

Volume 8/Issue 3
Summer 2022

Covering the news of the United Steelworkers in District 11

USW REPORTER

MINK Educational Institute *Provides Workshops for Local Leaders and Activists*

From June 6-10, 2022, in Lake Ozark, Mo., the USW hosted its Jerry Johnson Summer Educational Institute, also known as MINK (for Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas) at the Lodge of the Four Seasons.

About 130 union members from the four states participated in training sessions that included USW Labor History, Grievance Handling, Building Rapid Response, Communications/Public Speaking, Safety and Health, Civil and Human Rights, FMLA, Local Union Officer Duties and Responsibilities, Legal and NLRB Update and Research Methods.

District 11 Director Emil Ramirez also gave an overview of news within the district to all in attendance. Members also received updates on Rapid Response, Women of Steel and USW-Your Union Your Voice.

The week-long training ended with fourth year MINK students participating in a mock arbitration. Some played



MINK YEAR 1

the role of management advocates while others assumed the role of the union advocates.

Of course, in the end, THE UNION WON!

Thanks to all members who attended and a special thanks to all the instructors who participated.

Women's Council Resumes Meetings after Pandemic

Due to the COVID pandemic, there has not been a WIMN-KOTA (Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota) Women's Council since August of 2019, but we are now back on track to schedule meetings twice per year for each council.

The council held their first meeting on June 30, 2022, and it was our best attended gathering to date with forty sisters and brothers attending.

Local 129M hosted the meeting and arranged a tour of Anchor Glass in the morning with presentations on the

USW Organizing Initiative and the Free College Program rounding out the day.

Anchor Glass is located in Shakopee, Minnesota, where our over 300 USW members work and approximately 30 percent of them are women.

The Shakopee plant broke ground in June 1960, with the first bottle coming off the line on May 22, 1961. They produce 600 bottles per minute and recycle all their materials.





THE DIRECTOR'S DESK Emil Ramirez, District 11 Director

Solidarity Is the Key to Successful Negotiations

In the Spring 2022 issue of the *District 11 Reporter*, I reported that between May 1, 2022, and April 30, 2023, that over 105 contracts within the district would be negotiated. In addition, I'm also hopeful that we will be negotiating a number of first contracts for newly-organized units within the district.

In this issue of *USW@Work*, you will read about the successful negotiations that took place this spring with Arconic that included Local 105 in Bettendorf, Iowa. As one of the largest local unions in District 11, Local 105's leadership and membership always strived to be leaders in the aluminum industry, and after this round of bargaining, they continue in that role.

Here are some of the other successful negotiations we have concluded within District 11:

- ▶ Local 286L in Lincoln, Nebraska, was part of a successful Master negotiations with Conti Tech. They reached a new, three-year and two-month agreement while protecting the existing COLA (Cost-Of-Living Allowance) formula, keeping health care premiums at the current levels, garnering an increase in the defined pension multiplier and an increase in the 401(k) plan, among other improvements.
- ▶ Local 11-0001 at the East Boulder mine in Montana negotiated increased vacation time and bereavement leave, along with increased pay for overtime and limiting the company on utilizing mandatory overtime. We also bargained increases in incentive pay, shift differential and tool and safety boot allowances.
- ▶ Local 503-1 at Georgia Pacific Gypsum, the union was successful in negotiating wage improvements of 20 percent over a four-year period with more than half of the increase in the first year. Also gains in the define benefit pension plan.
- ▶ In recent bargaining at GCC Dakotah in Rapid City, S.D., Local 7833 was successful in adding double-time pay for overtime on Sundays and holidays, along with wage increases of four percent.
- ▶ The members of Local 331 at Malteurop, in Winona, Minn., where they process and produce high quality malt products for breweries all over the world, recently ratified a new, three-year agreement where they will see wage increases of 15 percent over

the next three years, along with a \$1,000 bonus each year. There were also significant language improvements, improved shift differential and weekend premium pay increases. This local union took zero concessions.

- ▶ Local 578, a local union that has had difficulty achieving strong wage increases, the members at the Independent School District #756 in Blooming Prairie, Minn., negotiated and ratified a new, two-year agreement with wage increases of 7.5 percent over the two years, increase in shift differential pay and a decrease in members health care cost.
- ▶ The members of Local 9349 employed at the Range Center, Inc., in Chisholm, Minn., who take care of our most vulnerable disabled adults, recently negotiated wage increases for direct staff of \$2.75 per hour, and the maintenance workers received an immediate \$4.25 per hour increase. Other improvements were that the employer increased their portion of the health insurance cost share by \$100 per month, and the local was able to get the company to recognize longevity of employment and negotiate a quarterly lump-sum payment for employees each quarter.
- ▶ In the paper industry, Locals 1259-03 and 1774, representing members at Packaging Corporation of America (PCA) in Minnesota and Iowa, negotiated wage adjustments, additional holiday, increase in the pension multiplier and reduced the time between vacation eligibility for members.
- ▶ Finally, at Local 159, employees at Boise Paper, a division of PCA, the negotiating committee reached wage increases of over 19 percent over the term of the new agreement, increased the defined benefit pension multiplier by \$6 and added new language on domestic violence.

