

FIRST LOCAL NEWS

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April 2022

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David Cox, recording secretary of Local 249's Veteran's Committee and Robin Taylor, chair of the union Women's Committee held the UAW wheel high on Kansas City's Country Club Plaza March 2 as they rallied with Starbucks's workers who are organizing there. Photo by Dave Grant.

International Union United Auto,
Aerospace and Agricultural Workers Local 249
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Local 249 members marched in the Snake Saturday Parade in North Kansas City on March 12. Photo by Don Lehman.



Local 249 members joined the picket line in solidarity with striking Starbucks workers in Overland Park March 19. Photo by Don Lehman.



Local 249 Chaplaincy Committee member Gregg Wolf, left, received the James "Frog" Moran Solidarity Award at the March Membership Meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

First Local News

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UAW Local 249

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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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Employee Support Services

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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

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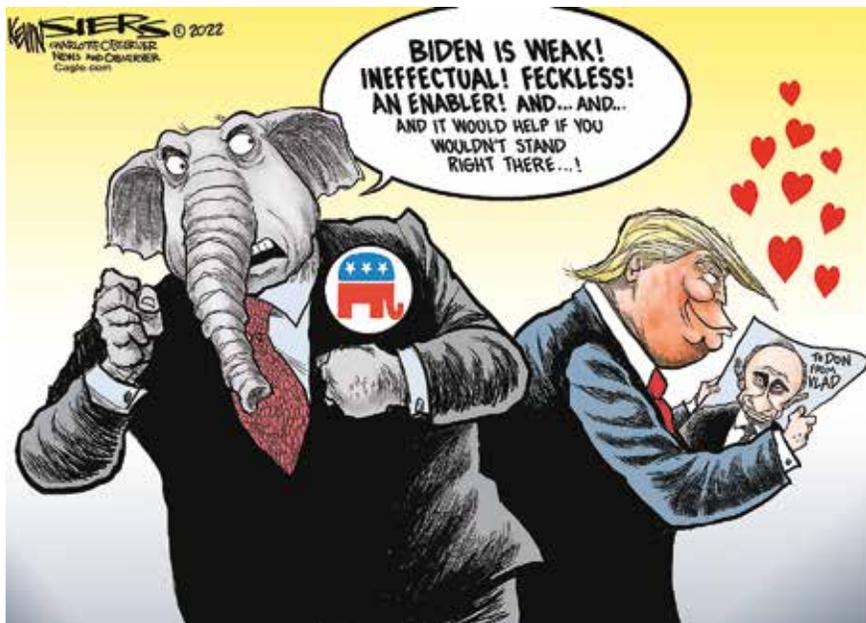
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The Biden administration can stop H-1B visas from fueling outsourcing

By Ron Hira and Daniel Costa, Economic Policy Institute

With approximately 600,000 workers, the H-1B is the largest temporary work visa program in the United States—an important program that allows U.S. employers to hire college-educated migrant workers. However, the H-1B program is not operating as intended and needs to be fixed. Instead of being used to fill genuine labor shortages in skilled occupations without negatively impacting U.S. labor standards, the latest data show that the H-1B’s biggest users are companies that have an outsourcing business model that exploit the program by underpaying skilled migrant workers. President Biden can and should implement regulations that would prevent such exploitation.

First, some background. Offshore outsourcing companies, like Cognizant, do not make a product. They are staffing firms that resell labor. They offer customers, like Disney, the opportunity to lower costs by transferring Disney’s in-house technology operations to the outsourcer.

Since wages account for the vast majority of technology operation costs, the outsourcing firm business model is only viable if it cuts labor costs substantially. After all, the outsourcing firm must offer the customer a sizable discount, since the customer is taking on risk by ceding some managerial control, and at the same time the outsourcer needs to earn profits for its shareholders.

The outsourcer realizes these cost savings by shipping as many of the U.S. jobs and tasks to its overseas operations where wages are substantially lower and by hiring H-1B workers at wages much lower than the U.S. market rate. Once it wins the contract, the outsourcer places H-1B workers at the worksites of client firms where they serve three key roles: to facilitate the transfer of jobs and tasks offshore; to coordinate offshore teams; and to act as a lower cost alternative to hiring or keeping U.S. workers for the jobs that must stay, due to the nature of the job’s

tasks, in the United States.

In 2006, Senators Durbin and Grassley released the first public list of the employers receiving the largest number of H-1B visas. The list was a startling revelation, dominated by firms that pioneered the outsourcing and offshoring business model rather than tech firms that are household names.

The public was rightly shocked by the senators’ revelation. Using the H-1B program to facilitate the offshoring of U.S. jobs and replace U.S. workers is the exact opposite of the program’s purpose of helping employers fill labor shortages with workers possessing skills that are in short supply. If it were operating as intended, the program should bring in skilled workers to complement the U.S. labor force.

