

# FIRST LOCAL NEWS

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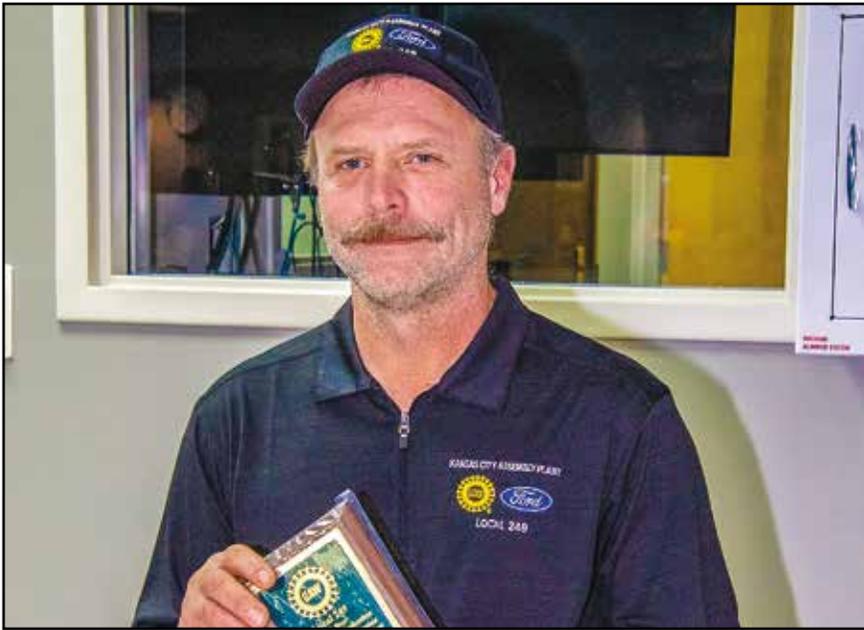


Local 249 legislative allies, State Sen. Lauren Arthur, left, and State Rep. Mark Ellebracht helped pack Thanksgiving dinners donated by Local 249 for laid-off members and others in need in the community at the union hall Nov. 18. Photo by Don Lehman.

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



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Air Force veteran Shaun Nell, a coordinator in Transit Trim, was presented with the James "Frog" Moran Solidarity Award at the December membership meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.



Local 249 donated \$5,000 to Mother's Refuge, which has provided a loving home to more than 1,900 young women and babies since 1987, Nov. 10. Photo by Don Lehman.



Local 249 Veteran's Committee Chair Dave Grant helps prepare to serve dinner to homeless veterans Nov. 11 during a Veteran's Day Stand Down at Hope and Faith KC, a daytime outreach center providing services to the homeless. Photo by Don Lehman.

## First Local News

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**Editor** Pat Hayes

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

## UAW Local 249

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

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

## UAW-Ford Joint Programs

### Apprentice Training

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### Employee Involvement

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### Employee Support Services

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### Health and Safety

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

### Quality

Kelly Loveall and Jeff Wright 816-459-1232

### Dealer Rep. Danny Mata

### Job Sourcing and Production Standards

Jim Ryan and Todd Wyse 816-459-1466

## Helpful Numbers

Quality Hotline 1-866-723-3937

Employee Health Services 816-459-1226

National Employee Service Center 1-800-248-4444

Blue Care 816-395-2700

Blue Cross PPO 1-800-482-5146

Preferred Care Blue PPO 816-395-3193

Child Care Referrals 866-327-7952

UNICARE Life Insurance 1-800-843-8184

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

Delta Dental (Active) 844-223-8520

Delta Dental (Retired) 800-524-0149

United Concordia Dental Plan 1-800-937-6432

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

www.fordvehicleprograms.com

UAW-Ford Legal Services 800-482-7700

UAW-Ford TESPHE 1-800-248-4444

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## Missouri tuition voucher opponents sue over deceptive ballot language

By Missouri State Rep. Wes Rogers

**B**ackers of a proposed constitutional amendment that would prohibit diverting taxpayer funding to private schools through vouchers or tax credits – and also require the state to implement a uniform process for evaluating and accrediting public schools – has sued Republican Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft, claiming the ballot language he prepared for it is a “distorted characterization” and “calculated to prejudice voters against the measure.”

Supporters are seeking to put the measure on the November 2022 ballot via the initiative petition process, which allows voters to propose and enacted legislation independently of the General Assembly. Securing a spot on the ballot will require supporters to collect a minimum of around 172,000 signatures from registered Missouri voters.

One section of the proposed amendment states its intent is to preserve revenue available for public schools by largely prohibiting efforts to subsidize private schools with public funds, subject to a list of five narrow exceptions. Earlier this year, the Republican-controlled General Assembly enacted controversial legislation creating a voucher program for students to attend private K-12 schools. The proposed amendment would render that legislation, which the governor signed into law, unconstitutional.

The provision of the amendment requiring uniform regulation of public schools by the Missouri State Board of Education appears intended to ensure basic accountability for charter schools, which currently operate free of many regulations that apply to traditional public schools. At present, charter schools are only allowed to operate in St. Louis and Kansas City, but proponents have been lobbying lawmakers in recent years to expand

them statewide.

Ashcroft’s ballot language says the measure would “remove opportunities for disabled, special needs, and those students who are economically disadvantaged” and “limit the influence, power and authority of parents, community members and local school boards.” The lawsuit, filed Oct. 15 in Cole County Circuit Court, says the measure would do none of those things and that Ashcroft’s wording is designed to deceive voters.