These are just a few of the successful negotiations that have taken place this spring and the early part of summer. I appreciate the work of the negotiating committees, staff representatives, USW technicians, Strategic Campaigns staff and attorneys who all have a part in bargaining new agreements, but I also want to thank the members for their solidarity and support of the officers at the local unions throughout the district.

William Wilkinson Welcomed as a New Staff Representative!

In his early 20s, William Wilkinson worked without health insurance, overtime, paid holidays or vacation time as a truck driver and ranch hand. He started his first union job as a member of USW Local 560 at Bobcat in 2010, and immediately understood that union membership made the difference.

As soon as he could, Wilkinson became a steward of the union in 2011. In 2015, he attended the AFL-CIO Next Up Convention in Chicago,

and with several other young workers started the first USW Next Gen chapter at Local 560. Wilkinson became an executive board member, and the local took on all kinds of community work and organizing. Wilkinson was then voted in as president of his local in 2016. As president through the COVID pandemic, he worked and fought hard for safety precautions at work.

His wife, Lindsey, was also a member of Local 560 and often volunteered to help with community events, and in 2018, she became the Vice President of Local 560.

William has been hired to fill the Staff Representative job vacated by Monte Morlock. The Wilkinson family have relocated to Wyoming from their home in North Dakota. Welcome to the District 11 team William and family!



WOMEN of STEEL Recognized for Volunteer Work

USW Local 310L Women of Steel has been nominated to receive a Governor's Volunteer Award for a group from Volunteer Iowa (The Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service), nominated for the work they have done to support the Home Connection program at Bidwell Riverside Center/Hawthorn Hill in Des Moines.

"Our Women of Steel committee has worked very hard to support various nonprofit organizations in our community," said Local 310L Women of Steel Coordinator Christina Lehman. "Though we do not do this for recognition, we are very grateful for this nomination for the Governor's Volunteer Award."

Bidwell Riverside Center/Hawthorn Hill Volunteer and Community

Outreach Manager Missy Reams nominated the Women of Steel for partnering with its Home Connection program to provide all of the makings of wonderful Thanksgiving meals for several families each year.

In April, USW Local 310L Women of Steel received an "Above and Beyond Hawthorn Hill Award" for its contributions to the community.

"They often include fruit and healthy snacks for the children as well, and as we all know, the cost to provide a traditional Thanksgiving meal can add up quickly," Reams said. "Without this support, our families would not be able to cover the expense of these meals."

She said that Women of Steel

volunteers also have done the shopping for the families, saving them time and allowing them more quality time with their children.

"We are certainly thankful for Chrissy Lehman and her fantastic team for this generous, annual gesture and the continued support for Hawthorn Hill's Home Connection families," Reams said.

Lehman said that although she is happy that the Women of Steel's work is being recognized, she is grateful for the support of her local union.

"None of this could be done without the ongoing support of our Local 310L brothers and sisters," she said.



Flooding Hits Hard in Small Town

On June 13, 2022, the Stillwater River flooded and took out approximately 400 feet of Nye Road leading to the Sibanye-Stillwater mine Montana. USW Local 11-0001- represents around 1,000 workers at the facility, and union members have stepped up to help their community rebuild and rebound.**

The mine suspended operations for several days after the flood, and with the permission of local landowners, contractors started working on a temporary road to access the mine.

"I find it amazing how union brothers and sisters band together in times of need to help each other and their local communities find a path forward," said Local Union Vice President Curtis Schomer, who has worked at the mine for 14 years.

Located near the mining facility is a popular recreation area to camp, picnic and hike. The company and workers sprang into action with vans and evacuated all of the 60-70 people that were affected by the flooding, although the recreation area remains closed.

"Sometimes, it takes a major event like a flood to bring people together," said Ed Lorash, President, Local 11-0001. "In the aftermath, we saw a lot of support and solidarity from within our local and spread through the community.

We are appreciative of the pay and that everything is moving ahead of schedule. The Company has also done a great job keeping us posted with updates."

The Nye mine is working with a skeleton crew of approximately 180 people day-to-day since the roadway damage occurred. There is a dirt access road that cannot accommodate bus traffic, so they have been using vans to transport the members in and out each day.

The facilities are facing issues with getting water out of the mines due to a broken pipeline, and the company has been sending out updates to members on a bi-weekly basis on the status of the roadway and timeline on reopening the facility.

