

FIRST LOCAL NEWS

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

May 2021



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



The Easter Bunny was a big hit with the children of Local 249 members at the Easter Drive Hop sponsored by the union's Women's Committee. Photo by Don Lehman.



Don "Fuzzy" Lehman was presented with the James "Frog" Moran Solidarity Award by Terri Hall at the April Membership Meeting for his long-time volunteer work as the photographer for Local 249's *First Local News*.



Ron King, center, was the winner of the Harley Davidson Motorcycle Raffle. He's shown here with Motorcycle Committee members Josh Curtis, Joe Lumpkin, Darrin McIntyre, Darren Piper and Jacob "Squirrel" Scott. Photo by Don Lehman.



Local 249 activists Gary Thomas, left to right, Kelsey Pinzino, Robin Taylor, Jason Starr and Greg Smith wrap up taping of the latest edition of the union's Solidarity Academy podcast on April 25.

First Local News

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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

Apprentice Training

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Employee Support Services

Kenny Alexander 816-459-1226

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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

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Infrastructure investment and clean energy would create at least 6.9 million good jobs

Rebalancing trade by expanding exports, and expanding public investments in infrastructure, clean energy, and energy efficiency, are the keys to generating at least 6.9 million good jobs, rebuilding American manufacturing and the U.S. economy.

The essential elements of this two-pronged strategy for rebuilding the domestic economy begin by first, adopting trade and industrial policies that dramatically boost U.S. exports and eliminate the U.S. trade deficit—now roughly \$850 billion—within four years. This includes measures to end the overvaluation of the U.S. dollar and rebuild the competitiveness of U.S. manufacturing industries. The second element of the strategy is a four-year, \$2 trillion program of investments in infrastructure, clean energy, and energy efficiency improvements. This would include investments of \$70.2 billion per year in schools and broadband, which would have substantial social benefits.

“Job losses due to growing U.S. trade deficits hit manufacturing industries particularly hard, shrinking the share of middle-class jobs available to workers without a college degree,” said Scott. “By rebalancing our currency and investing in desperately needed infrastructure upgrades, as well as clean energy alternatives, we could create millions of good jobs during the economic recovery. This program will bring jobs those who need them the most.”

The authors find that surging exports and major investment in infrastructure, clean energy, and energy efficiency would support between 6.9 and 12.9 million U.S. jobs annually by 2024. Of the 6.9 million direct and indirect jobs, 2.5 million would be manufacturing jobs and at least 471,200 would be construction jobs. Because the jobs supported would be

concentrated in high-wage manufacturing (36.4% of jobs supported) and construction industries (6.8% of jobs supported), this strategy would help rebuild U.S. manufacturing and restructure the domestic economy away from low-wage service-sector work.

“Our policymakers urgently need to confront climate change and the deep recession caused by a global pandemic. One way to do this is investing a substantial part of our budget to reduce our carbon emissions while also creating good jobs,” said Mokhiber. “We don’t have to choose between a strong economy or a healthy environment—we can have both.”

These stimulus policies would support large numbers of high-wage jobs with excellent benefits, especially for non-college educated workers, in durable goods industries including nonelectrical machinery, fabricated metal products, transportation equipment, electrical equipment, and primary metals. These estimates include substantial growth in motor vehicles and parts, aerospace products, and the steel industry.

“Good jobs would be created across the country if policymakers make such an investment a top priority,” said Perez. “In particular, many states in the Midwest would gain thousands of good paying jobs that could revitalize communities that have been left behind by outsourcing and it is no accident that they stand to gain the most from a manufacturing-centered economic development program.” — *Economic Policy Institute*

Labor News From the World Wide Web

The Picket Line

UAW accuses Ford of ‘greed,’ violating contract with plan to send jobs to Mexico

Ford Motor Co. “has decided it will not honor its promise” to add new product to the Ohio Assembly Plant in Avon Lake and, instead, the automaker intends to farm out jobs to Mexico, wrote a top UAW leader to union officials in an angry two-page letter dated Friday.

“Ford management expects us to hang our heads and accept the decision. But let me be clear, we are making a different choice,” wrote Gerald Kariem, UAW vice president of the Ford Department since January 2020. “We 100% reject the company’s decision to put corporate greed and more potential profits over American jobs and the future of our members.”

Gerald Kariem was named vice president and director of the UAW Ford Department on Jan. 16, 2020. He’s demanding to know whether Ford plans to break its promised investment at the Ohio Assembly Plant in Avon Lake, which employs 1,700 hourly workers, to move production to Mexico.

The letter, written on union letterhead, which copied UAW President Rory Gamble and the labor organization’s two top lawyers, said Ford is expected to honor its contractual commitments to UAW members “and when it fails to do so, we will take action.” — *Detroit Free Press*

How defunding public health in Missouri led to vaccination chaos

Missourians have driven hours to find vaccines in rural counties — at least those with cars and the time. Tens of thousands of doses are waiting to be distributed, slowly being rolled out in a federal long-term care program. Waitlists are hundreds of thousands of people long. Black residents are getting left behind.

Missouri’s rocky vaccine rollout places it among the bottom states nationwide, with 23.7% of the population vaccinated with at least one dose as of Thursday, compared with the national average of 26.3%. If Missouri were on par with the national rate, that would be roughly equivalent to more than 162,000 additional people vaccinated, or almost the entire population of the city of Springfield. “You get what we pay for,” said Spring Schmidt, former co-acting director of the St. Louis County health department, noting public health departments in the state have been underfunded for decades. — *KCUR*

With Biden as an ally, United Auto Workers prepare to fight for EV jobs

With President Joe Biden as an ally, the United Auto Workers union is preparing to organize electric vehicle start-up companies as it fights to retain, if not grow, its current membership during the industry’s expected transition to EVs.

