

FIRST LOCAL NEWS

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October 2022

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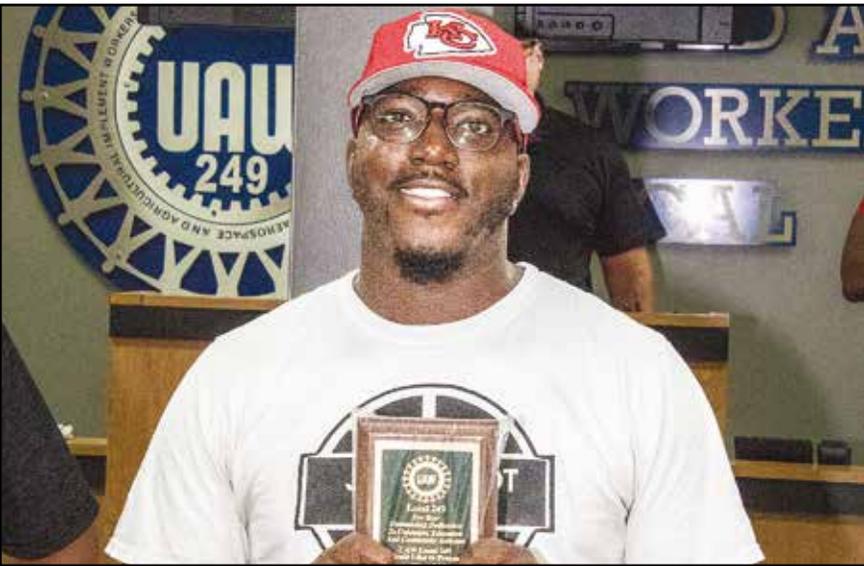
International Union United Auto,
Aerospace and Agricultural Workers Local 249
8040 NE 69 Highway
Pleasant Valley, MO 64068



Nearly 8,000 active and retired Local 249 members and their families attended the union's Labor Day Picnic at La Benite Park Sept. 5. Photo by Don Lehman.



Local 249 Women's Committee members Sydne Donaldson, center, Diedre' Brown, back row left to right, Stepha Henderson, Lamaesia Harris, Robin Taylor, Daniella Garcia, and NaTisha Johnson volunteered at KC Habitat ReStore Sept. 2. Sales of donated items help Habitat for Humanity partner with local families to build, rehabilitate and repair safe and affordable homes.



Neil Wilson received the James "Frog" Moran Solidarity Award from the Education Committee at the September membership meeting for saving a coworker from being seriously maimed when her foot got stuck in the line and a truck started to roll over it. Photo by Don Lehman.



Local 249's Cornhole Tournament, held Sept. 8, was a big success. Adam and Andy Urness took first place, Bryce Williams and Trevor Smith came in second and third place went to Brandon Gilpin and Todd McCant. Photo by Don Lehman.

First Local News

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Retiree Representative John Lowe

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

UAW-Ford Joint Programs

Apprentice Training

Cortez Bradley 816-459-2060

Benefits

Steve Hibbs, Derron Joyner and Jason Hartman 816-454-6333

Employee Involvement

Chad Troncin 816-459-1372

Darroyce Thornton 816-459-1490

Employee Support Services

Kenny Alexander 816-459-1226

Health and Safety

Ed Samborski 816-459-1210 • Terry Tharp 816-459-1407

Ulysses Bales 816-459-1605 • Joe Camper 816-459-5559

Dave Sambol 816-459-1223

Quality

Kelly Loveall and Jeff Wright 816-459-1232

Dealer Rep. Danny Mata

Job Sourcing and Production Standards

Jim Ryan and Todd Wyse 816-459-1466

Helpful Numbers

Quality Hotline 1-866-723-3937

Employee Health Services 816-459-1226

National Employee Service Center 1-800-248-4444

Blue Care 816-395-2700

Blue Cross PPO 1-800-482-5146

Preferred Care Blue PPO 816-395-3193

Child Care Referrals 866-327-7952

UNICARE Life Insurance 1-800-843-8184

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

Delta Dental (Active) 844-223-8520

Delta Dental (Retired) 800-524-0149

United Concordia Dental Plan 1-800-937-6432

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

www.fordvehicleprograms.com

UAW-Ford Legal Services 800-482-7700

UAW-Ford TESPHE 1-800-248-4444

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The Picket Line

NLRB rules Tesla broke law

In a major decision issued on August 29, the National Labor Relations Board found Tesla to have violated the law by restricting employees' right to wear union t-shirts at work. The decision orders Tesla to cease and desist from maintaining and enforcing a work attire policy that prohibits employees from wearing black union shirts, to rescind that policy, to notify all current employees that the policy has been rescinded, and to post a notice in the plant stating Tesla will comply with the law and not prohibit black union shirts.

