

FIRST LOCAL NEWS

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



10,000 UAW members struck agricultural implements manufacturer John Deere Oct. 21 after 95% voted to reject a tentative contract with the company.

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Local 249 sponsored free COVID vaccine clinics at the union hall for UAW members and their families in September and October. Photo by Don Lehman.



Local 249's Fall Brawl Bass Tournament held September 26 at Smithville Lake: Left to right, First Place and Big Bass Lloyd Christopher and Matt Buso, Second Place Doug Derry and Ted Triggs. Third Place Todd Knaack and Andy Bissett. Fourth place Greg Proffitt and Phil Proffitt. Second big bass Dylan Ferguson. Back row anglers of the year Mike Spence and Fred Jobe.



The Local 249 Recreation Committee Anglers of the Year Fred Jobe and Mike Spence.

First Local News

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

UAW-Ford Joint Programs

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Benefits

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Ulysses Bales 816-459-1605 • Joe Camper 816-459-5559
Dave Sambol 816-459-1223

Quality

Kelly Loveall and Jeff Wright 816-459-1232

Dealer Rep. Danny Mata

Job Sourcing and Production Standards

Jim Ryan and Todd Wyse 816-459-1466

Helpful Numbers

Quality Hotline 1-866-723-3937

Employee Health Services 816-459-1226

National Employee Service Center 1-800-248-4444

Blue Care 816-395-2700

Blue Cross PPO 1-800-482-5146

Preferred Care Blue PPO 816-395-3193

Child Care Referrals 866-327-7952

UNICARE Life Insurance 1-800-843-8184

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

Delta Dental (Active) 844-223-8520

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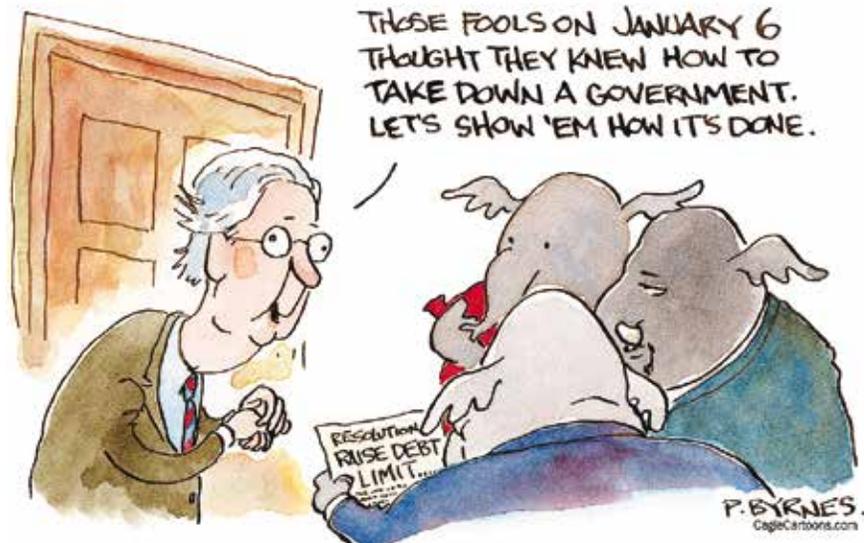
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UAW Calls on Congress to pass Infrastructure and Build Back Better with Kildee/Stabenow Provision

UAW

The United Auto Workers today announced a broad campaign to have Congress move forward on passing the Build Back Better and bi-partisan Infrastructure bills and Kildee/Stabenow Provision to protect good paying American jobs.

"It's about jobs — period," said Ray Curry, President of the UAW with almost 1 million active and retired members. "It is time for Congress to come together and create jobs now and in the future. Not passing both pieces of legislation could stifle economic growth and our middle-class economy for decades. It's time to focus on jobs and our future, not discord and act!"

Curry said that the legislation will impact all sectors of the UAW. "There is funding to boost demand for construction equipment for our Agriculture Implement workers. Funding in bills will boost development of Heavy Truck sales and development of EV and other future technology fueled trucks. Public and health care workers will benefit from Medicaid and Medicare funding to states and localities. Green building will pump funding into local economies. This bill is about jobs and the future for virtually all UAW members."

Included in the bill is development monies for infrastructure for EV vehicles including charging stations. Critically, for UAW members is the Kildee/Stabenow Provision which

ties future EV auto subsidies to sales in the United States as long as they create good paying union wage and benefit jobs.

"This bill is important to UAW families. By tying subsidies in the Kildee/Stabenow Provision to make sure taxpayer funding goes to domestic auto and battery assembly, and to make sure that these jobs are good paying union scale jobs, we protect our future," Curry added. "After all, these jobs of the future that replace traditional engine jobs need to provide the same middle class wages and benefits that built our modern economy. It is vital that the Kildee/Stabenow Provision pass to make sure jobs of the future are comparable to the jobs they replace."

Curry said the union is moving all of its channels to push Congress to pass both bills. "It is time to come together for all U.S. workers and their families on bills that create jobs today and meaningful jobs for tomorrow. It is time to come together as Americans and secure our future and pass both of these bills and the Kildee/Stabenow Provision."

CALL 1-866-287-6350 NOW AND TELL CONGRESS TO SUPPORT THE BUILD BACK BETTER ACT WITH THE KILDEE/STABENOW PROVISION

Labor News From the World Wide Web

The Picket Line

Medicaid Officially Expanded in Missouri

As of October 1st nearly 300,000 Missourians have access to affordable, quality healthcare thanks to Missouri voters who passed Medicaid Expansion.

Eligibility - The newly eligible population includes any adult from age 19-64 living in Missouri and whose household income is below 138% of the federal poverty line. Anyone previously eligible is still eligible as well.

Coverage - Physician services, psychiatry, family planning services, nursing facility services, home care, lab and X-ray services, family nurse services, dentistry, behavioral health services, and more are covered by MO HealthNet, Missouri's Medicaid program.