Electric vehicles, which Biden strongly supports, could usher in a new era of American manufacturing jobs for the UAW. But they also hurt the labor movement and undermine Biden’s goal of creating 1 million new jobs in the U.S. auto industry.

The vehicles require far fewer parts than those with internal combustion engines, which means potentially fewer factory assembly jobs. A lot of the parts for EVs are made outside the U.S. as well as the vehicle assembly — where workers are paid far lower wages. Many emerging EV start-ups, including industry leader Tesla, also have not been openly supportive of their employees organizing.

That’s led the UAW ... planning to utilize its “seat at the table” with Biden in other ways such as organizing, according to UAW President Rory Gamble.

“I’m advocating to everybody that we must take advantage of these times to fight for our members and fight for the American worker,” Gamble told CNBC in an interview. “American workers deserve more.” — *CNBC*

Auto Industry Update

UAW and automakers urge Biden to adopt expansive EV strategy

The United Auto Workers union and Alliance for Automotive Innovation, which represents a number of major automakers, have encouraged the Biden administration to adopt a laundry list of pro-EV proposals, arguing the recommendations provide the keys to the US' success in a transition to electric vehicle sales and manufacturing.

In a letter sent to President Joe Biden on Tuesday, the groups called for sweeping investments into raw material refinement and battery production, but also urged the administration to boost public awareness of EVs and their benefits, and asked the federal government to consider an expansion of tax credits currently available to EV buyers.

"We stand ready to work with your Administration to define the bold, comprehensive vision and innovation that will place the US at the forefront of creating a cleaner future for motor vehicle transportation," the groups said in the joint letter. "This transformation is greater than any one policy, branch or level of government or industry sector." — *CNET*

Biden's infrastructure plan would provide big boost for Tesla, GM and EV startups

President Joe Biden's \$2 trillion plan to overhaul U.S. infrastructure, the biggest such initiative in more than half a century, could trigger a "green tidal wave," in the words of one analyst, speeding the transportation industry's shift to electricity from carbon-based fuels and generating big benefits for companies ranging from Elon Musk's Tesla to General Motors and electric vehicle startups such as Fisker and Lucid Motors.

The White House said Biden's plan to "create good jobs electrifying vehicles" includes funding to spur production of vehicles, batteries, parts and materials at domestic factories and new tax incentives and "point of sale" rebates for consumers to make electric cars and trucks more affordable. That's particularly meaningful for Tesla and GM, which have exhausted previously approved federal tax incentives for purchases of their EVs.

Skilled workers will be "building a nationwide network of 500,000 charging stations. Creating good-paying jobs by leading the world in the manufacturing and export of clean electric cars and trucks," Biden said in a speech in Pittsburgh. "We're going to provide tax incentives and point of sale rebates to help all American families afford clean vehicles of the future." — *Forbes*

Biden wants to build a national EV charging system under \$2 trillion infrastructure plan

President Joe Biden is prioritizing a national EV charging network under his \$2 trillion infrastructure bill, promising to have at least 500,000 of the devices installed across the U.S. by 2030.

The Biden administration is rolling out Wednesday a \$174 billion plan to spur the development and adoption of electric vehicles that includes money to retool factories and boost domestic supply of materials, tax incentives for EV buyers, and grant and incentive programs for charging infrastructure.

But it's going to take more than government support to successfully expand EV infrastructure. There aren't enough EV drivers to make it a viable business yet, and building a network of chargers is far more complex than it sounds. It takes a mix of private-public partnerships that can involve local municipalities, businesses and utility companies as well as automakers and an emerging group of EV charging companies. It's not as simple as having a gas station at every corner.

Mo-Kan Legislative Report

Missouri Republicans block funds for voter-approved Medicaid expansion

Republican lawmakers blocked Medicaid expansion funding from reaching the Missouri House floor on Thursday, posing a setback for the voter-approved plan to increase eligibility for the state health care program.

The House Budget Committee voted along party lines not to pass a bill allowing Missouri to spend \$130 million in state funds and \$1.6 billion in federal money to pay for the program's expansion. Under the Affordable Care Act, the federal government picks up 90% of the tab on expanding Medicaid.

The increased eligibility would allow an estimated 230,000 additional low-income Missourians to be covered. It is set to go into effect in July, after voters approved a ballot question last August with a 53% majority. — *Kansas City Star*

Jeff City Republicans push through voter suppression bills

Amid a national push by Republicans, the Missouri House approved a series of changes in state election law on Thursday, drawing strong criticism from Democrats.

The legislation imposes photo ID requirements for voting, which voting

rights advocates say could pose an undue hardship, especially on the poor, racial minorities, the elderly and voters with disabilities.

The measure also prohibits counting absentee ballots until all Election Day ballots are counted, potentially delaying results.

And it bars election law changes within six months of a presidential election, which would have prevented the kinds of changes that were made to voting procedures last year when the pandemic hit.

Rep. Joe Adams, D-University City, said the proposal was "despicable."

"History is going to record that the Missouri Legislature has voted to disenfranchise people," Adams said. "We're trying to fix a problem that does not exist." — *St. Louis Post Dispatch*

Missouri voted to raise minimum wage to \$12. Republican wants to delay the increase

A Missouri lawmaker wants to stall the minimum wage hikes that voters approved statewide less than three years ago.

Rep. Cody Smith's bill would slow down the phased-in increases approved in 2018, which raised the state's minimum wage to \$10.30 an hour this year and will bring it to \$12 an hour by 2023. Instead, he wants to delay the next raise until 2024 and allow the wage floor to rise to \$12 in 2026.