“It directly contradicts the full text of the initiative petition, omits a central purpose of the measure, introduces terms that appear nowhere in the initiative, distorts the likely impact of the measure in a manner designed to inflame prejudice against it, and misleads voters regarding current law and the proposed amendment,” the lawsuit says.

The lawsuit asks the court to vacate Ashcroft’s language and replace it with wording that accurately reflects the proposed amendment’s purpose. Circuit Judge Cotton Walker, a Republican, has scheduled a status hearing in the case for Nov. 8

*Wes Rogers represents Clay County in the Missouri House of Representatives. He was elected to his first two-year term in November 2018.*

## Labor News From the World Wide Web

# The Picket Line

## UAW hails passage of infrastructure bill

**“W**ith passage of a bi-partisan infrastructure bill, President Biden, Speaker Nancy Pelosi and House Democrats have fixed many of the core needs that every American relies on to live, work and succeed in the future

For UAW members this legislation brings reliability and job opportunities by improving the current state of our roads, bridges, water, electric vehicle infrastructure, internet capacity and electrical grid reliability.

We were also encouraged by passage of the procedural rules for the Build Back Better Act (BBBA). We now look forward to swift passage by the U.S. House of the BBBA along with the Kildee/Stabenow Provision that when paired with this infrastructure bill will ensure that consumer EV subsidies for new EV products will be made in the United States by workers who have good paying union jobs.”— UAW

## Top Republican Party Committee Comes Out Against UAW Strikers, Attacks Workers

**I**n a surprising development today, the Republican Party has come out against the UAW strike and has begun to attack striking workers.

The National Republican Senatorial Committee, which fully backs and works closely with Sen. Chuck Grassley’s reelection campaign, put out a statement today accusing UAW workers of “jeopardizing entire crops and the livelihood of farmers all across Iowa.”

The committee is using the strike as a way to attack Democratic US Senate candidate Abby Finkenauer, who grew up in a union family, and to boost Grassley.

“Far from actually representing the voices of hardworking Iowa farmers, Finkenauer is instead siding with union strikers whose actions are jeopardizing entire crops and the livelihood of farmers all across Iowa,” the NRSC’s statement reads. “Why doesn’t Abby Finkenauer care about the livelihood of Iowa’s farmers?”

Finkenauer has frequently visited the picket lines outside John Deere facilities across the state, and her entire political biography is based around fighting for blue-collar families like the one she grew up in. — *Iowa Starting Line*

## Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly plans to axe food tax

**K**ansas Gov. Laura Kelly announced a plan to “Axe the Food Tax” and eliminate the state sales tax on food in Kansas, which garnered wide-spread support from a bipartisan coalition of legislators, advocates, and stakeholder groups. Kansas is one of seven states in the nation that fully taxes groceries. Kansas’ food sales tax rate is 6.5%, the second-highest rate in the country. Under Governor Kelly’s proposed bill, state food sales tax would be completely eliminated.

The Kansas Food Bank, Harvesters—The Community Food Network and the Second Harvest Community Food Bank strongly support Kelly’s proposal to eliminate the sales tax on food in Kansas in the 2022 legislative session.

“We have worked with our partners across the state for years to bring attention to the fact that Kansas has the second highest sales tax on food in the nation,” said Brian Walker, President & CEO of the Kansas Food Bank. “This regressive tax affects every Kansan, but disproportionately affects low-income families who are struggling to meet their basic needs.”

While 10.9% of Americans are food insecure, 12.1% of Kansans (more than 350,000) are food insecure. The food insecurity rate among Kansas children is 17.1%, much higher than the national average of 14.6%. A food sales tax that adds as much as 10% to every Kansan’s grocery bill has a significant impact on the food security of Kansans.

“The food sales tax is one of the most regressive taxes we have,” said Valerie Nicholson-Watson, President & CEO of Harvesters. “Low-income families spend a much larger portion of their income on food so the food sales tax takes the most from those who have the least.”



Local 249 volunteers showed up in force Nov. 6 to team up with State Sen. Barbara Washington and Council Woman Rayna Parks-Shaw to provide free family health essentials for Thanksgiving to those in need. Photo by Don Lehman.

# Local 249 puts the giving in Thanksgiving

By Pat Hayes

**B**y all measures, 2021 has been a tough year for Local 249 members. There was COVID-19. On top of that there were persistent supply chain shortages and the resultant layoffs at KCAP. Many members had a hard time getting the unemployment compensation and SUB pay that was due them in a timely way.

Even so, most members recognized that being a member of the UAW meant that they were protected, the problems would be solved and left them better off than most workers who don't have a union standing up for them.

That's why 25 Local 249 volunteers were willing to volunteer their time to help State Sen. Barbara Washington and Councilwoman Rayna Parks-Shaw provide free family health essentials, including warm coats, food, toiletries and cleaning supplies Nov. 6 at Swope Health Central.

Swope Health offers healthcare

services throughout the city through a mobile medical unit and provides outreach services to the homeless community. Urgent Care, Optometry, laboratory work, X-rays, ultrasound and mammograms, and pharmacy services are also offered.

Harvesters, which provides food and related household products to more than 760 nonprofit agencies including emergency food pantries, community kitchens, homeless shelters, children's homes and others donated food and other items to be distributed to those in need at the event.

