

# FIRST LOCAL NEWS

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August 2019

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Ending the race to  
the bottom | p6**

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Company | p5**



International Union United Auto,  
Aerospace and Agricultural Workers Local 249  
8040 NE 69 Highway  
Pleasant Valley, MO 64068  
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Members of the UAW Local 249 negotiating team are committed to bringing a Local Agreement that reflects the hard work and dedication of the over 7,000 members of UAW Local 249. Photo by Don Lehman.

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A major expansion at KCAP is nearing completion with the addition of a second stamping press and material sorting center.



Tony Renfro, left to right, Terri Hall, Angie Bommarito and Gary Thomas presented a donation from the UAW Local 249 Education Committee to the Clay County CASA Program to help kids in foster care with school supplies.



Phil Rangel, left, and Jeff Chisam, members of Local 249's Ramp Crew work on the deck of a ramp. The crew has built hundreds of ramps for housebound individuals in the area. Photo by Don Lehman.

## First Local News

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Reporters Chrissy Kline and Gwen Starkey  
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## UAW Local 249

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The Regular Membership Meeting of United Automobile Workers Amalgamated Local Union 249 is held on the third Sunday of each month at 2:00 p.m. in the local union hall, 8040 NE 69 Highway, Pleasant Valley, Mo. The Executive Board Meeting is held at 1:00 p.m. prior to the Regular Membership Meeting.

## UAW-Ford Joint Programs

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National Employee Service Center 1-800-248-4444

Blue Care 816-395-2700

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Preferred Care Blue PPO 816-395-3193

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UNICARE Life Insurance 1-800-843-8184

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Ford A,X,& Z Plan 1-800-348-7709

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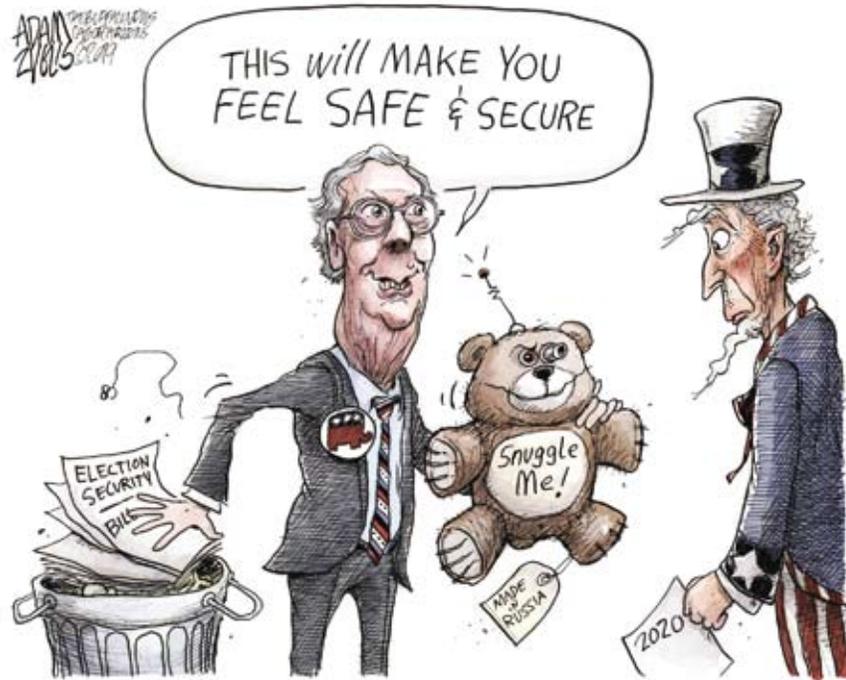
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## Negotiations open with handshake, a symbol of the struggle for workers rights

By Gary Jones

**I**t's hard to think about the cold right now in Michigan. With news about heat waves and soaring heat index ratings, December seems a world away.

But some of us thought about December this week. This past Monday and Tuesday, the Big Three automakers sat down with UAW leadership for the ceremonial handshake — the handshake that historically starts off all contract negotiations. We've been negotiating contracts with these groups for over 65 years, and each negotiation starts with this same handshake.

Negotiations didn't always start this way, however, and that's where we get to December.

At 8 p.m. on Dec. 30, 1936, it was snowing in Flint when the night shift crew at the Fisher Body plant simply stopped working. They carefully locked the doors and sat down. One worker shouted, "She's ours!"

The workers wanted recognition of a union as a bargaining agent. They wanted the company to pay fair wages, set up a grievance system, stop sending work to non-union plants. They wanted some safeguards and procedures to protect themselves from injuries on the jobsite.

The strike wasn't spontaneous, it was planned. These workers, and the leadership of the UAW, knew that the only way to get General Motors to listen was to stop production. The only way to get General Motors to take their safety and their well-being seriously was to shut down the company entirely. That's why the Flint plant was so important — it contained one of just two sets of body dyes that General

Motors used to stamp out almost every one of its cars in 1937.

General Motors argued that the striking workers were trespassing and got a court order demanding their evacuation. Still, the workers remained.

General Motors turned off the heat in the buildings. Still, the workers remained.

General Motors used the police to cut off the worker's food supply. Still, the workers remained.