His original proposal would have eliminated the increases altogether and lowered the minimum wage by more than \$3 an hour to the federal requirement of \$7.25. The proposal outraged labor groups and activists who are pushing for a \$15 minimum wage. — *Kansas City Star*



Local 249's Women's Committee sponsored the Easter Drive Hop March 28. The annual Easter Egg Hunt was transformed into a drive through event by the committee due to COVID restrictions this year. Volunteers Melody DeCoudres, Sydne Donaldson, Lynn Brown, Ny'Riell Taylor, Robin Taylor, Jessica Myers, Danielle Evans, Nicole D'Andrea, Jon'Aire Moltbia Taylor and Ely Bruso, center, packed 500 bags of candy for the children of UAW members.

Women's Committee sponsors Easter Drive Hop

By Erica Eckart

Local 249, along with everyone else in the world, is having to find ways to navigate our new normal throughout this pandemic. Thanks to the clever minds of the members of the women's committee, they were able to work together to figure out a way to carry on a local 249 Easter tradition, and host another one of the Women's committee's biggest events, all while keeping it safe and fun for everyone.

This year the Women's Committee had to figure out a way to allow the members of Local 249 and their children to participate in our Easter festivities while maintaining social distancing and adhering to CDC guidelines. They organized a two-lane drive through the parking lot at the union hall. Members were able to drop donations for the Noyes Home for Children and get a bag of candy for their little ones. We even had a special visit by the Easter bunny.

"I think the event went really well" says Danielle Evans, a member of the Women's Committee, "the highlight of the day for me would have to be the twin girls wearing matching tutu's, accepting candy from the back of their parent's car."

"For it being the first year we have tried something like this, I think it went really smooth", says Nicole Andrea. "It was a good way to continue membership involvement during a socially difficult time. I think the entire day was a highlight for me! I really enjoyed myself and loved to see our membership come together again".

"I loved that everyone one worked together and had fun with it!!, says Melody Decoudres, "I'm thankful for everyone that came out and celebrated with us. We were able to create a safe event for the membership and I love how generous people were with their donations for the orphanage!"

"The woman's Committee, along with Jason Starr and Dana Davidson, had to come up with a way to carry

on our traditions while maintaining the safety of our members and their families" said Robin Taylor, Chair of the Women's Committee.

"We knew we couldn't guarantee the safety of our members and their families if we did a normal Easter Egg Hunt, so we came up with a way to move forward with the tradition safely, without risking exposure to COVID."

"I got to thinking why not allow donations for the orphanage at the same time to make it convenient, safe and save our members a trip."

"I'm proud of the women's committee for showing up and working together to make this event a success while struggling through the recruiting and building process of the women's committee." Taylor's goal is to take the women's committee into a new direction with the focus aimed toward uplifting and empowering women and encouraging them to be a part of the change they want to see around them.

She is a strong advocate for unity and joint team efforts, she believes in brainstorming and executing plans

together as a team and her hope is to help shape leaders who share the same united mentalities.

Here's a look at what the women's committee will be up to in the next couple of months: The women's committee has decided to sponsor two women's groups from the community.

These two groups uplift and empower women to foster growth in our communities. The women's committee will select two groups to sponsor in May. The Women's committee will also be extending raffle ticket sales for the UAW T-shirt quilt.

Like most of the union's events lately, ticket sales were postponed due to Covid. Sales are set to resume when we return to work from layoff, with a targeted drawing for the quilt during the monthly Union meeting in May if the plant wide schedule permits.

Be expecting the roll out of popcorn sales soon. This event will depend on the layoff schedule so keep your eyes open for information on that! The Women's Committee would like to thank everyone for their support and participation.



Local 249 Union Label Committee Chair Paul Brink is grateful for the UAW negotiated health care coverage that paid for his wife, Susanne's surgery and the birth of their son, Luke. The medical bills were more than \$1 million, but he ended up paying only \$500 out of pocket.

The benefits of brotherhood

By Chrissy Kline

Paul Brink has experienced both the benefits and hardships of living in a union home for most of his life. Brink's father was a steward in the IBEW affording him the opportunity to learn union values from an early age. After growing up and finding himself working in staffing for 14 years, he decided he needed change. Brink had earned 8 weeks of paid vacation, but found if he took a single day off his phone would ring all day long preventing him from enjoying his time off. He had health insurance through his employer, but it came with a steep price tag.

When Brink heard that Ford Motor Company was hiring he knew that it would come with a substantial pay cut and he would lose out on all those weeks of earned vacation time. However, it also came with the security blanket of being a union member, knowing his insurance would no longer cost out of pocket and would start almost immediately, and lastly he could enjoy just being a number and have his days off truly be off from work and the worries it brings.

Brink started in the south loop in the Truck Trim Dept., eventually going utility and then making his way to stock driving in the MP&L Dept. for the last six years.

In 2016, Brink and his wife were blessed with the news they were going to be having a baby. After many years together the couple had begun to

worry this may never happen for them. Seven months into the pregnancy they learned that Brink's wife had a rare type of brain tumor called a hemangioblastoma. In approximately 12 hours she was having her skull opened for brain surgery. Brink recalls the immense fear from that day, from finding out that the love of his life, carrying their unborn child, would soon be undergoing surgery, to figuring out living wills and being forced to consider decisions about who he would choose to save if it came to that.

The surgery was a success, but it was not without its costs. For one, Brink's wife Susanne would require extensive care afterwards, and he overheard the nurses discussing transferring her and one replied "No, he works at Ford, they have great insurance so we can keep her in ICU and give her

the best care." Susanne stated, "which was great, because I didn't have to share a room because I was pregnant and far enough along, NICU had set up in the room so we had all the stuff just in case."

While these precautionary measures and comfortable arrangements were greatly appreciated, they could have left Brink bankrupt had he not been a member of the UAW with our amazing benefits. The surgeries totaled nearly a million dollars, but Brink only paid about \$500 out of pocket. Susanne shared that for her "It's not even the expense, it was the whole ordeal of everything. Regardless of the insurance. Without the union Paul could have lost his job."

