

FIRST LOCAL NEWS

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

August 2021

**Local 249
Veterans donate
to Hope Faith | p 7**

**249 women pitch
in with Habitat for
Humanity | p 6**

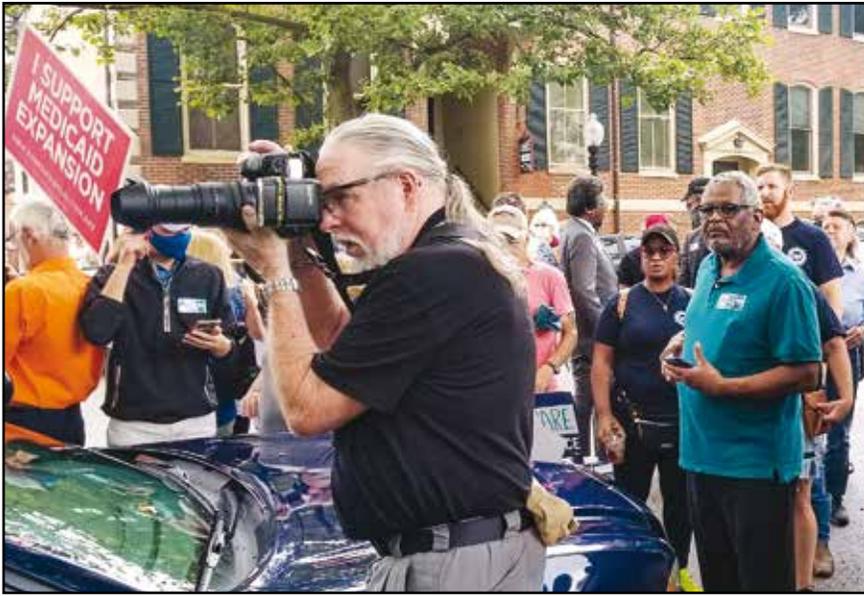


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8040 NE 69 Highway
Pleasant Valley, MO 64068



Local 249 members demand Gov. Mike Parson fund Medicaid expansion
in front of the governor's mansion July 1. Photo by Don Lehman.



Local 249 photographer, Don Lehman, won the prestigious Fred Taylor Award for best photograph taken in 2020 at the Local Union Communications Association award ceremony in June. Photo by Chrissy Kline.



Chrissy Kline, left, and Gwen Starkey both won first place awards for articles they wrote for Local 249's First Local News in 2020 at the LUCA Excellence in Communications awards ceremony last month. File photo by Don Lehman.



Missouri State Reps Mark Ellebracht, left, and Robert Sauls, right, join striking Machinists Local 778 members on the picket line. Workers there decided to strike rather than take a 10% pay cut.

First Local News

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Reporters Cecelia, Davis, Erica Eckart, Chrissy Kline and Gwen Starkey
Photographer Don Lehman

UAW Local 249

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Officers of Local 249

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2nd Vice President Tom Carr
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Financial Secretary Dana Davidson
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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

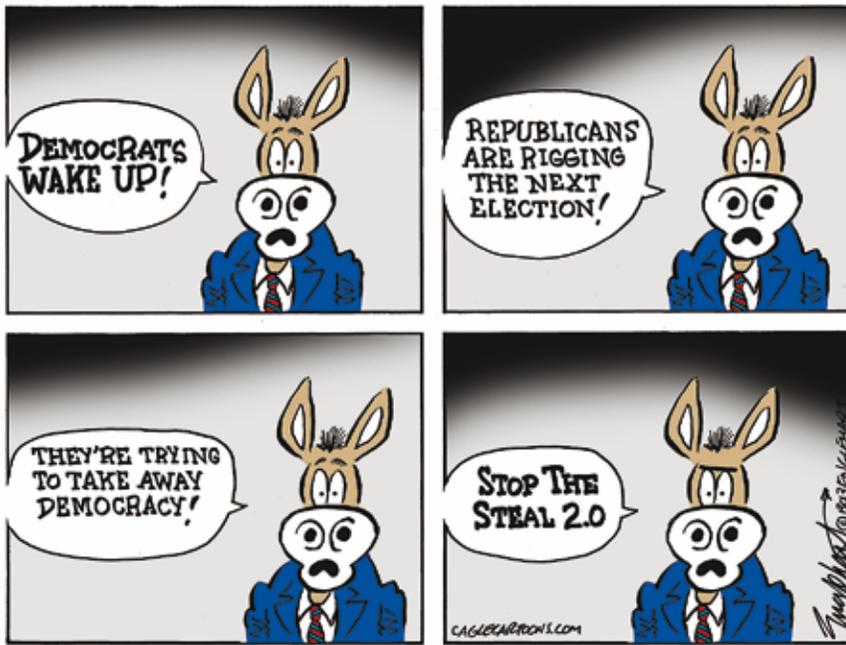
UAW-Ford TESPHE 1-800-248-4444

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UAW President Rory L. Gamble

President Rory L. Gamble was elected to the office of vice president of the UAW in June 2018 at the union's 37th Constitutional Convention in Detroit. Gamble previously served three terms as director of UAW Region 1A. On November 3, 2019, he assumed the position of UAW Acting President, appointed by the International Executive Board (IEB). On December 5, 2019, the UAW IEB named Acting President Gamble to fill the vacancy of President until the June 2022 Convention.

Gamble, a welder fixture repairman, joined the UAW in 1974 when he was hired at the Ford Motor Company Dearborn Frame Plant. He immediately became active in UAW Local 600 and has since served in numerous elected and appointed positions. In 1975, Local 600 members elected him to serve as a plant trustee.

Since 1987 Gamble's assignments have included local union health and safety coordinator, employee support services program, education director, civil rights coordinator, fitness center coordinator, and family services and learning center coordinator.

