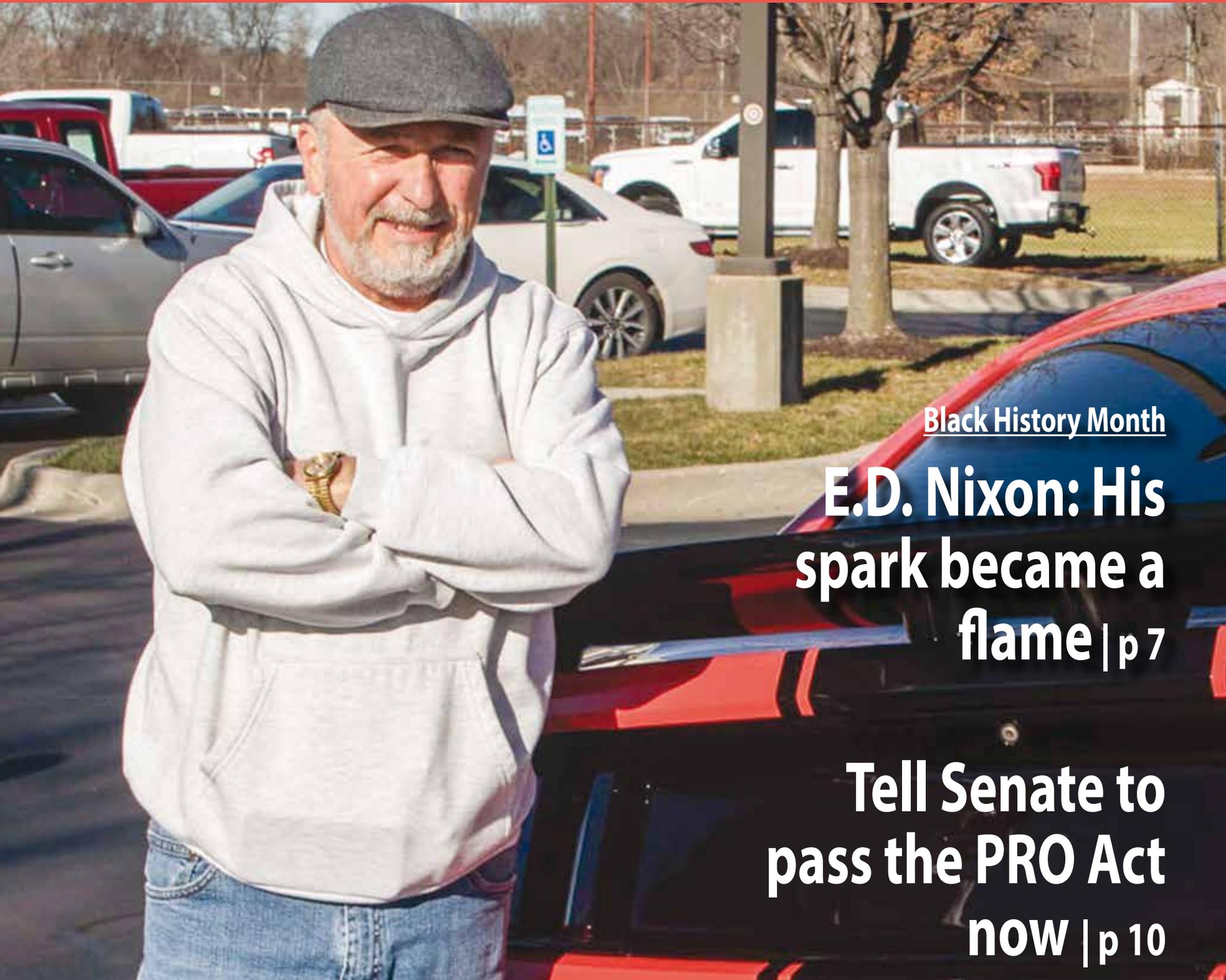


FIRST LOCAL NEWS

Published by United Auto Workers Local 249—Kansas City, Missouri

February 2021



Black History Month

**E.D. Nixon: His
spark became a
flame | p 7**

**Tell Senate to
pass the PRO Act
now | p 10**



International Union United Auto,
Aerospace and Agricultural Workers Local 249
8040 NE 69 Highway
Pleasant Valley, MO 64068



Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Jefferson City, MO
Permit No. 303



Dalton Frazier was presented with the James "Frog" Moran Solidarity Award by the Local 249 Education Committee at the December membership meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.



Local 249's Motorcycle Committee donated proceeds of their 2020 fund-raising efforts — and some additional goodies — to Cedars of Liberty Health Care Center, which provides care to the elderly and those with mental health conditions. Photo by Don Lehman.



Local 249 veterans participated in Wreaths Across America Dec. 19 to remember and honor America's veterans. Photo by Don Lehman.

First Local News

Published monthly with combined issues in December-January and June-July by UAW Local 249. Free to members and retirees of UAW Local 249. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the UAW or Local 249. Member of the Local Union Communication Association (LUCA).

Editor Pat Hayes

Reporters Chrissy Kline and Gwen Starkey
Photographer Don Lehman

UAW Local 249

8040 NE 69 Highway
Pleasant Valley, Mo. 64068
816-454-6333

Officers of Local 249

President Jason Starr
1st Vice President Tony Renfro
2nd Vice President Tom Carr
Recording Secretary Shirley Mata
Financial Secretary Dana Davidson
Treasurer Chrissy Kline
Trustees Ed Scaggs, Jeremy Fue, Sade Ott
Sergeant at Arms Leon Allen
Guide Gary Thomas
Bargaining Chair Jim Fisher
Bargaining Committee Steve Chorbak, Dean Freed and Don Picard
Skilled Trades Bargaining Committee Member Scott Pyle
Parts Depot Bargaining Chair Brandon Zarda
Nurse's Bargaining Chair Cathy Koogler
Team Solutions Bargaining Chair David Norris
Retiree Representative John Lowe

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

Apprentice Training

Cortez Bradley 816-459-2060

Benefits

Steve Hibbs, Derron Joyner and Jason Hartman 816-454-6333

Employee Involvement

Chad Troncin 816-459-1372
Darroyce Thornton 816-459-1490

Employee Support Services

Kenny Alexander 816-459-1226

Health and Safety

Ed Samborski 816-459-1210 • Terry Tharp 816-459-1407
Ulysses Bales 816-459-1605 • Joe Camper 816-459-5559
Dave Sambol 816-459-1223