The workers remained for 44 days. General Motors production went from 50,000 cars in December to just 125 cars in February.

The National Guard was called in. Gov. Frank Murphy refused to allow the National Guard to break the strike, instead requesting that they protect the workers and keep the peace. President Roosevelt urged General Motors to come to an agreement and end the strike.

And eventually they did. The agreement resulted in the first contract between the UAW and General Motors. It allowed for a 5-percent increase in pay, and the workers were given the freedom to talk to each other during lunch. Most importantly, though, the workers won the right to democratically elect racially diverse union representation.

When you see those contract negotiations, that ceremonial handshake, remember the almost 2,000 workers on a cold December day in Flint who made a decision to sit down.

## Labor News From the World Wide Web

# The Picket Line

## UAW president: Automaker profits are high, worker concessions 'must stop'

**U**AW President Gary Jones [opened negotiations saying] "The Big Three are more profitable in North America than any of their competitors," Jones said. "Despite record profits, labor is still being asked to make concessions. This must stop."

He warned against the increased use of temporary workers and outsourcing and alluded to the possibility of strikes.

"We will halt the race to the bottom," Jones said, saying he sees this year's talks as a fight for survival of the middle class. — *Detroit Free Press*

## Ford and VW agree to share costs of self-driving and electric cars

**F**ord Motor and Volkswagen said that they would team up to develop self-driving cars and share electric-car components. The move broadens an existing alliance and shows how automakers are putting aside rivalries to manage the cost of new technologies.

The agreement calls for Volkswagen to purchase a stake in a Ford-backed start-up that is developing self-driving technologies, and for Ford to use electric-car components developed by Volkswagen. — *New York Times*

## An all-electric Ford F-150 pickup truck is happening

**N**umerous startup automakers, among them Rivian and Tesla, have promised fully electric pickup trucks in the near future, and now the leading pickup-truck producer in the United States says it's getting into the game. Ford president Jim Farley told investors on January 16 that a battery-electric version of the F-150 is in the cards, and a Ford spokesperson has confirmed that this is the case. Depending on when it arrives, the electric F-150 could be the first pickup of its kind to go on sale in America. — *Car and Driver*

## Rivian R1T to compete with F-150?

**R**ivian is expected to debut the R1T pickup for the 2020 model year. To be rebuilt at a former Mitsubishi plant in Normal, IL, it will pack a quad-motor all-wheel-drive system to facilitate both high-speed maneuvering and low-speed rock crawling.

The company says the R1T will be able to reach 60 mph in just three seconds and tow a maximum 11,000 pounds. Three battery sizes are planned, with the top unit claimed to be good for a range of 400 or more miles. The automaker is even promising hands-off autonomous driving on the highway. It will reportedly start at around \$69,000. — *Forbes*

## Pass the PRO Act

**L**ast month marked one year since the Supreme Court handed down a wrong-headed, anti-worker decision in *Janus v. AFSCME*. Right-wing pundits predicted the death of the labor movement, but we fought back harder than ever. In the face of ruthless attacks on our most fundamental rights, our solidarity has only grown stronger. Five justices in Washington won't dictate our movement's future. We are demanding that Congress make it easier for every working person to enjoy the rights and dignities that come with a union card. Make your voice heard loud and clear, and tell Congress to pass the PRO Act. — *UAW*

# TELL THE POSTAL SERVICE

## *Honor the 50th anniversary of Walter Reuther's death WITH A U.S. POSTAGE STAMP*

**W**alter Reuther can be said to have done more for more American workers than any other leader in the labor movement. He spent his life ensuring American workers have a voice at the table with management, a voice still exercised today by workers in contract negotiations that will affect millions of working families.

He was president of the United Automobile Workers (UAW) from 1946 to 1970. Born into a West Virginia union family in 1907, he learned at an early age the importance of unions, social justice and political action.

He and his brother Victor joined the auto industry when they moved to Detroit for work in 1927. It was there they had their first up-close view of how auto workers were abused in plants run without worker input. During the Great Depression, when many Americans were exploring alternatives to capitalism, Walter was fired for campaigning for a Socialist Party presidential candidate. Shortly after the firing, he traveled to the Soviet Union with his brother to work and to train Russians at the Gorky auto factory, equipped by Henry Ford. He returned to Detroit in

1935 and quickly established the rise of the UAW by forming Westside Local 174. Shortly after, he was elected to the UAW's executive board.

The UAW saw major victories with the Flint Sit-Down strike in 1937 and other strikes that led to national recognition of the UAW by the Detroit 3 automakers. The victories were hard-won, however, and included Walter and his associates being beaten by Ford Motor Company thugs for organizing at the infamous Battle of the Overpass on May 26, 1937, and assassination attempts on Walter and his brother, Victor.

Walter and UAW members would go on to play a role in the Allied victory in World War II thanks to Reuther's creative plan to retool auto factories to produce 500 Allied planes a day, a cornerstone of the Arsenal of Democracy

that won the war.

After the war, the battles for fairness for workers continued with Walter at the helm as president who pledged to create a labor movement that fights "for the welfare of the public at large." Over the next 10 years, the UAW, under his leadership, would gain historic benefits for workers through collective bargaining and create the strongest middle class ever seen in America.

