

# FIRST LOCAL NEWS

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October 2021

Supply chain issues continue at KCAP

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We have it in us to win if we stick together

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NaTisha Johnson, Cecelia Davis Jr., Dominique Carter, Melody Decoudres, and Nicole D'Andrea, Lena Wiley, and Stephanie Henderson, Robin Taylor and Danielle Evans put a new coat of paint on the Mother's Refuge in Independence. Mother's Refuge provides shelter and education to homeless, pregnant and parenting young women.

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



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Winners of Local 249's Bass Tournament held Sept. 12 at Truman Lake were Todd Knaack, left to right, and Andy Bissett. Second place went to Fred Jobe and Mike Spence. Bissett also landed the Big Bass of the tournament. The event was sponsored by the Recreation Committee.



Vinnie Sorrentino, center, was presented with the James "Frog" Moran Solidarity Award at the September membership meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.



New members are sworn in at the September membership meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

## First Local News

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## UAW Local 249

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## Officers of Local 249

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**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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# The Picket Line

## Ford makes \$250 million EV investment

**F**ord announced a \$250 million investment in three Michigan plants Sept. 16, which will create 450 new UAW jobs. Ford says the investment will help increase production and meet consumer demand for the new F-150 Lightning.

"Today's announcement is a great example of the right way to navigate the transition to tomorrow's vehicles by ensuring good-paying jobs of the future. Investing in building vehicles right here, in the United States, with the hard-working men and women of the UAW investments like this can pave the way to a future that protects our families, our communities and our middle class," said UAW Region 1A Director Laura Dickerson.

Dickerson spoke at an event announcing the investment, along with Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer and Congresswoman Debbie Dingell. The event was also attended by leaders of UAW Locals 600, 898 and 2280, whose members will produce the vehicles. — *UAW*

## UAW on federal vaccination mandate

**"T**he UAW has and continues to strongly encourage all members and their families to be vaccinated unless there is specific health or religious concerns. We know that this is the best way to protect our members, coworkers and their families.

We are reviewing the details of yesterday's announcements and the impact on our members and our over 700 employer contracts.

In the meantime, we continue our member commitment to practice safety in every one of our worksites by following protocols including masks, sanitizing and reporting any exposure or symptoms of the virus. At the UAW we all understand that fighting this pandemic and protecting our families is key to our survival." — *UAW*

## Feds, UAW seek election referendum extension

**F**ederal prosecutors and the United Auto Workers on Tuesday asked a judge to postpone the conclusion of a vote that could change how members select international leaders of the union.

Both sides asked U.S. District Judge David Lawson to reschedule the referendum's conclusion to Nov. 29, a two-week delay. That would give more time to the contractor counting mail-in ballots sent to approximately 1 million UAW members and retirees next month, according to a court filing Tuesday.

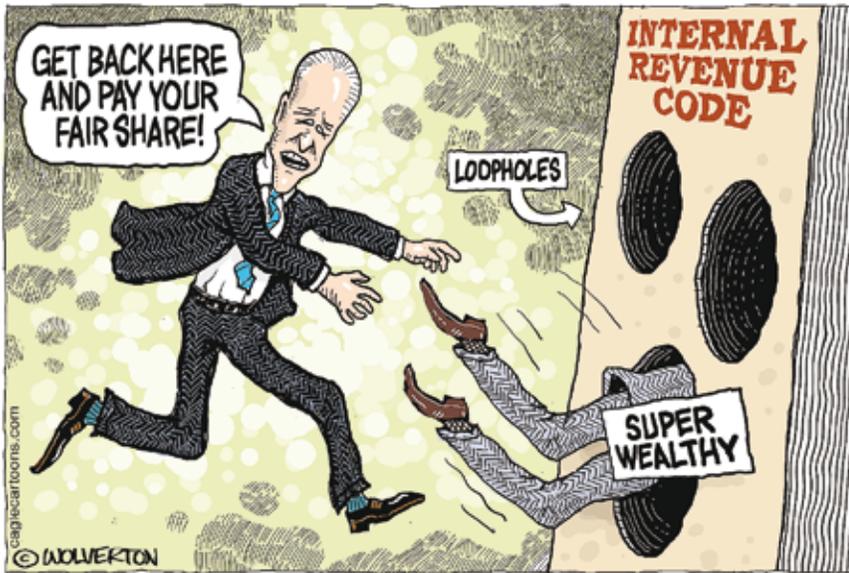
The referendum will address whether the union's constitution should be amended to allow for the direct election of the UAW's governing 12-member International Executive Board.

The vote is part of a consent decree with the federal government following a years-long investigation into union corruption that resulted in the conviction of 15 people, including two former UAW presidents. — *Detroit News*

## Nabisco strike ends: BCTGM members overwhelmingly accept new contract

**M**embers of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM) working for Nabisco/Mondelez in Portland, Ore., Aurora, Colo., Richmond, Va., Chicago, Ill. and Norcross, Ga. have voted overwhelmingly to accept a new collective bargaining agreement. Approval of the contract ends the BCTGM's strike against Nabisco which began on August 10, 2021.

"This has been a long and difficult fight for our striking members, their families and our Union. Throughout the strike, our members displayed tremendous courage, grit and determination," said BCTGM International President Anthony Shelton. — *BCTGM*



## American worker drives the economy

By Ray Curry, UAW President

**T**his is my first Labor Day as president of our great union, and although it would be my wish to be with you in person, I can tell you that our virtual celebrations and the observance of what this day means to this union and all working men and women in this nation are no less heartfelt and meaningful.

For me, Labor Day has always been about our collective voice and celebrating and recognizing what that voice has achieved for the American worker.

That voice built the middle class, spoke out against racial and social injustice and has been responsible for real job security, for health and safety advances and for a solid living wage, and that voice amplified by America's great unions is what we celebrate on Labor Day and what we continue to fight for and protect.

As we reflect, we take pride in the fact that it has been the American worker that continues to be the engine that drives this economy. Much has been said in the past year about how our economy is changing, how mobility is changing and how industry and manufacturing is on the precipice of a monumental transition. For the UAW's auto workers, the change we are moving toward will mean clean energy and clean vehicles.