Without the union the small family would have lost their home and likely been forced to declare bankruptcy and that isn't including the incredible care Susanne might have missed out on as well. She could no longer work and had to go so far as to re-learn to walk and redefine what "normal" meant in her life. Brink stated that the benefits of the UAW go beyond financial security and health insurance, there is also a brotherhood or sisterhood, a network that becomes a second family to you.

It was with their support that his family has not only survived but thrived in recent years as baby Luke was born and is currently growing into a cheerful, curious and active young boy.

Today, Brink is the Union Label Committee Chairperson, and despite wanting to spend all his free time at home with his family he can work closely with his Co-Chair Jessica Bertocci to help promote union made, American made, and local made products and businesses. Their committee was responsible for the "Design a T-Shirt" competition and providing opportunities to earn a gift card to a union butcher, supporting local BBQ and more. This committee helps to center focus on what is created here at "home" whether that is Kansas City or the USA.

Brink stated that our committees need dedicated people who are willing to put even just a little effort into our union and communities. "If you are a family-oriented person and not involved with the union you should be. It starts as two separate families that come together as one and create a powerful brotherhood that can get you through anything, you just gotta put in a little bit of effort."



Kansas City Mayor Quinton Lucas met with members of the KC Homeless Union and KC Tenants outside city hall where a group of people experiencing homelessness set up an encampment. The Mayor and City Council agreed to place up to 500 homeless Kansas Citizens in hotels for up to 90 days.

Local 249 activists support KC Homeless Union

By Shirley Mata

The KC Homeless Union won a tremendous victory following a two-month occupation of the south lawn of City Hall. The agreement negotiated between Mayor Quinton Lucas, 5th District Councilwoman Ryana Parks-Shaw and Homeless Union leader James Qadhafi Shelby was approved by the City Council April 8. The settlement provides for relocation of up to 500 homeless people to area hotels.

Calling for “housing not handcuffs,” one of the key demands of the Homeless Union was the decriminalization of homelessness.

Homelessness has increased during the coronavirus pandemic. The Greater Kansas City Coalition to End Homelessness estimates that 1,733 adults and children experienced homelessness during January this year.

Support for the homeless protest at City Hall came from several organizations including KC Tenants and UAW Local 249.

UAW activists Gary Thomas, Jay Bosler, Kelsey Pinzino, David Winkler, Travis Adams, Lucas Taylor, Sam Wilson and I were at the encampment in the days preceding the settlement with the city to provide support and solidarity.

That experience demonstrated

to all of us just how difficult it is to be homeless.

Like the homeless people I was there to support, I needed food, water and a bathroom so I walked a few blocks to a gas station.

I bought water and a snack. After I paid, I asked where the bathroom was. I was told they were closed to the public.

Later I needed lunch and more water, so I walked to the store. After my purchase was told the same thing, bathrooms were not open to the public. I had been with the homeless at City Hall eight hours by this time and started to get mad.

I was told by an activist there I could go use the bathroom at the Jackson County Courthouse. I asked if everyone could if they passed through security. I was told no the

homeless could not. Now I was mad. I decided to tough it out, but I knew, at the end of the day, I was going home to sleep in a warm bed — something the people I was there to support could not do.

Other aspects of homelessness, I learned, keep people trapped in that life no matter how hard they try to get out. Simple things, like getting a birth certificate, driver’s license or other forms of ID are nearly impossible without an address.

That’s why one of the demands of the Homeless Union was seeking confirmation that people will be able to use the hotel they’re staying at as their “proof of address” when securing documents necessary to acquire identification and employment.

I also learned that people using area homeless shelters are required to leave during the day and take all their belongings with them making it even more difficult to get and hold a job.

I left City Hall after sitting with the homeless for more than 11 hours. I was hot, wind-blown, sun burned, hungry, had to go to the bathroom bad, mad

and so full of emotion and thoughts I couldn’t put them together.

The day got to me. Seeing the need of these people and the guilt of knowing but not knowing. A friend had commented on my post earlier in the day we are all only one or two pay checks away from being homeless if we lose our jobs or our plants close. Two days later I was still with the homeless at City Hall in my heart and mind.

The experience taught me that we need real solutions to the problem of homelessness. Jailing homeless people, tearing down their tents and carting off their few, precious belongings is not a solution.

The hotel rooms provided by the agreement with the city will be guaranteed for 90 days with the possibility of an extension.

Big as the victory is, the Kansas City Homeless Union recognizes that these policies alone will not end homelessness in Kansas City. The group plans to continue organizing for an end to homelessness, and for safe, accessible, truly affordable homes for all in Kansas City.

State Sen. Lauren Arthur on Medicaid expansion

By State Sen. Lauren Arthur

On April 28, the Missouri Senate voted against funding Medicaid expansion as called for by voters last year. The Senate vote locked in the House's decision to refuse expansion of the program.

I've never been more disappointed. I've never been more disheartened by public service. The people spoke; they told us that they want to expand Medicaid. Any policy dispute is done. It's the legislature's job to fund it.

Over the years, I've heard many cynical excuses for not expanding Medicaid. I listened to GOP colleagues fight against helping hundreds of thousands of Missourians gain access to healthcare coverage.

That obstruction killed people. Real people, Missourians, died. People died from cancer because they didn't get a diagnosis in time or couldn't afford treatment. People died from heart disease because they couldn't get preventative care. Hundreds of lives were lost every year for the last decade. Who are those people? Wives, fathers, grandparents, young adults, friends, neighbors and coworkers, working Missourians who made too much money to qualify for Medicaid but not enough money to buy into the federal marketplace. Despite these deaths, and without any irony, the same GOP colleagues who rejected Medicaid expansion tried to claim the mantle of being pro-life.