He served as president of the CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations) in the 1950s but as UAW president, his national stature became a driving force behind labor's social justice advocacy.

"You've got to make up your mind whether you're willing to accept things as they are, or whether you're willing to try to change them," he famously said. He worked with government leaders and Dr. Martin Luther King on the passage of civil rights legislation, helped develop the War on Poverty initiative, marched with social justice and

civil rights activists across the country, oversaw the UAW's financing of the 1963 freedom marches, spoke before millions at the 1963 Washington, D.C., march and worked with the Johnson administration on getting assistance to troubled cities.

In the 1960s, he also advocated for aligning with international trade unions and began his dream of establishing a retreat center for worker education about workers' rights and social justice. His beloved UAW Walter and May Reuther Family Education Center in northern Michigan still operates to achieve that goal but, sadly, Walter and his wife, May, were never able to fully enjoy the center after their plane crashed en route to the center on May 9, 1970.

Walter Reuther's legacy lives on today with all workers who are still without a voice at the table with management, with those who believe in the rights of working families, and with supporters of social and economic justice.



# UAW opens talks with Ford Motor Company

*By Gary Jones*

**G**ood morning UAW Brothers and Sisters, fellow UAW board members and the members of our great bargaining councils. Good morning members of the Ford leadership team. It is great that Bill Ford has joined us for this important event in our history ... Thank you.

I'd like to start by recognizing the hard work of the UAW Ford Department, led by my Brother and friend, Vice President Rory Gamble, and the members of the Ford national negotiating committee. It is an honor to be here today to represent the hardest working men and women who have made Ford Motor Company the great company it is today.

UAW members build the best products in the world. Who are the loyalist of employees and who are — and always have been — Ford's best customers. So, today I come with a message from my Brothers and Sisters.

Ford Motor Company has seen years of growth and significant profitability since the 2015 negotiations. And I have heard loud and clear — at every Ford plant and local I visit — that they expect to share in the profits that their hard work and dedication has made possible.

We're seeing record profits for our American companies, but, sad to say,

those gains aren't translating to our worker's gains.

In fact, the Detroit 3 are more profitable in North America than any of their competitors. You all have the home advantage. The home advantage that our members built. But despite record corporate profits, we've been watching a race to the bottom over the past several years for working men and women in this country.

Despite record profits, labor is still being asked to take concessions. Our jobs have been outsourced to companies paying lower wages in the United States, Mexico, China and all over the World. THIS MUST STOP.

So, I am here to say, loud and clear: With this year's negotiations, we will halt that race to the bottom. We will protect our work, our jobs and our way of life. We expect an agreement that recognizes our contributions to profitability and looks ahead with Ford Motor Company to a prosperous future.

And, as we look ahead, our UAW

members expect to build the products of the future and be part of the manufacturing and automation processes that are on the horizon.

We are ready for the exciting new technologies that will redefine the auto industry. We will bargain hard to ensure that UAW members are provided with the training, the tools and the safe environments to, as always, more than keep pace with the industry's advancements.

The UAW has always embraced change and technology advancements. We are excited to be part of the evolving workforce: EV propulsion and energy storage; autonomous vehicles and related components, new mobility businesses such as Argo and all joint ventures. We want to work with you on joint ventures and partnerships and have a role in those discussions.

We saw beginning in January of this year, and the continued discussions, an alliance with Volkswagen in Europe. As you all are aware ... Volkswagen was not friendly to the UAW in Chattanooga and we will look very hard and with great concern at any alliance with them or any other non-labor friendly company. I'm sure more will come on this front. We want to be part

of this evolving business model.

And I'd like to point out here, and applaud that Ford Motor Company has chosen a business strategy, with great success, that keeps much of its North American production in the United States.

Of the Detroit 3, Ford sources much more of the vehicles it sells in the U.S. from the U.S. And, our UAW Brothers and Sisters produce 100 percent of Ford's great pickups.

We look forward to good negotiations and a good contract. Our membership is standing strong. UAW Brothers and Sisters are ready to do whatever is necessary to get the contract that, in this time of record profits, they deserve. We also know that we will need to address the issues of temporary employees and outsourcing.

And we will take up the issue of progression and shorten that eight-year window that my brothers and sisters say — LOUDLY... is way too long to get to the top of the pay scale.

So, we kick off 2019 negotiations today. And I say to everyone listening and everyone in this room. We are the voice of the American worker. The defenders of the Middle Class. And we are ready to talk.



UAW President Gary Jones and Ford Chairman William Clay Ford shake hands at the opening of negotiations for a new agreement. Contract talks between the UAW and Ford Motor Co. opened July 15 in Detroit.

# Contract Talks: Ending the race to the bottom

By Pat Hayes

**UAW President Gary Jones and Vice President Rory Gamble opened contract talks with Ford Motor Co. in Detroit July 15 with a pledge to halt the race to the bottom with this year's negotiations.**

"Ford Motor Company has seen years of growth and significant profitability since the 2015 negotiations," said Jones as negotiations got under way.