As we navigate this transition, we at the UAW will use our collective voice to state very clearly that these jobs of the future must be good paying union jobs right here at home. I visited Washington, D.C. last month and stood with President Joe Biden and Local 600 President Bernie Rickie on August 5 as the president rolled out his vision for the future of mobility, and he emphasized this: That future will be clean vehicles built by American workers making union wages.

During that visit to our nation's capitol, it was my great pleasure on August 2 to meet with Richard Trumka,

former leader of the AFL-CIO. Sadly, as I'm sure you all know, Trumka died suddenly on August 5. He was a tireless fighter for labor and a dear friend. He was one of our nation's great union voices.

On this special holiday, I want to take a moment to thank each one of my UAW brothers and sisters for the strength and Solidarity you have shown in this past year as we have all been faced with the terrible reality that is the COVID-19 pandemic.

So many of us have lost loved ones. I want to extend my deepest sympathies to our UAW family for those losses. I also want to recognize our frontline workers and every member of this workforce that has returned to work to keep our economy going. I want you to know that as president, I am doing everything in my power to keep us all safe as we navigate the months ahead.

Looking ahead, I have a quick update on the 2022 Constitutional Convention. We go into this iconic event with renewed energy, enthusiasm and purpose. I am looking forward to seeing so many of our members back in Detroit where this great union of ours was founded. The convention will be held at the TCF Center, formerly Cobo Hall, in Detroit, Michigan. The dates are July 25-29, 2022.

Lastly, as we head into this Labor Day weekend, I want to recognize the workers of today and those who have gone before us. Workers, one and all, who stood up to fight for safe working conditions, fair wages and benefits, and a voice in the workplace.



# CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

*By Ray Curry, UAW President*

**A**t the beginning of this month we observed Labor Day — a day to recognize the American labor movement and the contributions of laborers to the development and growth of our country. It's a great way to say "thank you."

We celebrate the work that millions of United Auto Workers and Americans contribute to our lives each and every day, in places like factories, offices, hospitals, stores, government services and educational institutions throughout our great nation.

Now is the time to take that celebration of our organized and working Americans and honor them by supporting working families throughout the coming years.

The UAW and its fellow unions have built this country's workforce and economic backbone. We've solidified what the American dream can be, and we've mapped out how to get there. Unions, members, friends and supporters must continue this work to organize the workers of today and tomorrow. We must continue the fight for good wages, comprehensive benefits and safe, equitable workplaces.

Our job is not done.

Over the past years — even during the COVID-19 pandemic — the UAW

continued to expand our presence and our successes.

Just last month, California's Public Employment Relations Board verified that a majority of the 17,000 graduate student researchers, trainees, and fellows at the ten University of California campuses and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory have chosen to unionize through Student Researchers United/UAW (SRU-UAW).

This SRU-UAW vote is the largest-ever unionization drive of academic student employees. The process of forming their union and bargaining for a better work situation has already begun.

These 17,000 workers represent the beginning of a large growth period for organized labor — not just at the UAW — but throughout the U.S. As with other workers, SRU will deliver value to their employers. They grow the university through grants and what they produce.

Yet they struggle to pay for housing and expenses and with the

uncertainty of their long-term future. The SRU-UAW victory is a huge boost for the growing academic worker movement, which has gained steam in recent years.

It is a segment the UAW gladly supports. We now represent more than 100,000 academic workers at universities across the country, and have recently won unions at Harvard, Columbia and the University of Washington.

Together, unionized academic workers have fought racist and xenophobic Trump-era travel bans, turned back the Republican graduate tax, lobbied for more funding for scientific research (including COVID research) and more.

Like their union brothers and sisters before them, workers in higher education are organizing because standing together is the best way to address workplace challenges like low wages, unstable benefits and persistent harassment and discrimination.

Across the country, support for unions in general remains high. A Gallup poll estimates that 65% of all Americans approve of labor unions; including 83% of Democrats, 64% of independents and 45% of Republicans.

The COVID-19 pandemic clearly

demonstrated the benefits of unionization. Unions were crucial to ensuring health care continuation during the downturn, demanding safety precautions as well as having a voice.

But we still have a ways to go and some challenges before us.

The shift to electric vehicles in the auto industry opens a new segment of workers. It means a shift in the jobs of the future.

As other industries develop from the constantly evolving technology, we must be at the forefront of ensuring workers' rights, informing and educating workers on their right to organize and bargain collectively for high wages, good benefits and strong workplace rights and protections. Key to that is passage of the PRO Act in Congress and passage of the Stabenow Amendment to ensure these future jobs have union wages and benefits.

The UAW and its counterparts have come a long way since our beginnings. Today, we have a great opportunity to continue to organize and grow our economy and the good middle class jobs that power this country.

As UAW members, we understand that the challenges of the future are an opportunity as well.



Members of Local 249's Motorcycle Committee participated in the Wings 4 Water event in Harris Park Community Center in Lee's Summit Sept. 9. Committee members prepared 1,500 chicken wings raising \$1,500 to provide clean water to people in need. Photo by Don Lehman.

# Local 249 MC raises \$1,500 for clean water

By Pat Hayes

**Local 249's Motorcycle Committee served up mouth watering honey-mustard chicken wings to an appreciative crowd at Harris Park Community Center in Lee's Summit Sept. 9 to raise money for clean water and local relief efforts.**

This is the fourth year the committee has participated in the Wings 4 Water event, according to the Motorcycle Committee Chair Josh Curtis. The Motorcycle Committee was one of 35 sponsors serving up some 16,000 wings alongside live music at this year's event.

At the Wings 4 Water events, now in its fifth year, people come out for free and enjoy live music while eating a wing from as many sponsors as they want. Then, they vote for their favorite wings with money and 100% of the vote goes to global clean water efforts and local relief efforts.

At the Sept. 9 event, people tried wings from as many different sponsors as they want. If they wanted to vote for a particular wing, they donated money to that team via credit card or online with their phones.

In addition to the money raised though votes for the wings cooked by the Motorcycle Committee, Local 249 donated \$1,500 to the group's clean water efforts.