Quality

Kelly Loveall and Jeff Wright 816-459-1232

Dealer Rep. Danny Mata

Job Sourcing and Production Standards

Jim Ryan and Todd Wyse 816-459-1466

Helpful Numbers

Quality Hotline 1-866-723-3937

Employee Health Services 816-459-1226

National Employee Service Center 1-800-248-4444

Blue Care 816-395-2700

Blue Cross PPO 1-800-482-5146

Preferred Care Blue PPO 816-395-3193

Child Care Referrals 866-327-7952

UNICARE Life Insurance 1-800-843-8184

UNICARE Medical/Disability Leave Claims 1-877-475-9652

Delta Dental (Active) 844-223-8520

Delta Dental (Retired) 800-524-0149

United Concordia Dental Plan 1-800-937-6432

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

www.fordvehicleprograms.com

UAW-Ford Legal Services 800-482-7700

UAW-Ford TESPHE 1-800-248-4444

Visit Local 249 on the web at www.local249.org

Like Local 249 on Facebook www.facebook.com/local249

Follow us on Twitter @UAWLocal249



The Picket Line

Ford UAW workers building F-Series start year with better benefits, promotions

Ford Motor Co. is planning to convert nearly 400 full-time factory workers from temporary to permanent status in January, and the Free Press has learned there are hundreds more such hires planned in 2021.

All the workers have been employed for two years and most are based at the Kentucky Truck Plant or Kansas City Assembly Plant. Others are at Dearborn Truck, Romeo Engine, Van Dyke Transmission, Chicago Stamping in Illinois, Lima Engine in Ohio and Louisville Assembly in Kentucky. — *Detroit Free Press*

Judge reduces sentence for former Fiat-Chrysler exec involved in corruption scheme

A former executive with Fiat Chrysler who was sentenced to prison for his role in a corruption scheme involving the United Auto Workers had his sentence reduced Monday by a federal judge. Al Iacobelli was sentenced to serve 5 1/2 years in prison after his 2018 conviction, however a judge reduced that sentence by 18 months because Iacobelli cooperated with investigators in the case. — *MLive*

UAW Reaches Settlement With Feds in Multiyear Corruption Probe

The Justice Department reached a civil settlement with the United Auto Workers union, marking a major turning point in a multiyear corruption investigation that has sent several former labor leaders to prison.

The sprawling probe, led by the U.S. attorney's office in Detroit, has penetrated the UAW's top ranks and exposed what federal prosecutors described as a culture of corruption among its leadership built around kickback schemes, embezzlement and other illicit activities. It has led to 15 convictions so far and some union members say the charges and indictments have dented trust in the UAW's leadership.

The proposed settlement includes a six-year period of independent oversight by a court-appointed monitor and requires the UAW to pay \$1.5 million to resolve outstanding tax issues, U.S. Attorney Matthew Schneider said at a press conference on Dec. 14. — *Wall Street Journal*

Demand for KC-made Ford F-150 surging, hundreds of pickups are stockpiled here

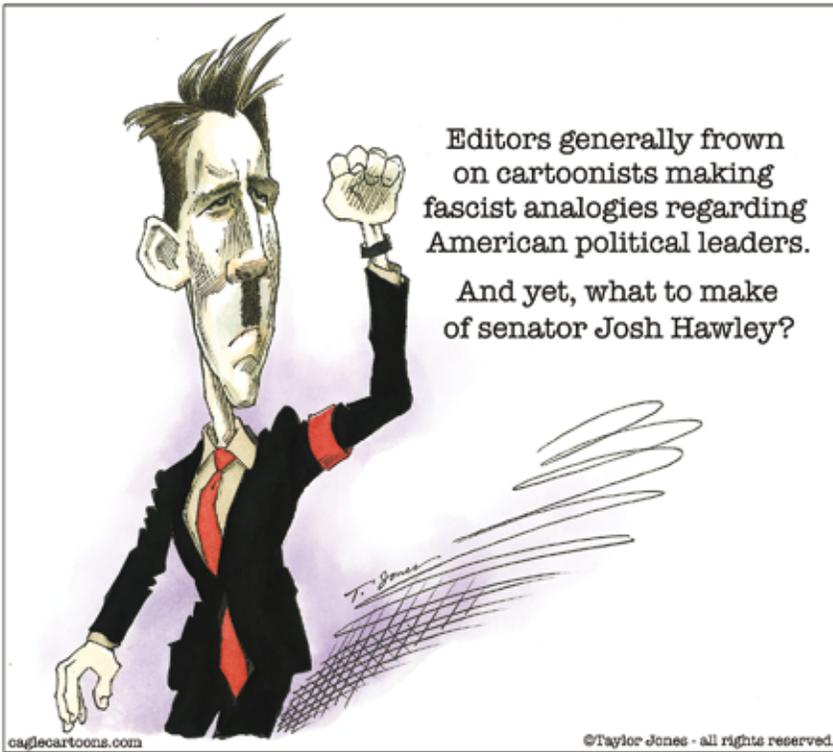
The inventory in the parking lots belie the challenge facing Ford Motor Co. Front and rear bumpers nearly kiss as hundreds of F-150s surround the Kansas City Assembly Plant in Claycomo. Across U.S. 69, pickups of all colors and sizes fill more fenced-in lots. A few miles to the south, the F-150s even occupy asphalt at Worlds of Fun.

It's not that people don't want the trucks. They do. More than ever.

But as Ford faces overwhelming demand for its latest iteration of America's most popular pickup, hundreds of models await final touches and quality reviews.

"As part of our commitment to delivering high-quality vehicles, we are conducting final quality inspections on trucks built earlier in the process to ensure they meet the quality expectations of our customers," Kelli Felker, Ford's manufacturing and labor communications manager, said in a statement to The Star. "The number of trucks awaiting quality inspections continues to dwindle."

Workers have been installing seat belts and conducting software checks on the trucks that are parked outdoors, the Free Press reported. — *Kansas City Star*



Labor movement quick to condemn Capitol violence

By Pat Hayes

Labor leaders across the country were quick to condemn the anti-American attack on the U.S. Capitol Jan. 6 as legislators were in the process of accepting electoral votes from the states that gave the presidential election to Joe Biden. The Capitol violence was widely seen by trade unionists across the country as an attack on the democratic institutions of the nation by ultra-right thugs intent on overturning the bedrock principle that the nation's leaders are chosen by a free and fair vote of the people.

"This is a very sad day for our nation and our democracy. This is not how this great nation, nor responsible citizens handle elections or our differences," said Rory Gamble, president of the UAW.

"We are a better people than this storming mob and I am optimistic that despite today's events, we will regain our footing and we will move forward for the greater good of all of us. As a nation, we are learning in a profound way that we all have a personal responsibility to safeguard this democracy," Gamble added.