When the legislature is not responsive to its citizens, the people themselves can change the law via the ballot and initiative petition process. Here, a diverse coalition including various Chambers of Commerce, the Missouri Hospital Association, labor unions, religious groups, and community advocates all voiced their support to expand Medicaid. 53% of voters agreed, enshrining it into the state constitution. They declared that helping working Missourians access healthcare would make our population healthier, grow our economy, and strengthen our healthcare system.

Our state constitution now includes language expanding Medicaid eligibility. As office holders, we took an oath pledging to uphold the constitution. While I assume that nearly every elected Republican personally opposed Medicaid expansion and voted against it, they all must accept the policy decision of the voters. This is about governing, not political games. We are accountable to the voters, not political parties. The Republican Senators who voted against funding

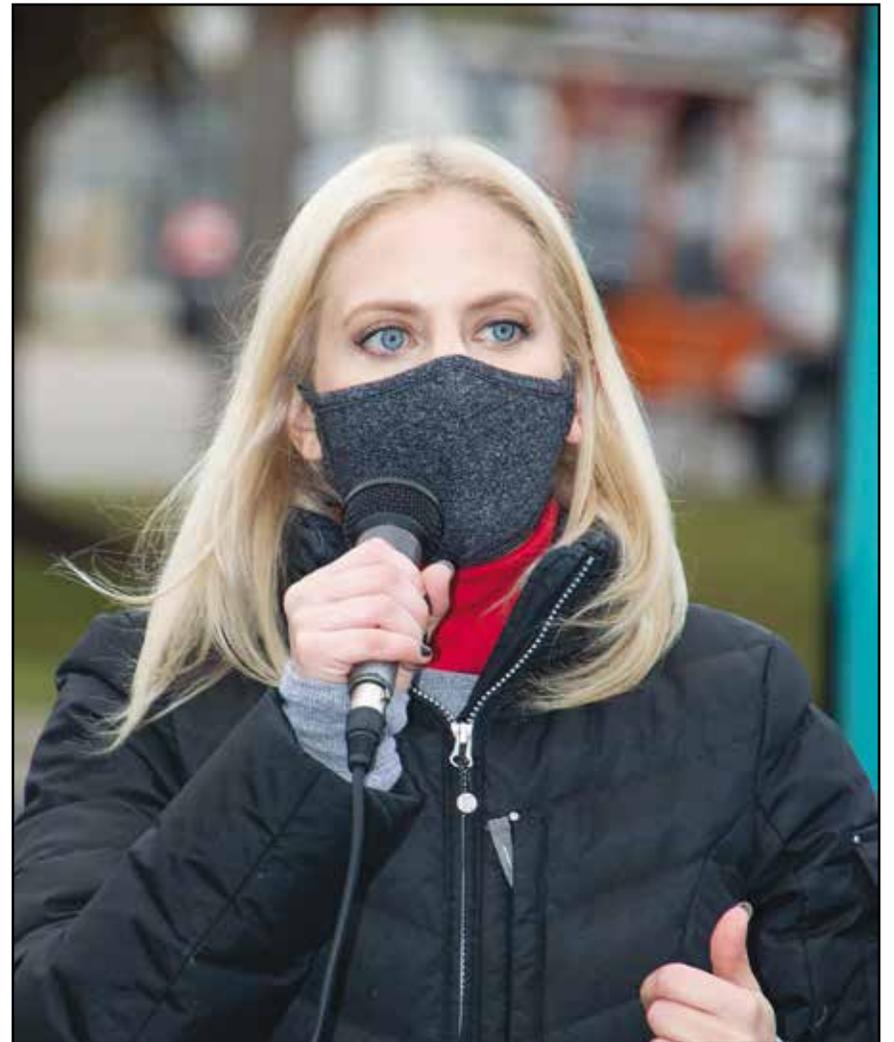
Medicaid expansion neglected their oath and damaged the legacy of the General Assembly.

This is a basic and foundational tenet of our democracy, and that the legislature thinks they can overturn the outcome of the election and just do whatever they please poses an alarming and existential threat.

Some have argued that Missouri just can't afford Medicaid expansion. That does not square with the facts. I've heard numerous appropriations committee members – Republican and Democratic – acknowledge that our state is flush with cash. We're well above projected revenues. The supermajority uses this as an argument to justify tax cuts that benefit corporations and billionaires.

Not funding Medicaid expansion is wholly unacceptable. We are supposed to be public servants. If an elected official cannot serve the people, cannot do what the people expressly asked, cannot make hard votes, he or she has no place in public office.

I am hopeful the courts will remedy this situation and direct the General Assembly to stop playing games and start funding Medicaid expansion. The families affected need certainty and access to healthcare.



Missouri State Sen. Lauren Arthur fought for Medicaid expansion in the legislature. Missouri House Republicans blocked funding for Medicaid expansion even though Missouri voters passed the measure in a statewide referendum in August. Arthur represents District 17, which includes Liberty, Kansas City (North), Gladstone, NKC and Pleasant Valley.

Standing for the will of the people in Jeff City

With Jeff City Republicans ignoring the will of the voters on Medicaid expansion, and some declaring they are “proud to stand against the will of the people,” labor’s allies in the state capitol — though few in number — are fighting back.

“When funding for the budget, including funding for Medicaid Expansion, hit the floor. I was not silent during the debate,” says **Patty Lewis**, who represents House District 25 in South Kansas City. “I spoke out fighting to fund Medicaid, fighting for the lives of Missourians, and fighting to protect the will of the voters.”

Democratic State Rep. **Keri Ingle**, who represents Dist. 35 in Lee Summit, reports that “the House of Representatives on March 22 voted 109-44 to prohibit Missouri courts from changing false or misleading ballot language written by lawmakers for proposed constitutional

amendments or laws the legislature places before voters. The Republican-backed measure now moves to the Senate.”

The Missouri secretary of state typically is responsible for writing the ballot language explaining what proposed ballot measures would do. However, lawmakers have the statutory prerogative to write their own ballot language for measures that come through the legislature, although until recent years that power was exercised sparingly, according to Ingle.