The money raised provides filters, pipelines and wells to communities around the world struggling to obtain clean drinking water. Last year, money

raised at the Wings 4 Water event went to citizens of Flint, Mich.

Some 3,200 people are drinking clean water today because of the efforts of Wings 4 Water, according to Chris Turney, a founder of the group. Just \$50 can provide a family of four with clean drinking water for life.

At the events, stealth judges have the enviable job of sampling wings cooked by the sponsoring organizations and voting for their favorites, says Curtis. One of those stealth judges, Bobbie Bell Jr., the son of legendary Kansas City Chiefs linebacker and defensive end, put the wings cooked by Local 249's Motorcycle Committee in second place out of all the sponsoring organizations at the competition.

"The Wings 4 Water events are a lot of fun. There's live music and lots

of wings to sample," says Curtis, "and it's all for a good cause."

In addition to Curtis, other Motorcycle Committee members who helped make the Wings 4 Water event a success are William O'Neal, Sharon King, Joe Lumpkin, Darrin Piper, Greg Duncan, Chip Snow, Sarah King, Sarah Allen, Jacob Scott, Wymann Simpson and Gary Thomas.

"The Motorcycle Committee is one of the most active committees at Local 249," says Local 249 President Jason Starr. "We should all be proud of the charitable work they do in the community. All of our standing committees do outstanding volunteer work throughout the year. All of our members should take pride in the work our members do to make the Kansas City metro a better place to live."



CAP Committee members Amy Minich, front row left to right, Stephanie Simpson, Shirley Mata, Erica Eckart, Camalee Hefty, Rakisha Theiss and, back row left to right, James Bosler, Chris Theiss, and Greg Smith have launched the V-CAP drive to defend worker rights in Jefferson City. Photo by Chrissy Kline.

# Local 249 launches V-CAP drive

By Erica Eckart

**This month Local 249 is honoring those who donate 25 dollars or more, to V-CAP. The CAP Committee has been on a plant wide mission to find and deliver shirts to everyone who has donated at the Directors' Club level. There are three levels of donations you could choose but anything is appreciated. The first level is called the Century Club; those members donate \$8.50 or more, every month. The second is the Directors Club which is a \$25 donation monthly. The third is the Platinum Club where members donate \$50 or more each month.**

"When I was hired back in 1995, they were asking for CAP donations in the amount of a quarter, I said I can give a dollar so, I gave a dollar," said Shirley Mata, chair of the CAP committee. "I gave it because they said it goes to help the union, But the education on exactly what that money went for and why it made a difference, wasn't there like it is now.

I give over \$55 a month especially now that I am so involved. I see what that money really does and what a difference it makes in our communities, and in the type of politicians we're able to get elected.

The importance for me is that these dollars go to support candidates that support collective bargaining whether Democrat or Republican, which gets us better contracts. Thanks to a Democratic Governor and a bipartisan committee composed of both Democrats and Republicans, our plant

was saved when they were going to close it down. Our CAP dollars were significantly involved in saving our plant.

Being CAP Chair, we've tried to make sure that people are educated and that this isn't a Democrat versus Republican thing. Yes, more Democrats are given money but it's because they are willing to support collective bargaining.

The one thing I learned when I came in was that our Union was born out of politics. We have a union that gives us medical, holidays, great pay and time off that we can spend with our families and without the union and collective bargaining that wouldn't happen, without our CAP dollars that wouldn't happen."

"Most of our members don't realize how deeply politics affect our collective bargaining process. Trade policies, taxation policies, everything

impacts our ability to negotiate at the collective bargaining table", Local 249 President Jason Starr explains. "I think that's where the disconnect happens for most members as to why we are so directly engaged in politics. They think it's just a fight between the UAW and Ford and it's not. It's a multifaceted battle and politics are the greatest threat to our survival".

"The reason I give so much is because I understand and realize what our dollars are going for," said Jay Bosler, co-chair of the CAP committee.

"They go towards electing people that support the working class, people like myself and my co-workers.

I also understand that our CAP dollars don't only go for electing officials but also to support programs within Region 4 area such as social programs, women's shelters, veterans programs and lots of other community based programs. In fact, in Liberty, there are two of the oldest cemeteries in Clay County and they have found over 700 unmarked graves that belonged to former slaves that were buried within these two cemeteries in a six acre plot of land.

Our CAP dollars from Region 4 and Local 249 went to sponsoring a new memorial for those people and

their families so that they would have a place to honor their loved ones. The total amount given was 40,000 dollars. That's a lot of money but it is something that our union and leadership all believe in and agree with.

CAP is also donating 5,000 dollars to two different organizations for a total of 10,000 dollars on behalf of the Women's Committee, to help promote and encourage women in the community, so, it's not just about politics when we're talking about the money we donate. I give \$55 a month every month and have for quite a while.

It's not only because I am on the CAP committee but because again, it goes back to knowing and understanding where that money goes.

As far as the political side of things, we as individuals and as an organization, must get out of the habit of pigeonholing ourselves into thinking that we must be on one side or the other or that we were only going to support Democrats or Republicans because the goal is not to support either one, we want them to support us."

If you would like to sign up for monthly donations, raise your donations, or purchase CAP tickets, call, or stop by the union hall or speak with a member of the CAP Committee



Members of Local 249's Women's Committee Lynn Brown, left to right, NaTisha Johnson, Lena Wiley, Lamaesia Harris, Robin Taylor, Nicole D'Andrea, Cecilia Davis, Danielle Even and Cecelia Davis Jr. made repairs to the Mother's Refuge, which provides shelter and education to homeless, pregnant and parenting young women Sept. 8. Not pictured Stephanie Henderson, Melody DeCoudres, and Dominique Carter. Photo by Don Lehman.