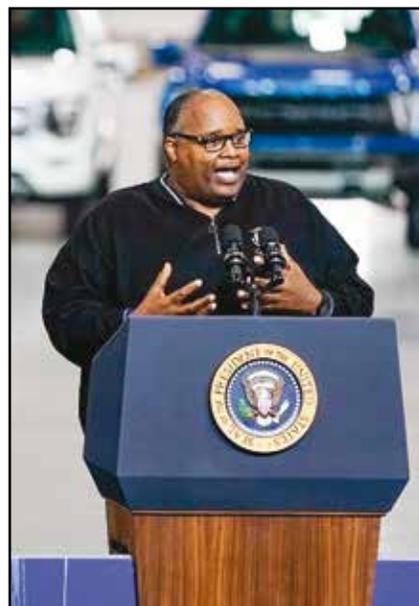
He has served as director of Local 600 Ford units, including Dearborn Engine and Fuel Tank, Dearborn Truck Plant, Milan, Industrial Athlete and Dearborn Frame. Other assignments have included retirees' liaison and coordinator of the Rouge Rehabilitation Center.

In 1998 and 2003, Gamble served on the UAW-Ford National Negotiating Team. From 1993 to 2002, he was elected to three terms as the local's recording secretary. Gamble was elected first vice president of Local 600 in 2002 and re-elected in 2005.

Gamble has received numerous awards including the Spirit of Detroit award in 1999; the 2006 Horace L. Sheffield Jr. Humanitarian Award; and the 2008 Minority Women's Network (Detroit chapter) Man of the Year award. He is a member of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists; the Trade Union Lead-

ers Council; the Michigan Humane Society and a life member of the NAACP. He serves on the board of Bridging Communities, a grassroots collaborative of Southwest Detroit businesses, labor organizations, churches and residents.

Gamble is a graduate of the labor studies program at Wayne State University. He lives in Detroit with his fiancé Bridget and is the father of five children: Anthony, Rory Jr., Raenard, Rashaun and Rahshidah, and grandfather to 34 grandchildren. — *UAW*



UAW President Rory L. Gamble will retire at the end of June. He will serve through June 30, 2021. He was named acting president in 2019.

Labor News From the World Wide Web

The Picket Line

UAW president announces retirement

UAW President Rory L. Gamble informed staff at noon today that he has notified the UAW International Executive Board (IEB) that he will retire at the end of June. He will serve through June 30, 2021.

Under the UAW Constitution, the IEB will elect a successor to serve the remainder of the term through June 2022.

"I said on Day One I would hand over the keys to this treasured institution as a clean union," said Gamble, 65. "My original intent as a UAW Vice President was to retire at the end of June 2021, and after looking at the progress we have made and the best interests of UAW members for a stable transfer of power, this is the right time for me to turn over the reins."

Gamble added that he hopes his retirement will usher in a period of multiple term presidents for the UAW. "You need time to settle in and look at the long-range focus and priorities of our membership," he said. "Especially in this time of vast technological change."

Gamble will be remembered for steering the UAW through a comprehensive ethics reforms initiative and ultimately saving the union from a potential government takeover. He was also a leading voice in guiding the UAW and American manufacturing through the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic; navigating the semiconductor crisis; and UAW support for Joe Biden in the 2020 Presidential Election.

Gamble said he intends to remain involved in community work after retiring including the Thaw Board. "I'm blessed to be able to spend time with my family and continue to work giving back to the community," said Gamble. "I'll always look back on the sisters and brothers who together made my time in the UAW so special. And although I never intended to be UAW President, I hope that my chapter in our history will long be remembered for righting the ship, facing a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic head on and saving lives, while setting up my union for a bright future. As a team we accomplished much to be proud of." — *UAW*

Prosecutors recommend 14-month sentence for former UAW official Vance Pearson

Federal prosecutors are asking a judge to sentence former United Auto Workers official Vance Pearson to 14 months in prison — lower than sentencing guidelines based on his cooperation with investigators — for his role in an embezzlement scheme that brought down the union's top leadership.

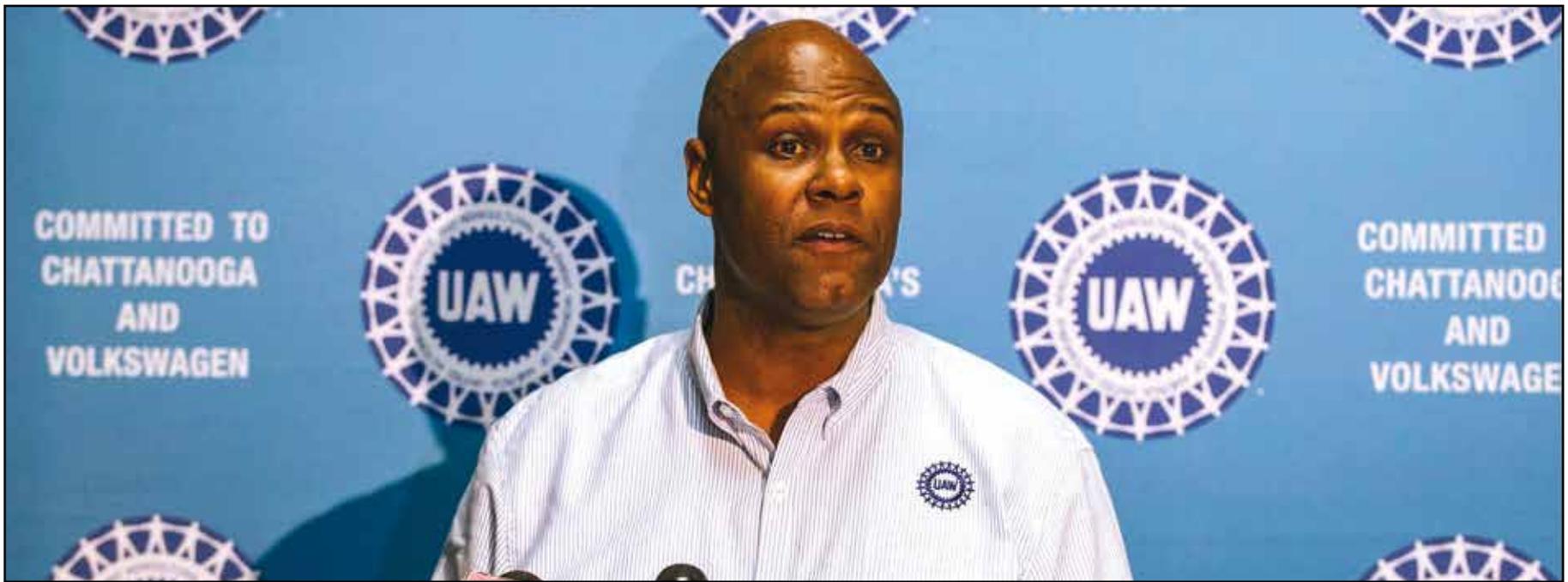
Acting U.S. Attorney Saima Mohsin's office on Tuesday filed a sentencing memorandum and motion to reduce Pearson's sentence below the guideline range of 24 to 30 months. Prosecutors cited Pearson's "substantial assistance" in the case that has led to 15 convictions and six years of independent oversight of the union. — *Detroit News*