In addition to Harvesters, the UAW, Sen. Washington and Councilwoman Parks-Shaw, a number of local unions, the United Way, the Urban League of Kansas City and others helped sponsor the event.

Local 249 members Chris and Rakisha Theiss, Cole Mills. Camalee Hefty, Consumer Affairs chairperson, Casey Martin, Heather Vaughn, Cameron Pennington, Jessica Beritelli, Melinda Martin, Jon Sowell, Ryan Hughes, Jay Bosler, CAP Chairperson, Greg Smith, CAP Vice Chairperson, Erica Eckart, Member to Member Chairperson, Shirley Mata, Midwest States CAP Kansas City Liaison, Cathy Manville, David Winkler, Caleb Call and Michelle Brown from the Chaplaincy Committee all lent a hand as 565 families were provided with family essentials.

"The turn out was a success and the families were beyond grateful," said Erica Eckart, Local 249 Member to Member Committee Chairperson. "Big thanks to those of Local 249 for showing up in numbers to help out the process," she said. "It was amazing to meet and spend time with other local union workers from different trades all over the city, and be able to come together and share the experience of giving back to our communities in such a unified way."

Senator Washington, a Democrat, represents District 9 which covers part of Jackson County in the Missouri State Senate. Councilwoman Parks-Shaw represents Kansas City District 5 on the south side of the city. Both have worked closely with Local 249 to defend the rights of working people in the state.



Local 249 volunteers donated 1,000 Thanksgiving dinners to families in need at the union hall on Nov. 18. Photo by Don Lehman.

# Local 249 donates 1,000 Thanksgiving dinners

By Cecelia Davis

**Local 249 is known for its hardworking, dedicated membership and the best-built, best-selling Ford trucks and Transit vans it produces. Members of all the standing committees came together and used their production skills to build an assembly line, not to build vehicles, but to build an atmosphere of solidarity and fellowship while packing Thanksgiving dinner boxes for families in need.**

The morning of November 18 was brutally cold, but that did not stop nearly 50 volunteers from showing up at 7:00am at the union hall to empty out truckloads full of turkeys and dry goods for Thanksgiving dinners. The local was able to purchase approximately 1,000 turkeys to be distributed throughout communities in need.

The community had the option to drive by and pick up their meals or have them delivered if they were homebound or lacked transportation. Five delivery teams were set up to ensure those individuals received their meals, delivering over 50 turkeys personally that day. There were no worries of feel-

ing left out thanks to those dedicated members. The meals were offered to community members, Stand-Up KC members, KC tenant members and our very own UAW members in need.

Within the Thanksgiving dinner sacks were a variety of traditional side dish ingredients such as green beans, mashed potatoes, gravy mix, mac & cheese, cornbread, stuffing, a box of cake mix or brownies with frosting, all of which accompanied a massive full turkey. There were also custom UAW Thanksgiving coloring books with USA made Crayola crayons to keep the little ones occupied. Every sack was finished off with a tender note of warmth and

gratitude from Local 249.

This grand gesture brought in three news stations, including Fox 4 News, KCTV Channel 5 and KSHB Channel 41. The news stations interviewed both UAW Local 249 President Jason Starr as well as Senator Lauren Arthur and Representative Mark Ellebracht who were also in attendance that day. Despite only KCTV Channel 5 actually airing any of the footage, word still spread about the deeds done that day.

"Those of us in the auto industry have been hit pretty hard with the parts shortages. So this year, the need in our community is bigger than it's ever been. Which is why we increased our efforts to do an online sign up to give members right in our community the ability to sign up, stop in, and pick up a turkey dinner for their family," Starr said. "All of the members here today volunteered. We're so proud and thankful that UAW members have the ability to impact our community like this."

Senator Lauren Arthur stated that "You guys don't just build great cars and trucks. You build a great community too." The day was a great showing of unionism and what it means to truly be a member of a union like Local 249.

This event has been taking place for nearly 40 years, having been started by Al Santellan, a Local 249 retiree who wanted to help the local community. What started as word of mouth and filling laundry baskets with dinners in the early days of Santellan has become truckloads and pallets of frozen turkeys and dry goods to help families in need during the holidays.

The spirit of service was alive as everyone pitched in to pack the meals, music played, and new friendships were forged. Jason Starr stood in the rotunda of the union hall, surrounded by a flurry of activity, loud voices and cheerful smiles and thanked everyone for giving up a hard-earned day to be there.



From community service activities, such as the Habitat for Humanity Women Build project (above) to picket line solidarity, Local 249 members stepped forward consistently to build a stronger, fairer community. Photo by Don Lehman.

# Local 249: A year in service

By Chrissy Kline

**O**ver the past year, UAW Local 249 and its standing committees have achieved countless hours of service and support to the communities in which we reside. That's not to say that it has been easy. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and all the fear and restrictions that 2020 brought, 2021 had its own set of challenges to overcome. The stalwart members of Local 249 were not deterred and carved a path all their own as they organized around mask mandates, social distancing, and general fear of gathering as the new year began.

During the frigid winter months early in the year members joined SEIU healthcare workers who were fighting for \$15 an hour, showed up to support LMV workers attempting to organize and marched in pickets across the city calling for better wages, treatment and living conditions.

The Women's Committee held a drive through Easter Hop, complete with the Easter Bunny present for photos and candy delivered to children as they passed through the union hall parking lot. This was one of many improvised activities held, helping members to still maintain contact and connection as the world shifted slowly towards gathering again.