Application - You can apply for Medicaid at the Department of Social Services website at this link: www.mydss.mo.gov/healthcare/apply — *Missouri Action Alliance*

Deere's injunction curbs UAW strikers

After a week on the picket line outside of the John Deere Davenport Works, strikers are now under strict restrictions over how and where they can picket.

As part of her order, Chief Judge Marlita Greve also limited to four the number of picketers that can be "near" each gate of Davenport Works, banned the use of chairs and barrel fires by picketers

Injunctions are often used by companies during strikes to shift the power balance in negotiations, according to labor experts.

"If you got a big group of workers, you got 200 workers out there, and then you're trying to bargain with the union, the union's bargaining team is going to get a lot of energy, and they're going to feel really good about having all those members out there," Bruno said. "And the company is going to feel the pressure."

Placing an injunction on a strike also limits the public's awareness on the picket lines and negotiations, because it limits media coverage and visitors, like politicians, according to Bruno. — *Quad City Times*

Missouri and the election crisis

Missouri politicians, including rightwing candidates hoping to out-Trump each other in the campaign for Blunt's Senate seat, have played an outsized role in seeding distrust in the election system. Attorney General Eric Schmitt, one of those would-be successors to Blunt, pulled Missouri into one losing legal battle after another to challenge the results in swing states. The state legislature is peppered with senators and representatives on the right who have openly suggested Trump won — and others nervous about what would happen if they admit he didn't. And Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft has tried to stand in two places at once: arguing Missouri elections have been safe and secure under his watch, while simultaneously claiming the state is wide open to fraud if it doesn't place more restrictions on voters. — *Riverfront Times*

Striking miners resemble historic strikes

Since April 1, 1,100 coal miners, members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), have been on strike against Warrior Met Coal Inc., near Tuscaloosa, Ala.

These miners are striking over outrageous safety violations, deep wage cuts and slashed benefits. Though this is the longest strike in Alabama's history and an important page from American labor history, the mainstream bosses of news media have hardly mentioned it.

Coal miners, due to the hazardous nature of the work, have always been the most militant segment of the American working class.

The current strike is especially interesting since it is happening in the Deep South, where unions have always been in the cross-hairs. — *Indiana Gazette*

Local 249 sponsors *spooktacular* Trunk or Treat

By Cecelia Davis

Spiders, witches, and pirates, oh my! Local 249 families joined together to have a *spooktacular* time at the union hall parking lot on October 23.

Our fantastic committees turned their vehicle trunks into Halloween masterpieces. About twenty trunks were decorated into a variety of themes. From a mystical witch land to fighting crime with wonder woman. The children and parents prance around with excitement as they circle the parking lot with glee. As they were patiently waiting for the next trunk, they were instructed to become a judge and choose the trunk that was the most creative.

Once they had reached the final trunk, the families were given a raffle ticket that was to be placed in a bucket of the trunk that they found impressive. The first place winner will not only get bragging rights for the year, they will be rewarded with a \$75 gift card, second place gets \$50, and third place gets \$25.

First place went to the CAP committee. There you met the Great Pumpkin Charlie Brown crew. Where Charlie Brown and Snoopy waited around their yard for the children to come play and dance around a bucket of candy they were willing to share. Second place went to the Civil and Human Rights Committee. Come on down to the carnival where the Civil and Human Rights

friends lured us in with the delicious smell of fresh popcorn. As the families were waiting for a savory treat, they were able to play fun and addicting carnival games that varied from the ring toss to the bean bag toss.

Last, but not least, was the Union Label, who placed third. Their trunk was every kids dream place to live, Candyland! Children softly chanted "Candyland" as they hopped on over to be greeted by the *boo-tiful*, multicolored hair, candy corn queen who let everybody, young and old, take a trip through her candy cane kingdom. She had giant lollipops, massive candy canes and heavenly sweets guiding the way to her big barrel of assorted candy.

"I enjoyed it a lot more than I was expecting. I thought it was going to be a lot smaller with less people than it was, but it was a way larger turn out than we had expected. We actually made it through 600 pre-filled bags of candy." Said Danielle Evans, who is a current participant in the Women's Committee. She was not only volunteering her time for her committee, but she was also able to have some family time with her daughter by joining in on getting some ghostly treats.

"My daughter enjoyed herself and



Camilee Hefty, left to right, Gibson Hefty, Addie Hefty and Levi Fraze were part of the Halloween fun at the Oct. 23 Trunk or Treat event sponsored by the Women's Committee. Photo by Don Lehman.

got to see all the trunks. That was fun for her. There was a haunted house the children could go through and some side games, like ring toss and candy corn bowling as well. I would 100% be a part of this next year!"

While the sun quickly set, the crowd grew bigger, until a chilling wave of wind and raindrops came misting down on the union families.

As the floating ghosts and goblins started to deflate and candy buckets started to deplete, the spine-tingling fun was coming to a halt. All the kids were exhausted with overfilled bellies from sweets and giggles. While the adults were pleased with such a safe and fun environment. Not a face was left without a smile. This year of spooky fun will be a haunting act to follow.

Kellogg workers strike to hold line on cuts

AFL-CIO

At midnight on Oct. 5, 1,400 workers at four Kellogg Co. plants went on strike against the company. For more than a year during the COVID-19 pandemic, Kellogg workers around the country have been working long, hard hours, day in and day out, to produce Kellogg ready-to-eat cereals for America's families.

Kellogg's response to these loyal, hardworking employees has been to demand the workers give up quality health care, retirement benefits, and holiday and vacation pay. The company continues to threaten to send additional jobs to Mexico if workers do not accept outrageous proposals that take away protections they have had for decades.

Kellogg is making these demands as it rakes in record profits, without regard for the well-being of the hard-

working people who make the products that have created the company's massive profits.

We are proud of Kellogg members for taking a strong stand against this company's greed, and we will support them for as long as it takes to force Kellogg to negotiate a fair contract that rewards them for their hard work and dedication and protects the future of all Kellogg workers.

Working people across the United States have stepped up to help out our

friends, neighbors and communities during these trying times, according to the AFL-CIO.