UAW Members at Volvo truck ratify contract

UAW Local 2069 members ratified the common overall agreement and hourly agreement at Volvo Mack Truck Wednesday and the strike will be suspended. The salaried contract was voted down narrowly. Members will return to work on their Sunday and Monday shifts.

"The democratic process played out at Volvo Trucks. UAW Members stood together through their strike and now the overall agreement and hourly agreement have been ratified despite the company's actions earlier in the week," said Ray Curry, President of the UAW and Director of the Heavy Truck Department. Curry said the UAW Constitution provides for an established process that will work to address the concerns raised by members over the salary agreement which narrowly failed.

The six-year agreement includes elimination of the second tier; health care premiums protected for the life of the agreement; provides protections around shift scheduling and plant operations; as well as providing a major signing bonus and aggressive annual wage improvements every year of the agreement. — *UAW*



The UAW International Executive Board unanimously elected Secretary-Treasurer Ray Curry to serve as president until the June 2022 convention.

IEB elects Ray Curry UAW President

UAW

With a focus on building, growing, and strengthening membership, the UAW International Executive Board (IEB), on Monday June 28, unanimously elected Secretary-Treasurer Ray Curry to serve as UAW President upon the retirement of Rory L. Gamble for the remainder of the current term, which ends in June 2022 at the 38th Constitutional Convention.

Curry, 55, will officially assume the office of President on July 1, 2021.

"It is a great honor for me to serve this historic union and the more than 1 million active and retired members," Curry said. "I am so proud of our UAW sisters and brothers who work every day to better not just their own lives, but the lives of their neighbors and communities. As president, I pledge to continue to build upon our commitment to a culture of transparency, reforms and checks and balances. I want to also say that I will be embracing the model that has been set forth by my brother and friend, Rory L. Gamble, to be accessible and accountable to our members, to keep them informed and engaged. Rory has led us through the storm, and we are so grateful for his leadership."

Curry added, "Rory and I are absolutely committed to making this a smooth, transparent transition for our membership. And we are both dedicated to the reforms that we have put in place for the UAW. I could not be prouder of our union and what I know we will be able to accomplish together in the coming years."

Under Curry, the UAW implemented comprehensive top-to-bottom financial ethics reforms including im-

plementation of internal and external auditing as well as enhanced reporting procedures and a complete review of financial systems and checks and balances while serving as Secretary-Treasurer, the union's chief financial officer.

Within his bargaining sector assignments, the members of UAW-Heavy Truck and UAW-General Dynamics sectors have enjoyed financial gains

and increased job security provisions during recently negotiated contracts while the members of the Agricultural Implement sector have continued to enforce current contractual terms along with health and safety provisions in their workplace to protect their memberships during the global pandemic as they prepare for the upcoming rounds of negotiations in 2021-2023.

"The elected leadership of the entire International Executive Board has been tasked to build, grow and strengthen our union and take the next exciting steps for our members and the working men and women of this nation," said Curry. "There is much to be done. It is time to put our nose to the

grindstone in Solidarity and lead this union into a future of new possibilities."

Curry stressed that there are significant challenges ahead but underscored that the union is in a strong position to meet them.

"Industry is at a crossroads right now with massive changes in new innovative technologies. It will be up to us to navigate through this monumental shift in mobility and manufacturing," he said. "And certainly, our priority — and my priority — is to grow our membership across all sectors, and new sectors, including gaming, higher education, public health, parts suppliers and auto transnationals. Whether in Charleston, South Carolina, Alabama, New York, or California, these workers and educators all deserve a voice in the workplace, and it is our duty to make that happen."

A North Carolina native, Curry worked as an assembler at Freightliner Trucks in Mount Holly, North Carolina before being hired to the UAW staff in 2004 and has served on the UAW IEB since 2014, when he was elected Regional Director of UAW Region 8. He was elected Secretary-Treasurer in 2018 and also directs the Heavy Truck, General Dynamics, and Agricultural Implementation Departments.

Curry is a graduate of the University of North Carolina Charlotte with a B.S. in Business Administration/Finance and an MBA from the University of Alabama.

He served three years on active duty in the U.S. Army and five years in the U.S. Army Reserves.

Ray Curry Bio

Elected UAW Secretary-Treasurer at the 37th Constitutional Convention in June 2018, Ray Curry was instrumental in the implementation of broad financial ethics reforms and oversight as part of the UAW's Ethics Reforms Initiative.

Curry was elected Director of UAW Region 8 in June 2014 at the 36th UAW Constitutional Convention in Detroit after having served four years as the region's assistant director.

A North Carolina native and military veteran, Curry served three years on active duty in the U.S. Army and five years in the U.S. Army Reserve.

He is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration/Finance. He holds a Master of Business Administration, MBA, degree from the University of Alabama.

Curry joined the UAW in July 1992, when he was hired as a truck assembler at Freightliner Trucks in Mount Holly, North Carolina. He served on the local's civil rights committee and as a delegate for the area A. Philip Randolph Chapter.