As the weather began to warm up so did the efforts of the standing committees. Members supported the KC Homeless Union at a protest held at city hall, attended Fight for 15 rallies and stood next to the KC Tenants at a rally for fair and equal housing opportunities.

When the members weren't fighting for social justice, they were exemplifying the ideals we stand for by organizing and donating at a blood drive for a young girl fighting brain cancer, participating in not one but two Habitat for Humanity home

builds performed solely by women, honoring fallen veterans with wreaths and holding an event aptly named "Mudfest" given the time of year that would benefit two individuals battling stage-3 kidney cancer and stage-3 colon cancer. These were the projects that humbled members, tugging on heartstrings and reminding all involved why we as a union do what we do.

As things heated up outside, so did the commitment of our standing committees. Members of all committees travelled to Jefferson City to rally outside the Governor's mansion and demand Medicaid expansion be honored. Local 249 partnered with UAW Region 4 Midwest States CAP to donate a total of \$25,000 to the Clay County African American Legacy, Inc. and the Garrison School for their Juneteenth celebration and the construction of a memorial to honor the more than 700 unmarked graves of African Americans buried in a local cemetery.

The summer also marked the start of several labor disputes that led to picket lines by members of the working class. UAW Local 249 supported Frito-Lay workers on strike in Topeka, KS as well as IAM Local 778 machinists union on strike here in Missouri.

Later in the year these efforts would expand to support both Kelloggs and John Deere on strike for a contract that reflected the hard work and sacrifice of its members over the years.

The Veterans Committee made sure no one was left behind, donating to the Kansas City VA Volunteer Services who often spend their own money to help the veterans in their care. They also donated to the Hope Faith charities to help aid homeless veterans and also teamed up with Harvest Church in providing food that was donated to nonprofits that helped veterans.

The Education Committee stepped in for the back to school season, donating \$2,500 to Clay County CASA for school supplies and tutors. Local 249 also made a \$10,000 donation to the North Kansas City Education Foundation for school supplies, necessities to kids in need and special grants for teachers to provide enrichment to the students.

The Motorcycle Committee participated in the annual Wings 4 Water event, donating \$1500 to provide clean drinking water to people in need as the summer months started to wane.

The Women's Committee selected two organizations to sponsor and work with in the coming year. Mother's Refuge, an organization dedicated to helping young and expecting mothers with nowhere to turn and Journey to New Life, an organization helping individuals recently released from incarceration get back on their feet and become successful in their new life.

Taking a break from working in gardens, organizing supplies and clos-

ets, the Women's Committee hosted Trunk or Treat, where each of the standing committees decorated a trunk and costumed kids came in droves to get their treats.

With the weather turning cooler, the Community Service Committee sponsored a supply drive and raffle basket for Pawportunities animal rescue as they raised money to build dog houses for outdoor dogs in need.

This year for Thanksgiving all the committees pulled together as the local purchased 1,000 turkeys for families in need. This was the first year that full dinners were provided including a turkey and non-perishables to make side dishes. These dinners supported members of our own local in need as well as community members struggling, even some from organizations like Stand Up KC and KC Tenants that we have partnered with throughout the year.

With all of these incredible acts of service, giving and sacrifice done by the members of the UAW Local 249 standing committees, local leadership and our membership the work is never finished. This local has a proud history of a spirit of service done through love and strength and plenty more activities are in the works for the Christmas season ahead of us.

First Local News will bring you reports of all to come in the next year and give a heartfelt and sincere thank you to all who have made this year the incredible success that it has been. We are yet again proud to call ourselves UAW Local 249. Wishing you happy holidays and a happy new year! See you in 2022.



Local 249 donated \$5,000 to Journey to New Life, which works to restore opportunity to those re-entering life after prison, Nov. 17. Photo by Don Lehman.

# Women's Committee aids Journey to a New Life

*By Erica Eckart*

**The Women's Committee is back at it again with their goal to provide support to our local organizations within the community. This month they've partnered up with an organization called Journey To New Life inc. which is an organization focused on second chance avenues for those who are coming out of prison and in need of resources to help them transition back into society.**

This organization was founded in 2013 after seven individuals, each with a substantial history and experience working with reentry programs, came together to share their experiences, discuss challenges, and ultimately come up with ways they could significantly help these individuals become productive members of society.

According to statistics, when a formerly incarcerated person, regardless of their circumstances, is successfully reintegrated into the community, they are less likely to commit new crimes - or create new victims which makes focusing on reentry programs a good thing for everyone.

One of the things that society doesn't discuss is the corruption of the justice system as a whole, and why 95% of women in the prison system are in-

carcerated because they dated someone who sold drugs or was associated with similar crimes. In a lot of cases, these women are not responsible for the actual crime itself but are doing a significant amount of time behind bars just for knowing about it.

The Journey To New Life Organization seeks to provide re-entry opportunities and fundamental resources needed to help provide individuals with a second chance at life for both Men and Women. The Women's Committee has become an advocate for this organization and has navigated ways to combine causes with another organization called Mothers Refuge. The Women's Committee has become the go-between for both these organizations in an effort to combine resources for those individuals in need of assistance whether

it be clothing, housing, furniture, help obtaining required credentials such as a driver's license and birth certificate, help with bills, job certifications, education, resumes and so much more.

Journey To New life is not just focused on women, they help men too. Despite recent reforms, the United States still incarcerates 698 people per 100,000 residents, more than any other country. Compared to that number, the women's incarceration rate of 133 per 100,000 seems quaint. But it's the highest incarceration rate for women in the world.

