time there is a fatal or life-altering event involving USW members.

At first “the program was much different than it is today,” said Allan McDougall, who led the ERT for 15 years, from the day that now-retired International President Leo W. Gerard

tapped him following the 2005 merger until McDougall’s own retirement from the union in 2020.

“The USW is a union of substance,” McDougall said. “So, we wanted to have a program of substance.”

That means the union’s ERT coordinators don’t just show up the day after an incident and then go home. They work hard to build long-term relationships with workers and families and make it clear that they’re there to help

for as much as a year.

“If you’re going to do a job, you should do it well,” McDougall said.

U.S. and Canada

The ERT has 62 volunteer responders throughout the United States and Canada. Through the ERT’s 24-hour call center, Pope receives information as soon as the union learns of an incident in a USW workplace, then decides on a response plan. Members of the ERT then travel to the site of the incident and get to work.

“The second visit can sometimes be more important than the first one,” McDougall said. “At first, we are just one in a sea of faces.”

That was the case for Tamara Taylor and Trina Benedict, two ERT coordinators who responded last fall following an explosion at an oil refinery in Newfoundland that injured eight workers, including a USW member who succumbed to his injuries six weeks later.

“There were eight people injured, so we knew it was going to be a big job,” Taylor said.

Because of the scale of the incident and the distance between the hospital and the workplace, Taylor and Benedict divided their ERT duties, with Taylor remaining at the hospital to assist families, while Benedict stayed close to the work site and aided members of the local.

“People go to work, and their families expect them to come home unharmed. Unfortunately, that’s not always the case,” Benedict said.

After their initial response, the pair returned a few weeks later at the request of the workers, to continue their efforts to help.

“They were all still in shock and didn’t really know our purpose at first,” Taylor said of the families. Often families assume that visitors they don’t know are company representatives, she said.

“Companies are going to try to protect themselves, and sometimes they are looking to lay blame,” she said. “We don’t want to see families taken advantage of.”

Families aren’t the only ones ERT volunteers are there to help. The team also works closely with local union members and sets up meetings for witnesses and co-workers following tragic events. If needed, the ERT refers people to professionals for further help

with issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder.

Often Overwhelming

In the immediate aftermath of a tragedy, members say, the presence of employer attorneys and insurance company representatives can be overwhelming for families, and survivors may end up unknowingly signing agreements that can put them at a disadvantage if they decide to take legal action in the future.

In addition, family members often don’t know exactly how the USW works, so they initially can be skeptical even of union representatives. ERT coordinators, though, are trained in every aspect of their response, including body language and the psychology of grief, so they have the skills to prepare them for nearly every situation.

“Companies are going to try to protect themselves, and sometimes they are looking to lay blame. We don’t want to see families taken advantage of.”  Tamara Taylor

“I tell them I can be a voice for them in dealing with company management,” said Taylor, a member of Local 5795 in Labrador. “We try to take anything we can off their plate so that they can just focus on their families.”

That has included addressing issues like workers’ compensation, temporary disability benefits, insurance coverage, hotel reservations, rental cars, parking fees, pet care and more.

“A lot of what we do is just being there for them,” Benedict said.

Months after the refinery fire, Benedict and Taylor said, they are still in contact with the members and their families in Newfoundland.

Coping with Loss

Benedict, a member of Local 5319 who works as an airport screening officer in Halifax, Nova Scotia, has been a member of the USW for about 17 years. She lost her husband suddenly when he was only 39 years old and, without real-

izing it at the time, that event started her along a path to helping others who were experiencing similar trauma.

“We’re seeing people at the lowest point in their lives,” she said. “When you’re at your lowest, you really rely on others around you to think for you, to do what needs to be done. That’s what the ERT is all about.”

Benedict, who also serves as a shop steward in her workplace, said being a part of the ERT helps to put her other union duties into perspective.

“The small things sometimes seem so trivial now,” she said. “Everything we do is important, but with the ERT, I’ve never been more proud to be a union member.”

Providing Strength

As the ERT has evolved over the years, its role has expanded from responding to the devastation of on-the-job injuries and deaths to other tragedies, such as workplace shootings, suicides and overdoses.

James Lonergan, a member of Local 9999 in Eastern Pennsylvania, said the most recent ERT call he received involved a member who lost his life. When he first arrived on the scene, he said, the family was slow to let him into their circle. But once they learned that he was there to help as a USW brother, they embraced him.

“I come here as a father. I come here as a son,” Lonergan said he told the family members. “I keep thinking about his dad and how overjoyed he was that someone went to that extent to help them.”

The ERT, Lonergan said, is one of the most important programs the USW offers – one that makes sure that members and their families know that someone always has their back, especially at the most desperate times in their lives.

“It’s important for members to know that they’re not by themselves, and we have the tools that they need to help them get through it,” he said. “When you’re in a position when you’re at your weakest, an ERT member is there to give you strength.”

‘Filling Your Cup’

Sometimes, it’s the ERT coordinators themselves who need to find strength. Responding to tragic events

on a regular basis, they say, can take a heavy emotional toll, and taking time away from the program sometimes is a necessity.

As the ERT grew, the USW, along with Loyola University psychologist Dr. Jeffrey Lating, worked to develop a sabbatical program for participants so that members are able to take a mental and emotional break from the stress.

Benedict recalled that, during her and Taylor's response to the refinery fire, the pair took a half-hour for a quiet walk on the beach, watching the waves and looking for sea glass, just to take their mind away – for a moment – from the tragedy they and their USW siblings were facing.

"It's about taking time to fill your cup," she said. "Sometimes something as simple as that can help."