"We cannot take our system of government for granted and we must be vigilant to ensure that our democracy maintains its historical position as the gold standard for freedom and liberty. Today's actions must not be allowed to alter that," he continued.

"This is truly a singular point in our history. The violence at the Capitol today is a deliberate and despicable attempt by extremists to disrupt our great republic. It will not succeed. We, as a nation, are stronger than this one shameful incident. There is room in

this great democracy, as in our own union, for disagreement. It is one of the great strengths of our democratic system. We are better than that and today above all, we must remember that there is more that unites us than divides us. There is absolutely no room for this type of mob rule in a functioning democratic system," he said.

"This is a day none of us should or will ever forget. But please let us remember that there is much work to be done — and we must take the personal responsibility to do it together. We are the United States and unite we must. I urge us all to work together to move forward and heal our nation."

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka called it "one of the greatest assaults on our democracy since the Civil War."

"Today's attempted coup has been years in the making as Donald Trump consistently spews venom, conspiracies, hate and lies to his supporters," Trumka tweeted. "They are carrying out his wishes, and far too many Republican lawmakers have enabled and even encouraged this violent threat to our republic."

Settlement reached in UAW corruption case

Statement by U.S. Attorney Mathew Schneider

United States Attorney Matthew Schneider announced Dec. 14 that an agreement has been reached with the United Auto Workers Union (UAW) to resolve the office's findings of fraud and corruption within the UAW.

Schneider was joined in the announcement by UAW International President Rory Gamble.

Today, the United States filed an anti-corruption and anti-fraud civil lawsuit against the UAW in federal district court seeking equitable relief to bring about reform and oversight of the union. Also today, the parties jointly filed a proposed Consent Order setting forth the terms of a settlement of the lawsuit. Under the terms of the proposed settlement, the Court would appoint an Independent Monitor who would have the authority to exercise disciplinary powers within the UAW, to investigate possible fraud or corruption within the union, and to seek discipline against UAW officers and members before a UAW Trial Committee, or before an Independent Adjudications Officer also appointed by the Court. The Monitor's oversight of the union would last for six years, with a possible early termination if the Monitor were to find that his or her work is complete and the UAW no longer needs the Monitor's services, or extension if the Monitor or the parties feel that a longer period is appropriate. Besides the Monitor, the UAW will conduct a binding and secret-ballot referendum of its membership, overseen by the Monitor and the Department of Labor, to determine whether to change the UAW's election method from the current delegate system to a direct election model, where the entire UAW membership could vote for the UAW President and the other members of the UAW's International Executive Board. Through the referendum, members would decide whether the UAW's constitution would be changed to provide for a direct election system in the union, sometimes referred to as "one person, one vote," starting in the 2022 election cycle. The parties have jointly proposed the referendum so that all of the men and women of the UAW—and not the government—can decide the method to elect the union's leaders. The costs associated with the Monitor would be borne by the UAW. The Monitor's duties would not include any involvement in the collective bargaining process or the day-to-day administration of those contracts, absent any indication of corruption or fraud.

The UAW's board would continue to oversee collective bargaining negotiations and enforcement going forward.

The proposed settlement fully and finally resolves the criminal and civil investigation of the UAW as an entity. The UAW also agrees to resolve a tax investigation by making a payment of \$1.5 million to the Internal Revenue Service in connection with administrative fees that the union received from the three joint training centers that were operated with the three car manufacturers. In addition, the UAW has already paid back over \$15 million to the training centers for improper chargebacks that the union received from two of the training centers. This money will be used by joint programs for the health and safety of auto workers.

An agreement has been reached with the United Auto Workers Union (UAW) to resolve the office's findings of fraud and corruption within the UAW

The civil complaint filed today in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan was brought pursuant to the federal civil anti-corruption and anti-fraud statute (18 U.S.C. § 1345), which was designed by Congress to empower courts to intervene and provide injunctive and equitable relief to eliminate fraud in order to serve the public interest. The civil lawsuit was not filed pursuant to the federal anti-racketeering RICO law because the investigation by the United States did not uncover any involvement by organized crime or the mafia in the operations of the UAW. Instead, the civil complaint sets forth in detail a series of corrupt and fraudulent acts by former officers and board members of the UAW, as well as executives of Fiat Chrysler Automobiles. The criminal investigation by the United States revealed an extensive and long-lasting effort by two former UAW presidents and their underlings to embezzle over \$1.5 million in UAW money for their personal benefit through a series of fraud schemes. The investigation also uncovered a scheme

by one former UAW vice president and two other high-level UAW officers to demand and accept over \$2 million in kickbacks from contractors to the joint UAW-GM training center involving multi-million dollar contracts for watches, backpacks, and jackets. The civil complaint alleges that high-level Fiat Chrysler executives paid bribes to, and engaged in embezzlement with, two former UAW vice presidents and other UAW officials amounting to over \$3.5 million. In total, fifteen UAW officials and Fiat Chrysler executives have been convicted thus far during the criminal investigation.

United States Attorney Schneider said, "The men and women of the UAW deserve honest and faithful leaders dedicated to serving the best interests of the membership. Today's settlement provides independent oversight to investigate and eliminate corruption within the union. It also brings real democratic change to the union by giving the membership the opportunity

to decide for themselves whether to institute a direct election system. I am truly thankful to President Rory Gamble for his good faith willingness to press for real reform within the union."

UAW President Rory Gamble said: "Today's agreement builds upon the many reforms that the UAW has initiated and put in place ourselves over the past 13 months. This civil resolution brings to a close the government's investigation and is testament to the hard work that has been done to make the necessary structural and cultural changes.

Under our current leadership, the UAW has proactively weeded out individuals who put their personal benefit over our members' interests and who abused their positions of trust to defraud our Union and our membership. Those individuals have been charged internally and permanently expelled from the Union.

Over the past year, the UAW's International Executive Board has also devoted an extraordinary amount of time, attention, and resources to significantly overhauling and strengthening both our financial and ethical

controls – all to ensure that no one in our Union will have the ability to repeat these misdeeds of the past.

The entire leadership of the UAW embraces the involvement of a Monitor for a period of time who will provide an extra and independent set of eyes on our Union's financial and disciplinary processes, and provide complete assurance to our members that the reforms we have initiated take permanent root. We are committed to making the Monitor's job a boring one, by doing everything we can to make sure there are no financial or ethical misconduct issues to monitor.

As I said upon taking office, my overriding goal is to deliver a clean, reformed and ethical union to my successor. Today's collaborative agreement with the government ensures that we are well on our way toward achieving that goal."