While it’s true that in many cases H-1B workers are highly skilled and benefit the U.S. economy, the data were clear already in 2006 that a large share of visas were being used to undercut and replace U.S. workers in order to pad corporate profits.

The most recent data for 2021 show that outsourcing firms continue to dominate the H-1B visa program. Absent policy changes, we expect the same outsourcing firms to exploit the program for the foreseeable future.

Labor News From the World Wide Web

The Picket Line

Striking Workers Protection Act

Senate Democrats introduced the Striking Workers Protection Act which would require employers to continue providing health insurance to workers exercising their right to strike, so working families aren’t forced off the health coverage they’ve earned and negotiated, and aren’t forced to pay out-of-pocket for potentially lifesaving health care.

The bill would create a separate unfair labor practice category, punishable by fines, for when employers cut or alter workers’ health insurance while the workers are on strike. The fines would vary based on their history of violations, size, the scope of the harm, and the public interest. — *Mo. AFL-CIO*

Republican infighting in Jeff City

If there were any doubts that the Missouri Senate was broken, yesterday they were put to rest. After yet another night of GOP infighting — this time over a bill pertaining to sexual assault survivors and an amendment banning “obscene material” in schools — Senators took turns blaming each other for the gridlock and bad blood.

First came a news conference, convened by GOP Sen. Holly Thompson Rehder of Sikeston and attended by eight Democrats and 14 Republicans, taking aim at what they called “a small group of self-serving politicians” in the Senate conservative caucus.”

It’s time for us to end the empty negotiations and begging for civility with these guys behind closed doors,” Rehder said. In response, members of the seven-member conservative caucus used procedural maneuvers to once again block action in the Senate and fire back at their GOP colleagues. “If we continue to allow this chamber to be run by individuals that are saying one thing, that they want peace, but then show up at press conferences like we saw this morning, it’s difficult to see how the chamber is going to function like anything but a square wheel for the next eight weeks,” said Sen. Bill Eigel, R-Weldon Spring. — *KCUR*

Musk challenges the UAW to unionize Tesla

Tesla CEO Elon Musk, a vocal critic of unions and the United Auto Workers’ efforts to organize his employees, is inviting the union to hold an organizing vote at the company.

On Twitter late Wednesday night, Musk said that Tesla is able to hire and retain workers only in the current, very tight labor market by paying and treating them well, and he is not concerned about having a union vote at the company.

“I’d like hereby to invite UAW to hold a union vote at their convenience. Tesla will do nothing to stop them,” he said in the tweet.

Musk was responding to a Twitter chain that started with President Joe Biden praising two unionized automakers — General Motors and Ford — for their investments in building electric vehicles. Biden, perhaps the most pro-union president in history, has repeatedly praised the EV efforts of unionized automakers, such as GM (GM), Ford (F) and Stellantis, while conspicuously ignoring Tesla, which to date has invested far more in EV development and built far more of those vehicles in the United States. — *CNN*

Why Starbucks workers are unionizing

In December, a Buffalo location of Starbucks became the first among the 9,000 corporate-owned stores in the United States to vote to unionize. Now, Starbucks baristas are serving up union cards across the country: More than 100 locations have filed for union recognition in over 20 states since the campaign started in Buffalo last fall.

“It’s spread with remarkable speed,” said Joseph McCartin, a history professor and the executive director of the Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor at Georgetown University. “And a spreading fire is difficult to put out.” — *Washington Post*

Working People Oppose Putin's Invasion of Ukraine

AFL-CIO

The AFL-CIO condemns the violent invasion of Ukraine by the Russian military. We stand in solidarity with the workers and their families who are impacted by the devastation, and offer our condolences for lives that have been lost.

We join the global labor movement and our allies in calling for an immediate end to President Vladimir Putin's military aggression, and we support extensive economic sanctions imposed by the United States and the European Union, particularly those focused on Putin and his protectors. These sanctions should be strengthened, by excluding Russia from the SWIFT international banking system and by taking effective multilateral action against tax havens and financial secrecy laws that protect Putin and his enablers.

We further call on all U.S.-based corporations doing business in Russia to publicly condemn Putin's government while calling for an end to the attack on Ukraine. We stand ready to assist the Biden administration in its efforts to implement and strengthen these measures, and we call on global leaders to build toward reestablishing peace and democracy in Ukraine and the region.

Ukrainian unions have struggled

for decades to guarantee the internationally recognized right to organize and bargain collectively. They have been at the forefront of campaigns to protect working people from precarious or "informal" work; fight climate change while preserving jobs and livelihoods; and end gender-based violence and harassment and employment discrimination against LGBTQ+ workers. Unions have courageously fought corruption that is widespread in the Ukrainian economy. All these brave efforts by Ukraine's unions are now threatened by the Russian military invasion, which is destroying the basic democratic rights of freedom of association, assembly and speech that are necessary for all effective trade union action.