In fact, Detroit auto manufacturers are making record profits, noted Jones, even as they demand deeper concessions from the workers who produce those profits.

Ford, GM and FCA claim they need these concessions to remain competitive with non-union auto manufacturers, even though they are more profitable in North America than any of their competitors.

"I have heard loud and clear at

every Ford plant and local I visit," said Jones, "that they expect to share in the profits that their hard work and dedication has made possible."

In addition to ensuring UAW members share in the profits they create, the new UAW-Ford contract must ensure that every UAW member has job security. Jones noted that,

of the Detroit 3, Ford sources much more of the vehicles it sells in the U.S. from the U.S. Even so, the new contract must ensure that products are allocated to each UAW represented Ford facility,

Building products here in the U.S. – not shipping them offshore to low-wage countries – will be a key issue at GM which is closing plants and laying off or relocating workers.

Projections on the future production of electric vehicles are all over the map, but one thing is sure: in coming

years, EVs will replace the internal combustion engine. Making sure that UAW members will be building those electric and automated vehicles of the future is a key job security issue in this round of negotiations.

That means negotiators will be fighting for training in these new technologies for union workers.

Jones also issued a warning to Ford about its proposed alliance with VW to collaborate on electric and self-driving vehicles.

"As you all are aware," said Jones, "Volkswagen was not friendly to the UAW in Chattanooga and we will look very hard and with great concern at any alliance with them or any other non-labor friendly company."

"We will protect our work, our jobs and our way of life," pledged Jones.

*"Ford Motor Company has seen years of growth and significant profitability since the 2015 negotiations"... UAW members "expect to share in the profits that their hard work and dedication has made possible."*

— UAW President Gary Jones



UAW Local 249's Ramp Crew spends as much time volunteering as they do working on their ramp projects. These guys see a need and they fill it. That's what community service is all about. Photo by Don Lehman.

# Volunteering is contagious at Local 249

By Gwen Starkey

**N**ot in their wildest imaginations would these four guys; Phil Rangel, Tom Macomber, Matt Holsted and Jeff Chisam, ever dream that way back when they completed their first wheel chair ramp project in 2012 for the joint UAW-Ford Ramp Program that over seven years and a few hundred ramps later they would still be hard at it. Making life easier for many folks who otherwise could not afford a ramp that sometimes is the only way they could leave their homes.

For them, this is their full-time gig and instead of working inside for Ford Motor Company, they are working outside within the community, helping make it a better place for all of us. However, their passion for giving back doesn't stop at quitting time, it continues in their off time as well; if they even have an off time.

These four hardworking men, three of which reside within the small northland community of Lathrop Mo. and one who lives in Independence, give back tenfold of their time and energy helping anywhere that they are needed. It might be cleaning up after tornados ripped through their town and nearby others, building concession stands and restrooms at the local high school, cooking for a fundraiser, or overseeing a Boy Scout troop. They are always on.

Phil Rangel who lives in Independence is a big supporter of the Boy Scouts of America. "I've been a Committee Member for Troop 221 for the last 10 years," Rangel said. They are celebrating their 80th anniversary for scouting as Troop 221 and they have an impressive count of over 360 Eagle Scouts. Rangel's son is just a project and a merit badge away from obtaining Eagle status. The Scouts do many service projects throughout the com-

munity and keep busy. Recent projects include clean up, mulching, and planting flowers in area parks. The troop has about 40 members who meet weekly and have monthly overnights, so there is always something going on.

Rangel is also a member of the Knights of Columbus for the last 8 years holding the positions of Grand Knight and Deputy Grand Knight. They do volunteer work in the community for people who are unable to do for themselves like mow grass, cutting down limbs or trees, and minor repairs on their homes. "I volunteer because it's great to give back to your community," Rangel said. "You can't be selfish; you have to give back. I'm healthy, and as long as I'm able to help, I'm there. If anyone needs anything, let's get it done. We just try to make this a better place for everyone."

Tom Macomber is Chairman of the Lathrop Sports Complex Committee and has been instrumental in getting a new turf football field, baseball and softball field complex for the school and the community to use, as well as continually raising funds for their upkeep. He also coached youth football for the last 12 years for the Lathrop community. "This kind of stuff just gets in your blood," Macomber said. You

know, you start slow and help people like what we do with the UAW / Ford Ramp Crew and before you know it, you want that feeling all the time. You want to help people and it's contagious, it really is. We need people to step up and volunteer, that's for sure."

Matt Holsted has sat on the Lathrop School Board for the last seven years holding the positions of president and vice president. This is an elected position, which comes without a salary, so there is a lot of volunteer time that goes with the job. He helped get Lathrop High School's multi building up and going. "I volunteered to help get the concession stand built and roughing in the restroom facility for the complex," Holsted said. "I also ran the electrical wiring for the building." He also coaches the CRBC recreation league basketball for fifth and sixth grade girls, a competitive softball team as well as volunteers for the city park board.