The fifteen individuals convicted of fraud and corruption crimes include former UAW Vice President Joseph Ashton (30 months in prison) former FCA Vice President for Employee Relations Alphons Iacobelli (66 months in prison), former FCA Financial Analyst Jerome Durden (15 months in prison), former Director of FCA's Employee Relations Department Michael Brown (12 months in prison), former senior UAW officials Virdell King (60 days in prison), Keith Mickens (12 months in prison), Nancy A. Johnson (12 months in prison), Monica Morgan, the widow of UAW Vice President General Holielfield (18 months in prison), former UAW Vice President Norwood Jewell (15 months in prison), and former senior UAW official Michael Grimes (28 months). In addition, the following UAW officials have pleaded guilty and are awaiting sentencing: former UAW President Gary Jones, former senior UAW official Jeffrey Pietrzyk, former UAW Region 5 Director and UAW Board member Vance Pearson, former UAW Midwest CAP President Edward "Nick" Robinson, and former UAW President Dennis Williams.

U.S. Attorney Schneider commended the outstanding work of the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigations, the U.S. Department of Labor – Office of Labor-Management Standards and Office of Inspector General, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation in conducting a comprehensive criminal investigation into labor corruption activities involving a vital sector of the local and national economy.



Local 249 retiree John Cartwright thanks the UAW and the union representatives who helped him during his 44 years in the auto industry. Photo by Don Lehman.

Cartwright says THXUAW for 44 years in union

By Chrissy Kline

Back in 2015, UAW member John Cartwright made the decision that he would retire after the 2019 contract. He began making plans, deciding how he could show his gratitude for the years spent under the wing of the UAW. To commemorate what would amount to 44 years of membership at the time of his retirement, he found a car worthy of any showroom and he ordered custom plates to let everyone know what made it possible: THXUAW.

Cartwright was eager to get the process started. He stopped by the union hall to get the blessing of active UAW Local 249 President, Jason Starr. THXUAW means thank you to the leadership of Local 249 for all their dedication to their membership, to International for their work throughout the years and to the membership, above all, because to me that is where it all starts.

Cartwright's grandfather worked for GM, starting there before there were even unions inside the plant, and his father retired from the Ironworkers in Detroit. These two men proved to be very influential in his upbringing and his love for his union.

"That generation and the love they had for their union was plain as day," says Cartwright.

His grandfather took him to the picket line a few times as a kid before retiring in 1968. He would even go to these picket lines in solidarity after

retiring. He would always tell him, "Go visit those boys on the picket line."

His grandfather also told him, "Go to work every day. What you do on the job is negotiable."

Looking back over the years, Cartwright realized he didn't really understand everything his grandfather told him at the time. "He just told me certain things and let me figure them out for myself as situations happened."

"Never turn your back on your union," his grandfather said. He didn't tell him why, he let him learn for himself that it was because his union would not turn their back on him.

When Cartwright was disciplined by Ford and needed a helping hand, his union was there for him. It helped that Cartwright followed his grandfather's advice and had a good attendance record.

That's when he understood what his grandfather was trying to teach him. When Cartwright hired in more

than 40 years ago, if someone went out on medical, had a death in the family or got time off for fighting rebalance on their job they would take up a collection in the shop for that person, even knowing that they would usually be made whole by a grievance anyway.

"I know our organization has faced its fair share of adversity and the news is good at showing our weaknesses instead of headlining our strengths. It's easy to get swept up in the turmoil of what is happening around us and forgetting to be thankful for what we have," Cartwright said.

"The men and women who started this union had to fight for everything in the very beginning, sometimes working 12 to 16 hour days only to be paid for six to eight of those hours. They went through hell for just the basics: seniority rights, time and a half pay, grievance procedure. Things we all too often take for granted, someone else is praying for."

Cartwright spoke highly of the benefits of being a Local 249 member. "We are lucky for what we have here in the UAW, and even more so at Local 249. We have great leadership, great secretaries and benefits reps that help fill out forms, make calls and explain what things mean. Not everyone has this type of service available to them

and getting all this help and representation after I retired for such a low price on our dues. I learn something new every time I come to the union hall, someone here is always teaching me something."

"Learning is a lifelong commitment. If you ever shutdown your desire or ability to learn, with the way the world moves today, you will get left behind. People are always willing to learn, but sometimes it's the way we speak to them that shuts them down," Cartwright said.

"It's important to continue telling the stories I learned from my grandfather's generation and to always keep learning and being thankful. Gratitude shouldn't be a secret."

"Everything I have has been made possible by the union. Without the UAW, we would be fighting for \$15 an hour like so many others are currently doing. We need to look at each weakness or failure as an opportunity, to keep on learning and to always be thankful. I was proud when I became a UAW member 44 years ago, and even today I am still proud to be a member of the UAW."

Now, Cartwright is passing those lessons on to the next generation. His youngest son, Joe, is an electrician apprentice at KCAP.



THE CHARLIE SUFFRIDGE SCHOLARSHIP CONTEST

By Gwen Starkey

UAW Local 249 recently announced registration for this year's Charlie Suffridge Scholarship essay contest. The entry deadline is 5:00 PM Friday, March 5, 2021. The scholarship, sponsored by the Education Committee and named in honor of former leader of the committee Charlie Suffridge, is designed to encourage high school junior or senior college bound students to write and learn about the value of unions and to analyze labor issues.

So, who was Charlie Suffridge and why did Local 249 name a scholarship after him? "Suffridge was appointed to chair the Education Committee by former UAW Local 249 President Jerry Kline many years ago," former UAW Local 249 Financial Secretary Toni McCauley said.

McCauley, who retired in 2011 recalls Suffridge as a someone who really studied the history of the UAW. "Charlie Suffridge was a scholar," McCauley said. "He was a very smart, very knowledgeable hardworking person. He lived and breathed unionism. He really got involved and turned the Education Committee into much more than an ordinary committee. He was the

mastermind of the history of the UAW museum that we all see in the union hall lobby today. All the photos, articles and memorabilia was researched and assembled by Suffridge."

He studied under Judy Ancel, Director of the Institute for Labor Studies at the University of Missouri Kansas City (UMKC) using his union negotiated education benefit reaching PHD status McCauley recalled. He was the driving force behind the idea of putting out a scholarship contest to encourage children of our membership to learn about the importance of organized labor and impart labor education to anyone who participated by asking them to write about the value of unions and their im-

portance to workers. He met a sudden death and to honor him and his dedication to UAW Local 249 it was decided to name the scholarship after him, a befitting memory to a great man.