Members of the Tennessee AFL-CIO Labor Council joined striking Kellogg workers in Memphis, Tennessee where members of BCTGM Local 252G are on strike on the picket line.

"I've been in the labor movement for a long time, and what I saw earlier this week was truly something special. The energy and solidarity on the picket line in Memphis is powerful," said AJ Starling (ATU), secretary-treasurer of the Tennessee AFL-CIO Labor Council.

"It truly feels like one big family that's gathered to support one another. Community leaders, elected officials, and countless union members have all stopped by to show their support for BCTGM Local 252G and all Kellogg's

workers who are on strike across the country. At a time when the company is making record profits, management's ongoing attempt to enact a two-tier wage system and divide the workforce is inexcusable. These hard-working employees deserve to be treated with dignity, respect and fairness on the job. As I said on Wednesday, all 60,000-plus members of the Tennessee AFL-CIO Labor Council are standing in solidarity with BCTGM Local 252G and will continue to do so for the duration of the strike."

If you live near a Kellogg Co. plant, please RSVP to a strike line and stand in solidarity with the hardworking workers! There are strikes in Battle Creek, Michigan; Omaha, Nebraska; Lancaster, Pennsylvania; and Memphis, Tennessee.



Local 249 women Camalee Hefty and her daughter Adalee, front row left, Alicia Price, Kaylee Parker, Dani Carl, Robin Taylor, Demi Calton, Amy Minich, NaTisha Johnson, Jessica Berocci, Jon'Aire Moltbia, Mindy Ashby, Cecelia Davis, with grandson, Zahria Coleman, Ny'Riell Taylor and Cecelia S. Davis marched for women's rights on the Plaza in Kansas City Oct. 2.

Local 249 women march for equal rights

By Cecelia Davis

“My body, my choice! My body, my choice!” echoed throughout the downtown plaza as a group of women of all shapes, sizes and ethnicities banded together to demand Justice! The women in attendance created signs with strong messages and graphics to catch the attention of all gathered. Many women were brave enough to step on a stage and tell the stories of how their lives were forever changed in hopes of lifting the spirits of those listening.

A group of women from UAW Local 249, coordinated by Amy Minich, a member of the UAW Local 249 CAP and Election Committees, attended this rally to show their support and agreement on the importance of women's rights. The union has experience in fighting for what is right, even when it is not what's popular. The UAW has supported civil and human rights even when faced with adversity and isn't about to stop now. This rally was not just a march for the pro-choice, it was about women empowerment and equality.

The organizers of the rally, an organization called Women's March, demand justice not only for themselves but for their fellow women. This justice

comes in many forms, referred to as Unity Principles, each of which ties into the same ideals that make us proud to be part of the UAW.

These principles are ending violence, reproductive rights, LGBTQIA rights, worker's rights, civil rights, disability rights, immigrant rights and environmental justice. Each of these unity principles can be tied to departments within the UAW, our standing committees, and beliefs of our union as well.

The women of UAW Local 249 heard about the most recent rally and knew they needed to be there. Minich communicated with the standing committees and found interest from all of

them. The women met at the rally and were inspired to find over one hundred women fighting for justice and equality for all.

“This wasn't just another event for me and my family. The fear of being sent back to the 1950's is real and tangible for everyone, as is the strength of conviction that we need to have to not let this happen, not now or ever,” said Minich. “Sometimes you must speak truth to power with your whole body by showing up and speaking out in solidarity. I felt was the best way I could have my voice heard. I felt angry, empowered, and proud. Mostly angry that we're still fighting the same way we've been fighting for decades.”

Minich believes the mission of the Women's March is to harness the political power of diverse women and their communities to create transformative social change. The kind of change that will only come if we stand united. That is what brought Camalee Hefty, member of the UAW Local 249 CAP Committee, to the rally as well. “I

believe it is my duty to attend Women's Marches. As a woman I want to honor and show respect to women in the past that have fought so hard for us to have any rights. I feel like we owe it to all the brave women of the past and all of our daughters for a better future,” Hefty said.

The only way we can create the change we want to see is to vote out those who fight to oppress us and show up at the polls in strength of numbers. How can you as a member help fight for women's justice? Join a standing committee, attend a rally, or find a local organization that stands with us in supporting equality and justice.

“Your vote is the loudest voice you have,” said Minich. “Showing up in support of what you believe in is your right and obligation not just as a member of this union but as a citizen.” So go out and make a change, “for your mother, wife, daughter, sister, niece, cousin, friend and to all who identify as a female.”



Women's Committee members Dominique Carter, left to right, Melody DeCoudres, Nicole D'Andrea, Lynn Brown, Robin Taylor, Stephanie Henderson, Maribell Courtez and NaTisha Johnson worked with a Journey to New Life volunteer coordinator, kneeling front row, to reorganize clothing donations in the men's and women's sections. Photo by Don Lehman.

A helping hand on the journey to a new life

By Pat Hayes

Members of Local 249's Women's Committee volunteered with Journey to New Life, a local social service organization that provides opportunities for men and women re-entering life after prison, Oct. 10. The organization, founded in 2013, provides emergency assistance such as shelter, transportation, clothing and other basic services to former prisoners.

Women's Committee members Dominique Carter, Melody DeCoudres, Nicole D'Andrea, Lynn Brown, Robin Taylor, Stephanie Henderson, Maribell Courtez and NaTisha Johnson worked with a Journey to New Life volunteer coordinator to reorganize clothing donations.

"The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted volunteer efforts," said Women's Committee Chair Robin Taylor, "we helped organize clothing donations in the men's and women's sections and took excess donations to Goodwill."

Taylor and Erica Eckart, a member

of the CAP Committee, plan to return to Journey to New Life later in the month to volunteer in the emergency services section. The committee as a whole is developing a long-term plan to partner with Journey to New Life as part of its community service work.

"Programs like these are what makes our community safer," says Rita Flynn, Journey to New Life Program Director. "Ninety-five percent of our clients never go back to prison. It just makes sense."