Jeff Chisam spends a great deal of time volunteering as well. Chisam is a member of the Kearney Masonic Lodge #311 and a Scottish Rite Mason. He volunteers on many construction projects with the Lathrop School District, Holt City Parks, and other recreational projects. He helped build the dugouts for the Lathrop City ballpark complex. When they need concrete work, he's the first to show up. "He's a great concrete guy," Macomber said. Chisam might back off a little and take it easy this next year, as his youngest son is a senior at the high school but he'll still be busy there too helping with his son's wrestling, football and track teams. "My youngest son is a senior this year and I

plan to soak in every moment the next year brings," Chisam said.

Holsted, Macomber and Chisam are active in the Lathrop Booster Club that handles all the concession stand sales. "I've grilled a lot of hamburgers for the cause," Holsted says. Holsted and Macomber have won the Francis M. Green Service Award for volunteering at the Lathrop High School and both have earned the title of Lathrop Citizen of the Year from the Rotary Club.

They all try to be humble, and none of these guys likes to talk about the things that they do, but without people like these four guys, our communities would suffer. It's people like them that make our communities a better place for all of us.

Kim Rowland, Chairperson of the UAW Local 249 Community Services Committee, oversees all the Ramp Crew projects and couldn't be more proud of these guys. "They not only do community service for a living, but they do it because they see a need, a spot that needs to be filled and they do it on their own time too," Rowland said. "That's what community service is all about. I'm proud of them. They make their little corner of the world a better place."

It takes a village to raise a child and UAW Local 249 members always step up to the plate when it comes to our kids and volunteering for our communities. Whether it's raising money for coats, hats, gloves and school supplies, shaping the minds of young boy scouts or volunteering at their local high school, UAW Local 249 is at the forefront of giving back.



State Representative Mark Ellebracht and State Senator Lauren Arthur join Jason Starr in presenting the first place winner Amaya Ambrosio with the 2019 Charlie Suffridge Essay Scholarship at the UAW Local 249 union meeting held in June. Photo by Don Lehman.

# 2019 Charlie Suffridge Scholarship essay

*By Amaya Ambrosio*

**I will never forget the day when my family of five drove down our gravel driveway in our trusty Ford Freestyle as my mom cried and we left my entire life behind. A few weeks prior, my parents explained to me that we were moving. Upon hearing this, my four year old brain spun with endless questions. Why are we moving when my parents worked so hard to build our home in Wakeman, Ohio? Why are we leaving Grandma and Grandpa? Where are we going? Will we have a new house? What will my new room look like? I did not understand the commotion that caused these circumstances before my young eyes and I was scared by the rapid change.**

It was summer of 2005, when my dad's employer Ford Motor Company decided to consolidate the Lorain Assembly Plant with the Ohio Assembly Plant where my dad worked. The United Automobile Workers Labor Union negotiated the right for its members to transfer with their product in the event that their product was sent to a different Ford Plant. With this deal, my dad received an opportunity to keep his job and relocate to the Kansas City Assembly Plant.

This opportunity gave him time to prepare our family's finances for the next few months, search for and buy a new house just north of the Kansas City Assembly Plant. As our young family settled into our new home we had the liberty to travel back to Ohio and visit relatives for Christmas while the Lorain Assembly Plant ceased all production

on December 14th, 2005. Even though leaving our roots to live in a foreign place was difficult for our family, having the support of the UAW never changed.

Even the health insurance benefits that they bargain to make with Ford have been miracle workers throughout my lifetime. My parents never had to worry about the hospital bills they received when I could not breathe and I needed to be rushed to Children's Mercy for my bronchitis. When I broke my left arm and went to physical therapy then had braces put on my teeth and needed glasses all in the fifth grade, my family was able to afford the costs. Without these health insurance from the union, my family would not have the high quality of life that we do now.

However, when unions are not es-

tablished in corporations, there are a lot of troubling possibilities that could come about for employees. Unfortunately, my grandpa happened to suffer from the lack of a union when he worked at a non-union factory. In 2001 his employer the Lorain Products Corporation closed its doors, let go of their American employees and moved their job opportunities to Mexico.

While my grandpa was given one year's severance pay he was not given a new job opportunity like my dad was. Without the support of a union to help him retain his job, my grandpa had to find a new career at the age of 54 and was forced to move his wife and daughter from their home.

This scenario wasn't an isolated situation in the town I was born in. Lorain was once known as a town rich in steel production jobs, but by the early 2000's many jobs were seized, leaving many of the working class in Lorain County jobless. If my dad was not a member of the UAW, our current living situation would be very different. Our family would be without a steady income for years, leaving us to struggle as my grandparents did. Our general healthcare would not be as great as it is and I would not have as many life opportunities as I do now.

Along with unionism improving my lifestyle, it also enhances my daily education. The Missouri National Education Association is a union that supports all of the educators in the state of Missouri. The MNEA works hard every day to provide professional development for educators, union member benefits such as the Hope Fund and they work with Missouri legislation to create pro-education laws. Without this union, public education would not where it is today.

I truly believe that without the UAW, Ford Motor Company would never have established the safety regulations and employee benefits that they have today for their workers. Every day, union members empower the force of unions so they can continually fight for my rights to an excellent education and healthy lifestyle.

To me unionism is the band of brothers and sisters that protect each other to ensure safety and equality within the workforce and throughout everyday life. I am grateful to have unions that support my family, my education and my entire community. Without unions on the American peoples' side the world would not be the place it is today.