"It's really nice to be able to help people out" says Danielle Evens, member of the Women's Committee. "This place focuses on prison re-entry and home plans but if anyone comes to the door fresh off the street, prison or not, they don't turn anyone away. I think the biggest thing to take away from this and women's refuge, is never judge a book by its cover and it's never too late to have a fresh start. That's why I chose to volunteer because I was seventeen and pregnant and I understand first hand the struggles women face."

"This is my first time here doing the Journey to New Life thing," said Macy Harris, member of the Women's committee. "My experience with this place has been an amazing one so far. This thrift store they have down here is completely free for them. They are able to come in and pick clothes, toiletries, furniture, and even household items like bed sheets. We come in and sort clothes and we help take the overflow of clothes to the Good Will so that they aren't coming in and looking through the same clothes all the time."

It is well known That Local 249 believes in opportunities for those who need them most. In some cases, that may be our own members.

Special thanks to the Women's committee for your persistent advocacy for those in need throughout the community, and your willingness to put forth the necessary efforts to help people no matter their background or situation. If you would like to volunteer or join a committee, you can reach us by calling the hall at 816-454-6333, or apply on the UAW app under UAW standing committee sign up.

Local 249 — 84 Years Ago This Month

# THE BATTLE OF FORD PARK

*By Pat Hayes*

**“After the smoke cleared, it was a bloody mess,” Gene Minshall said of the epic battle of Ford Park. Minshall, then a 28-year-old Local 249 leader in the Trim Department at the Ford Motor Winchester Ave. plant, was on the front line that cold December day. The memory of the pitched labor battles that erupted on the streets of depression-era Kansas City remained vivid more than 35 years later. He told the story again for a new generation of autoworkers in an oral history first published in the Local 249 News in 1973.**

Prevented from picketing the plant, but determined to stop the strikebreakers from reaching it, the union planned an all-out effort to halt production on Dec. 17, 1937. As the day dawned and the union men began to assemble in Ford Park across the street from the Ford Motor Winchester Ave. plant, it quickly became clear that the police had been tipped off to the union’s plan. More police than usual were massed in front of the plant and many more police cars rode shotgun on the caravans that transported strikebreakers past the union lines into the plant.

The first skirmishes in the battle started in the early morning hours as union men armed with slingshots, bricks and ball bats fanned out along the routes strikebreakers would take to the plant. Their goal was to stop two large car caravans filled with strikebreakers from reaching their destination. The caravans were formed at many points in Jackson County and converged into two large convoys: one at Blue Ridge and Van Horn, now Truman Road, the other at 22nd and Van Brunt on the city’s east side. Despite a heroic effort to stop them, the caravans got through. As the strikebreakers approached to within three blocks of the plant, the police suddenly rushed to erect barricades on the streets in front of the plant to keep the UAW members back.

“Hundreds of union men were massing in Ford Park across from the plant,” Minshall recollected. And as the strikebreakers neared the plant, “the union men made a mad rush toward the caravan and started to turn cars over.”

The police waded into the melee

in front of the plant gates using their riot sticks, threatening strikers with riot guns and throwing tear gas. The intensity of the police counterattack eventually forced strikers to retreat across the street where they picked up hot tear gas canisters and lobbed them back at the police who fired them.

“There was also lots of action taking place at 12th and Winchester,” according to Minshall. “There were many fights between the union men and the strikebreakers and police, some of the policemen got the hell beat out of them, many shots were fired.”

In all, five men were wounded by gunfire and many more were beaten during the Battle of Ford Park. One man was severely injured by a teargas canister that exploded in his hands. According to the Kansas City Star, the fighting “extended over the Northeast and intercity districts and even into rural Jackson County.” Mass arrests, mainly of UAW members, filled the cells at the Sheffield police station and the Jackson County jail.

The union was fighting Henry Ford, one of the richest and most powerful men in the world. They were also up against Ford’s ruthless lieutenant, Harry Bennett. As head of the notorious Ford Service department, Bennett sent armed thugs to Kansas City to terrorize the strikers and their families. The business community in Kansas City united against the UAW. They used their influence with City Manager H.F. McElroy who kept a promise he personally delivered to Henry Ford in Detroit. The police would end their policy of enforcing the law impartially to side with Ford and actively break the strike. The union was denied the

constitutionally guaranteed right to assemble on public streets to picket in front of the plant. Even the strikers’ wives and children were arrested when they attempted to peacefully picket the plant.

Despite their heroic effort, the union men could not prevail against the combined might of the forces arrayed against them. Still they fought on.

As the strikebreakers left the plant after work that day, Minshall was among a group of UAW men assigned to stop a Ford-organized caravan of some 200 vehicles at Van Horn and Blue Ridge Blvd. Driving a green sedan, Minshall, Steve Schmidt, Charles O’Connor and brothers Glenn and Richard Cathey crowded the lead car of the convoy to the side of the road bringing the whole line of cars to a stop not far from the Stone Arch Bridge. With the caravan stopped, 80 to 100 of the Ford strikebreakers leapt from their vehicles and began beating the union men with clubs and blackjacks.

In the free-for-all that ensued, Don Mustain, a chief deputy constable from Blue Township who was escorting the caravan, was struck in the legs and right thigh by shotgun pellets. Robert Scott, a deputy constable, was hit in each leg. A bystander, Russell Williams, was wounded in the right leg, neck and left hand as he watched the skirmish unfold from across the street, according to the Kansas City Star.