This year scholarship participants may select one of two essay topics which are; The National Labor Relations Act gave birth to unions in America. What was the creation of the act in response to; and second, Amazon could soon unionize. How could the workers win official recognition and what economic impact would it have in the communities in which they work? Both are solid topics that can help students learn about the importance of unions and hopefully carry that information with them into the job market better armed to defend their rights as a worker.

There are four prizes ranging from \$1000-\$5000 and contestants must be a junior or senior in high school, planning to attend college after graduation, be a dependant of a member in good standing and not be a previous

winner. Deadline for submission is 5:00 PM Friday April 30, 2021. Contestants should not use their name on their submission, but will be assigned a code number to identify them. Name use will disqualify the contestant. The essay must be between 800-1000 words in length.

Winners are selected based on the quality of research, analysis of the arguments as well as a depth of understanding about unions. They will also be judged on their ability to synthesize the arguments in their own words and the ability to organize the presentation clearly and concise.

The judging takes place anonymously. Previous judges included UMKC director of Labor Studies Judy Ancel, Mike Enriquez, lead organizer for Stand UP KC and the Midwest Center for Equality and Democracy, and Missouri State Senator and former school teacher Lauren Arthur. Competition will be stiff as there are many talented children of the UAW Local 249 membership. Good luck everyone.



E.D. Nixon escorts Rosa Parks to the Montgomery, Alabama, courthouse in 1956 after she was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a bus to a white man. Courtesy Library of Congress.

Black History Month

E.D. Nixon: His spark became a flame

By Pat Hayes

During World War II, African Americans in segregated units, such as the Tuskegee Airmen, the 761st Tank Battalion and 452nd Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion fought heroically in combat even as they endured racial discrimination at home. During the war, German prisoners of war at American military bases were allowed to sit in the “whites only” areas of mess halls and movie theatres from which outraged Black troops were barred.

Shockingly, enemy prisoners of war were also allowed to attend shows, movies, and dances, sponsored by the United Service Organizations (USO) that barred Black soldiers. Those injustices were more than E. D. Nixon could bear.

Nixon, a longtime member of A. Philip Randolph's Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters Union, was a long-time fighter for social and economic justice. He decided to write a letter to first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, who had the president's ear and was known to be sympathetic to the plight of Black soldiers, asking that the USO provide entertainment to Black troops engaged in the war effort, as well.

Nixon was born July 12, 1899, Lowndes County, Alabama. Acutely aware that the 16 months of formal education he got under Jim Crow

system of racial segregation in the south did not provide him with the grammatical skills required to write the letter. Nixon asked Rosa Parks, a member of the Montgomery, Alabama NAACP, to pen the letter for him.

As a result of Nixon's letter, the USO began providing entertainment to Blacks serving in the military. Following the war, President Truman ended racial segregation in the armed forces ending one of the darkest chapters in American history.

Black servicemen returned home from the war determined to end the system of American apartheid that put them into service in defense of the nation but denied them the benefits of their sacrifice.

Nixon, with his long history of labor activism in the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and experience

fighting for civil rights as president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in Montgomery was in a perfect position to advance the long struggle for equal rights.

Nixon crafted a strategy to take on Montgomery's segregated public transit system which required Black bus passengers to give up their seats to whites. He chose Rosa Parks, the elected secretary of the Montgomery NAACP, to challenge the law.

On December 1, 1955, Parks entered a Montgomery bus, refused to give up her seat for a white passenger, and was arrested.

Nixon then called on local Black ministers to support a boycott of the Montgomery bus system. One of the ministers he called was Martin Luther King who recently moved to the city from Atlanta. The ministers, including King, were initially reluctant to take on the sort of militant boycott that Nixon knew would be necessary.

He challenged their courage and, in the end, they came around.

The vast majority of riders were Black and, as the boycott took hold,

ridership plummeted putting the bus system into financial hardship. Black people walked to work. Many participated in a ride sharing system

The fight was a bitter one, lasting more than a year. Montgomery's white establishment did everything it could, including using the police, to break the boycott but, in the end, they failed.

On June 5, 1956, a three-judge panel of the US District Court ruled on *Browder v. Gayle* and determined that Montgomery's segregation law was unconstitutional, violating the Fourteenth Amendment of the US Constitution. Three days later, the Supreme Court ordered Montgomery to desegregate its buses.

"I'm from Montgomery, Alabama, a city that's known as the Cradle of the Confederacy," Nixon told supporters after the victory, "that had stood still for more than ninety-three years until Rosa L. Parks was arrested and thrown in jail like a common criminal. Fifty thousand people rose up and caught hold to the Cradle of the Confederacy and began to rock it till the Jim Crow rockers began to reel and the segregated slats began to fall out."



Local 249 President Jason Starr, left, and Bargaining Chair Jim Fisher inspect progress on the plant expansion for the E-Transit. Photo by Don Lehman.

Expansion for E-Transit to bring jobs to KCAP

By Gwen Starkey

The Kansas City Assembly Plant (KCAP) has come a long way since its humble beginnings in 1911 at the Winchester plant, the first auto assembly plant located outside of Detroit, before its relocation to its current home in Claycomo. The Claycomo plant originally opened in 1951 for military production before being converted in 1956 to what it is today, the longest running and largest car manufacturing center (in terms of units produced) in the United States, generating thousands of jobs and millions in tax dollars.

Beginning with the Ford Fairlane in 1955 and shortly thereafter the home of the best selling F150, KCAP has seen the production of many different vehicles throughout the years with most recently the all-new Transit van. And now, the introduction of the first all-electric Transit van which will be rolling off the assembly lines later this year at KCAP. Construction has already begun in the \$3.2 billion dollar investment Ford is making in its North American manufacturing facilities.

What does that investment mean for members of UAW Local 249? It means new jobs, new technology, and job security. "Gaining investment at KCAP in new technology and electrification is critical to our future," UAW Local 249 President Jason Starr said. "The auto industry is shifting towards electric vehicles and the UAW must work to secure the production of electric motors, batteries, and all new technologies to ensure that it is our members who

are performing these new jobs."

At KCAP alone, Ford's investment in KCAP will result in many new jobs for Local 249, beginning with a 5-bay facility expansion and a sequencing building. "Any time the company makes an investment to your facility, it is very positive news," UAW Local 249 Bargaining Chairman Jim Fisher said. What does this mean for our members?