According to Journey to New Life, the United States has the highest

incarceration rate of any country in the world. "Yet, we are ill-prepared to help former offenders reintegrate into the community once they have served their sentence."

Men and women leaving prison face many roadblocks to housing, employment, education, financial resources and family reunification. Journey to New Life works to remove those roadblocks.

On average, 67.8 percent of former inmates return to prison after release compared to just five percent of those helped by Journey to New Life.

"All of our members can be very proud of the work our Women's Committee is doing," says Local 249 President Jason Starr. "They are among the most active of our committees and their community and social service work reflect well on the local and our membership as a whole."

The purpose of the union's Wom-

en's Committee is to educate the women of the local union of labor's position on local, state and national laws regarding women's issues, and to provide leadership and educational training for women members so that they may become more active in the local union and seek leadership positions. The committee also informs all union members about women and family issues.

In addition to their ongoing work with Journey to New Life, Local 249's Women's Committee is busy preparing for its annual Trunk or Treat Halloween event at the union hall on Oct. 23, according to Taylor, who works on the Transit Paint Sealer Deck doing the pocket job. The committee is also making plans to continue to work with Mother's Refuge which provides shelter and education to homeless, pregnant and parenting young women.

Brian Mercer's volunteer work makes a difference

By Chrissy Kline

UAW Local 249's Brian Mercer personifies what it means to be a dedicated positive force for change in the world around us. Despite the rigorous work schedule and early mornings of working at the Kansas City Assembly Plant, Mercer has been involved with public schools around the Northland and Greater Kansas City. From PTAs to boosters, from committees involved in the building of schools and their stadiums to being a member of the North Kansas City Education Foundation and many committees in-between, Mercer is a busy man.

Mercer started working at Ford 27 and a half years ago. "That half a year is important! It all counts," he said. He is now a tag relief utility in Transit body shop. Thanks to the UAW and working in a seniority shop he has been able to bid on jobs that allow him to pursue his passions outside of the factory walls. Those passions have led to being inducted into the Liberty High School Hall of Fame.

When asked Mercer stated, "I just woke up one day and decided I needed to get involved. Working for Ford and being a member of the UAW has provided me with a good living, a great living, so as my kids got older, I started thinking maybe I should start giving back and set an example for my kids." At first, he wasn't sure what the best way was to get involved, eventually deciding to try, and run for the school board. "I put my name on the ballot and I ran. I did like 25 signs myself, I'm not a rich man, I put the signs out, knocked doors and did community events and ended up with over 3000 votes." Mercer was shocked by the number of votes that he had received and stated that it gave him enough confidence to try and run again next year.

He was later contacted by a woman who said that she and her colleagues were so impressed by the work he had put in that they wanted him to consider taking over her position. She was stepping down during her term as the North Kansas City School District PTA Council President. Her job was to oversee all the PTAs, booster clubs and promote community events. To Mercer this was a dream come true. It sounded like exactly the type of position he would be interested in. "The school board position sounded like a lot of meetings and board rooms and I'm more of a boots on the ground, with the people, kind of guy. I like the parties and fundraisers where I get to walk around and thank everyone for coming and promoting all the work we do," Mercer shared.

All the PTAs voted him in and then later requested he stay for another three-year term. He was overwhelmed

by the support and after getting in touch with the Missouri PTA he was able to stay on for another three years. Mercer found out through his position just how important the roles of the PTA and boosters were when it came to generating money to go towards schools, teachers, and students. He also expressed the level of detail in coordinating is greater in high school because then you also have sports teams like football, baseball and soccer that take on concession stand responsibilities for fundraising. Something as simple as arranging a tailgate event before a football game requires buying large tents in case it rains, massive BBQs to handle the volume of people, as well as someone to man them! "The average PTA only has 5 to 7 people, and they aren't going to be able to cover that alone, so they will have to reach out for help, and it's all volunteer." Mercer shared his experience about learning how truly selfless some people were once getting involved and how incredible it was to see.

One thing Mercer noticed in his time working with the school districts is that there were not as many men involved in the PTAs and boosters as he had hoped. "It was important to me to show other men that they could be involved too. I wanted dads to know there is room for them too. These days it isn't dad going to work and mom staying home all the time, both parents are usually working, and everyone should be able to volunteer for these types of programs. Change can be tough so hopefully I showed some dads out there that they can jump in too."

Mercer's daughter, a senior at Winnetonka, will be the last of his children to graduate high school. When asked what he planned to do after his children had all left home and he found himself an empty nester, Mercer shared he hadn't made any definitive plans yet. "I think that even when I decide to step down from being President I will still be involved on social media and supporting the schools. I really enjoy being an honorary ambassador for



Local 249 member Brian Mercer receives the Greater Kansas City Association of School Librarians Advocate of the Year award.

the school district. There is so much negativity on social media these days, I try to double down on the positivity to help, and some of it probably comes across cheesy."

Despite Mercer's plans to stay involved on social media he explained the reasoning behind his lack of plans. His wife Tiffany has been and still is a huge supporter of his work and his passion. Some nights after getting up for work at four in the morning I come home after my shift, shower, get a quick bite to eat and get into my district apparel and I'm out the door again to attend a function or two for the schools. "She always supports me and recently reminded me that I'm only two and a half years away from retirement, she has seven to ten in the district, and she wants to go somewhere that there's water and it's warm."

"She has always been there to support me and so there will come a time when I need to give that back to her, to show her that it's time for me to focus my energy back on her now. It is time to support her back and her dreams and passions, so I don't want any set plans for myself because I want to make sure she is happy," Mercer stated.

When reflecting on his time in the UAW and the lifestyle that he has achieved because of being a member of this union Mercer is grateful for the opportunity to retire in the future and

spend time with any future grandchildren that come along. "Something you learn as you get older is that you have to be ready to adapt to change at a moment's notice. You never know what life is going to throw at you," Mercer said.

Between now and that oh so enticing retirement date, Mercer plans to continue to double down on the positivity and be a friendly face to those who cross his path in the body shop and beyond. "Everyone needs to be seen and to feel like they matter, so that's what I try to do."