# Women's Committee aids Women's Refuge

*By Cecelia Davis*

**With the daily hardships and the environmental crisis nowadays, it can be a struggle to see hope at the end of the tunnel. Constant grief and sorrows whisper through the homes of the young and the old. Imagine a seventeen-year-old woman homeless in the frigid night air, worried about where she could safely rest her weary head and not only feed herself but the unborn baby she has been carrying for three months. Now, imagine being that young lady. Or better yet, imagine her being your daughter. What do you intend to do?**

Our Local 249 UAW has a committee that dedicates themselves to helping better women inside and out. They find ways to support and empower women around them. They also help educate the women within the local union of the labor's position on local, state, and national laws regarding women's issues.

The Women's Committee helps to provide leadership and educational training for members, so that they may become more active in the local union and seek leadership positions inside and outside the union. Not only is the Women's Committee setting a great example within the union, they are role models for the community of all ages.

On September 8, the Women's Committee decided to expand their leadership role and reach out to Mother's Refuge. Mother's Refuge is a darling location where homeless soon

to be mothers or young mothers are welcomed with open arms.

When women arrive at the refuge, the staff coordinate appointments to ensure that mothers and their babies receive the required medical care efficiently and as medically directed throughout and following after the pregnancy. They offer a five step program to enhance the young women life skills. They provide classes to assist in improving parenting, infant care, money management, mental and physical health, and community awareness. Once the mother has graduated from the program, Mother's Refuge helps them move into their own place with a small donation of 500 dollars to help jump start their future.

The refuge keeps all lines of communication open to them, to reach out to the home for continued comfort and support. The refuge accepts the mothers who range from twelve to twenty-

one years old. The home is equipped with pregnancy rooms, where the women that are pregnant share a charming little room accompanied with a bed, closet, and a dresser. Once the child is born, they are then moved to a serene and harmonious room just for the mother and newborn.

The UAW women felt instantly connected as they were greeted at the door from the coos of the infants that would curiously peek their tiny heads outside their bedrooms. While the UAW Women's Committee was there, they were presented the opportunity to help out with maintenance around the house.

They freshened up the home by repainting some of the rooms and hallways, and helped reorganize and update their food pantry. They also partner with the Harvesters after care program. After the hard work was completed, they helped set up a birthday event for one of the in-home expecting mothers while reminiscing about their heartfelt moments of becoming a mother.

"The Women's Committee chose this organization because in this day in time there is such a great need to support young women in their life struggles. To be a model of giving back and showing love. We also have

a member of our committee who benefited from this organization. We wanted to choose an organization we could get behind to foster good relationships in our community as well as show our membership and the community why union should be supported and upheld. We're not just working for our local but for our community as well. I truly enjoyed myself and I can't wait to go back," said Robin Taylor, the Women's Committee chair.

Robin encourages anyone and everyone to take the time to reach out to Jesse Moreno, who is the outreach coordinator for Mother's Refuge. "She was such a delight to provide us a tour and explain to us the daily routines that they provide these young ladies with to set them in the right direction," said Cecelia Davis, who is new to the Women's Committee. "I wish they had this type of advance program back in my early pregnancy. It definitely would've made my life a bit easier."

As the Women's Committee continue to strive forward, feel free to connect with Robin Taylor if you would like to volunteer or provide a donation to this life changing operation. With the right approval, the Women Committee plans on partnering with Mother's Refuge and foresees monetary contributions given in the near future.

# Michael Henze: a third generation union man

By Chrissy Kline

**M**ichael Henze is a third-generation autoworker, with roots that run so deep they remember what it was like to work at when there wasn't a union in these shops. His family's stories of a time before the union came to be, combined with Henze's own life experiences prior to being a UAW member pushed him to get involved when he started at the Kansas City Assembly Plant.

In 2013, Henze was plagued by sleep apnea in which he would stop breathing while he was sleeping. The episodes were so severe that if the need arose, he wouldn't even be able to function enough to call 911. He was considered "high risk" as a patient and no insurance companies would cover him. Living alone, this meant everyday he wondered if this would be the day he went to bed and didn't wake up the next morning.

He managed to get a referral to try and get a position with Ford Motor Company after doing some plumbing work for a UAW pipefitter. He got the job and within a year he was in material handling with a hi-lo bid. Henze said that was "unheard of" before the mass hirings in 2013. "I was a plumber before I came to Ford, which is the same thing as a pipefitter in here. They needed skilled trades help and I was fortunate enough to get interviewed and get a slot." This enabled Henze to get health coverage and a life-saving surgery that he otherwise wouldn't have had.

That alone should be enough to instill a sense of gratitude in a person, but Henze had his uncle's and grandfather's stories to help humble him along the way as well. His uncles worked for GM at Leads and Fairfax over the years and his grandfather worked at a plant in St. Louis before coming to work at both the 12th & Winchester Plant and the Kansas City Ford plant before retiring in 1969. Henze's grandfather said, "before the union, my job wasn't worth having." It didn't make sense to Henze at eight years old, but years later it all made sense.

The idea of a scheduled hours, vacation and overtime, breaks or even an opportunity to go to the bathroom were only dreamed about in those days. Henze's grandfather told him that in those days if you had to use the restroom you would get the attention of the foreman and ask to go, and he would walk you to a window where you'd see a line of people on the sidewalk to get a job. "If you can't keep working, one of those guys down in that line would be happy to take your job," the foreman would tell you. And so, you would hold it and go back to

work, eventually he would get a coffee can to use while working on the job just to get through his day before the union came along.

Henze now felt a sense of pride in continuing in his father and grandfather's footsteps and felt a duty to get involved in the union to do his part in keeping the legacy alive for future generations. This was only amplified after watching "Brothers on the Line" during orientation when he started.