"For Local 249 members, the expansion and investments help maintain product commitments for KCAP," Fisher said. "The additional expansion helps secure our members jobs for well into the future. The expansion and additional square footage gives us the ability to be versatile to additional product commitments in the future." Not bad for a facility that began with close to 32,000 sq. feet of building space, employing a few hundred workers who produced seven vehicles a day at the Winchester plant, to a massive 4.7 million sq. foot facility, employing over 7000 union workers who col-

lectively build one vehicle every 60 seconds at the state of the art Kansas City Assembly Plant.

Along with producing an all-electric vehicle comes the question of batteries. At the moment, Ford is one of the few automakers that plans on sourcing its EV batteries from suppliers rather than making them itself, according to outgoing Ford CEO Jim Hackett. "The supply chain has ramped up since Tesla's Elon Musk built his Gigafactory, and so there's plenty there that does not warrant us to migrate our capital into owning our own factory," Hackett said. "There's no advantage in the ownership in terms of cost or sourcing."

Ford's issue with such an investment relates to scale, as FoMoCo's head of product development and purchasing, Hau Thai-Tang, revealed in a recent analyst call. "We don't have that volume initially to justify that capital expenditure," he said. "There's insufficient scale for any one OEM, other than somebody who's a full-line battery-electric manufacturer like Tesla, to justify that spending. It gives us the ability to access the latest technology and innovation across multiple suppliers," Thai-Tang said. "So I know exactly what the state of the art is from the Korean suppliers, the Japanese suppliers, the Chinese suppliers, and I'm able to compare notes across them maybe better than they

can. And then, of course, we have the competitive tension with dealing with multiple suppliers, which allows us to drive the cost down." Batteries are one of an electric vehicle's most expensive components, accounting for between a quarter and a third of the vehicle's value. Driving down their cost is key to profitability.

Thai-Tang noted that Ford would have to produce 100,000-150,000 EVs each year to justify the cost of building its own battery plant. Such a move would also cause problems when battery technology inevitably reaches a new breakthrough point, or if customer demand for electric vehicles falters in the future. So the outlook doesn't look too positive for sourcing batteries at KCAP right now, but if those production numbers are ever realized, there could be a point in time where all that could change. "We continue to work with the company on this," Fisher said. "There is a very clear advantage for both the company and Local 249 to having this work sourced here."

We've come a long way baby and the future looks bright for the Kansas City Assembly Plant and members of UAW Local 249. We have the best workforce, producing the highest quality vehicles in the Ford system, so it's not a surprise that Ford would choose KCAP as their number one choice to produce the E-Transit.

Inventory issues change schedule at KCAP

By Jim Fisher

So far this year members at KCAP have seen several changes to our production schedules. The Transit System returned back from Christmas shutdown to a 5x10 schedule. They were then moved to a 4x10 schedule for two weeks, and then returned back to a 5x10 schedule.

The Truck System has also seen scheduling adjustments in production numbers so far in January. The reason for the changes has been caused by adjustments to inventory.

We ask all of our members to remain vigilant to the quality of our products. There are steps agreed to in the Local Agreement which protect operators and encourage them to notify Team Leaders and management of any defects found during production. The F-150's new technology has proven to be the most advanced truck we have ever built.

To help with quality protection and launch improvements Local 249 and KCAP have agreed to add an additional six repairmen into the Truck Final Departments. Those bids have been posted, and the new repairmen have begun their training. With both

the assistance from our line operators and adding in additional repairmen are critical in ensuring the high quality our plant is known for.

On January 1, 95 of our TFTs were converted to In-Progression members. Congratulations to those members for their hard work and commitment.

With the conversion of the TFTs, another leapfrog pay issue was identified as their pay increase was at a higher rate than those members who converted to in-progression in 2020. This leapfrog affected 127 members of Local 249 in addition to others at other UAW-Ford plants across the United States. All matters of pay are negotiated in the International Contract as they affect members at all facilities. We are currently waiting on a resolution from The UAW National Ford Department and Ford management in Detroit on



Local 249 Bargaining Chair Jim Fisher reports that 95 TFTs were converted to In Progression at KCAP Jan. 1. Photo by Don Lehman.

the issue. Once a resolution has been reached on the leapfrog issue, we will pass the information to the affected members.

Local 249 is currently working with

an approved vendor on the clothing vouchers. We are still several weeks from completion but are optimistic we will be rolling out information to the membership as soon as possible.

It's time to realize King's dream

By Rory L. Gamble

With images of an insurrection at our nation's Capitol this month, we all are experiencing a nation divided like none of us has ever seen.

We are divided by politics. By opinions. By economics. By beliefs.

The cause? Well, that is up for debate.

What isn't up for debate is that this is a time to look to — and take heart in — the words of President John F. Kennedy and heed the warning of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. that healing our nation starts with us. Each of us must personally seek to find what unites us and foster that, bond with it, build upon it, so that we can move forward to a better place for us all.

Somewhere within the separation and violence we've recently experienced are true signs that "what unites us is greater than what divides us."

What unites us is the American Dream — the ability to better ourselves, create a good life, take care of our co-workers and families and have hope for the future. No matter your political, religious, social beliefs, it is what we all desire and hope for: the

ability to create a good life. It is the foundation of the UAW and what we have tirelessly been striving to achieve for all of our brothers and sisters since our very first days.

There is much hope for this dream, this unity. Take for example, the Jan. 5 run-off election of Rev. Raphael War-

where King preached.

Warnock's father was the late Rev. Jonathan Warnock, a World War II veteran, who was born in the Jim Crow South. His mother, Rev. Verlene Warnock, worked picking cotton and tobacco in the 1950s.

Looking back on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have A Dream" speech, it is clear that he foresaw families like the Warnocks while his own generation experienced the siege and violence of

I look to a day when people will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character — MLK

nock. Warnock is a pastor and politician from Georgia. He is the first black senator in the state. He grew up in Savannah's public housing. He was one of 12 children and the first college graduate in his family. And he's the senior pastor of Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church

the civil rights struggle.

That historic speech was written in part at UAW headquarters, Solidarity House, in Detroit. King then delivered the initial version of the "dream" speech in Detroit in June 1963, when he marched up Woodward Avenue with

our own UAW President Walter Reuther.

We are unified in our united American dream that this country keeps alive in our hearts. We are united in our strong beliefs in the founding ideals of our country: equality, liberty, and democracy. We must use the words of Martin Luther King Jr. and JFK. And the story of Senator Warnock, to bind our community together again.

The first step is for each of us to stop opposing each other just because of our professional, political, social or organizational views and instead ask each other what we can do collectively to make our communities better? How can we help one another?

When the UAW first formed, the idea of our regular, everyday work life being equal, fair, just and safe seemed like a dream. But working together with a purpose, a goal, and a "we must do this" attitude, brought it all to fruition.