Mercer also added that he would love to see more people get involved not only in our schools and communities, but inside the plant as well. To donate your time no matter if it is one hour or twelve. It's still volunteering and helps build the feeling of community. The last couple years so much has changed, and now without having dinners and potlucks and having to distance ourselves from one another, there is a disconnect between so many people.

Take a small step and investigate some of the work done by the standing committees in the union. See if there is one that matches your interests or find an organization outside of here if that is your thing. If we all were a little more unselfish and gave just a little of ourselves, the world would be a better place.



William O'Neal and family, Joshua Curtis, Joe Lumpkin, Darren Piper, Darrin McIntyre, Jacob Scott, and Consuelo Huett-Vaughn, members of Motorcycle Committee, delivered water and food donated by Local 249 members to striking UAW-John Deere workers in East Moline, Ill. Oct. 21.

Local 249 aids UAW-Deere strikers

By Pat Hayes

Members of Local 249's Motorcycle Committee delivered 5,500 bottles of water, food and snacks to donated by Local 249 members to striking UAW Local 865 members who work at the John Deere Harvester Works in East Moline, Ill Oct 21. Members William O'Neal and family, Joshua Curtis, Joe Lumpkin, Darren Piper, Darrin McIntyre, Jacob Scott, and Consuelo Huett-Vaughn also walked the picket line before making the 387 mile return trip.

10,000 UAW members walked off the job Oct. 14 at agriculture-implements manufacturer John Deere in the first strike against the company in 35 years.

"On the picket line, one of the strikers, Alex Mitchell Jr., told us Local 865 members from East Moline had driven to Wentzville to walk the picket line with striking GM workers," says Joshua Curtis, chair of the Motorcycle Committee.

"Having us come to support them in return, he said, was awesome."

Curtis who comes from a farming family and raises 40 acres of row crops in addition to working at the Ford Motor Kansas City Assembly Plant believes the striking agricultural implements workers have strong support from the

farming community.

"I have a friend who owns a Deere harvester," says Curtis, "and he won't buy parts right now."

Despite an injunction limiting the number of pickets at John Deere plant entrances and a ban on burn barrels for warmth, morale among the strikers is high, says Curtis.

After a week on the picket line strikers put their last paycheck in the bank and will have to rely on strike benefits. The weather is turning colder, as well, but those folks, says Curtis, will stand there like a rock.

Separately, Gary Thomas, chair of the Education Committee and David Winkler drove to Ankeny, Iowa Oct. 20

to join 900 striking Local 79 members at the John Deere Harvester Works on the picket line.

One of the issues that led Deere workers to reject the tentative contract, says Thomas, was a provision that would have replaced defined benefit pension eligibility for workers hired after Nov. 1. Instead of a traditional pension, newly hired workers would have received a 401(k) under the rejected agreement.

People on the picket line, says Thomas, really believe it's time to get rid of the two tier pay and benefits that have saddled younger workers with bad jobs that don't have any future.

"Tough times make strong people," says Thomas. "These folks are ready to hold the line until they win."

The strike comes as UAW members overwhelmingly rejected a tentative contract on Oct. 10.

"Deere is reporting record profits, fueled by orders from farmers who are seeing high corn and soybean prices

and who had put off equipment purchases in leaner years. Deere projects it will earn \$5.7 to \$5.9 billion this fiscal year, which ends in November. That's at least 61% more than in the previous record year, 2013," according to the *Des Moines Register*.

Like other manufacturing companies, Deere has struggled to hire workers to meet demand. Reports from around the country indicate that workers are quitting in record numbers, factors that put the strikers in a strong position.

Workers are angry that CEO, John May, was paid \$15.6 million in 2020, up from \$6 million the year before.

Local 249 President Jason Starr is in contract with local union presidents at John Deere plants across Region 4.

"We stand ready," says Starr, "to come to the aid of our UAW brothers and sisters in the agricultural implements industry whether that means stocking their food pantries or putting our people on the picket line."

Production challenges expected to continue

By Jim Fisher

The production schedules at KCAP continue to be changing weekly, and often with late notice. The supply chains that provide stock to the plant seem to be very unpredictable. To make the issue even more complicated, the amount of cargo containers backlogged at ports entering the United States has not improved over recent weeks. Both of our systems have seen reduced schedules in the month of October due to this. The Transit System has been affected with cancelled shifts, and the Truck side has seen shifts running short. Until the parts issues are fully resolved we will keep members aware of any production changes the moment we are officially notified. I expect to continue to see schedule adjustments for the remaining part of the year.

On October 6, Ford CEO Jim Farley visited the Kansas City Assembly Plant. This was his second visit to the plant since taking over as Ford's CEO. His visit included a presentation of the Transit Battery Electric Addition.

This visit went very well, and all of our members should be proud of the way our Local 249 members that were part of the presentation represented the plant and our membership. Their knowledge and understanding of the new lines show that KCAP is ready for the next significant launch coming at the plant. Ford put a large investment into the plant getting ready for the BEV and our members showed that KCAP is ready to make this a very successful launch.

On October 15, Local 249 and KCAP made the official announcement that 290 additional TFT members were converting to Full Time In-Progression status ahead of the UAW/Ford contractually outlined timetable. This move immediately gave these members pay raises, better health care, and additional job security. Once all these members were converted, the TFT percentage at KCAP was reduced to 6% inside the plant. This percentage is well below the percentages allowed per the National Agreement.

On October 27, the final construction was finalized on the new drainage system to the North Parking lot. This a 100-foot-long drain that was placed just feet from the existing drain, and in front of the turnstiles. In addition, some additional dirt as removed from the ditch that separates the parking lot and 69 highway. There have been several attempts over the past couple of years to address the flooding that takes place there, and we are hopeful this will finally address the issues once and for all.