House Bill 850 would strip the courts of the authority to alter ballot language drafted by legislature. As a

result, the only remedy left to a court if it determines ballot language is false or misleading would be to issue an injunction barring the underlying measure from the ballot, says Ingle.

State Sen. **Greg Razer**, a Democrat who represents parts of Kansas City, says state continues to devalue higher education.

“State funding provided to Missouri’s colleges and universities is almost identical to what the state gave to them in 1999,” says Razer. “Missouri continues to devalue higher education – from trade schools to the top-of-the-line institutions. He wants the state to boost funding to them to help ensure that every student can afford to reach their full potential – regardless of where they are from.”

Semiconductor shortage stops KCAP production

By Jim Fisher

On April 21, Ford officially announced it would stop production at KCAP along with most assembly plants in North America due to the continued effects of the global semiconductor shortage. Currently, the plant is scheduled to return to production on May 17. However, this situation is constantly changing, and we will keep members notified if schedules are adjusted again.

Members have by now received instructions on how to file for Unemployment and SUB Pay. Any member who the State of Missouri has identified as serving a "Waiting Period" must print off a copy of their claim status and either take it to Labor Relations or they can also drop it off at the Union Hall.

We have received a lot of questions as to why members now need to drop off the documentation. The answer is the State of Missouri no longer reports the "Waiting Period" to Ford.

I also want to remind members that the Local Union is not able to pay members, that is strictly the company's responsibility. The decision was made to keep the Union Hall open to assist as a service to the membership. Some members were having issues with unemployment, pay issues, SUB payments, and general questions.

I want to thank the Local 249 Executive Board, Bargaining Committee, and staff at the Union Hall for their involvement in making every effort to try to help speed up the pay process and answer questions for members during this layoff. In addition, I want to personally thank Erica Eckart and Jay Bosler. Both members were placed on layoff. However, they both just showed up at the Union Hall and started volunteering their time for several days to also assist members in getting their pay processed and showing members how to print their claims off the unemployment website.

They both could have been at home relaxing but decided to come in and help. They have both displayed the true meaning of being a Union member and assisting their brothers and sisters in a time of need.

If members are having any pay issues Local 249 has set up an e-mail at subissues@local249.org that members can e-mail their questions to, members can also call the Union Hall at (816) 454-6333, and of course members can stop by the Union Hall. We are currently also keeping our Benefits Department open at the Union Hall to assist with any health care questions.

On April 8, the company announced that due to the semiconductor shortage KCAP will not be

scheduling the traditional summer vacation shutdown. The reason for this is the company wanted the flexibility of increasing production schedules once the parts issues are resolved. This will allow our members to be able to schedule their vacation time as they see fit. We have also been meeting with the company to discuss ways to improve the calendar program to ensure members are able to use their vacation time.

The Truck Side of the plant has been in the "New Launch Phase" for the 2021 F-150 since November. The company originally attempted to cut jobs out even before the truck had reached the assembly line. Then once the truck was placed in the production process the company attempted cutting more jobs before the production have ever reached its JPH. Ford attempted to resolve the lack of JPH by bringing in management from other plants. However, the issue was really addressed when an agreement was reached to ask some members of the UAW Truck Launch Team to go back out and fix the issues with production, quality and workstations.

I want to be as forward with this as possible. The KCAP F-150 quickly returned to its high quality and reputation not because a bunch of out-of-town supervisors huddled up together drinking coffee at the end of



Local 249 Bargaining Chair Jim Fisher reported the the semiconductor shortage has shut down production in both the Transit and Truck systems at KCAP at the April Membership Meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

chassis for 10 hours a day, it was fixed by the UAW members who know how to build the best truck in the world getting back to the floor and fixing what the company had messed up. We often talk about having the best workforce in the industry, this just proves our members are the reason the quality and dependability of this plant is the way it is.

In the month of April, KCAP converted 30 more temporary members to full time In-Progression status. So far this year 145 of our temporary members have completed the conversion process to In-Progression status. We would like to congratulate those

members for their hard work and dedication. We are continuing to monitor the layoff and impact of our temporary workforce.

Currently all TFT's are being coded "S" Code for the temporary layoff. The "S" code is a protected code towards continuous service, even if coded beyond 30 continuous days. Meetings continue with the UAW International and Ford's Labor Affairs about the impact of the temporary members not just in our plant, but all the UAW temporary members in Ford's facilities. If there is a change or any additional communication, it will be passed on to those members impacted.

Biden to bring semiconductor production back to U.S.

President Biden on Semiconductor Shortage

Remember that old proverb: "For want of a nail, the shoe was lost. For want of a shoe, the horse was lost." And it goes on and on until the kingdom was lost, all for the want of a horseshoe nail. Even small failures at one point in the supply chain can cause outside impacts further up the chain.

Recently, we've seen how a shortage of computer chips ... has caused delays in production of automobiles that has resulted in reduced hours for American workers. A 21st century horseshoe nail.

We need to make sure these supply chains are secure and reliable. I'm directing senior officials in my admin-

istration to work with industrial leaders to identify solutions to this semiconductor shortfall and work very hard with the House and Senate.

In the meantime, we're reaching out to our allies, semiconductor companies, and others in the supply chain to ramp up production to help us resolve the bottlenecks we face now.

We need to stop playing catch up after the supply-chain crisis hit. We need to prevent the supply chain crisis from hitting in the first place.

And in some cases, building resilience will mean increasing our production of certain types of elements here at home. In others, it'll mean working more closely with our trusted friends and partners, nations that share our values, so that our supply chains can't be used against us as leverage.

It will mean identifying and building surge capacity that can quickly be turned into and ramped up production in times of emergency.