The Russian government's invasion of Ukraine flagrantly violates international law and undermines the right of Ukraine and of all nations to self-determination free from the threat of violence. The consequences of the attack on Ukraine are vast—tens of

thousands of lives may be lost, millions may be displaced. Countries will need to house, feed and support the many refugees fleeing the violence. President Putin's war jeopardizes international peace and global economic recovery. Workers and their families are still struggling with the COVID-19 pandemic, and can ill afford the higher oil and food prices and further disruption to the supply chains this war will cause.

Going forward, the global community must come together immediately to reestablish a common security framework that ends violent conflicts and prioritizes investments in shared economic security, including jobs and basic social protections. The AFL-CIO stands ready to support policies that will bring security, peace and democracy, and we will provide continued solidarity and support to the people of Ukraine.

International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) General Secretary Sharan Burrow:

We mourn for those who have lost their lives and offer our deepest condolences and solidarity to those who have lost loved ones or been injured.

The imposition of sanctions by governments which support democracy and the rule of law is both

inevitable and justified, and should focus particularly on the entourage of President Putin, who is leading Russia down this destructive path and threatening peace in Europe and the world.

We call for world leaders to take urgent and definitive steps to initiate dialogue and find a peaceful solution to this crisis in line with the Charter of the United Nations.

European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) General Secretary Luca Visentini:

We strongly condemn the war, which hits people and workers first, and advocate for dialogue, peace and democracy to be reestablished immediately.

Europe must stand strong against Putin's aggression and put maximum pressure on his regime, and entourage in particular, to bring about peace and dialogue.

We cannot allow policy to be shaped by violence, and we expect world and EU leaders to protect Ukraine's integrity as well as the security of all other countries in the region.

With over 100,000 people already displaced, Europe needs to prepare to welcome refugees, and we acknowledge the pledges already made by several EU member states.



Local 249 members attended education classes at the union hall March 8 through 11. Classes were provided for members on day shift, night shift and C-Crew. The classes covered rights in the workplace and the role of members in keeping the union strong. Photo by Don Lehman.

Local 249 launches member education classes

By Erica Eckart

Local 249 is celebrating the successful re-launch of the membership education classes. The general purpose of the education classes range from topics regarding rights within the workplace to your role as a union member and everything in between.

President Jason Starr and Bargaining Chairman Jim Fisher, along with the Executive Board of UAW Local 249, recognized the need for members to move past the service mentality of union members and engage and encourage our members to understand their role as union activists.

"The classes give an honest assessment of where we are in the labor movement and how the workers of Kansas City, especially the UAW, have played a major part in our own creation but more importantly how to maintain our place as Union members" says Gary Thomas, Chairman of the Education Committee and Local 249 Guide.

"The 8,000 members of Local 249 build the best in class trucks and vans, yet we routinely give up our power to

the bosses, hot button politicians and the convenience of short term gains. The Education Committee is dedicated to showing our members that class identity is one of the most powerful weapons we have".

These education classes are taught by Gary Thomas and Robin Taylor (Chairwoman of the Women's Committee). The general structure consists of education, member engagement, and surveys, followed by over an hour of open Q&A during a discussion session with Local 249 President Jason Starr and our Bargaining Committee.

According to survey feedback from previous classes, the consensus is that people learn more than they expect to from these classes. Most participants state that they did not

understand the power they had as members, how much more they could be doing to contribute to our future and our successes, and how much the union does for them. Many shared that they learn how a lot of facts about plant issues often get misconstrued on the shop floor and blown out of proportion by the rumor mills.

One example of misconstrued topics would be about our VCAP donations. VCAP funds are not used for the hot button issues popularized by social media. The Voluntary Community Action Program was designed and built to promote and protect the interest of UAW members, our families and our communities.

These monetary donations are used to promote cancer awareness and research, scholarships for our children. They also support community programs, local schools and donations to organizations that support our membership, and so much more. Most importantly they help elect policy makers who represent the interests of unions and working class labor.

Oftentimes these discussions are filled with incorrect information fueled by biased or personal feelings that have no basis for truth and tend to divide the membership. These classes give members an opportunity to get clarification on the facts, express their thoughts and feelings, and ask any questions that come to mind.

One of the incredible and unique parts of these classes is that those in attendance select those who will attend the next class. This allows these members to return the investment the local has put into them by helping build the next set of attendees all while also taking the information they have learned back to the floor. Whether it is by donating to VCAP, joining a standing committee or agreeing to be an activist in their work area each member is asked to commit themselves to being a positive force of change for the local moving forward.

If you are interested in attending these classes, please submit your request to your district committeeman.



Local 249 members shared some of the luck of the Irish at the annual Snake Saturday Parade in North Kansas City March 12. Union activists used their skills to build a float for the parade and hand out candy to children who came to watch the parade. Photo by Don Lehman.

Local 249 celebrates St. Patrick's Day

By Cecelia Davis

Two, four, nine... two, four, nine ricochets off of the buildings on Armour road as our Local union 249 bellowed out as they marched down the parade route for a yearly event called, "The Snake Parade".