The Work Goes On

No matter what time of day, or what day of the week, the ERT is always there to respond to members in need, Pope said. And the team's work continues as long as families are suffering.

While Stitt's tragic death at NLMK left his children without their father and his 28-year-old wife a young widow, the USW has continued to rally around the family.

Members of the local, led by District 10 Next Generation Coordinator Colton Smith, have remained in constant contact with the Stitt family. Through various fundraisers, the local union has collected more than \$110,000 and has plans to establish a scholarship fund for Stitt's children.

The USW also presented the local union with the Karen Silkwood Award, given in recognition of members who build solidarity through health, safety and environmental activism.

"The local made it known that that family would never be alone," said District 10 Director Bernie Hall. "They really represent the best of us, of what our union is all about."



ERT Hotline

The USW's Emergency Response Team hotline is available 24 hours a day. Team members respond to fatal or life-altering incidents involving USW members.

866-526-3480



RIPPLE EFFECT

INFRASTRUCTURE BILL ALREADY PAYING DIVIDENDS FOR STEELWORKERS



Just over a year after President Joe Biden's infrastructure and investment plan took effect, the law is already having wide-ranging effects that will continue to create jobs for USW members and bolster their communities for years to come.

The \$1.2 trillion plan to modernize the nation's roads, bridges, airports, public utilities and communications networks has already created 700,000 U.S. jobs and generated a surge in demand for aluminum and steel as well as raw materials like nickel and ore and the pipes, batteries, valves and other components needed for thousands of projects across the United States.

"Our union fought hard for years to enact a major infrastructure program in this country, and, ultimately, that fight was a huge success," said International Vice President Roxanne Brown. "These upgrades will grow our economy and our union, create jobs, facilitate commerce and improve the lives of everyday Americans in immeasurable ways for years to come."

Additional Pay

Not long after President Biden signed the bill in November 2021, Chris Frydenger and his co-workers at the Mueller Co. in Decatur, Ill., began ramping up production of valves, couplings and other products used in water

and gas systems.

But the life-changing impact of the massive infrastructure program really struck Frydenger, grievance chair for Local 7-838, when management reached out to the union with an unprecedented proposal.

The company asked to reopen the local's contract and negotiate an ad-

ditional pay increase so it could hire and retain enough workers to meet the dramatic spike in orders. "Everybody in the union got a raise," Frydenger said.

That demand, in turn, continues to create family-sustaining jobs, put more money in workers' pockets and lift the middle class, just as labor unions and their supporters in Washington, D.C., predicted when they pushed the legislation through Congress and onto Biden's desk.

"This story needs to be told, for sure. It at least doubled our business in a short period of time," said Frydenger, noting the local's 408 members not only received middle-of-the-contract pay increases but continue to avail themselves of all the overtime they want.



“These upgrades will grow our economy and our union, create jobs, facilitate commerce and improve the lives of everyday Americans in immeasurable ways for years to come.”

Roxanne Brown,
International Vice President

Biden's Success

During a visit to Pittsburgh last fall, the president reminded a crowd of union workers, including a number of USW members, that it was only a year ago, Jan. 28, 2022, coincidentally on the day of another visit to the city, that a local bridge collapsed. Thanks to federal funding, union workers have already finished the process of rebuilding the bridge, a major thoroughfare through the city's East End.

"But it never should have come to this," Biden said, pointing out that, thanks to four years of inaction by the



“
It’s definitely created
some jobs for us, we’re
going to start staffing a
weekend crew.”

Chad Dickerson,
President, Local 00065B

previous administration, the term “Infrastructure Week” became a punchline.

“Now,” he said, “we’re going to have ‘Infrastructure Decade.’”

That was good news to Charlene Crawford, unit president for Local 6521 in Altoona, Pa.

“Our labor depends on this,” Crawford said of Biden’s job-creation and inflation-reduction efforts.

The “Made in America” provisions of the infrastructure law are particularly important to Paul Pelc, of USW Local 1917, who also attended Biden’s speech.

“Infrastructure is so important,” said Pelc, of Meadville, Pa. “It means more work for union workers.”

Lasting Impact

When the infrastructure investments create new jobs and increase wages, working families use that extra money to buy cars and appliances, remodel their houses and support local businesses, among many other purposes, helping to extend the infrastructure plan’s reach to virtually every segment of the economy.

“It’s had such an impact that in our new hire orientations, our general manager talks about it,” Frydenger said of the year-old law. “That’s how big an impact it’s had on sales. He gives all the credit to the infrastructure bill.”

The billions allocated for drinking

water, sewer and stormwater upgrades will enable utilities across the nation to extend distribution systems, replace aging pipes, curtail runoff and address lead and other contaminants. And upgrades to natural gas infrastructure – as well as solar, wind and hydrogen power – will help the country build a more secure, reliable energy base.

Those investments will mean a more secure future for American workers and families, said International Secretary-Treasurer John Shinn.

“It’s vital that our USW work force manufactures the components for these upgrades, and that our union continues to supply America’s energy needs,” Shinn said.

Keeping it Homemade

The Made in America requirements in the infrastructure law will ensure these projects rely on products such as those made at the Decatur plant. What makes Frydenger happier still is knowing that his union brothers and sisters up and down the supply chain also have brighter futures because of the infrastructure push.

An increasing number of orders prompted Mueller Co. to expand its purchases of brass, a raw material in the company’s production process. Helping to fill that need are about 225 members of USW Local 7248 at

Wieland Chase, a brass manufacturing plant in Montpelier, Ohio, and about 50 members of USW Local 9777 at H. Kramer & Co., a brass and bronze ingot foundry in Chicago.