# Contract talks underway at KCAP

by Jim Fisher

**A**s everyone knows, both our Local and National agreements are set to expire on September 14th. There are a few things our members need to be addressing at this time. Any member who has moved or changed their phone number needs to make sure it has been updated in Labor Relations. The Labor Relations Department will send the information to the National Employees Service Center and they will relay any changes to the union hall. Also, any member who is currently on prescription medication should be talking with their doctor to make sure that if an agreement is not reached they would have plenty of medication on hand.

There have been a few questions I hope to clear up. A lot of people have asked about the process of our meetings. We will be meeting with the company on a regular basis to work out an agreement.

Depending on the progress of the talks, we will ask the membership for the right to call for a strike vote. Once that is secured, if either the Local negotiating team or the National negotiating team feels it is necessary, they will call for a strike vote. If that is to happen we are thinking it would take place around the early part of September.

Some have asked, who will be the lead company during negotiations? That question will only be answered by the International UAW negotiation teams.

They usually don't pick a lead company until closer to the deadline. There is also a chance that a lead company won't be picked and they will be in talks with all three at the same time.

Another question is: why haven't we heard much about the meetings? This one is simple. These talks are very sensitive to our future. It has been a past practice of both parties not to discuss the negotiations until a deal has been reached. Locally, our facility is important to our members, Ford Motor Company, and our community.

It is a very delicate process to deliver a contract that rewards our members for their hard work, continues to make KCAP the top facility in the Ford System, and grow the economic future of our surrounding community. Our plant is unique to every other facility in the system.

Our members build the top selling F-150, the most versatile van on the market, and work in the most efficient stamping plant in the world. As you can imagine there are a lot of people watching the progress of our talks.

However, I assure everyone when there is information we can pass on,

it will be delivered via plant bulletins and our social media links very quickly.

I want to remind everyone that as we work towards reaching agreements on both contracts don't be buying into any rumors that are produced on the floor or Facebook. If there is any information to be shared, it will come from the leadership team only.

I have been working closely with your Bargaining Committee on a daily basis for months preparing for these negotiations. You should all be very proud of the work being done behind the scenes.

It's not as simple as just writing a proposal and hoping the company says yes to it. Each proposal requires facts and documentation to be provided to justify the need for the resolutions it contains.

A lot of people have asked me if there is anything the membership can do to help. First I ask everyone to donate to our UAW Local 249 food pantry. If the donations are not used towards a work stoppage we will donate everything collected to our local community food pantries.

I would also tell everyone to be on the lookout for management acting up. Again, I remind everyone that your supervisor is not there to help you.

They are there to do the simple task of just running the line. If they were there to improve things you wouldn't walk into a dirty bathroom, they wouldn't find new ways to block you from the calendar program, or be making you drive to work with over a foot of snow on the ground while the Kansas City area is under a blizzard warning.

All of that was done by KCAP Management. Any signs of our membership showing solidarity makes them nervous.

Simple things like wearing a union shirt at work, having each other's back and supporting each other, making sure a member is not talking to a supervisor without a union representative present, wearing a red shirt on



Jim Fisher, Bargaining Chair cautions members to beware of Facebook rumors about contract talks and to look to the local union leadership for accurate information. Photo by Don Lehman

Wednesdays and C-Crew Saturdays or something as simple as just saying, hi, to another union member in the hallway.

We are quick to call each other brothers and sisters in the plant, but your leadership team is counting on all of you as well. We need to

remind the company it's not KCAP management against the eight of us during these negotiations. The fact is that in reality, it's just a handful of management vs over 7,000 Local 249 members.

Our strength and our power can be found in our solidarity.

## Plan ahead!

**Talk to your doctor about getting prescriptions set up for 90-day refills where possible to ensure you have enough of your medications in the event of a work stoppage.**

**Also be sure to use your vision and dental benefits prior to contract expiration if possible.**

# Local and national contract talks begin

By Jason Starr

**F**ord, GM and FCA will tell you that they can't compete with low-wage foreign transplants like Toyota, Nissan and Volkswagen because UAW contracts require them to pay higher wages and more generous benefits.

The truth is, Detroit 3 automakers are earning record profits. GM and Ford are No. 1 and 2 in market share and FCA comes in at No. 4. Obviously, our union contracts aren't hurting them. I would argue that the UAW workforce is — in fact — the real reason for their success.

That's why we're going into negotiations for new contracts at the local and national level confident that we can get a better deal for our members.

Here at KCAP, we opened negotiations at the plant level on July 15. Bargaining Chair Jim Fisher, who is leading negotiations with the company, told Ford management that the F-150 is the hottest pickup on the market and that this plant and Local 249 are one of the biggest sources of profits for the company.

"This will not," Fisher told them, "be a concessionary contract."

UAW President Gary Jones sent the same message to Ford in Detroit on July 15.

"Despite record profits, labor is still being asked to take concessions. Our jobs have been outsourced to companies paying lower wages in the United States, Mexico, China and all over the world," said Jones. "This must

stop. With this year's negotiations, we will halt that race to the bottom."