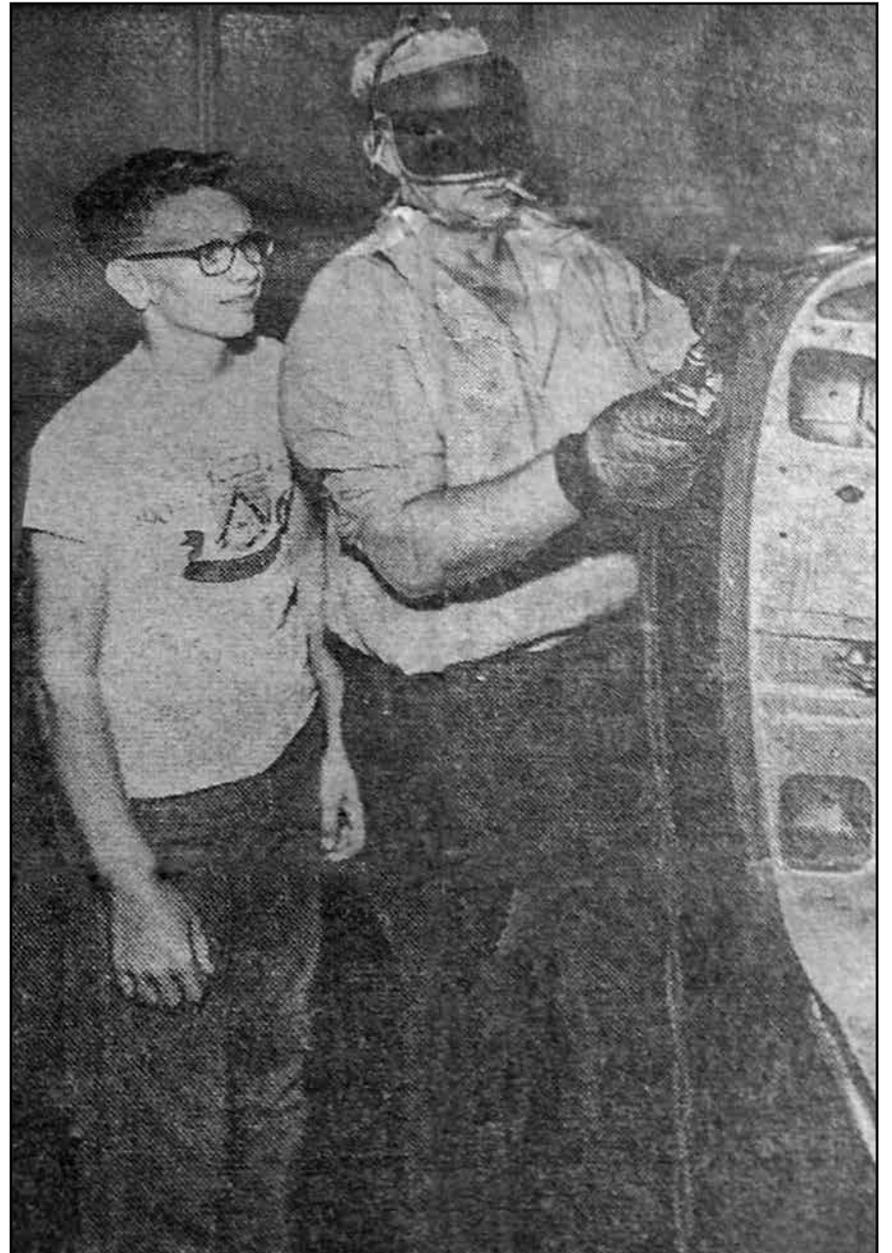
"All these different things came together. I came in and got the job, I got my surgery so I could live without fear of dying. Then the talk around the shop was about the two-tier system and why it was there so I was told to talk to my committeeman to get involved." As it turned out, Henze's committeeman at the time was Jason Starr, now President of UAW Local 249. "It was like some alignment of the universe that he ended up being my committeeman. He opened us up to why things were this way and pushed us to ask ourselves 'What are we gonna do about it?'"

Henze started by getting involved in the fight against Right to Work attending rallies, going to Jeff City and talking to others in the plant about why it was wrong for us. He helped the Fight for \$15, worked on the CAP committee, walked the plant for signatures to stop Right to Work, served as alternate committeeman and more.

"After I realized how much my family had prospered because of the UAW and Local 249 in particular, you know, that was my motivation to try to be involved in putting something back into it. I came in and didn't want to be political but to be union is to be political," Henze said.

"It's an opportunity to put back into something that has helped my family for three generations, now four generations with my cousin working here, and my son for a short while.

**"After I realized how much my family had prospered because of the UAW and Local 249 in particular, you know, that was my motivation to try to be involved in putting something back into it. I came in and didn't want to be political but to be union is to be political."**



Michael Henze's grandfather, Bernard Henze shows Michael's uncle, Douglas, what a day in the body shop of an assembly plant is like in 1953.

You never know, maybe a fifth generation will come along that wants to work here. I want to keep this a viable lifestyle for more families and more people to come and have a good livelihood and be able to go to the doctor."

It wasn't until Michael Henze came to work at UAW Local 249 that he truly understood how much the union had changed his life before he'd even been born. His grandfather's union job allowed him to afford a place on the

lake, half of his dad's university tuition, a nice home and union benefits and wages. "There's no telling how our lives would have turned out without being union," he shared.

The story of Henze and his family is one that shows the long-lasting impacts unions can have on the lives they touch. The benefits and opportunities afforded to us as members of this great union allow us to provide a lifestyle and a livelihood to our families that can last for generations. It is important to get involved and stay involved, so that the stories like those of Michael Henze's grandfather and uncles aren't lost to time, and their sacrifices hold meaning. The fight may look different today, but the strength and courage it requires is still the same.

# Supply chain issues continue at KCAP

By Jim Fisher

**D**uring the month of September our members continued to experience down weeks due to parts issues. As we start to head into October and the beginning of the fourth quarter of the year. There is nothing to indicate that these issues are over. Our parts supply base is still appearing to be very soft. During normal operations we can forecast production schedules months in advance. Currently, the production schedules are basically week by week.

The local has been meeting with the company on a regular basis to ensure we are able to work as many of our members as possible during these down weeks, as our priority is to keep as many members employed as possible.

During these down weeks Labor Relations continues to show no competence in paying members correctly. For the week ending on September 12, the company had a scheduled holiday for Labor Day on September 6. Most members were not eligible for the holiday pay due to the down weeks. However, KCAP's Labor Relations Department did not remove the holiday code in the computer system. Once SUB Payments were sent for processing the payroll department identified the holiday code and rejected members SUB payments. Only once this was caught by Local 249 were SUB payments resubmitted to payroll and the pay process was restarted.