“The orders have just piled up because of the rebuilding and construction,” said Local 9777 President Steve Kramer, noting that the business boom spurred by the infrastructure program helped his members win good raises and other gains in a recently completed contract with the foundry. “When orders are up and they’re under the gun, we’ve got a little more leverage.”

“They’re growing. They just hired more people,” Kramer said of the foundry’s increased business with Mueller Co., among other customers. He added that the law also has boosted production and employment at many of the 40 or so other USW-represented companies covered by his amalgamated local.

The Decatur plant sells products directly to customers. But it also ships some of what Frydenger and his co-workers make to other Mueller facilities, where even more USW members are experiencing the benefits of the infrastructure program.

“It just flooded our orders,” said Chad Dickerson, president of Local 00065B, which represents about 450 union members who manufacture

Mueller fire hydrants in Albertville, Ala., known as the “fire hydrant capital of the world.”

“It’s definitely created some jobs for us,” said Dickerson, adding, “We’re going to start staffing a weekend crew.”

The increase in orders “probably added 50 jobs we never would have had,” and Dickerson estimated the need to create up to 100 more jobs in coming months.

Those hydrants go to places like Groton, Conn., where members of USW Local 9411-00 provide water and sewer service to thousands of customers.

“The Mueller hydrant is our standard throughout the system,” explained Kevin Ziolkovski, Local 9411-00 unit president, whose members at Groton Utilities serve the city of Groton and a handful of neighboring communities.

Ziolkovski and his co-workers look forward to using more of those hydrants and other Mueller products in infrastructure program projects that would boost customers’ safety and quality of life.

“Any time you upgrade the system, you reduce the possibility of water main breaks or blockages,” Ziolkovski observed. “Your water quality increases. Your water pressure is better.”

Workers at Mueller have been making these top-of-the-line products for about 150 years. With the infrastructure program, Frydenger noted, they’ll continue making them – and newer versions – for decades to come.

“We’re innovating more every day,” he said. “I can’t tell you how much it fills my heart to be part of this.”

As he touted the infrastructure bill to the crowd of union workers in October, Biden said that good union jobs, and the security that comes with them, are the building blocks of a new economy built around the middle class.

“This is only the beginning,” Biden said. “I’ve never been more optimistic about the future of this country.”



‘MADE IN AMERICA’ RULES *Make a Difference* FOR USW MEMBERS

Even before the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 began to pay dividends, “Made in America” rules were already making a difference in the lives of Antonio Wellmaker and his Local 1063 co-workers.

Wellmaker, whose employer, Amsted, in Granite City, Ill., produces coupler systems and components for railway systems, has actively sought relief for U.S. workers and manufacturers from unfairly traded Chinese imports. But duties on imports are just one method of ensuring good jobs for American workers.

Amsted has reaped the benefits of a contract the company has,

through rail manufacturer Alstom, with Chicago’s Metra, the commuter rail system that serves the city and surrounding area.

Because the contract stipulates that at least 70 percent of the transit cars and components for Metra must be made in the United States, that has provided job security for workers like Wellmaker and his siblings.

“Our facility builds the bogie, or the under-

carriage, of the cars, and the contract with Metra resulted in about 40 jobs being added,” Wellmaker said. “Amsted also has a contract with Amtrak to repair their bogies.”

Wellmaker said that the added business has also meant higher wages, not only for Amsted workers but others in the area.

“In order to get new hires, there has to be a competitive wage,” Wellmaker said. “Especially in this market. Higher wages lure more qualified people.”

Wellmaker said he was waiting for more information to determine what other benefits might come from the infrastructure law.



USW HONORS VETERANS WITH ‘LIGHT TO UNITE’

MEMBERS STEP UP VETS OF STEEL ACTIVISM ACROSS THE COUNTRY

The USW marked Veterans Day last November by participating in the national “Light to Unite” event, which coincided with a celebration of the 240th anniversary of the Purple Heart medal.

“The USW is proud to honor the generations of veterans who served our nation and made the world safer through their dedication and sacrifice,” said International President Tom Conway, himself a veteran of the U.S. Air Force. “Our union is proud to partner with the National Flag Foundation to commemorate Veterans Day, lighting up our headquarters alongside organizations across the country in honor of our military heroes.”

The Light to Unite event, which was sponsored by the National Flag Foundation and the Military Order of the Purple Heart, took place on the evening of Nov. 11, 2022. The organizations asked groups to light their buildings in purple or in red, white and blue to mark the two occasions.

The USW was in good company in participating in the event. The tallest building in the United States, One World Trade Center in New York City, took part, as did the Koppers Tower in Pittsburgh, the home of the National Flag Foundation.

Veterans of Steel

The USW’s celebration of Veterans Day came just a few months after members voted at the union’s 2022 International Constitutional Convention to require the establishment of Veterans of Steel committees at each USW local.

The USW constitution now calls on locals to create Veterans of Steel

groups alongside the union’s other requisite committees, including organizing, civil rights, Women of Steel, and workers’ compensation.

In addition to providing the union’s thousands of military veterans with an opportunity to connect with each other, Veterans of Steel encourages members to serve their communities, craft contract proposals to support veterans, provide help with job-placement and training assistance, connect their fellow veterans to community resources, raise funds for veterans in need, help them confront issues such as PTSD, addiction and other challenges, and build networks through local, state and national labor groups like the AFL-CIO.

Studies show that about one in 10 homeless adults in the United States is a veteran, and only 25 percent of veterans have jobs waiting for them when they leave the armed forces.

“Thousands of USW members served or are serving in the military. Today and every day, we’re grateful for their hard work and commitment,” Conway said. “All veterans deserve our ongoing support, and as union members, we remain committed to ensuring they have the resources they need to succeed both in their workplaces and their communities.”