Every year, the Snake parade consists of the North Kansas City community coming together to celebrate Irish festivities on the week of St. Patrick's Day. Local non-profit organizations and businesses take part by creating unique floats and custom costumes to entertain the crowd and to get an enormous amount of exposure to their organizations.

It is such a sight to see. To add some extra fun for every participant that marched within the parade, they competed in front of judges for a chance to win cash prizes.

The Snake Saturday parade and festival awards prize money to about 50 to 100 local charities, roughly 2 million dollars to date. The judges were going to have a tough call with the UAW float in the competition. Our float was incredible. Sadie Bass, was the director in navigating the creation of

the float, as she contacted the twelve committees to join together to put their innovative skills in motion.

They crafted a 4-foot pot of gold with a dazzling rainbow coming out of it, placed beside about a 7-foot pea green top hat with a big golden belt buckle that wrapped around it. If the giant leprechaun hat didn't catch your attention, then the green and yellow tinsel and frills with glitter words did, taking the float to a whole new level.

"Our local represented the UAW well today. I will forever remember looking down the parade route and seeing all the kids so excited to get their UAW bags," said Jason Starr, the president of our local union.

Sam Wilson, a member of the Education Committee, added, "It was great to get the Local 249 name out there

more and handing out bags of sweets to the kids as they exchange smiles and giggles. It was amazing!" Children of all ages received goodie bags that had a handful of candy in it, along with coloring pages accompanied with crayons and a sweet note saying how much our local union appreciates the community.

"Interacting with the crowds of people and seeing them receive the genuine message of the UAW helps encourage me to keep spreading unity," said Kelsey Pinzino, co-chair of the Education Committee. "It was very empowering to see the crowd listening to us as we chanted, "We are the workers, fighting for Justice and good jobs for all!"

Like the UAW, Snake Saturday started out as a small but powerful development that grew with the astonishing neighborhood involvement and support, making it one of the best parade celebrations in the Midwest.

Snake parade came to life in 1983, with parade founder Mickey Finn and

co-founder Bill Grigsby, who at first started this approach for a promotion for Rodeway Inn with only four floats and a grand marshal. Regardless of the weather, the modest yet impressive parade took place in the motel parking lot, making it accessible for the motel residents to watch out their window from inside their warm room..

After a successful march around the parking lot, the North Kansas City mayor suggested Mickey take this exciting event to the streets next year and the years following regardless of the weather condition and always on the Saturday before St. Patrick's Day.

This year parade attendance was quite a turnout, considering it was a chilly morning, but the sun still came out to shine upon such an entertaining event. Come out and see what this event is all about next year, whether you are an attendee in the crowd with your loved ones or providing solidarity, marching with your union brothers and sisters. We will guarantee you an exciting fun filled day.



Members of Local 249's Women's Committee Lynn Brown, left to right, Lena Wiley, Porsche Thomas and Stephanie Henderson prepare sweet treats for the annual Easter egg hunt to be held April 3 at the union hall. The Easter Egg Hunt will be held on April 3 from 2 to 4 pm at the union hall.

Spring has sprung at Local 249

By Chrissy Kline

Over the course of the last two years, many have wondered “When will things go back to normal?” and others have questioned what normal even is now. UAW Local 249 has continually strived to put the safety and well-being of the membership above all, while still maintaining the feelings of brotherhood and solidarity that have made us who we are. Now as the restrictions surrounding gathering and events due to COVID-19 protocols have begun to loosen it feels like the end of a long winter and the first buds of spring are visible. Events are being planned, meetings are being held in person and we can let out the collective breath we have been holding.

These changes are evident looking forward as we see the calendars filling up with activities, pictures of smiling faces are all over social media and the buzz of excitement is in the air again. The most prevalent and visible example of this was the recent Snake Saturday Parade with more than fifty union members and their families representing Local 249 in the parade and watching from the sidelines.

The next big event coming up is the annual egg hunt being held by the UAW Local 249 Women's Committee, the Easter Eggstravaganza, on April 3 from 2-4 pm. Traditionally the hunt takes place at the start of the event and is over within seconds, but this year there will be games, prizes, and food before the main event.

There is a community blood drive scheduled for April 28 to help reduce the shortage of life-saving blood as well as a gate action on the same day

for Worker's Memorial Day. The Conservation & Recreation Committee has been hard at work planning events like the UAW 249 float trip, the BBQ cookoff, and the Pleasant Valley Spring Cleanup on April 30. With the mask mandates being lifted and spirits rising with them, plans are even beginning to be made to hold the UAW Local 249 annual picnic held around the Labor Day holiday.

Seeing all the fun events on the horizon, it is hard to imagine there would be much time for anything else, but the members and standing committees are hard at work educating the membership, organizing within the plant and in the community, and preparing for elections by seeking out motivated, labor-friendly candidates with the same vision for the future as the United Auto Workers.