Right now, local and national negotiations are at the earliest stages. Both sides are far from reaching an agreement. It will take time to hammer out a new contract.

When a tentative agreement is reached, members will be able to read it, attend a meeting to hear an explanation and vote. I've noticed that there are already wild rumors swirling on social media about the contract. None of these are true.

We have to remember that the company and antiunion groups both have an interest in spreading misinformation in order to divide and weaken the union. During the last contract, we discovered a number of social media trolls using fake Facebook identities to stir up trouble. We also found a number of people who aren't UAW members trying to derail discussion between members about the provisions in the contract.

There are others who have already decided that the new contract — which hasn't even been negotiated yet — is bad. They say they won't vote for it no matter what is in it.

Every member has the right to their own opinion of the contract. And,



Local 249 President Jason Starr is a member of union negotiating team at KCAP. Photo by Don Lehman.

every member has the right to vote for or against it.

But, I urge every member to actually look at what's in the contract before making up their minds.

Don't fall for rumors spread by enemies of our union. Accurate information will be available as the process evolves. You can find it in our union newsletter, *First Local News*, the Local 249 Facebook page, our App and in

flyers distributed by the union. If you are in doubt, call the union hall and talk to a union leader to get accurate information.

I believe that both your local and national union negotiators are working hard to win the best contract possible for our members. Our ability to do that rests on the strength and unity of our membership. We will do our best, but we can't do it without your help.

## 2019 UAW Region 5 Special V-CAP Drive

### Two Grand Prize 7-Day All Expense Paid Cruise for Two

Or Win a Laptop Computer or 5-Day All Expense Paid Elk Hunt

**Winning Wednesdays**  
Buy a V-CAP Ticket for a  
Chance to Win \$25 Gift Card or  
Movie Tickets and Restaurant  
Gift Card  
Drawings Every Wednesday

**Join the Platinum Club**  
Members Who Donate \$50 a Month Get  
a Chance to Win A Cast UAW Wheel Wall  
Decoration  
Raise Your Monthly Donation to the Next Level  
to Win a \$150 Gift Card

**Monthly Drawing**  
Buy a Book of Tickets  
For a Chance to Win a 90-Minute Massage  
• Michael Kors Purse • Drone • Blue Tooth  
Speaker • 10" Tablet  
**June Drawing**  
American Made Smoker Set  
**September Drawing**  
\$500 Costco Card



1 Ticket \$3 • 2 Tickets \$5 • 12 Tickets \$30

# Retiree Contributions Past and Present

By Gary Jones

**I**n a letter to retirees, International UAW President Gary Jones recognized the importance of our retirees, their legacy and the contributions they have made both past and present. This letter is still pertinent today with the start of a new series of elections looming ahead of us. We are thankful for our retirees and the sacrifices they have made, now and always.

We need the hard work and commitment of UAW retirees more than ever to protect the gains that we have made over the years. Issues that directly affect our retirees such as healthcare, Social Security, Medicare and other critical concerns are currently under attack from conservative lawmakers and judges who favor corporations over the interest of America's working families.

We appreciate how you have never shied away from standing up and supporting our beliefs. We thank you for your show of solidarity and pride by participating in events such as Labor Day parades, rallies and picket lines.

You amplify our voice through social media, writing our legislators, phone banking and distributing leaflets at community functions. You play an important role when you communicate with our members, active and retired, issues affecting working families and the labor movement.

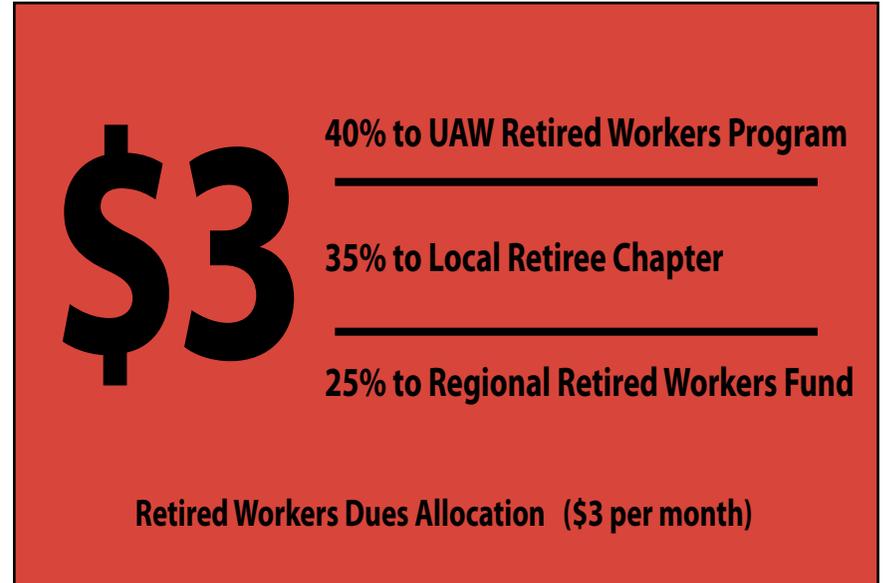
The UAW Retired Workers Department and its programs are funded

by voluntary dues from UAW retirees like you.

