

Volume 8/Issue 2  
Spring 2022

Covering the news of the United Steelworkers in District 11

# USW REPORTER



**In February 2022, the District 11 Health Care Workers Council (HCWC) convened its first meeting. The council is comprised of two members from each of the health care locals, the USW District 11 HCWC Coordinator and five district representatives.**

The goals of this council are to share information, find access to resources for our membership, solve problems as a collective group and look for educational opportunities for our members.

Also, USW District 11 Director Emil Ramirez has appointed Local 9460

## Health Care Workers Council UP and RUNNING

President Deanna Hughes to represent District 11 on the USW International Health Care Workers Council (HCWC). Serving as President of 9460 since 2019, Hughes will be an excellent advocate for USW members.

Hughes oversees 16 contracts in the largest health care and largest overall local in District 11. As the newly appointed District 11 HCWC Coordinator, she will be directly involved in meetings along with USW District 11 Assistant to the Director Cathy Drummond.

Drummond and District 11 Staff Representative Michele Fredrickson went to Pittsburgh to attend the

International Health Care Workers Council annual meeting on March 10, 2022. USW Health Care Workers Council Coordinator Tamara Lefcowitz outlined a variety of objectives for the coming year.

The largest and most interesting discussion revolved around organizing health-care workers. USW Organizer Beth Usery talked with the class about what our union has planned for organizing drives in the health care industry.



International Health Care Workers Council members including Michele Fredrickson, Staff Representative, and Cathy Drummond, Assistant to the Director, both from District 11.

### DISTRICT 11



### 2022 UPCOMING EVENTS

- ▶ **MINK:** June 5-10
- ▶ **International Convention:** August 8-11
- ▶ **Ruttger's:** September 18-23



**THE DIRECTOR'S DESK** Emil Ramirez, District 11 Director

## Critical Year for Bargaining

**On April 21, 2022, District 11 concluded a three-day Collective Bargaining Conference in Minneapolis. This education conference brought together over 80 members from throughout the district in every sector that we represent.**

I truly believe this year is the Workers' Year when we go to the negotiating table and negotiate new agreements. Within District 11 we will be negotiating over 105 contracts between May 1, 2022, and April 30, 2023. That is over 35 percent of the contracts within the district.

Our off-date oil refineries will be going to negotiations with their respective employers to bargain contracts that mirror the wage increases from the recently concluded National Oil Bargaining Pattern.

The paper sector has a number of contracts that are expiring this year, along with a few companies in the paper sector who want to start negotiations a year early.

Many of the major sectors where we represent workers, including rubber, aluminum, steel, natural gas, iron ore mining, paper, healthcare, manufacturing and cement are up for negotiations in the next twelve months.

I believe that we, as a union, have a great opportunity to increase wages, negotiate better health and safety language, protect our healthcare benefits and secure pensions and other retirement benefits for the members we represent.

I'm confident that with the combined knowledge of our local union leaders, USW staff and support from our different departments in Pittsburgh, we can make gains across the board in all sectors.

Our members have been the essential workers throughout not only the COVID pandemic, but throughout decades of making sure products and services are available to the consumers.

If you are now, or going to be part of an upcoming bargaining at your workplace, thank you!

If you believe your local union needs more negotiating preparation, please let your assigned staff representative know, and I will make sure that I do everything I can to get the proper resources made available to the local union.

***Again, I'm confident we'll have many successful negotiations in the coming year, and remember, an injury to one is an injury to all.***

## District 11 Represented at USW MINING CONFERENCE

***The first USW Mining Conference in several decades was held in Salt Lake City from April 4 through April 6, 2022.***

A total of 160 members participated in the three-day conference, and District 11 was represented by 55 members from the following local unions: 11-0001, 1938, 2660, 2705, 6115, 6860 and 13214.

The delegates were able to attend a number of different workshops which included Women in Mining, Organizing, Health and Safety, Strategies for Extending Jobs and Protecting Benefits, and Labor History.

President Tom Conway addressed the conference and talked about how this is a crucial time in North America, because if we want to move to a clean energy future then we need

to mine those critical minerals in North America.

The purpose of the conference was three-fold. Firstly, to engage our miners, because this was probably the first time the delegates were able to talk to other miners outside of their local unions or district in a conference focused on the mining industry.

Secondly, we kicked off a new organizing initiative in the mining sector, and lastly, we discussed with membership the challenges we still face in the mining industry.

The Women in Mining panel that was moderated by District 11 Assistant to the Director Cathy Drummond

featured women in the industry who discussed continued challenges in the workplace.

Whatever our members need, the USW is willing to fight for the issues important to us, and we need to hold the employers to higher standards to protect all miners, regardless of sex.