Members of the Community Ac-

tion Program Committee will be coming through the facility to seek support for the VCAP program that promotes labor-friendly policymakers, organizations, and communities. Already plans are being set into motion for voter registration and GOTV drives, lit-dropping,

door-knocking, and phone banking.

With the first stirrings of spring beginning, it brings with it the hope for positive changes and joyful gatherings. We look forward to seeing you, your families, and your smiling faces at our upcoming events.



Andy Bissett and Todd Knaack, left to right, won the Local 249's Bass Tournament held March 20 at Stockton Lake. They also landed the Big Bass of the tournament. AJ Richards and Bob White took second place in the tournament. The event was sponsored by the union Conservation and Recreation Committee.



Local 249 member Gary Thomas turned his gratitude to the UAW into solidarity and activism for working people living in poverty. Photo by Don Lehman.

The UAW lifted me out of poverty

By Gary Thomas

I grew up poor in a rich city. So poor, in fact, that we would often have to “go fetch water” to flush our toilet because the water was shut off more often than it was on. I remember hundreds of nights washing my hair with a bucket and bar of soap in a darkened bathroom, because our electricity was always off. We would move constantly. Lie to landlords about rent, and family about whether we’d eaten and how long it was between meals.

That poverty stayed with me for a long time. When I married Pam, we were poor. We raised our children, Dylan and Alex, poor. We chose which bills to pay and which ones to let go. Every paycheck went to pay back bills, overdraft fees and gas to get to jobs that paid too little.

I found a job at my first union shop and that poverty eased a bit. Not much, but enough to know that being a union member was the only true path out of poverty.

When I lost that job, I found work at Walmart and sank right back into crushing debt and despair. I held two jobs, one at Walmart and one as a cook and dishwasher. I was 30 years old. Pam

held a job while studying for her bachelor’s degree in computer science. We used every trick, grant and cost saving method we could find, invent, or scam the schools out of. We still had to take out a \$6,000 loan. We were sinking in an ocean of drowning people.

In 2014, Ford was hiring and there were thousands who wanted the job. Many of us waited for days to just get the chance to take the eight-hour test.

There was no lunch break, no choice and no second chance.

Pam and I found out we each got new jobs a month apart. I got on at Ford and she was hired as an engineer at another company. It took several years and thousands upon thousands

of dollars, but we pulled ourselves out of poverty.

None of that would have happened if I didn’t join the UAW. Today, I’m a utility hi-lo driver on C-Crew in the Truck System at the Ford Motor Kansas City Assembly Plant. As a member of UAW Local 249, my wife and children have medical care second to none. I received profit sharing. I was paid a wage that meant I didn’t have to worry over which bills to pay each month. It was surreal and still is, that I can live a life without feeling the weight of poverty hanging over my head.

Pam and I bought a house in Lee’s Summit not far from where I grew up. It’s on the same street where my grandmother lives, but believe me, we’ve come a long, long way.

Now, my youngest son is picking out colleges. It’s seems crazy to me that ten years ago, before the UAW, I was resigning my youngest to a life of hard labor and crushing poverty. Now, he’s talking about becoming a lawyer,

an engineer, or taking on some other career that I know will be expensive, but I haven’t once had to question my ability to provide for his education.

I’m involved in the union because I knew soul-crushing poverty. My union freed me from it, and I’ve made it my duty to make sure I have a hand in ending it for someone else, because someone I never met ended it for me.

I’m proud to have helped launch Local 249’s Motorcycle Committee and served as its co-chair with Keith Jones. Now, I’m the chair of the local’s Education Committee and I teach member education classes. I work closely with organizations like Stand Up KC and KC Tenants that help people who find themselves trapped in the same cycle of soul-crushing poverty that I grew up in.

I do that because my union changed my life. Yes, it’s let me down emotionally at times, but it’s never given up on me and I will never give up on it.

E-Transit launch leads to schedule changes

By Jim Fisher

The production schedules for KCAP have continued to adjust during the month of March. The Transit system (per Appendix H page 150 of the National Agreement) has been changed to a 12-hour schedule due to a Major Model Launch of the Battery Electric Transit. However, in reality, what we have seen due to parts supplier issues is that there have been very few times the company has been able to run these kinds of hours in production.

In March the Transit System scheduled five shifts of Super Production on Saturdays. The Truck System remains on a 3-Crew Pattern and had two shifts scheduled for Super Production. While March showed encouraging signs that production schedules would be leveling out and returning to normal, there are still signs that an unstable supply chain remains. Due to the events in Ukraine, Ford had announced European production is being reduced. In March, an earthquake affected production at several semiconductor plants in Japan. Due to all these concerns our plant schedules will remain week to week.

There have been some steps recently taken by the COVID-19 team to phase out COVID protocols at our plant. Recently, members were allowed to work without masks. While the membership has gotten a break from the masks, I just want to just remind everyone that if the COVID-19 cases increase in our area that the mask requirement could come back.