Even when members have returned to work, we continue to have issues with management on the floor paying members correctly. Everyone needs to be checking their DROT's daily, and if there are issues with your pay make sure you are notifying your process coach and District Committeeman as soon as possible.

We have spoken with several other locals and are finding the same issues in other plants as well. This can only lead us to believe this is being done intentionally. Ford needs to recognize the past 18 months have been hard enough on our members with uncertainty to work schedules and down weeks. KCAP management can only look at themselves in the mirror for their manpower shortages when the starting wage is not competitive with the other companies in the industry and those that are working can't get paid correctly.

We have seen an increase in terminations of members on the charge of a 10-day quit. If you're going out on a medical leave or extending a medical leave it's very important all your documentation is turned in a timely manner. If you are having issues with

Unicare make sure your in contact with our Benefit Representatives at the union hall.

While the Truck Department was going through the down weeks a large effort was made in cleaning the Truck Final Department. On most weeks the Truck Department is usually filthy. During the down time stock racks were pulled out, the areas under the lines were swept out, flooring on workstations were repainted, and barriers were repainted. In addition, several broken workstation fans were fixed by our skilled trades.

Finally, I want to thank all our members for your hard work and dedication you have all shown so far this year. There have been many hurdles we have all had to climb, but we have made it through everything so far.



Local 249 Bargaining Chair Jim Fisher reported that supply chain issues will continue to hamper production at KCAP into the foreseeable future. Photo by Don Lehman.

There are several more upgrades and significant investments coming to this plant over the next few months. Our plant is receiving a lot of attention for

all your hard work. All these are made possible by a membership that comes to work and makes our plant the success it is.

## What you need to know about the infrastructure bills

By Stephen Weber, Missouri AFL-CIO

**O**n August 10th the Senate passed an infrastructure bill, formally titled The American Jobs Plan, on a 69-30 vote. It received support from all 50 Senate Democrats, as well as 19 Senate Republicans. Missouri Senator Roy Blunt voted yes and Josh Hawley voted no. Because it had the support of more than 60 Senators it could be passed through regular Senate order and could not be blocked by the filibuster.

The Senate bill focuses mainly on investment in construction projects and is sometimes referred to as the hard infrastructure bill.

There are two numbers that you may hear associated with the Bipartisan bill. The first is \$1.2 Trillion, which is the total cost of the bill. The second is \$550 Billion, which is the totally new spending in the bill; the remaining \$650 Billion is regularly scheduled appropriations for federal government operations.

The Hard Infrastructure bill is mostly paid for. It sweeps unspent coronavirus relief money and unused federal unemployment aid while tightening enforcement of the tax code. According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, the bill would add approximately \$250 billion to the debt.

Here's what Missouri would get in the bill over 5 years:

- \$6.5 BILLION dollars in highway funding
- \$484 Million for bridge maintenance and repairs
- \$674 Million for public transportation
- \$99 Million for installing Electric Vehicle charging stations across the State
- Over \$100 Million for installing broadband
- \$866 Million for water infrastructure including replacement of lead pipes
- \$246 Million for upgrading airports

In addition, on a national level, there is \$66 billion dollar investment in railroads, multiple multi-billion dollar funds for "Special Projects" (i.e. highway expansion) that Missouri could apply to for additional money, \$17 billion for Ports, \$21 billion for environmental (Superfund Site) clean up, \$65 billion for investments in the nation's power grids, tax incentives for clean energy, money for cyber security and more.

The second infrastructure bill offi-

cially titled the American Families Plan is going to be partisan. Republicans will all be no's, meaning Democrats will have to keep all 50 of their Senators together to get it out of the Senate.

To circumvent the filibuster and pass the bill with 50 votes the Democrats will utilize a process known as reconciliation; this allows them to pass the bill with 50 votes as long as all items in the bill have a substantial impact on the budget. What this means is that Democrats can spend money on the bill, but can't pass policies that don't spend money (i.e. they can't pass a national ban on right-to-work).

Here's a sampling:

- Universal preschool for 3 and 4 years olds.
- Every American would be eligible for 2 years of community college at no cost.
- A Federally paid family and medical leave benefit for ALL workers
- Extension of the enhanced child tax credit
- Expansion of hearing, dental and vision benefits to medicare beneficiaries
- A \$400 Billion investment in home-based services for seniors and people with disabilities, to help them stay in their homes and out of nursing homes.

# We have it in us to win *if* we stick together

By Jason Starr

**O**ur Chiefs hit a little bump on the road to the next Superbowl when they lost 36-35 to the Baltimore Ravens on Sept. 19. Our defense had a hard time stopping the Ravens' running game giving up 251 yards on the ground. Then, down by one point with the clock winding down in the fourth quarter, Chiefs running back Clyde Edwards-Helaire was stripped of the ball just as the Chiefs were getting into position to kick a game-winning field goal.

The result was disappointing, but I'm still looking forward to the Chiefs getting revenge against Tom Brady and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in Superbowl LVI. Why am I confident? I believe in the Chiefs long-term prospects because Andy Reid and Patrick Mahomes' strategy for winning is built around teamwork.

What you didn't see after the loss to the Ravens is Mahomes going on Twitter to point a finger at the defense. You didn't see teammates turn their backs on Edwards-Helaire on the sidelines or Andy Reid denouncing Steve Spagnuolo in the media. Just the opposite.

"We will never point fingers and say it's just one person's loss," Travis Kelce said after the game. "That is not how we roll at Kansas City."

That's not how our union rolls either and it's something we in the UAW should remember. Just as the Chiefs must face their NFL opponents on the playing field, our union must face Ford management on the plant floor every day and in contract negotiations. It's not just Ford management that the UAW must fight, either. We are in a constant battle against politicians who've sold their souls to big business, the corporate media, political action committees, and think tanks owned by billionaires.

Unfortunately, while the Chiefs stick together both in victory and defeat, we in the UAW are often far too quick to tear each other apart in a public forum when issues aren't solved quickly enough, or problems arise. The sad truth is, given the wealth and power of the opponents we face, the battles we're fighting are going to stretch out long after the next Superbowl has been played in Los Angeles.