Let us all take personal responsibility to protect our great democracy. Let us seize our moment in history this moment to realize our dreams of a more perfect union. — *Detroit News*

Tell Senate to pass the PRO Act now

By Jason Starr

The Biden administration has taken some very promising first steps to help restore the middle class by defending union rights in its first days in office. Within hours of being sworn in as president, Biden fired the National Labor Relations Board's general counsel, Peter Robb and his deputy, Alice B. Stock. Robb was a union-busting attorney who prevented millions of workers from joining unions before Trump appointed him. Likewise, Stock was hostile to workers and unions.

Just hours after his inauguration, Biden and Democratic allies in Congress released new details on their proposal to double the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour.

Raising the minimum wage would generate \$107 billion in higher wages for workers and would also benefit communities across the country. Because underpaid workers spend much of their extra earnings, this injection of wages will help stimulate the economy and spur greater job growth.

Even before he took office, Biden announced that he would nominate Boston Mayor Marty Walsh, who has deep ties to unions, as his labor secretary.

When Biden joined the picket line outside GM's Fairfax Assembly Plant in Kansas City, Kan. last fall, he promised to be the "most pro-union president you've ever seen."

After years of Republican attacks on our wages, living standard and union rights, Biden's pledge and initial actions should give us hope that things are going to change for the better.

But, we've been here before. No one has forgotten that the last time

Democrats held the presidency and controlled both the House and Senate, they failed to pass Card Check legislation that would have made it easier for workers to form unions.

That's why we're not going to sit back and wait for Democrats to do the right thing. The labor movement is launching a campaign of its own for immediate passage of the Protecting the Right to Organize Act.

The PRO Act was passed by the Democratic majority in the House a year ago, but it was blocked by Senate Republican and opposed by then President Trump.

One of the key features of the PRO Act is that it would ban all right-to-work laws.

Right-to-work laws have drastically reduced the number of workers who are protected by a union contract. With the loss of union representation, workers become "at will" employees meaning they can be fired at any time for any reason or no reason at all.

Here in Missouri, Republicans have repeatedly tried to enact right-to-work laws despite being defeated each time they placed it on the ballot. Voters re-



Local 249 President Jason Starr reports on efforts to pass the PRO Act at the January 24 membership meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

jected it again in 2018 and yet a new right-to-work bill was filed by Republicans in this session of the legislature.

The Pro Act would put a stop to this Zombie legislation in Missouri for good and open union organization and membership to millions of working people in the 28 states that have enacted the law.

There are many other important provisions in the PRO Act that will protect the rights and living standards of working people.

• It introduces meaningful, enforceable penalties for companies and

executives that violate workers' rights.

• It expands workers' collective bargaining rights and closes loopholes that corporations use to exploit workers.

• It strengthens workers' access to fair union elections by requiring corporations to respect the results.

Here in Missouri, we face a different situation. Anti-worker Republicans hold the governor's office and have big majorities in the House and Senate. They have already filed a raft of anti-worker legislation, which I'll cover in a future issue.



NEED HELP?

Are you worried about money? Do you have problems on the job? Is someone in your family ill? Has a loved one passed away? Have you been physically or mentally abused? Are there drug or alcohol problems in your family? Having thoughts of suicide?

The UAW Chaplaincy Committee is here to listen or to offer spiritual advice. Call the Union Hall at 816-454-6333 and the Local will put you in touch with one of our caring Chaplaincy Committee members.

First Local News is seeking two new writers

We are looking to expand our team by adding two talented and motivated writers to help us educate, motivate and recognize our membership.

If this sounds like something you would be interested in, please choose one of the prompts provided and write an essay approximately 500-750 words in length.

Essays will be accepted between February 5 and March 1
E-Mail your submission to info@local249.org

Prompts:

- How has my union membership changed my life?
- What is necessary for unions to survive the next 100 years?
- Why do we need unions and how can we successfully organize in today's world

Retirees hoping for a better year in 2021

By Natalie Woods

Greetings fellow retirees! The new year has brought us some great changes. Newly elected President Biden and Vice President Harris have given us much to look forward to during this administration change. This was evident during the inauguration. Despite the attack on the Capitol, we were able to pull off a dignified and respectful event. Now let us pray for a better year than 2020 and hope that things turn around to what we once considered normal. But no matter how this year goes we need to remember, this is our world, and we will need to make the best of it.

We still will not be meeting because it is not safe yet for us to do so. But when that time comes, we will have much to celebrate. Until then let's check in on our brothers and sisters. The isolation can be hard on all of us, so call or text even if it is just to say hello and how you are doing.

Life goes on and we have some that have retired after a number years of service. Here is the list of retirees from December 2020 and January 2021:

Now for brothers and sisters that have gone on to the UAW in the sky. We will miss them, and we will keep their families in our prayers. Be a friend as safely as you can, perhaps this is dropping off a covered dish on someone's porch or sending a card. Those who have left us in December and January were:

To end on a positive and upbeat note, how about those Chiefs! We are going to the Super Bowl again making it back-to-back games for us. That certainly something to look forward to while we wait to gather again.

The Retirees Committee would like

you all to know we are thinking of each and everyone of you. Stay safe, wear your mask, and continue practicing social distancing. It's a personal choice for each of us on whether or not to take the vaccine. If you choose to get the vaccine, the dates / times you can get them are as follows: Let your conscious be your guide. Until we meet again. Happy Valentine's Day to all.

Missouri and Kansas have provided information about the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine. Here is what we know so far.

In Missouri, no person can be billed for the COVID-19 vaccine. Vaccination providers may charge an administration fee to insurance, Medicaid or Medicare, if applicable in your situation. Uninsured Missourians will be able to receive the vaccination regardless of their health insurance status.

No resident may be charged for the COVID-19 vaccine, so uninsured Missourians cannot be denied vaccination based on their health insurance status.

Missourians will qualify for vac-



Missouri and Kansas have provided information on distribution of COVID-19 vaccine for senior citizens.

ination based on priority phases, anticipating a limited initial supply. Groups currently eligible include those in Phase 1A, Phase 1B-Tier 1 and Phase 1B-Tier 2.