Members can visit www.usw.org/members/veterans-of-steel to find more information on the Veterans of Steel program, as well as model contract language, presentations, and other resources.

Nationwide Activism

Dozens of USW locals across the country have been active for years in

the Veterans of Steel program, established in 2017, and a number of groups participated in other events honoring Veterans Day and the Purple Heart anniversary.

In Paducah, Ky., members of Local 550 marked the holiday at the McCracken County Courthouse, where President Gary Wilson spoke, and the courthouse dome was bathed in purple light, in recognition both of Veterans Day and of Purple Heart recipients.

The Purple Heart is a medal given to military service members who are wounded or killed during their service as a result of enemy action.

Meanwhile, in New York, Veterans of Steel members teamed up with USW Rapid Response activists to help pass a first-of-its-kind law that requires employers to post information in workplaces about veterans’ benefits and services.

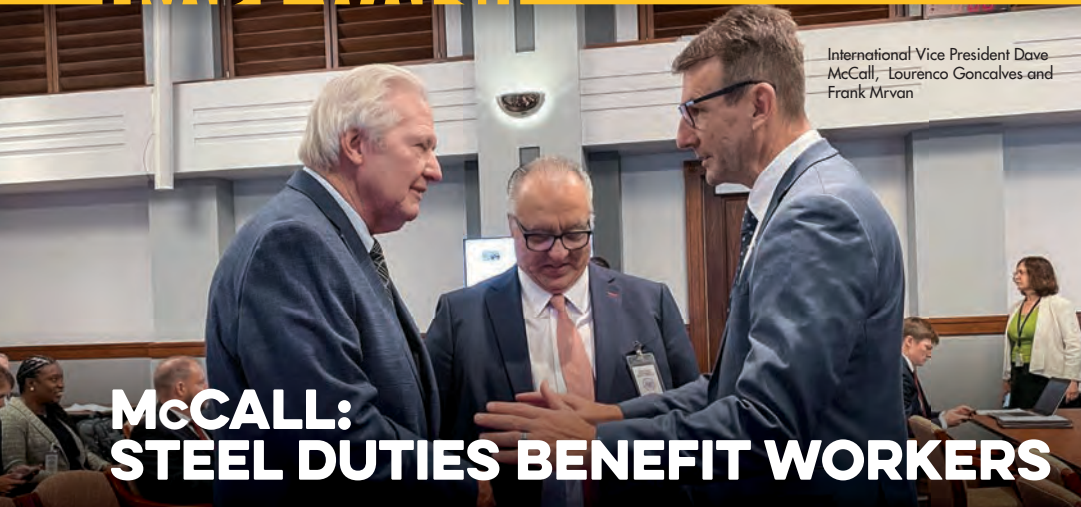
USW members met with legislators for months, pointing out the deficiencies in existing laws designed to help veterans. Too many veterans, they said, are unaware of the benefits available to them in areas such as education, training, job placement and health care.

The law took effect on Jan. 1.

“We were proud to have been a part of the passage of this legislation,” said District 4 Director Del Vitale. “We look forward to finding more ways that we can help our nation’s veterans, in New York state, across District 4, and around the country.”

Rapid Response and Veterans of Steel activists will be working to pass legislation to support veterans this year. Keep an eye on USW communications, usw.org and the @steelworkers social media pages for more information.





McCALL: STEEL DUTIES BENEFIT WORKERS

International Vice President Dave McCall testified in November before the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC), seeking the agency's support for continued duties on imports of carbon and alloy steel cut-to-length plate from 12 countries.

The ITC announced in January that it reached unanimous affirmative votes on 11 of those nations: Austria, Belgium, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan, and Turkey.

This outcome means that duties will remain on corrosion-resistant steel, cold-rolled steel, hot-rolled steel, and cut-to-length plate, with the lone exception of orders on Brazil, where Section 232 relief remains in place. The orders will stay in place for at least five more years.

The duties that have been in force since 2017, McCall said, have allowed U.S. facilities to reopen, companies to make new investments, innovation to flourish, and workers to share in the benefits.

"We need these orders," McCall told the commission, "and we urge you to keep them in place."

Antidumping duties target imports sold – or dumped – in the United States at below fair market value. Countervailing duties are used to offset illegal subsidies that foreign governments provide to steel manufacturers.

McCall, who started his USW career as a millwright at the Burns Harbor mill, said that steel communities like those in Northwest Indiana and across the country depend on the level playing field that the ITC is intended to provide for American workers.

"In many ways, Steelworkers have been the engine of our manufacturing recovery," said McCall, who oversees the union's bargaining in the steel industry. "They will be a driving force behind the renewal of our nation's outdated infrastructure and supply chain."

Joining McCall in testifying on Nov. 15 was Cleveland-Cliffs CEO Lourenco Goncalves, who oversees the largest steel manufacturer in the United States and whose company recently reached a new four-year agreement with USW members.

McCall said the new contract and continued vigilance to ensure fair trade will mean a strong future for workers and steelmakers.

"We look forward to years of working together to grow this essential American industry and the family-sustaining, union jobs the industry supports," McCall said.

Before the duties were imposed, he said, the industry struggled and USW members were facing an uncertain future. The duties, along with those on other major steel imports, instilled both workers and manufacturers with a renewed confidence.

"Before your decision, domestic steel producers were idling facilities and reducing investments," McCall said. "It was a dark time for Steelworkers who saw their jobs and their ability to support their families slipping away."

That's why it's so important that the tariffs continue, he said.