The members have also began taking advantage of a local fitness center. The Foundation has been made available while an upgraded air ventilation system is added to our own fitness center. If you're interested, membership vouchers are still available at the union hall. And finally, the plant cafeteria has taken the early steps in serving hot meals again. Currently, the cafeteria has only three employees and they are working on hiring more employees and expanding the hours those meals will be available.

Our quality has been very inconsistent, but there have been some improvements. While the parts issues are affecting the plant every day in one department or another, we must put our highest priority on protecting our customers from quality defects. There should be no controllable defects leaving your workstation without being reported. We have seen an increased awareness from members enforcing the Stop Button Procedure, and even management has been reported holding the lines to fix quality issues. Once our membership took the lead in fixing

the problems on the floor, management tried to give the impression they are fixing things also.

All members should be aware that our national and local contracts are set to expire in September of 2023. I know that this is still a very long way away, however, now is the time to start noticing some of the top issues and how they are being handled. The plant continues to struggle in manpower, mainly due to an inability to hire new employees off the street.

The entry wage of a temporary worker making \$16.67 is not competitive with the market conditions of most fast-food restaurants. Ford still requires our members to start off at a temporary status. This is a problem that could be fixed immediately. However, they have chosen to let plants struggle by not fully staffing base operations within the plant as a cost saving move.

Recently, KCAP management implemented new plans for controlling manpower as an effort to try to hide the number of open jobs. We expect this will lead to delays in moving members who have bids, and we are prepared to file grievances for those members if necessary.

Like I said earlier, September of 2023 is still a long way off, but financial



Local 249 Bargaining Chair Jim Fisher answers questions about the production schedule at the March membership meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

planning for this process should start with your family now. The company will not be able to "cry poverty" or "help save the company" during this next contract. They have committed to spending bil-

ions in investments for Battery Electric Vehicles to improve their financial bottom line for the future, but we need to be assured they will be investing in our members in 2023 as well.

Official Election Nomination Notice

Amalgamated Local Union 249 UAW

In accordance with the UAW Constitution and Local Union 249 By-Laws, the nominations for 38th Constitution Convention of the International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of America, UAW Delegate and Alternate Delegate, will be held in the following manner:

Nominations

Nominations will be held at the Regular Membership meeting on Sunday, April 10th at 2pm at the UAW Local 249 Union Hall (8040 NE US 69 HWY Pleasant Valley, MO 64068). If a member is unable to attend the nomination meeting because the employer has scheduled her/him to work during the nomination meeting the member may make a written nomination. Such a written nomination must be delivered to the Local Union Hall during business hours the week before the nomination meeting. A signed statement must also be filed with the Local Union stating you were assigned to work during the nomination meeting. Anyone making such a written nomination is obligated to inform the person nominated, so that the member may accept or decline in a timely fashion.

Acceptance of Nomination

Acceptance of nomination for 38TH Constitutional Convention Delegate and Alternate Delegate must be on a properly completed form available at the Local Union Hall (8040 NE US 69 HWY Pleasant Valley, MO 64068). Acceptance of nomination must be deposited in the ballot box at the Local Union Hall beginning immediately following the nomination meeting Sunday April 10th and no later than 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 14th, 2022.

VCAP isn't about the R, D or I. It's about the J.O.B.

By Jason Starr

In 2010, Ford announced it was pulling production of the hot-selling Escape from KCAP and sending it to Louisville. No replacement product for our plant was promised, and many feared that with half the plant idle, we would lose the F-150, too.

Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon stepped forward to introduce the Missouri Manufacturing Jobs Act to provide incentives to bring a replacement product to KCAP for the Escape and keep the F-150 here, but a faction of far-right Republicans in the House and Senate blocked action on the bill. When the regular session of the legislature ended with no action on Nixon's incentives bill, KCAP seemed doomed.

As word spread around the country that Missouri had blocked incentives to keep the F-150 here, Michigan, Illinois and Ohio quickly stepped forward to offer hundreds of millions of dollars in incentives to lure production of our F-150 to their states.

If they succeeded, every Local 249 member at KCAP would have faced a stark choice: move far away from family and friends or lose their job.

The loss of KCAP wouldn't have affected just our members, either. The Center for Automotive Research estimates that each assembly plant job creates six additional jobs in transportation, parts plants and aftermarket suppliers. In all, the legislator's failure to act might have cost Missouri more than 30,000 jobs, more than \$1 billion

a year in wages for the local economy and all the taxes those good jobs generate.

To stop that from happening, Local 249 leaders used VCAP funds donated by our members to build a state-wide bipartisan coalition of elected officials, business leaders and labor unions to call for a special session of the legislature to pass the incentive package and save the plant.

It was a struggle. The opposition by some far-right Republican legislators was fierce and many times threatened to stall the Jobs Act incentives again. In the end, the bipartisan coalition we built with your VCAP dollars carried the day. The incentives bill was passed. Ford kept the F-150 here and brought production of the Transit commercial van here, as well. A stamping plant was built and more than \$1 billion was invested in modernizing the plant.