During the month of October our UAW Quality Reps, UAW Work Standards Reps, FPS Plant Coordinators, Bargaining Committee, and District Committeemen were assigned with

addressing any quality issues inside the plant. Members were also notified of quality issues inside the plant. Thanks to a lot of hard work the plant has reported that in just 30 days on Truck Customer Acceptance Line (CAL) quality improved by 20.5%. In addition, KCAP reported out better quality than Dearborn Truck Plant by 13%.

This shows a significant improvement in our quality. While these numbers show an improvement, we are not satisfied enough is being done. To put it very simply we must do better, but for the first month the numbers indicate our members have begun to take quality to a higher priority. In addition to getting issues addressed on the production floor the Truck Final rebalance was ended early and job settlements in both Truck Trim and Truck Chassis have been settled. This was completed ahead of schedule to address jobs that have been overloaded. Additional manpower was added to both departments to completed job rebalance concerns.

The quality of our units is also our future. Each member has the responsibility to protect our customers. The Local Agreement protects our members with contractual Quality Stop Button Procedure found on pages 156-158. We ask all members to read, understand, and follow your Local Agreement.

The Local Leadership Team takes the quality of our units a very high priority. The success of this plant depends on the best units coming off our assembly lines. Quality is defined as a "Joint Venture" with the UAW and company. However, if our quality policies are properly administered, it will be done without reprisal to any operator. T

o our KCAP management counter parts I will ask one simple question, when was the last time a member of management stopped the line to fix a quality issue? Any attempt from management to harass or intimidate an operator for properly using the contractual Stop Button Procedure will



Local 249 Bargaining Chair Jim Fisher recognizes a member during the question and answer period of his report at the monthly membership meeting.. Photo by Don Lehman.

be reported to management outside of this plant to prevent KCAP Management from having the opportunity to cover up the issue. If members see quality issues not being addressed or recurring, we ask them to report those issues to our Quality Hotline numbers. The local number is 816-414-5588, and the National Hotline number is 866-723-3937.

Looking into November and December the Contractual Holidays are coming closer. Our members have seen

a crazy year in 2021 to say the least. Holiday parties and family gatherings will soon be starting. We wish to remind everyone that COVID 19 has not gone away, and to plan to continue protecting your family and loved ones with social distancing practices. As we approach Thanksgiving, I ask all our members to look back and reflect on all that has gone on this past year. While 2021 has been challenging, as members of the UAW we still have a lot to be thankful for.



KCAP Emergency Response Team members train for confined space rescue. Photo by Don Lehman.

A sleeping giant awakens

By Jason Starr

They're calling it Striketober. Across the nation, more than 100,000 American workers are on strike — or threatening to go on strike — to win back what's been taken from them over the past 45 years.

At Frito-Lay, Kellogg and agricultural implement manufacturer John Deere, workers have walked off the job in a high-stakes battle to turn around generations of declining pay, benefits, working conditions — and let's be honest — hope.

It's not just happening on the picket line, either. A record 2.9% of the American workforce quit their jobs in August, which is equivalent to 4.3 million resignations, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Since the late 70s, American workers have been on the losing side of a desperate battle to save the American Dream. Years of relentless attacks from the corporate billionaire class and their enablers in the halls of government and the media have made a mockery of the once common-sense idea that a hard day's work should be rewarded by a fair day's pay.

Years of successful attacks on working class living standards have created a race to the bottom among the corporate class to deny workers dignified pay and benefits, including Ford, that has invested in new products including the Bronco Sport, Maverick and Electric Mustang that have all gone to Mexico to avoid paying UAW negotiated wages and benefits. Ford recently announced it is making its largest investment in company history in right-to-work Tennessee and Kentucky all while attempting to ignore its con-

tractual commitment to invest \$900 million in the Ohio Assembly Plant.

As these attacks on working men and women progressed decade after decade, the dream that a steady job was the ticket to a middle-class life gradually slipped away.

Today, over 60% of American workers make less than \$20 an hour and are working multiple jobs to get by. These realities have true life and death consequences. Life expectancy in the United States declined by 1.5 years from 2019 to 2020 to the lowest level since 2003, according to new provisional data from the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics.

This decline in life expectancy, which predates the COVID-19 pandemic, comes almost entirely among working class Americans without a four-year college degree, which make up a significant portion of the U.S. working-age population.

Social scientists call these deaths of despair as a result of the steady erosion of U.S. working-class life.

Here in Missouri, there were 73,831 deaths in 2020, 11,000 more than in 2019. The state saw just 69,276 births, meaning 4,555 more people died than were born, according to a report issued by the Department of Health and Senior Services.

What Striketober is showing us for the first time in decades is the



Local 249 President Jason Starr chairs the monthly membership meeting. File photo by Don Lehman.

beginning of despair transforming itself into determination. Workers are fighting back and believe they can win. The sleeping giant — the American Worker — is no longer willing to accept the loss of jobs, pay, and dignity. We want our fair share of the wealth we create, and we are willing to take on the corporations and their lapdogs in government and the media.

The strike by 10,000 of our UAW brothers and sisters at John Deere is one of the best — and most important — examples of the transformation from resignation to resistance.

The Deere strike comes at a time when the company is reporting record profits. The company projects it will earn \$5.7 to \$5.9 billion this fiscal year fueled by orders from farmers who put off equipment purchases in past years, but now benefit from higher corn and soybean prices.

Worker anger was further stoked by the knowledge that Deere CEO, John May, was paid \$15.6 million in 2020, up from \$6 million the year before.

The tentative contract — rejected by an astounding majority of UAW members at Deere — would have provided increased wages to current workers, but at the expense of defined benefit pensions and retirement healthcare for the next generation of Deere workers.

Sacrificing the future of their children for a handful of silver was one step too far for the vast majority of Deere workers.

In many ways, the decades-long decline of the American working class as a whole is reflected in the battles between the UAW and in agricultural

implement manufacturers that erupted in the 90s.

In 1992, the UAW waged a bitter five-month strike against Caterpillar. In response, Caterpillar threatened to replace Caterpillar's entire unionized work force.