"With your vote to continue the orders on cut-to-length plate," McCall said, "we know that we will make the next chapter for American steel a success story."

DUTIES ON OCTG IMPORTS

The U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) will impose duties on oil country tubular goods (OCTG) from four countries following an investigation that found unfair imports of the goods are harming the U.S. industry.

The ITC will issue countervailing duties on OCTG imports from Russia and South Korea, and antidumping duties on imports from Argentina, Mexico, and Russia. Antidumping duties target imports that are sold at below fair market value. Countervailing duties are intended to offset illegal subsidies that foreign governments provide to their manufacturers.

Thousands of USW members who work in the steel industry produce top-quality OCTG products that keep oil, natural gas and other products flowing through vast distribution networks.

USW CONDEMNS ABUSE

The USW condemned "horrifying abuses" revealed in a Sheffield Hallam University report in December that detailed the Chinese government's systematic abuse of Uyghurs and other minorities and the widespread impact that forced labor has on automotive supply chains.

"This report documents not only the human rights violations workers in the Uyghur region are suffering at the hands of the Chinese government, but the way in which this oppression permeates the supply chains," International President Tom Conway said following the report's release. The abuse, he said, "is an affront to basic human dignity and cannot be allowed to continue."

USW BACKS STRONG ‘RULES OF ORIGIN’ IN USMCA

USW Legislative Director Roy Houseman testified in November before the U.S. International Trade Commission, supporting strong “rules of origin” for automobiles under the U.S., Mexico, Canada trade agreement (USMCA).

The USMCA, which replaced the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), took effect July 1, 2020. Rules of origin are used to determine whether or not automobiles are subject to duties under the agreement, based on the percentage of domestic content they contain.

The updated rules of origin included in the USMCA were intended to provide greater incentives for automakers to source goods and materials in the United States and North America.

The ITC hearing was part of the commission’s investigation into the economic effects of those rules as the commission compiles information for a report the ITC is scheduled to submit to the president and to Congress by the end of June. Under the USMCA, the ITC is required to provide such reports every two years.

Houseman told the ITC that strong rules of origin help support good jobs for USW members and other workers who make parts and materials used in cars and trucks.

“A significant number of USW members work in sectors that provide materials and components for the automotive supply chain,” Houseman said. Strong rules of origin, he said, “have an immense impact on hundreds of thousands of our members and the communities where they live.”

Community Impact

Houseman pointed to members of two USW locals in particular as he sought to put a human face on his argument.

In Davenport, Iowa, about 1,900 USW members work at Arconic Aluminum, including Pat Stock who followed his father into a manufacturing career. The plant, Houseman said, makes components for Ford F-150 trucks, and, in

part because of the popularity of that vehicle, the local recently signed a new contract that increases wages, maintains quality benefits and improves pensions.

“We see similar community impacts from other industries that stand to benefit from strong rules of origin, such as our rubber sector,” Houseman said.

Houseman also shared the story of Al Butler, one of approximately 2,000 members who work at the Goodyear tire plant in Fayetteville, N.C. Butler has worked at the plant for 14 years and takes pride in the fact that he drives an American-made truck.

The ITC is all too familiar, Houseman said, with the pressures U.S. tiremakers face due to illegal trade practices by overseas competitors, such as the dumping of tires at below-market value. The USW represents workers at 18 U.S. tire plants, many of which are in communities of color where the plants are major economic engines.

“The union encourages you to consider additional racial and economic factors in your analysis,” Houseman said.

Maintaining strong rules of origin for automobiles, he said, along with other pro-labor policies, will benefit hundreds of thousands of American workers.

“The high standard,” Houseman said, “has the potential to maintain

a quality of life for workers, like Al Butler and Pat Stock, while enabling the next generation of workers to uplift their own wages and benefits.”

Panel Decision

In January, the USW responded to a USMCA panel decision on automotive rules of origin that would allow for significantly more content to come from China and other countries while remaining labeled “made in North America.”

The decision, International President Tom Conway said, “not only hurts workers across North America but undercuts the agreement itself, representing a significant victory for Chinese and other foreign producers.”

The interpretation, Conway said, amounted to “fuzzy math that allows corporations to cut corners and dilute the amount of North American content needed to qualify for the preferential tariff consideration.”

“The Biden administration worked diligently to defend higher standards and protect workers, including hundreds of thousands of USW members,” Conway said. “We commend the administration’s ongoing commitment to fair trade that benefits workers and consumers. But decisions like these make it harder to trust new tariff-reduction agreements.”



NEWS BRIEFS

BIDEN SIGNS BILL TO EXTEND FUNDING FOR TAA

As 2022 came to an end, President Joe Biden signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act, a bill to fund the U.S. government for the coming year. Thanks to the activism of USW members, the measure addressed two important pro-worker priorities.

The bill included an extension of the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program through September of this year. The extension includes \$494 million for critical worker training and provides a welcome reprieve for workers who lost their jobs because of bad trade policies. Although the measure is not as strong as what union activists initially sought due to Republican opposition, workers will continue to fight for a longer, more robust extension of the TAA program and other worker-friendly trade policies throughout the year.

The funding bill also included \$25 million in additional funding for the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), which oversees union elections and adjudicates labor disputes. It was the first increase in funding for the agency in nine years.

LOCAL 1023 REACHES AGREEMENT WITH YOKOHAMA

Unwavering solidarity allowed members of Local 1023 to achieve a strong new contract with Yokohama Tire in Salem, Va., despite the company's initial demands for numerous concessions.

Yokohama came to the table with 119 proposals that sought to reduce and eliminate benefits, contract language and job protections that would have negatively affected every member and retiree.