But just as I believe the Chiefs have what it takes to fix the run defense and make it back to the Superbowl this year, I believe our union and its membership have what it takes to take on the company and win in the long run.

For that to happen, however, we must remember where our strength lies. Unlike the billionaires and their corporations, our union doesn't have trillions of dollars at its disposal to buy politicians and hire lawyers. We don't

control the media, the courts, or the police. What we have is each other. Our strength comes from our unity and our willingness to stick together.

We have a lot of issues here at KCAP that have members upset and angry right now. Members are forced to deal with a company that puts profit and production over the safety of our membership. We are dealing with chronic pay shortages and the failure to pay our UAW negotiated SUB benefits in a timely manner during recent layoffs. The company has been slow – as it always is – to deliver on their contractual agreements including the completion of the clothing voucher negotiated locally for our members. In addition, we have been fighting along with International for months to push the company to address our members who have been impacted by the pay leapfrog issue as our temporary members transition to permanent status.

Local 249 members are right to be angry, but some have directed their anger, not at Ford – the party causing the problems – but at the union. That plays into Ford's hands because it weakens our ability to fight back and fix the problems. In fact, the long-term nature of the SUB issues and pay shortages tells me this is a strategy the company quite consciously employs to divide and weaken us.

There's no doubt that Ford, GM, and FCA would love to operate in a non-union environment like their competitors VW, Toyota, Nissan located in the "right to work" south. Shedding union contracts would save them billions. There would be no seniority, shift preference, classifications, defined pay rates, full coverage healthcare, clothing voucher, and many, many other benefits we have that are exclusive to UAW members in the auto industry. That's why weakening the UAW by getting us to fight against each other instead of the company is in their long-term strategic interests.

In August, some members attended the monthly membership meeting to discuss the leapfrog issue that involves new permanent members leapfrogging them in pay even though they had less seniority. Of course, this



Local 249 President Jason Starr talks to members about the leapfrog issue at the September membership meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

is unfair. The union has dealt with and fixed this problem several times in the past. Now, however, Ford says it's unwilling to do the right thing any longer. They could. They've done it in the past and the amount of money it would cost to fix it is pocket change to Ford. But they understand that allowing the leapfrog issue to fester causes infighting in the union. It weakens us and that gives them an advantage going into the next contract.

Initially, at the membership meeting, some of the members blamed the union, not the company. Naturally, as in the past, we have filed a grievance and are pursuing a settlement vigorously. But the truth is, it will take our membership coming together on all contractual issues to resolve this matter.

After the membership meeting, Jim Fisher, the Bargaining Committee, and I met for several hours with the members who are affected by the leapfrog issue. Through that very productive discussion, we were able to define the realities of this situation and outline how important it is to work together to hold the company accountable.

These members agreed to take ownership of their membership and use the tools available to them as members to organize support on the shop floor. They have worked to clearly outline their shared perspective in a letter to the UAW Ford Department and how it has impacted their experience as a UAW member and how important it is that this issue is corrected. This display of unity gives the leadership of Local 249 additional power to highlight to the International UAW how critically important this issue is to all members, not just those directly impacted, and

that we stand prepared to take all actions necessary to win on this issue.

These members could have adopted a "take my ball and go home" mentality and just blamed the union and given up. Thankfully they recognize that the company is to blame and I'm proud to say that because of that meeting and follow-up meetings, a number of the members who were victimized by the company's refusal to address the leapfrog issue have recommitted to empowering their union by joining some of our standing committees and get more actively involved in our union. This is a perfect example of how we build the power of this union.

The only way we will fix our issues like Safety, SUB benefits, pay shortages, leapfrog, clothing vouchers, or any other issue is through unity on the shop floor and activism socially, economically, and politically in our communities. We must remember that we are contracted to do specific tasks for the company and yet the very company that is willing to disregard our safety, ignore quality concerns and disrespect our membership is also reliant on us to do more than we are contracted to do to meet their production demands. We must come together and demonstrate to Ford that we are united because when we are united, we are strong. When that happens, they will see that the costs of undermining the union outweigh the benefits.

Just like the Chiefs, we are a team, and we must come together to do our part in the battle to achieve victory because we will be fighting for dignity and justice long after the Chiefs win this year's Superbowl and hopefully many, many more.

# PUBLIC EDUCATION UNDER ATTACK IN MISSOURI

A Teacher-Legislator fights back against false narratives on Critical Race Theory

**By State Rep. Maggie Nurrenbern**

**A**s a state representative and a former teacher, I'm sickened by politicians pushing false narratives about what is and isn't being taught in our public schools. I'm tired of politicians lying that educators are indoctrinating kids to be less patriotic. I'm disheartened by the disrespect shown to my brothers and sisters in labor vilified for teaching our nation's sometimes disappointing history.

Fueled by extremist conservative media — the same cohort who pushed the Big Lie and downplayed a virus that has killed over 600,000 Americans, elected officials across Missouri and in this country have a new right-wing boogeyman: critical race theory.

Until recently, CRT was most likely to be found in law school classes to examine the intersection between American institutions, law and race. That's it. It's graduate-level, advanced subject matter, and it isn't even taught in our K-12 public schools. I certainly never saw it when I was an educator.

However, I'm sure after many late nights of strategizing how to divide our country and add more fuel to the

culture war fires, the same people who have insisted President Joe Biden was not fairly elected — despite all evidence to the contrary — have now decided that Marxist socialists have infiltrated our public schools. It would be laughable, if it weren't so censorious.

Despite CRT's non-existence in our schools, one-sided town halls and kangaroo court-style hearings are being held across Missouri and in Jefferson City to ban it. Some legislators are going further and pushing for bans on other curricula, like teaching any component of the 1619 Project, which seeks to examine history through the lens of first enslaved Africans who arrived in what would become the

United States.

Perhaps most alarming of all are the calls to censor curricula that embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Teaching through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion means kids of all backgrounds can see their own humanity reflected in their education. It means students learn to treat people more humanely and work together with those who are different from themselves. Union members know better than anyone the strength that comes from working together with people of different backgrounds.