Some ten thousand UAW members struck again in 1994–1995 for 17 months, a record at that time. The strike ended with UAW members forced to return to work without a contract despite record revenues and profits by Caterpillar.

What is the difference now? Workers are regaining their class consciousness in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic that identified which work is absolutely essential. Corporations are conducting a desperate search for workers to fill their factories and workers are rightly demanding more.

We see this here at KCAP where Ford is converting TFTs to Full Time In-Progression ahead of schedule because they cannot retain enough workers to keep production running at current levels of pay and benefits.

It is time — long past time — to use our power to take back what we have lost over the past 45 years.

To take advantage of our renewed power, we need to fight on the picket line, and we need to fight for trade policy that brings jobs to the U.S. so that we are not so reliant on overseas suppliers. We need to demand that our elected officials stop enabling corporate criminality and it must all start with the passage of the PRO (Protecting the Right to Organize) Act that will give workers the power to organize for dignity and justice on the job.

A poster for a Thanksgiving Dinner Donation Drive. At the top left is the UAW Local 249 logo. The main text reads "UAW LOCAL 249 Thanksgiving Dinner Donation Drive". Below this is a list of items: "Canned vegetables", "Stove Top stuffing", "Mac n cheese", "Cake mix with frosting", and "Jiffy corn bread mix". At the bottom, it says "UAW Local 249 is collecting donations of non-perishable food goods at the union hall to build dinner boxes for families in need this Thanksgiving. Listed above are the items we are most in need of!". The background features a photograph of a Thanksgiving dinner spread.

Missouri redistricting faces uncertainty

By Missouri State Rep. Jerome Barnes

If things had gone like they were supposed to, the Missouri General Assembly would have completed the process of redrawing the state's eight congressional districts to reflect population shifts under the most recent U.S. Census in May. But since the states didn't get the detailed Census data needed for redistricting until recently (September 16) due to pandemic-related delays, lawmakers are behind.

With the legislature unable to do the job during its regular session, the bipartisan expectation had been Gov. Mike Parson would call a special session this fall in order to have new congressional maps in place by the end of the year. Surprisingly, the governor announced in August he has no intention of calling a special session for congressional redistricting.

As a result, lawmakers won't be able to take up the task until the next regular legislative session begins on Jan. 5. That's a problem because candidate filing for next year's party primaries opens Feb. 22. In theory, the minimum time the legislature needs to pass a bill is just five days, but it almost never happens.

So, with a complex and politically charged topic like congressional redistricting that usually takes months to complete, getting it done in the roughly six weeks between when the legislative session starts and candidate filing begins will be a major undertaking.

Making the task even more difficult is the fact that bills enacted during the regular session normally don't take effect until Aug. 28, which in this case will be six months after candidate filing opens. The only way a bill can take effect immediately upon being signed into law by the governor is if it passes by two-thirds supermajorities in both the state Senate and House of Representatives. Given the competing interests among majority Republicans – with at least seven sitting GOP state lawmakers mulling congressional runs of their own – getting supermajority support isn't guaranteed.

The partisan split of Missouri's congressional delegation currently stands at six Republicans and two Democrats, and that's likely how it will remain. While some Republicans are talking about creating a 7-1 GOP map by carving up the Kansas City-based 5th District, there are several political hurdles to doing so, which is why I understand a similar attempt 10 years ago went nowhere.

Two districts – the 1st and 8th – need to significantly expand in territory to gain sufficient population to reach the target. The remaining six districts will need to lose residents.

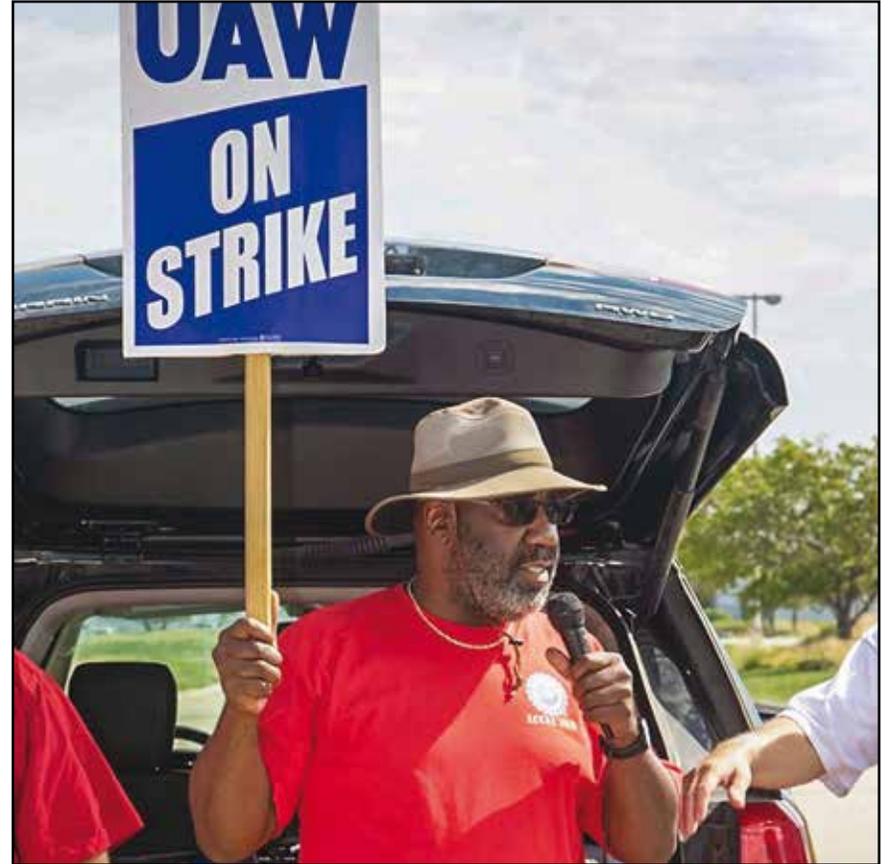
Although it is possible to recon-

figure the 5th District, represented by longtime Democratic Congressman Emanuel Cleaver, into a Republican district, it's much easier said than done, politically speaking. Since the 5th District currently is heavily Democratic, flipping it Republican would require shifting large numbers of Democratic voters into neighboring districts. As a result, the Republican strength of those districts would be diluted.