Jeff City delays 249 unemployment, SUB checks

By Jason Starr

The layoffs in the Transit and Truck systems at KCAP are now stretching into the middle of May and perhaps longer. UAW Local 249 members are struggling to get the State unemployment and UAW Negotiated SUB checks they are due because Missouri Gov. Mike Parson, a Republican, refuses to waive the 10-day employer hold and the waiting week. The situation for UAW members is further delayed by the refusal of Labor Relations to take reasonable steps to speed checks to members. The union is still fighting with the state and company to get checks to members who were laid off in February.

Missouri law provides a 10-day period for employers to file a protest when employees file for unemployment. It also provides for a waiting week where no benefits are paid. These could be waived by Gov. Parson — as Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon did many times for Local 249 members in the past. In fact, when KCAP was partially closed for nearly 2 years for retooling to build the Transit, Gov. Nixon dispatched state unemployment workers to our union hall each week to assist members in getting the pay they were entitled to.

Our legislative allies, Lauren Arthur and Mark Ellebracht have appealed to the Governor and his staff to waive the waiting periods to speed checks to our members, but they have refused. We received a call from Missouri Auditor Nicole Galloway, a Democrat, offering to help our members. Her assistance helped us reach out directly to the acting director at the Missouri Department of Employment Security who informed us there would be no changes

to the current policies to expedite the processing of claims.

Local 249 is working proactively to assist members during this difficult and frustrating time. Volunteers Jay Bosler and Erica Eckart from our CAP Committee have stepped forward to staff the union hall to help members with filing for unemployment. During the past couple of weeks, thousands of members have come to our Union Hall for help in filing. We have secured additional equipment to help process claims and print out claim status verification. Once the paperwork is completed, members of the Bargaining Committee are taking the paperwork across the street to Labor Relations and verifying that company Labor Reps are manually inputting the information to expedite payment of our UAW Negotiated SUB benefits.

The delays members are experiencing are no accident. In 2015, Republicans — who have veto proof control of both the Missouri House and Senate



Local 249 President Jason Starr reports that inaction by Missouri Gov. Mike Parson is delaying unemployment and SUB pay checks to Local 249 members. Photo by Don Lehman.

— voted to cut unemployment from 20 to 13 weeks. This was later ruled unconstitutional by the Missouri Supreme Court. Undeterred, Republican lawmakers are once again considering cutting the amount of time people can claim state unemployment benefits in this session of the legislature.

Republican legislators in both Missouri and Kansas have cut funding from unemployment programs for decades now. As a result, the systems for filing and paying benefits now are unable to keep up. That is why our members are waiting hours on hold, being disconnected, and experiencing glitches when they try to file online.

In addition to adding volunteer staff to help members get their unemployment and sub pay, the union has

added an e-mail address, subissues@local249.org, where members can ask questions and get assistance.

The union is doing everything it can to help members get the checks they are owed, but you can do your part, too. Contact the office of Governor Michael L. Parson by writing a letter addressed to P.O. Box 720, Jefferson City, MO 65102 or by phoning 573-751-3222 to ask the Governor to waive the 10-day protest period and waiting weeks. You can also send an e-mail by filling out a form at: <https://governor.mo.gov/contact-us>

And, when the next election rolls around, members should remember which elected officials were there to help working people like us and which are not.

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.



Newly retired and living with the new normal

By Cecilia Davis

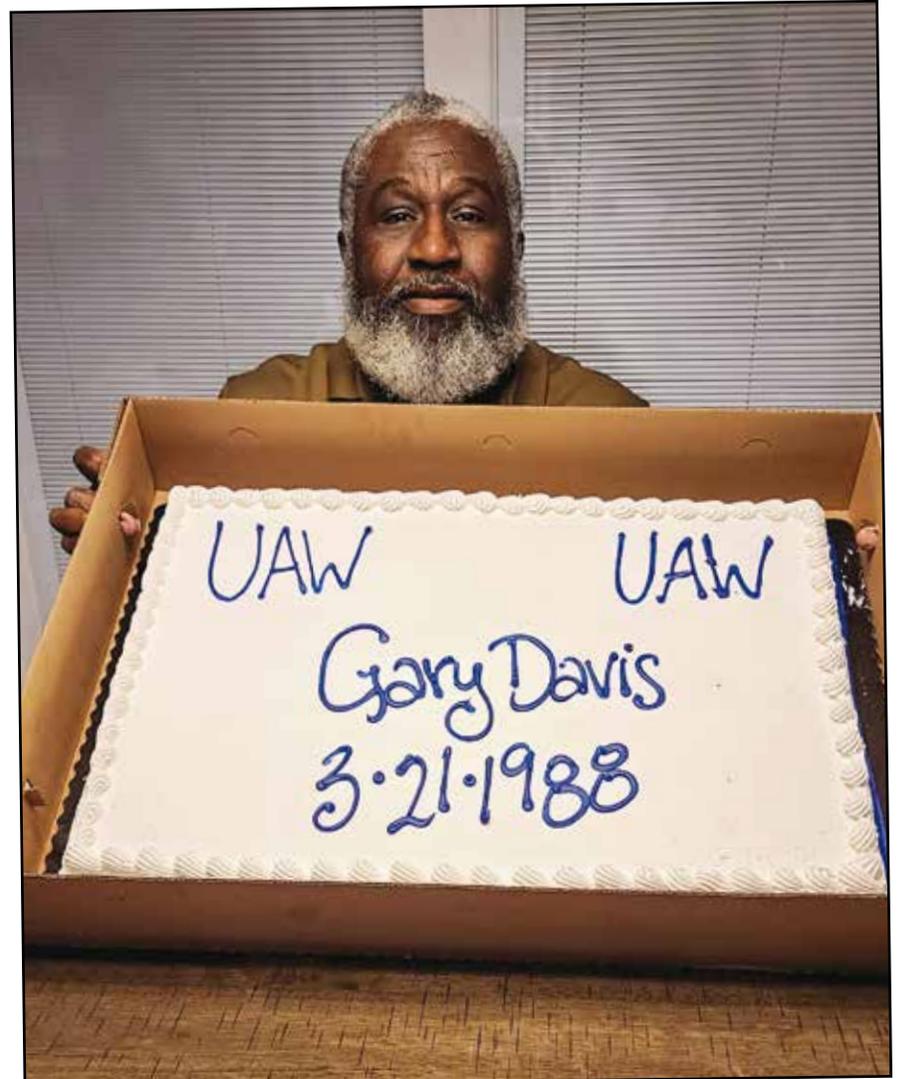
The meaning of retirement is the ultimate prize of a hardworking employee like Gary Davis. In fact, retirement is one of the number one goals in any adult lifetime. With so much success of a supreme accomplishment, comes with a triumphant amount of emotions. But, what about retiring during an unknown pandemic that can wreck any future plans financially and more so, physically?