Instead, the local fought back and won a four-year agreement that eliminated the two-tier wage system, maintained cost-of-living increases and provided increases in pension funding, life insurance, vacation and other benefits.

The new contract covers about 500 USW members who work at the Yokohama factory in Salem, Va.

Members of the Local 1023 bargaining team credited the USW's "Building Power" program with helping them maintain steadfast solidarity during the protracted negotiations.

"We let the company know that our members meant business and we expected a fair and equitable contract," said Jimmie Link, Local 1023 recording secretary. "We are proud of what our negotiating committee achieved."

CONTRACT EXTENSION AT NATIONAL GRID

Members of Local 12012 and Local 12003 voted overwhelmingly in January to ratify a contract extension with natural gas provider National Grid of Massachusetts.

The extension, which expires in 2027, covers about 1,300 members and includes annual wage increases, significant pension enhancements, improved layoff language and continued quality, affordable health care coverage.

The extension came four years after the end of a lengthy lockout from which members emerged with contract improvements.

USW SEMINARS HONOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The USW is honoring Black History Month this February by sharing stories of well-known trailblazers whose work was an invaluable part of the narrative concerning the Black experience in America.

Members can learn about the collective work of Black Americans who may not be well-known, but whose gifts to labor and labor history are indispensable. The USW's Civil and Human Rights Department will host a two-part series that will take members on a journey from Reconstruction to the present, to re-examine Black peoples' contributions to labor history, and to grasp the importance and urgency of organizing Black workers as part of a healthy and growing labor movement.

Part one will take place on Feb. 9 at 7 p.m. EST and will cover Reconstruction up to the beginning of the Civil Rights movement. Part two will be on Feb. 16 at 7 p.m. and will cover the Civil Rights movement through the modern labor movement.

To register for the seminars, visit usw.to/rsvp-bwalm. The completed sessions also will be available on the USW's YouTube channel, youtube.com/steelworkers.



WORKERS AT SENIOR CENTERS RATIFY FIRST CONTRACT

About 500 workers at four Kane Community Living Centers in Western Pennsylvania ratified their first collective bargaining agreement after voting unanimously to become USW members in January 2022.

The bargaining unit includes certified nurse assistants (CNAs), licensed practical nurses (LPNs), recreation aides, dietary and housekeeping workers, and material handlers at the county-run assisted living and senior facilities.

"This is the best contract I can remember us having," said Desirae Beatty, a CNA at Kane for 18 years. She and her co-workers were previously represented by another union. That contract expired in December 2021. "I mostly wanted to make sure we didn't lose anything, and we ended up gaining a lot," she said.

As part of the four-year agreement, LPNs will receive an hourly raise of \$3 immediately; by the end of the contract, they will receive another \$2 an hour. Workers with at least three years of service will also now receive longevity raises, and the uniform allowance is increased to \$400.

Part-time workers will also now be represented by the union, another major win, according to Beatty, who served on the bargaining committee for the first time.

LOCAL 8888 HONORS HOMETOWN HEROINE

A five-year campaign by members of Local 8888 in coastal Virginia culminated last fall with a ceremony honoring Mary Jackson, a mathematician and aerospace engineer who was one of the pioneering scientists in the U.S. space program.

Jackson, a native of Hampton, Va., spent most of her career working at the Langley Research Center in Hampton, and, in 1958, became NASA's first black female engineer.

In 2017, members of Local 8888, a group of 10,000 workers who build nuclear submarines and aircraft carriers for the U.S. Navy in nearby Newport News, Va., began a campaign asking the City of Hampton to honor Mary Jackson in a permanent and meaningful way.

"We simply knew it was the right thing to do, and it was the right time to lift up this forgotten Hampton hero," Local 8888 President Charles Spivey said during the ribbon-cutting ceremony in September celebrating the opening of the Mary W. Jackson Community Center in her hometown.

In addition to playing a pivotal role in the development of the U.S. space program, Jackson worked hard throughout her distinguished career to further the hiring and promotion of other women in scientific and engineering jobs at NASA.

Jackson's story, and those of her fellow Black women scientists, was portrayed in the book and 2016 feature film "Hidden Figures."

Jackson passed away in 2005 at the age of 83. In 2019, she was posthumously awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, and, in 2021, the Washington, D.C., headquarters of NASA was renamed the Mary W. Jackson NASA Headquarters.

Members of Local 8888 collected more than 2,500 petition signatures seeking to honor Jackson, working with community allies and activists, including USW retirees, to achieve their goal.

"Mary Jackson personifies the kind community role model who deserves to have her name on a facility that serves the community," Spivey said.

Spivey and his USW local took their dedication one step further, providing a donation of \$10,000 to fund outreach and programming at the new community center.

"We believe so much good can come from our young people," Spivey said, "when we invest in their activities and their potential."



Local 9600 President Alyssa Stout, former President Ty Walk and members Mai Xiong and Michaela Blasey-Herbert

CALIFORNIA HEALTH CARE WORKERS SCORE MAJOR WINS

The 800 health care workers of Local 9600 in Oroville, Calif., scored several wins in their new three-year contract, including the formation of a worker-driven union-management health and safety committee with Oroville Hospital.

The health and safety committee will also address worker concerns related to patient care and workplace violence, issues many members prioritized as the union's bargaining committee prepared for negotiations.

The union's negotiators addressed each of the 110 job classifications at the hospital separately, achieving an average first-year wage increase of 9.5 percent. They also secured an additional week of vacation for members in the business office and service unit in an effort to address disparity issues.

ALABAMA 3M WORKERS RATIFY AGREEMENT

Members of Local 9-675 in Guin, Ala., held the line during their recent contract negotiations with 3M to ratify a new three-year agreement that includes the highest wage increases the workers have seen.