Minshall and his comrades were accused of firing the shots that wounded the constables and bystander, but it is more likely that the shotgun pellets that hit the three men were actually indiscriminant shots fired at the union men by the strikebreakers riding in the heavily armed caravan. Despite contradictory – and self-interested – testimony from the constables and others, the preponderance of evidence suggests the constables were hit by friendly fire from the very caravan they were escorting from the plant.

One of the union men with in

the green sedan with Minshall, Steve Schmidt, told the Kansas City Star their side of the story.

“As we were passing a sedan with cream wheels, one of the men pulled a gun on us and shot at us. We went to the head of the caravan to head it off. The men in the cars came after us and started beating us.”

As the Battle of Ford Park drew to a close that day, Minshall found himself in jail with hundreds of other UAW members. He was charged with riotous assemblage. The strikebreakers, of course, were not charged.

Two days later, on Dec. 20, an arsenal of 14 pistols, 12 shotguns and 57 miscellaneous weapons were seized by the sheriff from strikebreakers riding in the Ford-organized caravans, giving added weight to the union charge that it was strikebreakers themselves who were doing the shooting.

“The battles of the caravans were lost but left the union men on strike more determined than ever to continue the long hard fight for their just rights,” Minshall remembered. “It was evident that the union could not match the power of the Ford Motor Company factory service men, the company’s imported thugs, the city and county police force.”

As the strike dragged on past Christmas, the UAW put its faith in the Federal Government filing a unfair labor practice complaint with the National Labor Relations Board. Within days of the Battle of Ford Park, Homer Martin, then UAW president, traveled from Detroit to Kansas City to announce the union would charge Ford with violations of the Wagner Act. The Act, passed into law in 1935 as part of President Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal, gave American workers the right to organize and the right to strike for the first time.

The Battle of Ford Park was lost, but the war to organize Ford would continue on the streets and in the courts for another four long years.

# Looking back at the challenges of 2021

By Jim Fisher

**L**ocally at KCAP we have seen production schedules remaining uncertain and changing from week to week. As I have reported in the past there are still issues with our supply chains, and I expect for at least the next couple months to see additional schedule adjustments. We will work to keep the membership as up to date as possible while the company continues to gain control of their supplier issues.

We have finally reached December, and to look back, 2021 will go down as a very hectic year. To be honest ever since COVID-19 started affecting our plant in March of 2020, our members have had to work through conditions never seen before, not just at KCAP but in American manufacturing as a whole. I hope one day COVID-19 is gone and supply chains return to normal. Then hopefully this is something we can tell the generations behind us that we made it through. Our members have had to adjust to so much, but you have done it. Even with uncertain schedules we have had zero members permanently laid off to the street, which is something that happened at several other locations across the United States.

This has not been a year to just cross your arms and feel sorry for yourself. I'm very proud of the way our members have adjusted to the schedules and continued to work our way around all the obstacles they have had in front of them.

This past year the local leadership team was involved in resolving several issues for our members as well. The company failed to pay members in a timely way on several occasions. Our Reps pressed the company and fought hard to get all the pay adjustments completed. We even changed the way we handled pay adjustments with the company by filing an individual grievance against every manager that failed to pay members correctly. The fight over pay was even taken to the NLRB as Local 249 was forced to file Labor Board charges against the plant. These actions have led to less pay adjustments and faster response time from the company when an error has occurred.

The local leadership team was also very successful in getting TFT members converted to full time. In 2020 there was 634 TFT members converted to Full Time In Progression. Most of those conversions were done ahead of the contractual language.

Our 249 reps successfully closed out over 60 Health and Safety complaints this year. The Truck Final Department was completely cleaned out and repainted in a refresh project.

Local 249 worked very closely with the UAW National Ford Department and Vice President Chuck Browning for a resolution to the "Leap Frog" issue. In early November it was announced that the "Leap Frog" pay had been fixed and the effected members would be receiving back pay for their lost wages.

If you have looked around the plant very much this past year you have seen several large investments, expansion projects, and upgrades going on at the facility. In 2022 KCAP will launch the Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) in Transit. The beginning of electric vehicles will become a large part of the Ford footprint for the future and KCAP will be a large part of the future of vehicles going forward. However, there are things members must also address to keep leading the way. As a membership we must improve absenteeism. For all projects taking place in the plant, it can't be slowed down due to poor attendance. In addition, we must continue to work on improving quality. Ford is very aware of some design issues and of course the problems in the supply chain. However, some of quality that we can control such as missing shots, completing the push-pull-click process on wire connections, and locating all locators must improve. This plant has always had a reputation of "Best in Quality" and we must do all we can to protect our customers, our products, and our future.

As we go into 2022 members will quickly see more upgrades coming to the plant. All these improvements set the groundwork for job security going deep into the future. It is all our jobs to take advantage of this. Our future is literally being set right in front of us. These next couple of years will be very important for what KCAP looks like for the next generations.

Even with the uncertainty of our schedules at the current time, as Local 249 members we have a lot to be proud of as union members. Our plant, our customers, and our community depend on our success. I know that our members will lead the way.

Finally, on behalf of our entire Local Leadership Team we wish you all a very happy holiday. Make sure you get



Local 249 Bargaining Chair Jim Fisher answers questions at the December Membership Meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

to spend some time with your loved ones, family, and friends during the holidays. We all have a lot of work to do in 2022.