Meanwhile, this unwarranted fear consumes time and energy that could be used to support real education reform that would actually improve public schools across our state. Missouri ranks 49th in America in state funding for public schools and starting teacher pay. If we want our schools to do better, we can start there.

So, let's not become distracted by these scare sessions. How do we build

stronger communities and continue to build a more perfect union? We continue to support our public schools and work to ensure that they are constantly improving to support the needs of each and every student. We allow schools and teachers control over the tools they have to teach.

Because it's educators — not some right-wing think tank in D.C. — who are experts in the classroom.

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*Representative Maggie Nurrenbern, a Democrat, represents Clay County (District 15) in the Missouri House of Representatives. She was elected to her first two-year term in November 2020.*

*Prior to her legislative duties, Nurrenbern taught at North Kansas City High School and at University Academy.*

*She is a lifelong resident of Clay County, graduating from Smithville High School in 2002. She holds a bachelor's degree in Communication - Journalism from Truman State University and a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction from UMKC.*

## In Memoriam

Lanny Maple - March 1, 2021  
Jerald Mulkey - March 1, 2021  
Stanley King - March 5, 2021  
Herman Moore - March 9, 2021  
Joseph Ellis - March 11, 2021  
James Day - March 12, 2021  
Melissa McGhee - March 14, 2021  
Cleo Hailey - March 22, 2021  
Ira Skirlock - March 24, 2021  
Danny Taylor - March 24, 2021  
William Christian - March 26, 2021

Mace Harris - April 3, 2021  
Albert Placke - April 6, 2021  
Russell Vogel - April 8, 2021  
Henry Whitfield - April 19, 2021  
Charles Day - April 20, 2021  
Gary Piper - April 29, 2021  
Chance Kovacs - May 18, 2021  
Charles Garrett - May 21, 2021  
Bob Paxton - June 1, 2021  
Carl Davis - June 8, 2021  
Billy Bowlin - June 13, 2021  
Richard Stanley - June 14, 2021

Richard Stumph - June 15, 2021  
Bryan King - June 17, 2021  
Leroy Grubb - June 22, 2021  
Kenneth Wellman - June 22, 2021  
Sherry Alexander - June 25, 2021  
Stephen McConnell - June 25, 2021  
Kenneth Devlin - June 26, 2021  
Matthew Haake - July 1, 2021  
Mark Heavelow - July 7, 2021  
Ruben Rangel - July 11, 2021  
James Chaney - July 12, 2021  
Tom McCluskey - July 16, 2021

Robert Wyrick - July 18, 2021  
Robert Mahoney - July 19, 2021  
Sean Johnson - July 21, 2021  
Charles Steele - August 7, 2021  
Ronald Pycior - August 13, 2021  
Ed Sager August - 15, 2021  
Lester Hafner - August 19, 2021  
Derwood Troxel - August 24, 2021  
Tyler Schoemaker - August 25, 2021  
Mark Miller - August 28, 2021  
Donald Smith - September 9, 2021



UAW Local 249 member Woodie Bonds prepares to whip up a batch of craft brew in a temporary set-up until Vine Street Brewing, his joint venture with Kemet Coleman and Elliot Ivory, is up and running in 2022.

## 249 member to open brewery in KC Jazz District

By Chrissy Kline

**A historic event is on the horizon as Vine Street Brewing begins preparations to open in 2022. It will be the first Black-owned brewery in Kansas City, with a focus on bringing craft beer to many communities. Local musician and beer enthusiast Kemet Coleman dreamed of opening a brewery in Kansas City but had had little success up until now. That is where Woodie Bonds, member of UAW Local 249 and creator of the Hip Hop Hooray beer festival comes in.**

Coleman came across a building in the historic Jazz district and felt like he was finally close to achieving the brewery he had dreamed of. He then contacted one of the most serious craft brewers he knew, Woodie Bonds, to propose a business partnership. Bonds said "Kemet called and said he had an opportunity he wanted to run by me and after thinking about it I told him I was in as long as I could bring Elliot Ivory in with me."

Ivory is another local home brewer that Bonds claims helps balance him out, referring to him jokingly as his "brew-mother." "He doesn't tell me no when I start to go off the rails on my

creative side but he does offer suggestions on what might work better and helps balance me," Bonds stated. Ivory's analytical side blended with Bonds creativity is sure to produce some amazing results.

Bonds said of his brewing passion that "This was not the plan. I used to tell people that I would never brew beer. That wasn't my thing." It was through the Missouri Mashers Brewing Club that he was convinced to give it a try. "There was this recipe and I said, 'Why don't we try this?' and they said, 'You can't do that!' so I had to do it for myself and see. That started it all."

Bonds has a love of trying unique

and interesting combinations to make crazy flavors in his brews, wanting to specialize in the scientific and more curious side of brewing he is always up for a challenge. When asked what one of his favorite crazy combinations was, Bonds decided on a cream ale that he used lactose sugar, strawberries, and a bottle of margaritas in his process. He also mentioned trying port wine in brewing beer and has had success in making a Neapolitan stout.

The brewing community is very tight knit, working together to always find new ways of improving our craft and working together to bring the community together. "Really, I just want to be a part of the community. There are so many doing great things we want to be a part of," Bonds shared. "They have all really welcomed me in and I look forward to working with Kemet and Ivory to bring more craft beer drinking to the city and educating people on brewing and craft beer."

The location is perfect for the trio

to achieve their goals with the building boasting enough space for a taproom and possible outdoor area for a patio or beer garden. While the community eagerly awaits the grand opening, Bonds is already thinking ahead to the future of possible beer competitions in-house with his fellow brewer Ivory, of continuing with his beer festivals and finding ways to draw in more local and home brewers as well as incorporating his union brothers and sisters along the way.

"It would be awesome to incorporate my love for my union and for the beer I brew into festivals. After discussing it with Kemet and Ivory, we are planning a discount of some kind for UAW and retiree members," Bonds shared. The support for this up-and-coming business from all the communities has been incredible to see and we couldn't be more proud of our union brother for chasing his dreams and pursuing his passions. Looking forward to walking through the doors of Vine Street Brewing in 2022.