The company is currently paying base wages to all of their employees during this shutdown. They will be receiving that pay until the end of July, when they are hoping to be back up and running.

It is estimated that 90,000 tons of rock will be needed to repair the washout. It has been suggested that the members at the Sibanye-Stillwater mine would be able to crush the rocks and haul all the materials to fix the washed-out roadway.



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Emil Ramirez, Director
Cathy Drummond, Assistant to the Director
Joyce Russotto, Admin.
Assistant to the Director



3433 Broadway Street NE, Suite 315
Minneapolis, MN 55413

Phone612-623-8045
Fax.....612-331-4266

Sub-District 1 Office

3433 Broadway Street NE, Suite 315
Minneapolis, MN 55413

Phone612-623-8003
Fax612-331-4266

Staff: Brian Ecker, Travis Lohmann, Robert Ryan,
Justin Recla, Karen Stockton, Tom Ricker,
Liza DeCoursey

Sub-District 2 Office

3675 South Noland Road, Suite 310
Independence, MO 64055

Phone.....816-836-1400
Fax816-836-0312

Staff: David Rizzuto, Greg Tate Jr., Robert Tripp,
Terri Pierce, Rob Haynes, Stacey Andersen

Staff Office

415 Jones Street
Eveleth, MN 55734

Phone.....218-744-2757
Fax218-744-7926

Staff: Cathy Drummond, John Arbogast, John
Kesler, Michael Woods, Michele Fredrickson,
Tiffany Olson, Will Wilkinson

Staff Office

3307A Hollenberg Drive
Bridgeton, MO 63044

Phone.....314-209-0613
Fax314-209-0662

Staff: Cameron Redd, Ronald J. Wilkey,
Ruth Cooley, Jeff Hartford

Send comments and suggested articles to:
D11news@usw.org



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Next Gen Lending a Hand

USW Local 310L's Next Generation Committee has organized food drives for the last three years, typically donating to a food pantry that is located at Oak Park Elementary, just around the corner from the local and the Bridgestone Firestone Agriculture Tire Plant.

This year, they decided to bookend the food drive with volunteer days at Meals from the Heartland. Meals from the Heartland packages and ships meals all around the world. In a two-hour shift, groups work together to measure, weigh, package, seal and box ingredients for meals.

The meals consist of protein powder, dehydrated veggies, soy beans, and rice. Meals from the Heartland also makes taco mac for communities in the U.S. The food shortage from the war in Ukraine is a good example of where these meals are shipped.

This was the first time Local 310L volunteered with Meals from the Heartland, but they plan to make it an annual opportunity for USW members and families to participate.

The experience was so rewarding that next year the local is planning to reserve spots for 20 volunteers, twice as many as participated this year.



Pictured are volunteers from Local 310L including Chris Glover, Lily Brannon, Emily Brannon, Gabe Brannon, Terrell Harris, Jayleen Rodriguez, Juwan Murphy and Tim Linn.

Let's Hear from YOU!

USW@Work is published four times a year and we need the submissions for the Fall 2022 issue by September 20, 2022. Please submit them to 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.

GET INVOLVED

CIVIL RIGHTS

David Rizzuto
USW District 11 Civil and
Human Rights Coordinator
816-836-1400 phone
816-836-0312 fax
515-490-1277 cell
drizzuto@usw.org

EDUCATION COORDINATORS

Brian Ecker
becker@usw.org
Ron Wilkey
rwilkey@usw.org

NEXT GENERATION

For information on Next Generation, please contact the District 11 office at 612-623-8045.

ORGANIZING

For information on Organizing, please contact the District 11 office at 612-623-8045.

RAPID RESPONSE

Bob Ryan
USW District 11 Rapid
Response Coordinator
3433 Broadway Street NE
Suite 315
Minneapolis, MN 55413
612-623-8003 office
612-331-4266 fax
rryan@usw.org

SOAR

Bonnie Carey
USW District 11
SOAR Coordinator
Bettendorf, IA 52722
309-721-7908 cell
bonnie.carey@gmail.com

WOMEN OF STEEL

Cathy Drummond
USW District 11
Women of Steel Coordinator
415 Jones Street
Eveleth, MN 55734
218-744-2757 office
218-744-7926 fax
cdrummond@usw.org



WOS COUNCIL COORDINATORS

Christina Lehman—Iowa
125 NE Broadway Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50313
515-201-6134
local310wos@outlook.com

Misty Samples—MOKAN WOS
116 West Smith
PO Box 251
Hesston, KS 67062
316-253-2782
womenofsteeluswlocal11228@gmail.com

Marketa Anderson—WIMIN-KOTA
502 SW 8th Avenue
Chisholm, MN 55719
218-403-0219
m_manderson@msn.com

Tina Fife—WY/MT
PO Box 553
Lyman, WY 82937
307-747-4672
tfife78@gmail.com