I want to thank all the delegates from District 11 who attended and participated, especially Wendy Erickson from Local Union 6860 and Kandi Kerr from Local Union 11-0001, who agreed to be on the Women in Mining Panel.



Pictured left to right: John Arbogast, Staff Representative District 11; Senator David Tomassoni, MN District 6; Director Emil Ramirez, USW District 11.

The award, shown below, is made of real 'hard rock,' from U.S. Steel's Minntac Mine.



## SENATOR DAVID TOMASSONI Receives Inaugural "Hard Rock Miners" Award

**The Iron Ore Alliance announced on March 31 that Sen. David Tomassoni is the recipient of its inaugural "Hard Rock Miners" award in recognition of his outstanding commitment and contributions to Minnesota's taconite industry.**

Members of the Iron Ore Alliance recently presented the award to Sen. Tomassoni in his St. Paul office. Sen. Tomassoni, who has represented areas of the Iron Range at the Minnesota Legislature since 1993, announced last summer that he was diagnosed with ALS.

"Senator Tomassoni has devoted his career to tirelessly advocating for his neighbors on the Iron Range," said John Arbogast, staff representative for United Steelworkers District 11 and co-chair of the Iron Ore Alliance. "We are immensely grateful to him for helping protect and advance Minnesota's 135-year legacy of iron mining."

The Iron Ore Alliance is a collaboration between the United Steelworkers and U.S. Steel that helps educate Minnesotans about the importance of U.S. Steel's iron ore business. The alliance made the award out of

taconite directly from U.S. Steel's Minntac facility in Mountain Iron.

"Senator Tomassoni is a special person. He's passionate about representing his constituents at the Capitol and he does it thoughtfully and collaboratively," said Chris Masciantonio, director of government affairs at U.S. Steel and co-chair of the Iron Ore Alliance. "This award—made of real 'hard rock' from U.S. Steel's Minntac mine—is our way of saying thank you, Sen. Tomassoni, for your leadership and service to the Iron Range."

Article from the *Hometown Focus* newspaper April 8, 2022

## 2022 Rapid Response Virtual Conference

**The USW held its first ever Virtual Rapid Response Conference for activists from February 22-24, 2022.**

Due to COVID and other mitigating factors, we were unable to hold the conference in Washington D.C., so virtual was our best option.

District 11 had 32 members and staff participate in the three-day program, which included workshops such as "Collective Bargaining: Engaging Organizing," "Job Security: Technologies to Retain Jobs and Reduce Pollution," "Domestic Issues: Voting Rights are Civil Rights," "What Is Social Infrastructure?" "Trade Enforcement," "Legislative Process: Legislating in the 2020s," "Health and Safety: Leveraging Our Voices" and "Rapid Response Reboot 2022."

On the last day of the conference, we had a virtual lobby day with Senators and Representatives (or their staff) from our district. We had some great discussions with them about our concerns, and we are following up with some offices on the questions they had.

**If any local or unit in the district is interested in learning more about Rapid Response, please contact Bob Ryan in the Minneapolis office to discuss trainings for your local.**



District 11

**REPORTER**

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**District 11 Represented at RPIC**

The USW Rubber Plastics Industry Conference was held on March 24, 2022, in Pittsburgh, Pa., in preparation for several master contract negotiations starting this spring.

RPIC Coordinator Kevin Johnsen welcomed the 65 delegates in attendance who heard comments from President Tom Conway and Vice President Dave McCall regarding upcoming negotiations and the organizing initiative in the rubber industry.

Representatives from Local Union 307L (Topeka-Goodyear), led by local union president Jody Juarez, and representatives from Local Union 310L (Des Moines-Bridgestone), led by local union President Tim Linn, were in attendance and gave in-depth reports on issues from their respective plants.

Director Ramirez will be leading the master negotiations for the local unions represented at Conti Tech, which includes Local Union 286L in Lincoln, Neb., along with three other USW represented local unions. These negotiations will take place in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.

The master negotiations for the local unions at Goodyear will start in early June in Cincinnati under the leadership of Vice President McCall, and the master negotiations for the local unions at Bridgestone will also start in early June in Lexington, Ky., under the leadership of RPIC Coordinator Johnsen.

**Let's Hear from YOU!**

USW@Work is published four times a year and we need the submissions for the Summer 2022 issue by June 28, 2022. Please submit them to [D11news@usw.org](mailto:D11news@usw.org).

Also include a telephone number or active e-mail address in case we need additional information. We will try to include all submissions and we reserve the right to edit information in order to fit the allocated space.

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**NEXT GENERATION**

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**ORGANIZING**

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