The local, which includes about 250 production, warehouse and maintenance workers, entered bargaining with 3M last fall with a focus on wages and language clarification. After rejecting the company's first offer, the membership ratified their final contract Nov. 30. Members secured annual wage increases and multiple benefit improvements, including up to three weeks of paid parental leave.

The new contract also includes an increase to shift premiums, as well as much-needed updates to scheduling and overtime.

Local 9-675 members manufacture reflective road signs and pavement marking materials; reflective products for advertising on trucks and trailers and for improved visibility of emergency response vehicles; glass bubbles for lightweight filler material, and ceramic microspheres that are a filler in paints and coatings.

NEWS BRIEFS

MEMBERS APPROVE NEW GEORGIA-PACIFIC CONTRACTS

Thousands of USW members who work at Georgia-Pacific mills and box plants have new master agreements after the two groups of workers voted overwhelmingly last fall to approve the new contracts.

In October, members ratified a new four-year master agreement covering more than 4,000 workers at 13 Georgia-Pacific mills. The union bargaining committee was able to achieve a deal that eliminated virtually all two-tier provisions and included across-the-board wage increases that were triple the raises that USW members gained in the 2015 master agreement.

“The solidarity of the locals’ leadership was at the highest levels I have ever witnessed,” said Danny Faircloth, president of Local 1192 at the company’s Foley, Fla., cellulose mill. “We showed a collective resolve from every mill on these issues that would not only raise our members to a higher standard of living but would also help the company with its bottom line.”

With that steadfast solidarity and the leadership of the Georgia-Pacific mill council, the bargaining committee, led by International Vice President Leeann Foster, was able to eliminate inequity issues in benefits such as vacation and holidays. The council also achieved substantial wage increases in local agreements, preserved affordable health care, and improved retirement security, vacation and contract language.

“This should be a shining moment for all when they wonder what true solidarity and commitment to working hard for a fair contract looks like,” Faircloth said. “Our combined solidarity across all USW/GP mills has enabled this to happen.”

Following the mill agreement, members at Georgia-Pacific box plants voted overwhelmingly in November 2022 to ratify a new four-year master agreement.

The new box plant contract covers more than 1,100 workers at 15 locations. The agreement includes wage increases totaling 12 percent over the life of each local agreement, which are higher increases than in any previous master agreement.

The bargaining committee, with the strong support of the union work force, fought off changes to members’ affordable health care plan, and achieved increases to retirement benefits and vacation.

“Thousands of hard-working union members have continued to keep this company moving forward through some of the most difficult times in recent years,” Foster said. “These contracts reflect those sacrifices and are a testament to how valuable this union work force is to Georgia-Pacific. USW members should be proud of the agreements we achieved and the solidarity they demonstrated.”

FOOTBALL PLAYERS RATIFY CONTRACT WITH USFL

Members of the United Football Players Association (UFPA), an affiliate of the USW, voted overwhelmingly in January to ratify a contract with the United States Football League (USFL) covering roughly 350 professional athletes.

International President Tom Conway said that football players in all leagues deserve fair treatment on the job and that the new agreement empowers individuals to speak up.

“Our union is committed to working with players to improve conditions and ensure that they are treated with dignity and respect by the league,” Conway said. “The contract provides a much-needed voice for players, whose jobs and earnings also will be more secure under the ratified agreement.”

Ryan Cave, an executive with the United Football Players Association, said collectively bargaining for better treatment and working conditions is an important step toward improving the quality of life for players.

“We know that working together is the key to getting results,” Cave said. “Players throughout the USFL stood together, and we achieved a strong first contract as a direct result from that solidarity.”

The USW and the USFL announced a tentative agreement in December, about five months after their union election.

International Secretary Treasurer John Shinn, who represents the union on the AFL-CIO Sports Council, said the contract provides important improvements.

“Through standing together in unity, players successfully bargained for enhanced economic and medical provisions, including a newly negotiated five-week injured reserve,” Shinn said. “Throughout the league, from training camp and through the season, players will receive better pay and have more security.”

The eight-team league, which has no official connection to the league of the same name that operated from 1983 to 1986, is scheduled to kick off its second season in April, with playoffs taking place in July.

“Employment security and working conditions are areas where the contract will make a difference, and improving them will give players more opportunities to thrive,” said Kenneth Farrow II, president of the United Football Players Association. “Throughout the organizing and bargaining process, players sought to have a strong voice in their own future.”



OBITUARY: JIM BOWEN, LONGTIME DISTRICT 23 DIRECTOR

Jim Bowen, former District 23 director, died on September 27, 2022, at the age of 87.

Bowen was first elected director of District 23 in 1985 and served until 1995, when the union restructured its U.S. districts from 18 to nine, and Bowen then became a special assistant to former International President George Becker.

District 23 included the state of West Virginia and parts of Southeastern Ohio.

In addition to his leadership role in the USW, Bowen also served as president of the West Virginia AFL-CIO until his retirement in 2004.

One of Bowen's signature accomplishments during his tenure as a USW director was helping members of Local 5668 reach a historic agreement that ended a 20-month lockout at Ravenswood Aluminum in West Virginia in the early 1990s.

"Jim said there were five qualities that led to their victory: labor solidarity, community support, bravery, creativity and perseverance," said Josh Sword, who now serves as president of the West Virginia AFL-CIO.

West Virginia Education Association President Dale Lee called Bowen "the greatest labor leader I've known in my lifetime."

"West Virginia and all the working people lost a great friend and advocate," Lee said.