Local 249 members Austin McFarland, Robin Taylor, Lynn Brown, Sydne Danaldson, Lukas Taylor, Kelsey Pinzino, Sam Wilson, Dolandra Leak, Gary Thomas, David Winkler, Nicholas Dibben, Chris Allindor, Travis Adams, Amy Minich, Stephanie Simpson, Shirley Mata, Jessica Bertocci and Arnetha Omeka helped with security and other tasks at the protest. Photo by Don Lehman.

Local 249: Putting the solid in solidarity

By Pat Hayes

Activists from UAW Local 249 and 710 joined tenants of Gabriel Towers in Kansas City June 26 to protest the slumlord Frank Sinito, the owner of Millenia Companies, which manages the property. The tenants, who are organizing with KC Tenants, complain about lack of air conditioning, black mold, insect infestation and unrepaired plumbing problems. They demand safe, accessible, and truly affordable homes.

In 2020 Millenia Companies was found in default of its contract at Gabriel Towers by Kansas City's urban renewal agency following testimony by tenants and building inspectors. Millennia has an agreement with the city's Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority which allows it to avoid paying property taxes amounting to some \$55,000 a year.

A subsequent inspection of the building by New Horizons, an environmental services company, found several kinds of mold, including black mold, in air samples.

The large and boisterous rally held in front of the housing project at Jackson and 16th Street on the East Side called for a People's Housing Trust Fund to support the preservation and production of affordable housing that would increase opportunities for families and individuals to access decent affordable homes.

The trust envisioned by KC Ten-

ants and their supporters would be overseen by people directly impacted by housing insecurity. Funding would come by divesting evictors, slumlords and gentrifiers.

"I believed I was poor because I did something wrong," Jenay Manley, a leader of KC Tenants told the large enthusiastic crowd. "I was wrong. The problem is not us. It is the system. It is the profiteers who run this town."

Many of the residents of Gabriel Towers, which describes itself as "an apartment community for those 62 and better, handicapped, or disabled," have been organizing to demand that Millennia make needed repairs for several years.

"I joined the union and I changed my life," says Sharice Crawford, a disabled tenant. "At Gabriel Towers, the power we have is the power of our union. We are like a family. Kansas City doesn't want to love us like it should, so we've got to love each other."

Like many renters across the coun-

try who have lost jobs and income due to the COVID-19 pandemic, residents of Gabriel Towers have faced eviction. Although the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) issued an eviction moratorium, Missouri failed to enact an eviction moratorium in 2020. St. Louis city and county, and Jackson County, which includes Kansas City, issued their own moratoriums, but leaders of KC Tenants report that some judges continue to issue eviction orders.

"I have to choose between food, medicine and rent," says Sabrina Davis a KC Tenants leader who described an apartment infested with millepedes. "When I complained to management," says Davis, "the treated me like a pest."

The "State of the Nation's Housing 2021," published by Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies reports that "millions [are] struggling to cover the rent or mortgage, their housing situations have become increasingly insecure, and these disparities are likely to persist even as the economy recovers, with many lower-income households slow to regain their financial footing."

It is a mistake to see slums as a by-product of the modern city, rundown areas that occur by accident, according to a study in the American Journal of Sociology by Princeton's Matthew Desmond and MIT's Nathan Wilmers.

They write that the slum has long been a "prime moneymaker" for those who profit from land scarcity, racial segregation, and deferred maintenance.

If labor exploitation is understood as getting paid less than the market value for what one produces, then we can extend this definition to the housing market where the poor are exploited by being forced to pay more for less," write Desmond and Wilmers.

"Slumlords have us living like animals while inspectors look away and the city gives tax incentives to property owners," says Ruby Watson, a resident of Gabriel Towers and leader of KC Tenants.

"I'm proud of UAW members for standing up for the exploited tenants of Gabriel Towers," says Local 249 Education Chair Gary Thomas. This is what the labor movement is all about. Fighting to transform misery and despair into hope and progress.

Local 249 members Austin McFarland, Robin Taylor, Lynn Brown, Sydne Danaldson, Lukas Taylor, Kelsey Pinzino, Sam Wilson, Dolandra Leak, Gary Thomas, David Winkler, Nicholas Dibben, Chris Allindor, Travis Adams, Amy Minich, Stephanie Simpson, Shirley Mata, Jessica Bertocci and Arnetha Omeka helped with security and other tasks at the protest.



Local 249 Women's and CAP Committee members Rakisha Theiss, left to right, Robin Taylor, Camalee Hefty, Stephanie Henderson, Lamaesia Harris, Lynn Brown and NaTisha Johnson helped build a house for a single mother with Habitat for Humanity. Photo by Don Lehman.

249 women pitch in with Habitat for Humanity

By Erica Eckart

Local 249's Women's Committee and members of the CAP Committee collaborated with Habitat for Humanity to help build another house for a member of our community.

The latest recipient in the housing program is Kayla Borders is a single mother struggling to make ends meet and like many others renting in the Kansas City metro area, she was dealing with increasing rent and a landlord who refused to make any repairs.

Due to the neglect of the landlord's responsibilities, Borders and her family were met with a completely flooded basement on more than one occasion. "I lost everything in the flood," said Borders. "My daughter's baby pictures, my children's clothes. I was living paycheck to paycheck, and I knew I had to make a change." Borders was able to break the lease, but her only choice was to move in with family members with so few affordable options available to her. That is when she learned about Habitat for Humanity of Kansas City.

"I didn't believe the program was real. Every outlet I turned to would reject me and I was constantly being let down. I felt like nothing was working out for me."

Borders said when she was accepted into the program, she knew God was telling her that this was her chance

to build a better future for her children. Fueled by her faith and determination, she quickly started completing her 350 sweat equity hours and her hard work has not gone unnoticed.

"I'm really proud of my Mom. She's taught me so much about being financially literate and I'm inspired by watching her" said Victor, Border's oldest son.

After paying an unaffordable rent for an apartment infested with mice and poor plumbing, becoming a homeowner is the answered prayer Borders has been waiting for.