It was about that time where multiple employees have served their necessary time to have the option to retire. Among all of them, there was a happy-go-lucky man name, Davis, who was eager to leave, but was also timid to venture off into the unknown land of life with no employment. With thirty-three years under his belt, a lot has changed before he was employed with Ford Motor Company. He started in the plant at St. Paul, Minnesota before he took the opportunity to transfer to the Kansas City plant. A massive life change was common for this man, such as to building a new life in an unfamiliar location and time. So handling a new pace of life on his own terms should be no problem.

On April 1, he signed on the dotted line to retirement with so much delight. When he was ready to say his last few good-byes to his fellow co-workers and friends, him and along with the rest of the KCAP, was notified that we were closing momentarily due to COVID.

Sent home with a cake to feed 100, Gary was baffled that his thirty-three years was somewhat swept under the rug. With the feeling of leaving at the right time, COVID had ceased any kind of retirement celebration that Gary had intended to have. Covid had made him feel resentful knowing that it had then over shadowed his change in plans. Instead of laying on a balmy beach sipping on his choice of beverage, like any retiree would have wanted, he had no choice but to become a hermit inside his very own household. It was an instant halt in life.

With COVID still affecting society, multiple vaccines have been produced to lower the chance of infection, Gary can now proceed with his intended agenda to live a somewhat normal retirement. "My suggestion to anyone that's "ready" to take that remarkable bound of retirement is, don't take too much time emphasizing on your exact plan on what you will be doing after you retire. Find your new normal."



Local 249 member Gary Davis retired March 21 after 33 years at Ford. He started at the Minneapolis-St. Paul plant before transferring to KCAP.

A graphic showing a smartphone with a social media app icon on the screen. The text "Social media" is written above the icon.

KEEP UP
With Local 249 on Instagram
<https://www.instagram.com/uawlocal249/>

A graphic showing a close-up of a microphone.

LISTEN
UAW Local 249 Solidarity Academy Podcast
<https://anchor.fm/uaw>



Local 249 members in the Team Solutions unit — the cleaning company at the Ford Motor Kansas City Assembly Plant — voted overwhelmingly April 16 to authorize a strike, if necessary, to win a fair contract. There are 180 full time and 40 part-time workers in the unit.

Team Solutions unit votes to authorize strike

By Pat Hayes

Local 249 members who work for Team Solutions – the cleaning company at KCAP – voted overwhelmingly on April 16 to authorize a strike, if necessary, to win a new contract. The vote to authorize a strike passed with 98.66% in favor, sending a strong signal to the bosses that workers are serious about achieving their demands.

Passage of a strike authorization vote does not necessarily mean there will be a strike by clean-up workers at KCAP, but it gives the union bargaining team the authority to call a strike if Team Solutions refuses to bargain in good faith or agree to a fair contract.

Currently, 180 full time and 40 part time Local 249 members work for Team Solutions, a Canadian-based company. “There just aren’t enough of us to do the kind of quality job required by a 5.5 million square foot-plus facility with four major production plants sitting on 1,269 acres,” says David Norris, the Bargaining Chairman for Local 249’s Team Solutions unit.

“We know UAW members have

additional concerns about cleaning and sanitation due to the coronavirus pandemic,” says Norris, “our members are concerned, too. They want to do a good job, but the lack of training, understaffing, and management disregard for our members undermines the work we need to do.”

The current UAW contract with Team Solutions expires on April 25. Norris and the international UAW bargaining team are fighting for lump sum raises over the life of the four-year contract. Wage increase would provide additional security for our members and their families

Norris believes that one key to improving quality is to provide part-

time workers more of an incentive to remain with the clean-up company. That is why the union is bargaining to secure coverage for medical and dental benefits for part-time workers with Team Solutions.

Like Ford workers hired after 2007, Team Solutions workers no longer receive a defined benefit pension. With 30 workers who now have more than 10 years working for Team Solutions, the UAW negotiators are fighting for an increased match to members 401k accounts so that those members can have a retirement income when their working years come to an end.

Full time Team Solutions members receive profit sharing and under the current agreement. Negotiators are working to secure these benefits and provide an equitable profit sharing formula for our part-time workers who directly contribute to the company’s profitability.

Norris believes that restrooms and

production areas at KCAP would be cleaner if his members could choose an area preference for where they work. Currently, Team Solutions members are assigned to different areas each day preventing them from becoming familiar with the routine tasks for the area they find themselves in.

“Our members want a clean, sanitary and safe work environment,” says Local 249 President Jason Starr, who represents our Team members as Unit Chairperson. “I know our Team Solutions Members want that, too.” “It’s simply not good enough to say we are all on the same team or put out feel good statements on how highly employees are valued. When people aren’t paid enough to provide for their

families or live a decent life, that speaks more loudly than words or empty promises. We say to Team Solutions and to Ford, don’t tell us how much you appreciate our work, show us at the collective bargaining table.