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# UAW International Elections Referendum

By Jason Starr

**A**s this issue of First Local News goes to press, the Nov. 29 deadline for receiving ballots in the UAW International Elections Referendum has passed and the Court Appointed, Independent Monitor of the UAW has begun to report results. While we are still waiting for the final total count, a threshold has been crossed that indicates the direct voting system will prevail.

With this new change in how the UAW International Executive Board is elected will come a need to develop new election rules and methods to put into place for the election of new officials.

What does all that mean for us as members of UAW Local 249?

It means that it is time to roll up our sleeves and get to work. With nearly 78% of the votes cast from this local favoring the direct voting system, it is safe to say that the membership is in favor of change. With that change comes responsibility. A direct voting system is not a cure-all solution for what ails us in the UAW. It provides an avenue to make changes, but it will require the commitment and dedication of all members, not just an enlightened select few.

It is time for the membership to take ownership of our union; and a direct voting system is going to require a level of participation beyond what we have grown accustomed to. Members will need to be engaged and aware of the issues the union is facing, conduct research on the candidates running for positions, and most importantly: mem-

bers will need to show up at the polls.

If we are to ensure the future of this union and to prevent further division from marring our legacy, then we as a membership need to focus on driving the changes we want to see. Direct elections in the hands of an engaged, energized membership may transform our union into the kind of organization that can reverse two-tier contracts, limit the number of temporary workers in our plants, restore post-retirement health care for UAW members hired after 2008 and wage successful organizing campaigns in the non-union auto plants in the Right-to-Work south.

However, the direct voting system is not a solution and cannot make that happen on its own, but it is certainly an opportunity. One that we need only to accept to begin the process of reshaping the UAW into the driving force it once was and pave a new path into the future for labor unions.

The last two years have brought layoffs due to the COVID-19 pandemic, parts shortages, and changes to our everyday lives and how we operate as a society. It has also brought about



Local 249 President Jason Starr with State Sen. Lauren Arthur at the Nov. 18 distribution of Thanksgiving dinners at Local 249. Photo by Don Lehman.

a resurgence in worker's rights and work stoppages. We have seen strikes at Frito-Lay, IAM Local 778, Kellogg's and John Deere. This is unprecedented in today's world and shows a growing discontent among the working class as big money corporations rake in billions and leave their scraps to their workforces.

If we want to be successful in our future endeavors, then we need to begin today by accepting responsibility for what is to come and making the change we wish to see a reality. That starts by strengthening our organization from within, and that starts with the membership.

It is time to get involved and take ownership of the direction we take. You can start today by joining a standing committee within the local, attending the monthly membership meetings and staying informed and connected through union bulletins and social media.

We need to unite under the umbrella of the working class and show these greedy corporations and corrupt politicians that we are united, we are strong and we will prevail. One of the best ways to show that is taking the opportunity before us and use it as a stepping stone to reshape our own future from the inside out.

## NEED HELP?

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



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

UAW LOCAL 249'S HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS COMMITTEE WELCOMES YOU TO:

*A Celebration of  
Martin Luther  
King Jr.*

January 15, 2022 | 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM  
At the United Auto Workers Local 249 Union Hall  
Keynote Speaker: Kansas City Mayor Quinton Lucas

# Voting rights under attack in Missouri

By State Rep. Ashley Bland-Manlove

**T**he conversation on voter rights and access has taken center stage in the national discourse since the end of the 2020 election, as former President Donald Trump has continued to circulate demonstrably false claims that the duly elected President Joe Biden's victory was illegitimate. In the immediate aftermath of Biden's hard-won victory, Trump provided absolutely no proof of collaborative wrongdoing, conspiracy, or widespread fraud by Biden, his colleagues, the Democratic Party, any state governments, or any other organized group. His detailed history of serial dishonesty, obfuscation of the truth, and creation of outright myths should have made it clear to anyone paying attention that his accusations were the desperate ploy of an unstable, delusional loser desperately seeking any means to cling to power.

Instead, his lies led to thousands of his most fervent supporters rioting outside and inside the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6. They violently attempted to shut down Congress to prevent the elected representatives of the people of the United States from certifying the election. They wanted their mob rule to replace American democracy. Fortunately, they failed.

Yet, Republicans — including its members in the Missouri General Assembly — are still eager to bow to the whims of this deceiver and his mob to set limits on who can vote under the guise of election security.

Over the last 20 years in Missouri, Republicans have worked to curtail access to the ballot box for groups of people that traditionally vote for Democrats. Take photo voter ID, for instance. In general, mandating that voters supply a specific, limited, and arbitrary form of identification to vote adds a significant imposition to anyone looking to participate in our democracy. However, this law targets those who do not already have a photo voter ID like a driver's license (people with disabilities, the elderly) or could struggle to obtain a photo voter ID, namely women, those with low income, or racial and ethnic minorities. All these groups can face different struggles to obtain the documents required for an ID.

While some might argue this imposition is too circumstantial, too niche, too small to be relevant, the Brennan Center for Justice found 11 percent of Americans do not have a driver's license or other form of government-issued photo identification.

In addition, Missouri Republicans almost got a bill to the governor's desk this year that read like a laundry list of Trump's conspiracies about the 2020 election. It mandates air-gapping voting machines, allows campaigns to hire "poll watchers" not required to live in the district where they're observing

an election, curtails efforts to register more voters, requires the use of paper ballots, and prohibits the use of mail-in ballots. Fortunately, this bill did not become law, but they will likely try again in 2022.