Many Local 249 retirees will be eligible to receive the vaccine in Missouri's 1B-Tier 2 for High Risk Individuals. This includes:

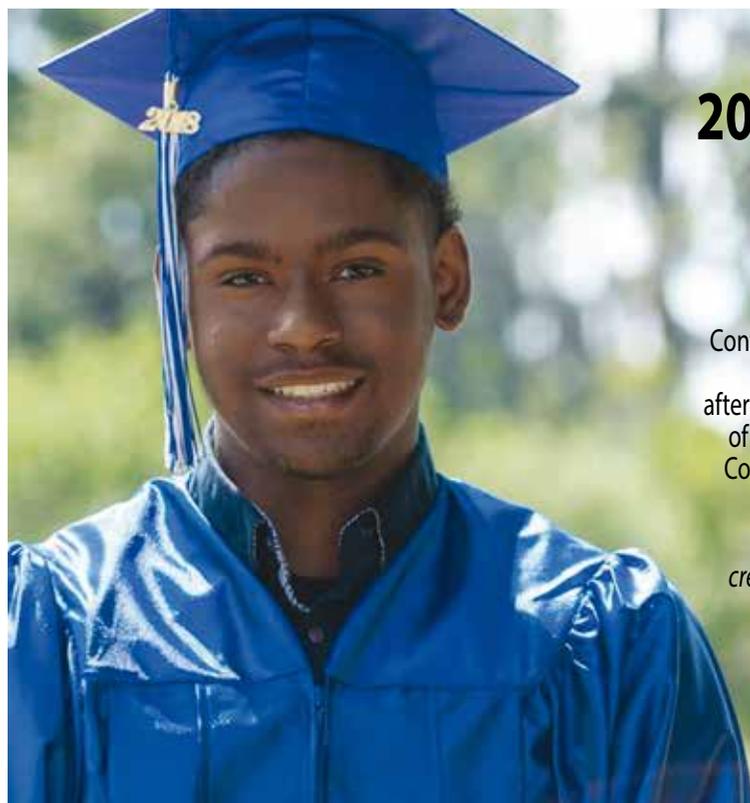
- Anyone 65 and older
- Any adults with cancer, Chronic Kidney Disease, COPD, Heart Conditions, weakened immune system due to organ transplant, severe obesity (BMI >40), pregnancy, Sickle Cell Disease, Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus, or individuals with intellectual and/or

developmental disabilities such as Down Syndrome.

Kansas is in Phase 2 for vaccinations, which includes persons aged 65+, congregate settings, high-contact critical workers and unvaccinated Kansans from Phase 1.

Residents of Wyandotte County who would like to get updates on when they are eligible to receive a vaccine can go to ughealth.info/Vaccine, or visit wycokck.org/COVID-19 and click on the "WyCo Vaccine Interest Form" button.

In Johnson County you can sign up to receive updates by going to <https://www.jocogov.org/covid-19-vaccine>.



UAW Local 249

2021 Charlie Suffridge Scholarship Contest

Sponsored by the Education Committee

First Place: \$5,000 • Second Place \$2,500 • Third Place \$1,500 • Fourth Place \$1,000

For High School Juniors & Seniors

Sign Up Now! Deadline for Registration is Friday, March 5, 2021

Contestant must: Be a junior or senior in high school during the 2020 - 2021 school year • Be planning to attend a college, university, or trade school the following school year after graduation • Be a dependent of a member in good standing of Local Union 249 • NOT be a winner of last year's contest • Contestant must turn in essay no later than 5:00 p.m., Friday, April 30, 2021 • Contestant must not use their name on the paper, but they must use their assigned code number • Name use will disqualify the contestant • Essay's must be between 800-1200 words.

TOPICS: (1)The National Labor Relations Act gave birth to Unions in America. What was the creation of that act in response to? (2)Amazon could soon unionize. How could the workers win official recognition and what economic impact would it have in the communities in which they work?

A code number will be assigned, and a copy of registration sheet will be returned to you.

Registration forms, will be available at the Union Hall Monday through Friday, until March 5, 2021 8:00 am until 5:00 pm.



Local 249's Motorcycle Committee presented a check to Jackson County CASA, an organization that recruits, trains and supports lay volunteers who act as advocates on behalf of the best interests of children who have suffered abuse and neglect, on Dec. 15. Photo by Don Lehman.

Community Service in a year of COVID

By Gwen Starkey

UAW Local 249 wrapped up their final community service projects with several events in December. While this may not have been a normal year with Covid restricting many of the usual events that take place during the holidays, they still did what they could to help uplift and support the community that we live in.

On Dec. 15, the Motorcycle Committee, chaired by Josh Curtis, presented a donation to Jackson County CASA, a court appointed advocate that works with children who have experienced abuse and neglect. They also donated a few goodies to the Cedars of Liberty Health Care Center.

On Dec. 19, members of the committee met at the Terrace Park Cemetery in the Northland to join with the Wreaths Across America organization to remember and honor our veterans. They laid Remembrance wreaths on the graves of our country's fallen heroes. It was an event held simultaneously throughout the country starting with a color guard salute and saying

the name of each veteran aloud.

"It was quite an event," Curtis said. "We had many Local 249 volunteers come out and help us lay about 400 wreaths that were beautiful, made with real greenery and adorned with a big red bow. It's humbling. No matter how bad your day is or your circumstances are for the week, participating in an event such as this changes your perspective." The Motorcycle Committee has been doing this for a few years now at Terrace Park and Higginsville Veterans Cemetery.

Coming up this year the committee is planning many activities, Covid permitting, including another motorcycle giveaway, a blanket drive for first

responders, and Roses for Widows. Details will be forthcoming.

The Women's Committee chaired by Karen Mahoney also kept busy in December. Unfortunately, their annual Breakfast with Santa and Craft Fair was cancelled due to Covid restrictions, but they were still able to volunteer at the Shelter KC's Christmas community serving project.

"We collected coats, hats, gloves, scarves, blankets and personal hygiene products for the homeless of Kansas City," Mahoney said. "It was a great event and such a big turnout that no one was turned away even after running out of the free tickets. It was so very humbling," Mahoney added.

They practiced social distancing so part of their group helped box up the Christmas dinner consisting of ham, turkey, stuffing, potatoes and cookies, while the rest of the group set out decorating the room and dinner tables. Members got into the Christmas spirit

donning Santa hats and reindeer antler headbands.

Everyone that came in, and they estimate about 400 or so, received a donation of some sort, but the coats ran out fast. Mahoney wanted to make sure to thank everyone that helped. "We had folks from other committees and folks that weren't on a committee at all helping us out," Mahoney said. "Thank you all. It's definitely a community effort to help others that are less fortunate than us."

The Women's Committee projects in the future are uncertain as of this date due to COVID, Mahoney said, and she is unsure of the annual Easter Egg Hunt at this time even with it being an outdoor event. Watch the Local 249 Facebook page for any updates.

As we put 2020 in the rear view mirror, there is much anticipation for what 2021 holds for us all. Bring on the New Year and prosperity for all of us.