Border's son wasn't the only one inspired by their story, "A rising tide lifts all boats," said Camalee Hefty, a member of Local 249's CAP committee. "This house gives this family an opportunity to enrich their lives in every way, an awesome foundation to build their dreams on. This is one of the many reasons I love being a UAW member because without this union, I wouldn't know how to partner with so many great organizations that allow me to give back to the community."

"I love building homes for families in need," shared Lynn Brown, a member

of the Women's Committee. "This is a great opportunity to help another family out. I'm glad that we can all come together to work as one for a great cause. As a new member of the Women's Committee, I'm extremely happy to be afforded this great opportunity! This is a blessing for me to be able to give back to someone in need."

"I am happy to be a part of this women's build partnership" says Macy Harris, member of the Women's Committee. "I was raised in this community in this exact neighborhood and I'm honored to be a part of this. All my life, my grandmother and I would do what we could to participate in uplifting the community by donating and volunteering at food pantries and local thrift stores. I feel like I've come full circle with this woman's build program and my union. I'm taking a special part in improving lives and making a difference in my community."

"I'm blessed, so whenever I'm given an opportunity to bless someone else, I will!" says Stephanie Henderson, also a member of the Women's Committee. "My husband and I are a proud union family that supports the betterment of our community every chance we get. I'm grateful for the opportunities given by the UAW and the Women's Committee that allow me numerous

chances to be a positive influence in our community and the ability to affect people's lives in a powerful way."

"I think it's very exciting to be a part of this project," stated Rakisha Thiess, member of the CAP committee. "I've taken part in giving someone an opportunity to be a homeowner. Working together with my union sisters and my community to make this possible is truly a blessing. The homeowner stopped by and thanked us for our contribution to the betterment of her and her family's new journey. This gave me a sense of pride and the urge to do more. Knowing that we as a union have had a hand in impacting someone's life in the most positive way brings so much joy to my heart."

"I live to make a difference and I feel like if you can't give back to something greater in life then what are you living for?" says Thiess. "We must always organize, build power and win justice for everyone and not just ourselves. I'm proud of this opportunity and I'm forever proud to be a member of Local 249!"

We would like to extend a huge thank you to the women who have given their time to help make a difference, and special thanks to Robin Taylor, chair of the Women's Committee, for being an exceptional leader throughout this process.



Local 249 veterans Lou Davidson, left to right, David Cox, Demetris Camp, Dave Grant, Mike Richardson, Tracie Chrisman. Nathan Chrisman and Chris Scott made donations to a number of area veteran and homeless organizations in July. Photo by Don Lehman.

Local 249 Veterans donate to Hope Faith

By Cecelia Davis

The Veterans Committee has done something impeccable again! They teamed up with Harvest Church to provide food to donate to any non-profit organizations the Local UAW 249 collaborates with.

The vision of the Harvest Church is to change lives by restoring lost and hurting humanity, back to our heavenly father in the hopes of making a significant difference in their lives.

With that being said, they wanted to connect with a nearby union that makes such big impacts on people's lives. What a great choice they have made to call on the Local 249 Veterans committee chairman, Dave Grant. Dave fights hard to provide not only for the veterans but for the under privileged throughout the community.

"We can't depend on the State or the Federal government to really help people," said Dave, "we citizens must

do the hard work for our brothers and sisters!"

In such short notice, Jim Fisher was able to provide Dave the contact information for Chris Stout. Chris has also helped with various organizations to give to those in need. He is also the program director for the Hope Faith - Homeless Assistance Campus located on 705 Virginia Avenue in downtown Kansas City, Missouri.

Hope Faith works to alleviate homelessness and poverty in Kansas City, Missouri by providing basic necessities and assistance, as well as, providing critical services and programs to empower individuals experiencing

homelessness and at-risk individuals to become self-sufficient and independent.

"I was excited! All of the food for these folks in our society are depending more and more on non-profit organizations." Said Dave, "Hope Faith - Homeless Assistance Campus is the only one of its kind in Kansas City, Missouri. It's open during normal business hours to help support our homeless populations, whether they are veterans or everyday civilians."

Along with the food donation that the Harvest Church provided, the Veterans committee was also able to donate 500 dollars to Hope Faith. "We must have more concern about others instead of just self," said Dave. "Self is a selfish mentality."

The Veterans Committee has decided to make a special trip out to

tour Hope-Faith facility personally, on Tuesday, August 12th to share the same environment with those that are in need, to spread some hope and light. The homeless community is suffering daily. Dave Grant hopes to shed some light to other individuals in our union to come join the good fight within our community and help make a change.

A lot of the blessings that the Veterans Committee provides goes unnoticed, because being able to lend a helping hand isn't something to boast about. It should be second nature to help those in need from the kindness of your heart without having to document to the world your good deeds. With this article, we hope to inspire you to go out into the world and provide some help where it is needed and to not take your blessings as an autoworker for granted.



Local 249 member Terrae Porter helped save the lives of a pregnant mother and her two children when their house blew up in Raytown. Photo by Don Lehman.

Terrae Porter: Local 249's real life hero

By Chrissy Kline

Terrae Porter presents as your typical happy-go-lucky guy, he is polite and cheerful and happy to carry on a conversation. You would never know that only weeks ago he experienced what many of us hope we never have to and made a choice no one wants to make.

Porter, a TFT for the last year at the Kansas City Assembly Plant, came home to Raytown after a long day working in the Transit Body Shop, having no idea how his night would end. Porter's cousin attempted to convince him to go out for the night, but after getting cleaned up and relaxed Porter decided he "wasn't going anywhere" and went to tell his cousin just that.

Within moments of coming downstairs Porter heard a resounding boom that shook his whole house. He looked out the window and saw the neighbor's garage door laying in the street. "It didn't even look like a house anymore," stated Porter who quickly got dressed and grabbed his mask. "I don't know why I grabbed my mask, I guess in my mind I already knew I was going in if I had to and it just seemed right."

Porter and another neighbor

rushed to the scene of the explosion, quickly realizing there were people still inside they knew they had to help. The pair risked life and limb rushing into the hollowed-out carcass of what was once a home as they raced against time as the fire spread around them. They were able to locate two children, lifting them from the rubble and handing them to neighbors gathering outside. The children cried for their mother who was still somewhere inside.