The implementation of dues began at the 1966 Constitutional Convention where retirees pledged that this program would be self-funded and that the UAW would not have to use active member dues. Our retired members have kept faith with that pledge.

At that time, voluntary retiree dues were \$1 per month. In 1986, retirees went to the convention and asked that the dues be increased to \$2 to ensure the continuation and growth of retiree programs. At the 36th Constitutional Convention, held in June 2014, retirees once again asked for the voluntary dues to be increased to \$3. The Constitutional change was overwhelmingly approved.

For your convenience, check-off cards are available online or at your local union hall. Once you fill out a card it will increase your contribution to \$3 or more, per month. We'd like to thank those that have already in-



creased their dues. Spouses or surviving spouses may request to become associate members of the retired workers chapters. Surviving spouses are also encouraged to participate in the voluntary dues program.

Retirees are not required to pay dues, but today 75 percent of the retired members pay \$2 per month in voluntary dues. Of these dues, 35 percent stays in each local union retired workers chapter, 25 percent goes to the regional retired workers fund and 40 percent of each dollar goes to the UAW Retired Workers Department for their efforts on behalf of retired workers.

Some of these efforts would be for collective bargaining, legislation, communication, education and representation on issues affecting seniors and retirees. The entire program of the

UAW retired workers' movement is financed by retirees' voluntary dues.

The Retired Workers Department has many avenues for retirees to be involved with their union and community. To find out more about these opportunities, please visit [www.UAW.org/retirees](http://www.UAW.org/retirees).

We encourage you to become more active in your union by attending retiree meetings, helping out at your local union and volunteering in your community. We need you to spread the word about how your membership in the UAW has positively impacted your life.

We now have almost as many retired members as active members. Retiree dues support all of the activities of the retired workers programs and are now more necessary than ever before.

**UAW Local 249 Strike Pantry**

In preparation for a possible strike, we are asking you to donate nonperishable food and hygiene items to the strike pantry at the union hall. If we don't go on strike, all items will be donated to local food pantries.

*The belly you help fill may be your own!*

**Have you moved?**  
Is your address current with Labor Relations?

*In the event of a strike, the union needs your current address to pay strike benefits*



Members of the UAW Local 249 bargaining team prepare to meet with representatives from the Ford Department as KCAP local agreement negotiations begin.

# Local 249 opens negotiations for new contract

By Chrissy Kline

**O**n July 15, the UAW Local 249 Bargaining Team kicked off negotiations with Ford Motor Company at the Kansas City Assembly Plant. The bargaining team is comprised of Jim Fisher, Chairman; Jason Starr, President; Steve Chorbak, Dean Freed, Don Picard and Ron Pangborn, Bargaining Committee; Todd Hillyard, Servicing Rep; and Chad Troncin.

Here at KCAP we produce the best-selling truck in its market, the Transit van that is gaining popularity with commercial orders coming in daily, and a stamping plant that is considered to be one of the most efficient in the world. With the profitability and quality of products produced by UAW Local 249 members in mind, Jim Fisher clearly stated in his opening remarks for local talks “this will not be a concessionary negotiation.”

The company is not losing money, they are doing quite well in fact, and a large portion of the profit margins enjoyed by Ford executives are due to the hard working members of Local 249 and the products they produce.

While some plants are struggling

and failing to make money in overseas markets in Europe and China, we are thriving here in Kansas City. Our plant is unique to the Ford System as we technically have three separate plants governed by these agreements: the F-150 truck, the Transit van and our stamping facilities which are currently undergoing expansions.

Together we can be proud of a facility that could one day be a model for others to follow, and as such, our bargaining team is taking these local agreement negotiations very seriously and hopes to bring an agreement to the membership for ratification that will reflect the hard work, dedication and profitability found here at KCAP.

The purpose of these negotiations

is to set the rules and standards that KCAP will follow for the next four years encompassing the local agreement, any letters of understanding, lines of demarcation and stamping operations. The local agreement outlines the day to day operating procedures in our plants. This covers everything from heat stress and calendar programs to overtime equalization and job bidding procedures.

The process of negotiations is fluid, changing day to day. Initially, opening remarks are made and both parties begin submitting proposals to one another. Time is made between sessions to research and prepare rebuttals as well as to send proposals to International, NLRB or Ford Motor Company headquarters for approval or disapproval.

These back and forth conversations occur until tentative agreements are made, signed off on by both parties and finally after all material is covered it is sent to the membership to be ratified. Part of this process includes

calling for a strike authorization vote which will allow for a strike to be called later if good faith bargaining fails.

During negotiations, updates are limited to protect the integrity of the bargaining process. Neither side wants to give up their competitive edge by sharing information too early. “Don’t let social media drive the narrative,” said Jason Starr. The bargaining team will need the patience, understanding and trust of the membership as they perform both their regular duties as well as the difficult process of local agreement negotiations.

“We know there are rumors out there pertaining to the local and national agreement. We don’t want members involved in the sharing of misinformation. If you do not hear it from leadership or bargaining, don’t feed into it,” cautions Jim Fisher. “Overall the goal is to bring a local agreement that the bargaining team can be proud to present to the membership, and that is what we will do.”