Bowen is survived by his wife and daughter as well as two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.



TEXAS LOCAL RATIFIES CONTRACT WITH DOW

More than 200 members of Local 13-1 at Dow-Deer Park, Texas, won wage increases and other vital gains in a new contract they ratified in December.

The union agreed to enter into early negotiations, though the contract was not set to expire until March 11, 2023. Dow earlier gave the local a last, best and final offer that members rejected by a 2-to-1 margin.

"Our main objective was a fair contract," said Local 13-1 President Harold Scott. "We were locked out in 2019, and we didn't get a fair contract then. The members wanted a contract that was comparable to other chemical plants and refineries in the area."

Highlights of the agreement include annual wage increases, including a 7 percent hike in the first year, lump sum bonuses, added bereavement days, improved seniority language and increased financial incentives for the Emergency Response Team.

"Dow plays hardball, and we just have to learn their game and educate each other by networking," said Scott.

NOTICE TO ALL EMPLOYEES COVERED BY A UNION SECURITY CLAUSE

All USW represented employees covered by a union security clause have the right, under *NLRB v. General Motors*, 373 U.S. 734 (1963), to be and remain a nonmember subject only to the duty to pay the equivalent of union initiation fees and periodic dues. Further, only such non-member employees have the right, under *Communications Workers v. Beck*, 487 U.S. 735 (1988), to limit payment of union-security dues and initiation fees to certain moneys spent on activities germane to a union's role as collective bargaining representative. This latter statutory right is embodied in the USW's Nonmember Objection Procedure.

The Procedure is available to any USW represented employee who is subject to a union security clause but who is a non-member and who objects to his or her union security fees being expended on nonrepresentational activities. Paragraph 1 of the Procedure states:

"1. Any individual, who is not a member of the United Steelworkers and who is required as a condition of employment

to pay dues to the United Steelworkers pursuant to a union security arrangement but objects to supporting ... political or ideological expenditures by the United Steelworkers which are not necessarily or reasonably incurred for the purpose of performing the duties of an exclusive collective bargaining representative shall have the right upon perfecting a notice of objection to obtain an advance reduction of a portion of such individual's dues obligation commensurate with expenditures unrelated to collective bargaining as required by law."

An eligible employee who objects to the USW expending monies for nonrepresentational activities such as charitable or political activities may choose to perfect a notice of objection under Paragraph 2 of the Procedure, which states:

"2. To perfect a notice of objection, the individual must send an individually signed notice to the International Secretary-Treasurer during the first thirty days following either the individual's initial date of hire into the USW represented unit or an anniversary date of such hiring; provided, however, that if the individual lacked knowledge of this Procedure, the

individual shall have a 30 day period commencing on the date the individual became aware of the Procedure to perfect a notice of objection; and, provided, further, that a member who resigns membership shall have the opportunity to object within the 30 day period following resignation.¹

Objectors are not USW members and have no right to vote in union elections or to be a candidate, no right to participate in union meetings or activities, and no right to vote on contract ratification.

Upon perfecting properly a notice of objection, the objector is entitled to an advance reduction of a portion of his or her union security obligation commensurate with expenditures unrelated to collective bargaining, as required by law. International Secretary-Treasurer John E. Shinn has determined, based upon expenditures for the calendar year 2021 that the reduction percentage under the Procedure is 10.85% (18.26% if organizing expenditures were to be included).

There are court decisions holding that organizing activities are non-representational activities. The USW does not agree with those rulings. However, without intending to waive its position that its

organizing expenditures are not subject to objection and without intending to waive its right to assert its position if there is a challenge to the reduction percentage, the USW has deemed it expedient to apply the 18.26% figure to most current and future objectors. Therefore, an objector will be charged 81.74% of the regular dues amount. Each objector will be given a detailed breakdown between representational and non-representational activities with a report by an independent auditor.

The Procedure contains an appeals system under which challenges to the reduction percentage determination must be filed within 30 days of the Notice of Determination and are to be decided by an impartial arbitrator appointed by the American Arbitration Association. Disputed amounts are escrowed pending appeal.

While a notice must be individually signed and timely mailed, there is no form for a notice. Processing is faster, however, when the notice contains the objector's name, address, local union number, and employer.

¹ Any right of a resignee to pay a reduced amount under this Procedure may or may not be superceded by the resignee's check-off authorization."

Have You Moved?

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 _____

You may also email the information to membership@usw.org



International President
Tom Conway



Ramogi Huma, executive
director of the National
College Players Association



Pittsburgh Steelers greats
sign autographs for fans



Jon Kolb, left, and Larry Brown, four-time Super
Bowl champs with the Pittsburgh Steelers



Secretary-Treasurer John Shinn, left,
and District 10 Director Bernie Hall

USW, STEELERS JOIN FORCES TO SUPPORT COLLEGE ATHLETES

In January, for the first time since 2019, Steelworkers and Steelers returned to hosting what has traditionally been an annual fundraiser in support of the National College Players Association (NCPA).

The event in Pittsburgh featured National Football League stars signing autographs for fans while raising much-needed funds for the NCPA.

The NCPA, a nonprofit organization that advocates for better treatment for college athletes, includes more than 20,000 players at more than 150 campuses. The USW has supported the organization's work since its inception in 2001.

"The USW has been proud to work side by side with the NCPA," said International President Tom Conway. "Together we have made significant progress toward improving the lives of young athletes and making sure they are treated fairly."

"We hope that the progress we have seen is just the beginning," he said.

In addition to supporting the NCPA athletes, the USW also counts as members the players in the United States Football League (USFL). That group of 350 professional athletes reached a first contract with the league. See News Briefs, Page 30.