At this point the flames were beginning to move quickly through the destroyed duplex, and they almost missed the woman, Erica Williams, partially buried in the rubble. She kept saying, "just go, leave me, just go." Porter said, "There was no way I was doing that! There was tons of debris on her and we had to yank her out from under everything. She said she couldn't

walk, and she was pregnant, so we had to pretty much carry her out." By then emergency services had arrived and were starting to take control of the situation. A second huge boom followed by what appeared to be fireworks followed soon after.

Their timely rescue efforts had most certainly saved lives. Williams had a broken back and a broken leg, and her three-year-old son had sustained two broken legs. Others involved received minor injuries and were being treated on the scene.

Porter, an asthmatic, did a breathing treatment but was otherwise considered fine. Still on an adrenaline rush from the events of the evening but afraid of missing work as a TFT he contacted his committeeman Dave Orr and told him what had happened.

He ended up making it to work a day later but said that he was still dragging, his mind replaying all the events that had taken place, almost as though the shock of it all was delayed in setting in. It took some time, communication, and effort but Porter was

able to process the danger he had been in as well as the full impact of what had taken place some time later.

"I got a lot of closure afterwards and that helped. I spoke with the sister of the lady I saved, and she gave me a huge hug and told me that her sister was already up and walking. I ended up going to the service for the man who didn't make it and saw the lady I helped save and she thanked me for not leaving her behind. That was good closure," Porter shared.

Porter, a humble man, claimed that "God put me there for a reason," taking little credit for his own act of bravery. We as people hope we are never put into the kind of position to have to make that kind of decision, and we hope that we make the right one if we are. Porter showed that not only was he the kind of man to step up and help in a situation, but he also risked his own life for the benefit of others. His commitment to doing the right thing in the face of insurmountable odds marks him as a real-life hero walking among us here at UAW Local 249.

Production and mask protocols return at KCAP

By Jim Fisher

On July 26 all shifts of production have returned to work from the most recent layoffs due to the parts shortages. On August 2, the Transit System will return to a 5X10 hour work schedule with Super Production scheduled for both No. 2 and No. 3 Shifts. The Truck System has returned all three shifts of production to work, with a couple of Super Production shifts scheduled between now and the end of September. Currently neither system shows any more down weeks through the month of September, but that is always subject to change.

On July 26, Ford Motor Company announced that they would adjust their protocols on COVID-19 and go back to requiring masks for all members inside the facility. Ford says that positive COVID cases in Missouri have increased. In a letter from National Joint Health and Safety Team, which is made up of both International Safety Union Reps and Ford Motor Company, they announced that they were addressing states where there had been a significant increase in COVID-19 cases. Ford will continue to monitor COVID-19 daily and stated they expect to have to adjust to protocols over the coming months.

On July 28, Kansas City Mayor Quinton Lucas announced a mask mandate for indoors in public places starting Monday, August 2 and will go through at least August 28.

With this decision, KCAP Management needs to address all requirements of the Return-to-Work Playbook and quite frankly do a better job protecting its workforce. Ford has already said they won't return the Temperature Scanning booths, because they caught less than 1% of positive COVID cases entering the plant. The reality is they were a failure from the beginning. Tents were constantly unmanned, had reduced lanes, had employees who failed the scan but waved into work anyway so they wouldn't be late, and had entrances management could enter without going through the scanner.

Another very significant part of the Return-to-Work Playbook is cleaning. KCAP Management has completely dropped the ball on this as well. The intention of the Return-to-Work Playbook is very clear on this matter. All workstations, bathrooms, break room, and anything else with a high touch potential needs to be cleaned on a regular basis. Unfortunately, KCAP didn't find this part important either. On most occasions hand sanitizer stations were either empty or broken. The restrooms are still filthy, and most are either missing soap, toilet paper, paper towels or the bathroom facilities themselves are broken. However, the

company posts signs to remind us to repeatedly wash our hands.

KCAP hires an outside company called Team Solutions to clean the plant. Since the beginning of the pandemic Ford has reduced the funding to Team Solutions for pandemic spending in a cost saving effort. This has caused Team Solutions to reduce their cleaning staff dedicated to COVID 19 cleaning by one third.

The Return-to-Work Playbook also calls for a daily "signoff" by the supervisor of the area. This includes walking the workstations, break rooms, and restrooms. To avoid providing Local 249 the documentation that these walks were taking place the company covered for them by saying that they emailed them to their bosses. The fact is that workstations we not being wiped down, break areas had no cleaning supplies – and most still don't – and bathrooms are still in horrible conditions clearly proves these "signoffs" have never been completed.

During this pandemic, Local 249 performed several audits of the Return-to-Work Protocol and required the company to walk with us. It should have been the other way around with the company asking us on the walks and asking us for input. At the end of the day the company is responsible for keeping their employees safe. KCAP management must step up their game as this virus appears to be increasing in cases.

The pay practices at KCAP also remain an active issue. Members report to work and are not paid correctly by floor supervisors. KCAP Labor Relations and HR Departments has intentionally delayed SUB payments, and even admitted to not paying out SUB pay benefits the last week in June to improve the company's second quarter earnings. On July 28, Ford Motor Company reported a "surprise" net profit of \$1.1 billion in the second quarter, one can really only wonder what the numbers would have been if they had not delayed members pay until July 1, which is the start of the third quarter.

During the past 18 months, all of us have seen changes. However, Ford



Local 249 Bargaining Chair Jim Fisher reports that Ford has reintroduced the mask mandate but is not living up to the commitments it made in the COVID-19 Return to Work Playbook. File photo by Don Lehman.

has clearly made a change that's not in the best interest of our UAW members across the country. In the 2019 National Agreement Ford committed a \$960 Billion investment into the Ohio Assembly Plant. Since then they have told the UAW they don't intend to make that investment after all. At the same time they have moved the Electric Mustang, Bronco Sport, and Maverick Truck production all to Mexico.