Local 249 members, who worked so hard to overturn the right-to-work law passed by the Missouri legislature and signed by the governor in 2017 will appreciate just how critical voting rights are. Without the vote — and the hard work of union members — Missouri would be a right-to-work state today.

Compare those changes to what Democrats are doing at the federal level. In August, the U.S. House passed the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, which will reinforce provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 weakened by 2020 Supreme Court decision. Passed during the Civil Rights Era, the Voting Rights Act prohibited racial discrimination at the ballot and required states (specifically Southern states) to clear major voting rights changes with the federal government.

When the Supreme court weakened that bill, a slew of states immediately passed laws that targeted minorities. For instance, North Carolina Republicans passed a bill establishing a strict photo I.D. requirement, eliminated same-day voting registration, and even banned voting on Sundays. Why did they ban voting on Sundays? Because the state of North Carolina admitted in court that counties who



District 26 State Rep. Ashley Bland Manlove is fighting unjust and unnecessary restrictions on the right to vote in Missouri. Photo by Don Lehman.

allowed voting on Sundays were disproportionately Black, and thus disproportionately more likely to vote for Democrats.

The modern-day Republican Party does not want to go through the hassle of courting voters or catering to ideas that may not be popular with the masses. As such, they have zero interest in expanding the right to the franchise or easing access to the ballot box. Instead, they fight tooth-and-nail in Jefferson City and other state capitals

to make it more difficult for American citizens to exercise their constitutional right to vote.

The John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act will counter unjust and unnecessary voting regulations being passed in states that directly limit the right to the franchise. It will ensure states cannot make dramatic changes without clearance from the feds, which will protect voter access.

This bill upholds our national values of equality, individuality, and progress. We owe it to the people of this country to pursue an elections policy that prioritizes inclusion over exclusion, that expands our democracy to everyone rather than condenses it to a select few. To do anything less is a betrayal of the public and of this nation.

Ashley Bland Manlove, represents Jackson County in the Missouri House of Representatives. She was elected to her first two-year term in November 2018.

**Between January 1 and September 27, at least 19 states enacted 33 laws that make it harder for Americans to vote.**

— Source: Brennan Center for Voting Rights



Local 249 volunteers served Thanksgiving dinner to residents and staff at St. Michaels Veterans Center Nov. 20. Photo by Shirley Mata.

# Local 249 honors service on Veteran's Day

By Pat Hayes

**W**ith winter's cold setting in and homelessness rising in the Kansas City area, Local 249 members from the Veteran's and VCAP committees rolled up their sleeves Nov. 11 to help distribute new boots, warm clothing, haircuts, health screenings and a hot meal to some 300 homeless veterans on Veteran's Day. Local 249 members worked with Hope and Faith KC, a daytime homeless center that provides critical services to those experiencing homelessness and at-risk individuals, families, and youth.

The Kansas City Veteran's Day Stand Down is the second annual event sponsored by Hope and Faith KC. Local 249's Veteran's Committee has worked with Hope and Faith KC and other area veteran's organizations for many years to provide needed services to homeless veterans. Veteran's Day Stand Downs are typically one- to three-day events providing supplies and services to homeless Veterans, such as food, shelter, clothing, health screenings and VA Social Security benefits counseling.

Veterans Day originated as "Armistice Day" on November 11, 1919, the

first anniversary of the end of World War I. Congress passed a resolution in 1926 for an annual observance, and November 11 became a national holiday beginning in 1938.

Veteran's Committee Chair, Dave Grant, and members Hans Beebe, David Cox, Diane Bell, Demetris Camp, Justin Vasko, Tracie Chrisman, Nathan Chrisman and Chris Scott helped provide security, check the status of participants and distribute clothing at the Stand Down. Local 249 President Jason Starr, CAP Chair Jay Bosler and Education Committee member Greg Smith also assisted at the event.

Local 249 members also provided Thanksgiving dinner to 150 residents and staff of St. Michaels Veteran's Center on Nov. 20. St. Michaels provides veterans with a place to live, employment assistance, physical and mental health care, as well as trauma and addiction management.

This is the fourth year that Local 249 has provided Thanksgiving dinner to residents of St. Michaels.

"This year we were able to serve dinner inside the center," said Veteran's Committee Chair Dave Grant. "Last year, we had to serve dinner outside due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Veteran's Committee members Dave Grant, Hans Beebe, David Cox, Demetris Camp, Diane Bell, Chris Scott all helped prepare and serve the dinner, as did Motorcycle Committee members Josh Curtis, Joe Lumpkin, Darin Pieper, William O'Neal and family members Sharon King and daughter Erin. Member to Member Committee

members Erica Eckart, Amy Minich, Zach Pridgen and CAP Committee members Shirley Mata, Jay Bosler and Greg Smith also participated.

The Veteran's Committee is also planning to distribute Challenge Coins to Local 249 veterans as well as active and inactive military who present a DD 214, driver's license with veteran's designation, VA card or military ID. A challenge coin is a small coin or medallion, bearing an organization's insignia or emblem and carried by the organization's members. Traditionally, they might be given to prove membership when challenged and to enhance morale.

"Local 249 members are making a real difference in people's lives here in Kansas City," says Local 249 President Jason Starr. "I'm especially proud that so many members of a number of union committees helped our veteran's with these events honoring our nation's veterans."