So, while carving up the 5th District might produce a 7-1 Republican congressional delegation in the short term, that could easily turn into a 5-3 – or even a 4-4 – split over the 10-year life of the map.

Another hurdle to turning the 5th District Republican is it would require putting more of the Kansas City metro area in districts with far away rural counties whose residents probably would prefer to maintain the rural focus of their current districts. Those rural residents likely would put strong pressure on the Republican state lawmakers who represent them to oppose a congressional plan creating more hybrid rural/urban districts.

And the final hurdle to this plan is the several rural Missouri state lawmakers with congressional aspirations almost certainly would prefer running in overwhelming Republican districts rather



Missouri State Rep. Jerome Barnes joined the picket line with striking UAW members at the Fairfax GM Plant in Kansas City, KS in 2019. Photo by Don Lehman.

than diluted ones that could prove more difficult to hold in the coming years.

If lawmakers are unable to agree on a redistricting plan in a timely manner, it's possible that a panel of three federal judges could end up drawing Missouri's new congressional districts, as authorized under federal law. Federal judges drew Missouri's new districts in both 1971 and 1981 after the legislature failed to do so.

Given the political uncertainty

of the legislature enacting a congressional redistricting bill in such a tight timeframe in 2022, there's a strong chance that could happen again.

Missouri State Rep. Jerome Barnes, D-Raytown, is serving his third term representing the 28th District in the Missouri House of Representatives. Rep Barnes is the ranking Democratic member of the House Special Committee on Redistricting.

Missouri House and Senate redistricting is underway

New district lines must be drawn so that we voters can pick our leaders — and not in a way where politicians and political consultants are picking voters to advance their own agendas. Our commissioners need to hear from Missourians about how you live in community with one another, what are important aspects to consider when drawing district lines, or how current boundaries have had an impact.

No one knows your community like you do, and we need you to share your story. Missouri's future depends on us demanding new and fair boundaries for our communities. These maps will decide how our communities get resources for the next 10 years! We must make our voices heard and insist that everyone be counted and not just voters! Tell the redistricting commission

that using total population is the only acceptable way to redistrict in Missouri.

In November 2020, Missouri voters were deceived into replacing Clean Missouri's non-partisan redistricting plan with a more partisan process that will make it harder to challenge the final maps in court.

Instead of a non-partisan demographer, bipartisan commissions will

draw the new maps. After the Census releases statewide data, political party officials will nominate members for the House and Senate Commissions from each of the eight congressional districts. The Governor will have 30 days to choose 10 Republicans and 10 Democrats to appoint to each commission.

The criteria of competitiveness and partisan fairness, which would provide a more level playing field for legislative candidates, now have a lower priority than population, contiguous districts, and the rules for county boundaries.



CAP Chair Shirley Mata, center, led a large group of Local 249 activists, including Bryant Myers of the Human and Civil Rights Committee, right, showing support for legislators who worked with the UAW to oppose right to work at Gladfest Oct. 2.

Local 249 activists turn out for Northland events

By Erica Eckart

Every fall, the Northland puts on two parades that are a part of local history. The first parade is the Liberty Fall Fest Parade, which is a three-day event held on the fourth full weekend of September, in Historic Downtown Liberty, Mo., where locals from the community come to enjoy craft/food booths, a one-of-a-kind parade, a carnival, along with live music, children's activities and much more! The festival offers many opportunities for locals to showcase their many artistic talents from handcrafted ceramics and woodwork to jewelry, metal work, drawings, paintings and food.

Tasty food and beverages are sold throughout the festival to benefit local non-profit groups so parade goers are able to enjoy great food while supporting worthy causes.

The city of Liberty is a small town but is rich with history. In the 1800s, American settlers began to arrive. By 1822 the settlement had grown to become the county seat for Clay County. In 1829, Liberty was the second oldest incorporated town west of the Mississippi River.

This year's festival celebrated its 44th year and is now an established tradition that Local 249 is proud to be a part of. Our Local, and its members

get the chance to walk in the parade and showcase two of our own Kansas City made F-150's.

One of the ways Local 249 members enjoy participation is by decorating our trucks, often showing support for our local elected officials, who have shown unwavering support for UAW Local 249 members and the working class as a whole.

Among the representatives in both parades this year were Mark Ellebracht, Missouri state representative, District 17, Clay County; Ashley Aune, who is convinced she needs an F-150 after riding in one, Missouri

State representative, District 14; Maggie Nurrenbern, Missouri State Representative, District 15; John Carpenter, former Missouri State Representative who is currently a Clay County Commissioner; Megan Thompson, Clay County Commissioner; and our latest endorsement Zach Thompson, currently running for Clay County Prosecutor (Non-Partisan).

The second of these colorful parades is the annual Gladfest Parade. For twenty-five years now, this major Northland event has drawn huge crowds, and brings with it massive publicity for Gladstone, and all the businesses involved in making this annual event happen. Activities at Gladfest include commercial and craft tents, tons of excellent food, a carnival, live entertainment, the parade, and much more.

Gladfest is usually held over the third full weekend of October, but this year the parade began on October 2nd. As with the Liberty Fall Festival, the

main event for Gladfest is the parade, which usually means the streets are lined with families and children eagerly excited to see all the local participants in their various floats, with local businesses, high school performances, live bands and as always lots of candy!

Parade participants maintained the tradition of tossing handfuls of candy to the children lining the parade route and you can always count on Local 249 members, State reps and everyone else to show up with literal truckloads of candy for the kids.

Local 249 is honored to be able to participate in both timeless and historical events. We look forward to continued participation and would like to invite all our members to come and join the fun. If you are interested, or would like to learn more, contact Shirley Mata, Chair of the CAP committee for more information. Thank you to the members of Local 249 and their families for making these two events a huge success.