Our In-Progression members have also been disadvantaged by a pay issue nicknamed "Leapfrog". This has caused members with lower seniority to receive pay raises before higher seniority members. During the Ratification Meetings the company agreed to correct any "Leapfrog" issues. They did commit to address the immediate concerns while voting on the contract was taking place. Since then, they have said fixing the "Leapfrog" was too expensive. We suggest using the "surprise" second quarter earnings to correct the pay.

Local 249 has and will continue to take direct action with the support of

the International Union. We have also advanced the issue to the National Labor Relations Board to seek immediate resolution

As long as Unions have been around there are things members like and don't like. However, the attack from the company on the UAW has now been made very clear. We must immediately begin to act like union brothers and sisters and have each other's backs. We need to start acting like we are 7,300 strong. Union Reps can't win all the fights alone. Spend time learning your contractual rights and holding the company accountable.

It's clear the company forgot in the third quarter of 2020 and coming back up from the 2020 COVID-19 shutdown that KCAP broke every production record ever set by this plant. They have forgotten who saved them in their "darkest hour" from the financial crisis in 2007. They have chosen to ignore their "UAW Partners" in return for new friends on Wall Street.

Maybe it's time to help them re-member who got them where they are.



Missouri Medicaid expansion victory

By Jason Starr

The Missouri Supreme Court delivered a stinging rebuke to Gov. Mike Parson and the Republican super majorities in the House and Senate July 22 when it ruled that the state must expand coverage to approximately 275,000 low-income people.

The decision reversed a lower court's ruling that found the amendment approved by voters last August to be unconstitutional because it did not include a revenue source for the state to pay for the Medicaid expansion.

Although it took the Supreme Court to resolve the issue, our members can be proud that UAW Local 249 has been in the fight from the beginning and, truth be told, our members played one of the biggest roles in the fight at every stage of the battle.

Local 249 members were there at the beginning circulating petitions to get the constitutional amendment on the ballot. Many organizations, including the UAW, submitted nearly 350,000 signatures to place Amendment 2, Medicaid expansion on the ballot.

Republicans, who'd voted against expansion repeatedly since 2014, moved immediately to defeat the initiative. Secretary of State John Ashcroft rushed the signature verification process, bypassing local election authorities, to place expansion on the August 2020 primary ballot when Republicans believed fewer pro-expansion voters would turn up at the polls.

That failed. Medicaid expansion was passed by Missouri voters with 53.27% voting to extend eligibility in Missouri to adults that are between the ages of 19 and 65 whose income is 138% of the

federal poverty level or below — about \$17,774 for a single person.

With the voters having expressed their support it was expected that Republicans would finally do the right thing — that was naive — they still had plenty of cards up their sleeve.

In the last session of the Missouri legislature, that just ended, Republicans demonstrated that they care nothing for what the voters want. They don't feel bound by the state's constitution. They simply used their super majorities to block funding for expansion.

Gov. Mike Parson went along with the charade claiming that his hands were tied.

At that point public pressure was brought to bear. Local 249, Jobs with Justice and other supporters of Medicaid Expansion mobilized to confront Parson at the governor's mansion in Jefferson City on July 1.

Three weeks later, the state Supreme Court ruled that the Department of Social Services and Missouri HealthNet, who are responsible for the administration of Medicaid in Missouri, are required to use the funds appropriated by the legislature on all eligible recipients under the adopted amendment.

Apparently, that court still believes the ideals outlined in the Declaration of Independence — that "governments



Local 249 President Jason Starr, right, led a large contingent of UAW members to Jefferson City July 1 to demand Gov. Parson keep his promise on Medicaid expansion. Photo by Don Lehman.

are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed" — still stand.

There are some important lessons in the Medicaid expansion fight that all working people should absorb.

Although we are largely on the defensive — with all the power of monied

interests arrayed against us — we can still win important victories if we are united with our allies in the trade union and social justice movements. With our friends, we brought the strength and power of our membership to bear. The fight was long and hard, but in the end, we won.



First Place and Big Bass in the July 18 Local 249 Bass Tournament at Smithville Lake was won by Mark Spence and Mike Spence, left to right. Second Place went to Paul West and Daniel Campbell. Congratulations to all who participated in another great Recreation Committee event.

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.

Women Senators Save Healthcare Funding

By Senate Democratic Leader John Rizzo

Recently, the Missouri Legislature was called into special session to pass a healthcare funding bill. I wanted to update you on what happened during special session, how women Senators saved the day, and what it means for Missouri families going forward.

Since the early 1990s, Missouri has had a program called the Federal Reimbursement Allowance – “FRA” for short. The FRA assesses hospitals a fee which draws down federal Medicaid matching funds. This is a good deal for hospitals as the federal matching funds bring home much more money than the fees they pay. Without the FRA, Missouri would have a \$4.5 billion hole in our budget. That’s why for thirty years governors and legislators from both parties have passed FRA renewals without conflict.

Until now.

During the regular Legislation Session, Republican Senators added an amendment to the FRA that would ban birth control for women on Medicaid. This creates two significant problems: First, it would result in more unplanned pregnancies among the Medicaid population. Secondly, it would put Missouri out of compliance with federal law thus jeopardizing billions of dollars in FRA federal matching funds.

As these extremists Republicans refused to relent, the Missouri Senate adjourned in May without passing an FRA.

By mid-June, Gov. Parson finally got involved in negotiations and called a Special Session for the last two weeks of June, with the July 1 budget deadline quickly approaching.

The Special Session began and immediately things fell apart. As the days passed, it seemed as if a solution would never be found. The simple courage Republicans needed to stand up to extremists in their base failed to materialize. For our part, the Senate Democratic Caucus made it clear we would not support legislation blocking birth control for women.

Finally, from the jaws of defeat, victory was seized. A group of women Senators, from both parties, wrote new legislative language that would protect Missouri’s healthcare funding without blocking birth control. These Senators managed to break through gridlock that had paralyzed the Senate for months. It was everything one hopes government would be: bipartisan, levelheaded, and good for working families.