Everyone working at KCAP today has a job because VCAP allowed us to implement a winning strategy to save our products, plant and jobs.

Your VCAP contributions don't go to candidates and elected officials because they are members of one party or another: Republican, Democrat



Local 249 President Jason Starr leads a discussion at a member education class held at the union hall in March. Photo by Don Lehman.

or Independent. VCAP donations are made to elect candidates of any party who pledge to fight for economic policies that support good jobs, fair trade, worker rights and health and safety.

We also work with community allies to build a movement – like the coalition that saved our plant in 2010 – to fight for those economic objectives. To that end, we have invested the voluntary contributions made by our members into community activities such as the Breast Cancer Awareness Walk, the Martin Luther King Banquet sponsored by the Coalition for Black Trade Unionists, the Earnest and Edna Shepard Youth Center Scholarships, Clay County African American Legacy,

the Garrison School Cultural Center, Journey to a New Life, Working Families Friend and Region 8 tornado victims.

Local 249 is launching a drive for VCAP contributions. I urge you to start making a contribution to VCAP if you aren't already and to increase your contribution if you are. Your small monthly contributions are a great investment in protecting our jobs and wages, union rights and our health and safety laws. VCAP contributions also make the communities that we live in stronger. It creates allies who will work with us to defend middle class living standards and to fight and win should we face another crisis like the one we faced in 2010.

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.

Open Enrollment



MetLife

UAW-Ford Life Insurance

MetLife is sending two representatives to the union hall the week of May 2-6 from 8 am to 5 pm to help enroll and answer questions for UAW-Ford life insurance

Democracy under attack from Ukraine to Missouri

By State Sen. Lauren Arthur

Over the last few weeks, Russian forces have continued their invasion into neighboring Ukraine in an attempt to topple the democratically elected government to gain greater control over Eastern Europe. Since the overthrow of a pro-Russian regime and the installation of a democratic government, Russia has never given up its mission to regain influence over the country. As I've watched one of the most infamous authoritarian regimes continue to attack democratic influence, it's hard not to see the smaller, yet systematic, attacks on the democratic process in our own state of Missouri as a precursor to what could be a much darker, much more insidious future for our state.

News from the Missouri legislature of late has been for many, including myself – a member of the Missouri Senate – bleak, riddled with infighting, conflict, and alarming legislation.

From gerrymandering of Congressional districts to making the initiative petition process all but impossible for citizens, extremists continue to attack our democratic institutions. If they continue unchecked, we will be on a path to a less democratic society, and, I fear, a reality in which the people are without power, while a small group grows their own.

One of their primary targets has been Missouri's initiative petition process – one of the most powerful democratic tools available to everyone.

Missouri is one of only 18 states with an initiative petition process that creates a pathway for any citizen to put an issue on the ballot. Anyone can file a petition, collect signatures, and get their petition on the ballot.

It's one of the few safeguards to ensure a voice for the people in the absence of legislative action or, as was the case with Right to Work, overturn harmful legislation. Currently, there are multiple bills aimed at making the process all but impossible, increasing the number of signatures needed as well as the vote threshold for passage from a simple majority to a two-thirds majority. If we can't protect the initiative petition process, everyday citizens will continue to be cut out of government altogether.

In Russia, these kinds of rights don't exist. The largest union in the country is state-controlled and works less to protect workers and more to instill the values of the regime. Protesting and demonstrations in Russia – any kind of dissent – is not only silenced, but also persecuted.

Those who speak ill of the regime are often stalked, harassed, arrested, tortured, or killed. It's a truly American right to speak out and be critical of any administration. Demo-

crats and Republicans, alike, have enjoyed and expressed this right. But this will only continue if we work to protect the democratic process and our democratic rights as a people.

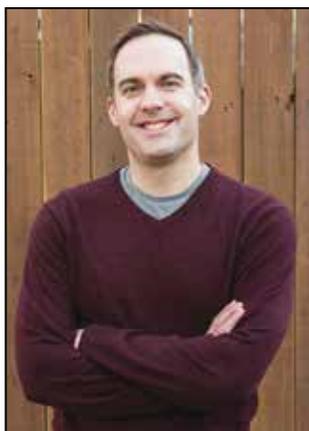
These anti-democratic attacks can be stopped for Ukraine and Missouri, alike. Missourians must speak out and put pressure on their legislators. And, in turn, our legislators must find the courage to stop their extremist colleagues and put an end



Senator Lauren Arthur was elected to represent the constituents of Missouri's 17th Senatorial District which includes Liberty, Kansas City (North), Gladstone, NKC, Pleasant Valley.

to bills that undercut our democracy once and for all.

We all must act. Our freedom and future depend on it.



Laura Wagner, left to right, is running for the North Kansas City School Board. Matt Sameck and Karen Rogers are running for positions on the Liberty School Board. Rory Rowland is running for Mayor of Independence. All will be on the ballot in the April 5 Municipal Election.