In the end, the Missouri Senate passed a Clean FRA and sent it to the House. The House passed the bill and

sent it to the Governor. The Governor signed the Clean FRA before the July 1 deadline and billions in funding cuts were avoided.

Personally, I want to thank the Women Senators who saved the day and defeated a ban on birth control. It is unfortunate that Missouri even found itself in this position all because extremist Republicans like to play politics with healthcare. It has become clear that the GOP has been fully engulfed in the extremism fueled by Donald Trump and his allies. There are no more moderate Republicans in charge of their party. It is my continued hope that moderate Republican voters will realize this and leave the party that has left them. Until then, the Republican attacks on your healthcare will surely continue.



Senate Democratic Leader John Rizzo thanks a group of women Senators, from both parties, who wrote new legislative language that would protect Missouri’s healthcare funding without blocking birth control.

Local 249 Retirees:

Important reminder about marital status changes

In order to ensure appropriate coverage for you and your family in the event of a marital status change, it is important to contact each of the respective benefits centers. Such changes could also affect the amount of your pension benefit so it is best to notify as soon as possible when you experience a change.

If you get married:

1. Contact the Ford-UAW Retirement Board at 1-800-829-8833 to add your new spouse to your pension. If you do not do this within 18 months of your marriage, you will miss your opportunity to add your new spouse.

2. Contact Retiree Health Care Connect at 1-866-637-7555 to add your new spouse and/dr dependent children to your healthcare coverage.

3. Keep your address and contact information up to date by contacting the National Employee Services Center (NESC) at 1-800-248-4444. If you change your name, the NESC can assist to ensure that any benefits, pension payments or applicable tax forms that you receive are issued to you with the correct information.

4. Update your beneficiary on file, if necessary v/ For the Tax-Efficient Savings Plan for Hourly Employees (TESPHE), you can check or update your beneficiary information on my-

fordbenefits.com.

For life insurance, you can contact Unicare at 1-800-843-8184.

If you become divorced:

1. Contact the NESC at 1-800-248-4444 to notify of your divorce. They will require appropriate documentation in order to remove your spouse from your pension and recalculate your pension amount. They will also assist you with any required name or address changes.

2. Contact Retiree Health Care

Connect at 1-866-637-7555 to remove your spouse from your healthcare Coverage.

3. Update your beneficiary on file, if necessary.

v/ For the TESPHE, you can check or update your beneficiary information on myfordbenefits.com. For life insurance, you can contact Unicare at 1-800-843-8184.

If your spouse passes away:

1. Contact the Ford-UAW Retirement Board at 1-800-829-8833. They will assist you with removing your spouse from your pension.

2. Contact Retiree Health Care Connect at 866-637-7555 to remove your spouse from your healthcare:

3. Update your beneficiary on file, if necessary.

For the TESPHE, you can check or update your beneficiary information on myfordbenefits.com. For life insurance, you can contact Unicare at 1-800-843-8184.

Note: Register your email address on myfordbenefits.com to receive information and make it easier and faster to reset your pin.

**UAW-Ford
Retiree
Benefit
Update**



Local 249 members demand that Missouri Gov. Mike Parson follow the will of the voters and fund Medicaid expansion outside the governor's mansion in Jefferson City July 1. Photo by Don Lehman.

Parson runs but can't hide from Medicaid mess

By Pat Hayes

Demonstrators, including a large delegation of Local 249 members, traveled to the governor's mansion in Jefferson City July 1 to deliver emails and transcripts of voicemails begging Gov. Mike Parson to fund Medicaid expansion and save lives.

The governor and his Republican allies in the legislature have so far refused to fund Medicaid expansion even though a majority of Missouri voters approved Amendment 2 expanding Medicaid eligibility in Missouri in 2020.

Just as Parson ignored the will of the people in refusing to fund Medicaid expansion as required by the Constitution, he has refused to respond to citizens who call or write him to do his duty.

Demonstrators planned to deliver hundreds of those e-mails and voicemails to Parson during the demonstration, but the governor was not in.

That's when Pastor Jon Stratton came to the mike to announce that Parson was holding a news conference five blocks away at MoDot headquarters.

"Instead of delivering to his big, tax-payer funded mansion," said Rev. Stratton, "we were going to go see him where he is."

With that, the crowd moved toward the building where the governor was holding his news conference. Still, the governor and his aides refused to allow Rev. Stratton to deliver the messages.

That's when the crowd surrounded the building, covering all the entrances so Parson could not leave without coming face to face with the demonstrators.

A long standoff ensued with the demonstrators unwilling to leave until the Parson received the box containing the messages and the he was unwilling to come out and face the

crowd in order to move on to his next appointment.

Finally, an agreement was reached, Rev. Stratton was allowed to deliver the messages and the demonstration ended.

Parson still may not read the e-mails or transcripts of voicemails, but the message that Missourians are angry at the governor for his betrayal of the voters was delivered nonetheless.

"Today should be the day we are celebrating," the Rev. Kris Avise-Rouse told the crowd, "the day Missouri voters decided to put in our state Constitution that Missouri would finally expand Medicaid to more the 275,000 of our neighbors across the state.

"But the man who resides here, who claims to uphold the law of the land, the will of the people, lied. After the voters spoke, he said to the media and to us that expansion would be fully implemented."

Then he broke his promise to Missouri voters and blocked their consti-

tutional right to Medicaid expansion.

"Just because we don't want to pay for heart attacks doesn't mean they don't happen," said Dr. Heidi Miller, Medical Director of St. Louis Regional Health Commission and Primary Care Doctor with Family Care Health Centers. "We have wasted time in denial, circling between the myths of telling our patients – 'You're not good enough for Medicaid.' But by wasting time, wasting the truth, we have wasted lives."

Rev. Dr. Emmett Baker, one of the Medicaid 23 who was arrested for sitting in at the Capitol to demand Medicaid expansion said his daughter's life could have been saved nine years ago by Medicaid expansion, which failed in the state 10 years ago.

"We have people all over this state who are dying simply because we don't have Medicaid expansion," Baker said. "It is estimated that approximately 700 people a year in Missouri die because they don't have healthcare."