Municipal Election Day is April 5 in Missouri

While the news media often focus on national elections, Missouri voters will go to the polls April 5 in municipal elections to select candidates to represent them on the local level. These local elected officials often make the decisions that affect us the most. The UAW urges members to vote on April 5.

Laura Wagner is a candidate for the North Kansas City School Board has a strong labor background. She is the Laborers-Employers Cooperation and Education Trust (LECET) Director for the Western Missouri and Kansas Laborers and a member of Local #264. She has served on the NKC School District Education Foundation for five years, and currently serve on the Industrial Education Committee, preparing the Pathways program for students to find

their future careers.

Matt Sameck has training in education and classroom experience, having taught at the middle and high school levels as a member of the National Education Association, the national teachers' union. He also has experience in non-profit fundraising, grantmaking, and marketing and worked in cooperation with a managing board in a previous position for five years.

Karen Rogers is running for the

Liberty School Board. She has 16 years of experience as an education law attorney, including 7 years at the U.S. Department of Education, working with numerous school board members, school district leaders, and parents. She has provided representation, advice, and training on issues including student education rights, employment matters, health and safety, transparency and effective governance.

Rory Rowland is a candidate for Mayor of Independence. He currently serves Independence as an elected state legislator and has served in that role for 6 years.



A large contingent of UAW members from Locals 31, 710 and 249 lent solidarity to Starbucks workers who are battling antiunion actions by the company to organize their own union on Kansas City's Country Club Plaza Feb. 3. In the face of the action, Starbucks elected to temporarily close the store and cancel a scheduled forced anti-union meeting with employees.

Large protest closes Starbucks on the Plaza

By Pat Hayes

A large protest in solidarity with a Starbucks workers union organizing drive led store managers to temporarily close the popular coffeehouse location and cancel a mandatory anti-union meeting for employees here March 2. Approximately 200 people, including a large contingent of UAW Local 249, 31 and 710 members, filled the sidewalks and spilled into the street at the corner of Nichols Rd. and Central St. outside the café in Kansas City's historic Country Club Plaza.

The spirited protest, organized by Stand Up KC and the Missouri Workers Center, was attended by union members, religious leaders and community activists from across the Kansas City Metro. Terrence Wise, a McDonald's worker, Stand Up KC leader and organizer of the Starbucks protests introduced two Starbucks workers who spoke at the protest.

"We have to deal with chronic understaffing, high turnover, under-training, exposure to COVID-19 and negligent management," Hope, a barista at the Overland Park Starbucks location, told the crowd.

With the large, boisterous crowd chanting outside the now closed store, Josh, a worker at the Plaza location stepped up to the microphone to tell the crowd of supporters he'd just re-

ceived a text from management.

"Due to unforeseen media coverage, the store meeting will be cancelled today."

"That's inspiring," he told supporters. "If a little under 30 minutes of protesting scares them, imagine what we can do."

State Rep. Patty Lewis, a Kansas City Democrat and ally of Local 249, attended the protest and told the crowd the Starbucks organizing drive in Kansas City could inspire other workers in the service industry to organize.

"We are a proud union city," said Lewis. "Everybody deserves a seat at the table, the right to organize, negotiate wages, working conditions."

Starbucks workers in Kansas City are part of a growing, nation-wide organizing drive at the Starbucks chain.

After five stores in Buffalo, New York voted to unionize in recent months, the ranks of the organizing drive swelled to include workers at 105 locations in 26 states asking to be represented by Workers United, an affiliate of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), according to Richard Minter, the union's vice president.

Coffee is big business. At last count, the Seattle-based Starbucks chain included 8,947 company-operated and 6,497 licensed stores in the United States. In 2020, Starbucks employed 349,000 workers in its U.S. locations.

It's profitable, too. In 2021 it reported more than \$4 billion in profits. Starbucks CEO Kevin Johnson saw his overall compensation grow 39.3% from \$14.67 million to \$20.43 million last year, according to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. His estimated net worth is over \$90 million.

While Johnson and other Starbucks executives and shareholders are rolling in it, grinding poverty is the norm for the Starbucks baristas who generate those profits. The average

pay for a Starbucks barista in Overland Park, according to Zip Recruiter, is just \$20,899 a year. That's \$402 a week or \$1,742 a month. The median rent in the prosperous Kansas City suburb is \$1,164 a month.

"It is not easy to stand up to your employer and demand a collective bargaining seat at the table for your workplace conditions, pay and benefits. That is why I support and encourage the brave baristas at Starbucks locations who are standing up for their voice in their working conditions," said UAW International President Ray Curry, in a statement.

"There are over 1 million UAW members and retirees and their families who benefited greatly from having the right to bargain at their workplace and we want the same rights for hard working Americans in all sectors of our economy," he said. "The organizing efforts of Starbucks baristas inspire and encourage all of us to stand up in solidarity and support each other in having a voice and fairness in our working life. UAW members are proud to support Starbucks baristas in their effort."