In making the decision, the Board explained that union insignia are a "critical form of protected communication" under the NLRA used "to support organizing campaigns, demonstrate solidarity, and advocate for issues during collective bargaining." The decision also applies beyond union insignia to other slogans that concern terms and conditions of employment.

The decision reverses a Trump-era NLRB decision that had strengthened the hand of employers in their ability to restrict worker expression on the shop floor. Unfortunately, the decision comes more than four years after workers and the UAW filed unfair labor practice charges with the NLRB.

"Our union commends this decision as a just recognition that the right to organize is meaningless if workers cannot exercise the right without fear of reprisal," says UAW President Ray Curry. "Worker expression is a statement of solidarity during organizing. As a result of this decision which the UAW fought for, workers can feel more secure in their pro-union expression today as they work to form their unions."

"This is a great victory for workers who have the courage to join together and organize in a system that is currently stacked heavily in favor of employers like Tesla who have no qualms about violating the law," adds UAW Vice President Cindy Estrada. "While we celebrate the justice in today's ruling by an increasingly pro-worker NLRB, it also nevertheless highlights the substantial flaws in U.S. labor law. Here is a company that clearly took numerous aggressive and unlawful steps to block workers' rights, and yet it is more than four years down the road before workers see a modicum of justice." — UAW

California enacts sweeping protections for fast-food workers

California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a bill Sept. 5 that increases protections for fast-food workers in the state, creating a council to set an industry-wide minimum wage and workplace standards.

Newsom said in a Labor Day video message that California, which is the size of the world's fifth-largest economy, had long had a "formula for success around growth and inclusion." But the fast-food industry was one in which the state had fallen "a bit short" on improving wages and working conditions, he added.

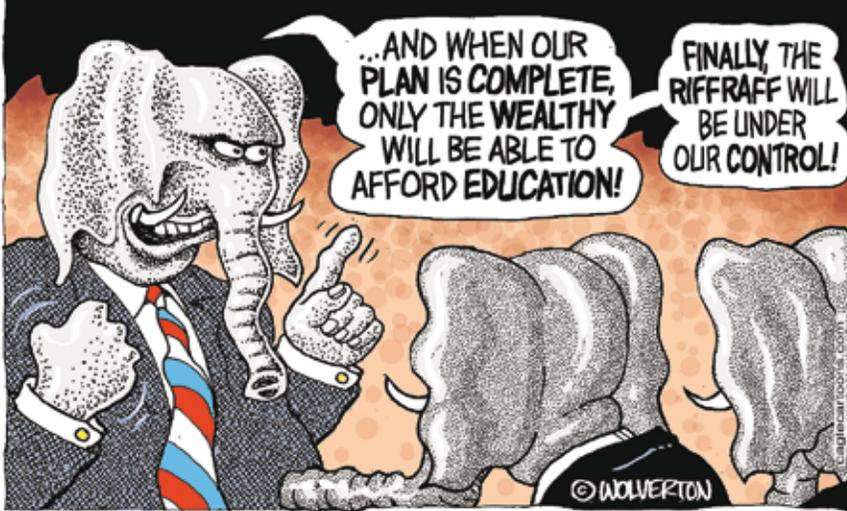
"For years, the fast food sector has been rife with abuse, low pay, few benefits, and minimal job security," the bill's authors wrote. The law provides for the creation of a "Fast Food Council" made up of 10 members to "establish sectorwide minimum standards on wages, working hours, and other working conditions related to the health, safety, and welfare of, and supplying the necessary cost of proper living to, fast food restaurant workers."

The legislation caps the 2023 fast-food minimum wage at \$22. The state minimum wage is \$15 for businesses with 26 employees or more. After Jan. 1, 2024, the sector's minimum wage will be adjusted for inflation, capped at 3.5 percent annually.

The law also enhances protections for workers against retaliation by their employers.

The Service Employees International Union, which represents 2 million workers nationwide, called the bill's passage a "watershed moment in the nation's labor history, giving more than half a million low-wage workers in the fast-food industry a meaningful voice on the job." — *The Washington Post*

DEFUNDING PUBLIC EDUCATION



Women's reproductive rights are worker's rights

By State Representative Keri Ingle

The attack on women's ability to decide when and if they are going to have children is an attack on all families and working people.

As a mom of two young children, I know exactly how expensive kids are. When I worked as a State employee my salary was almost completely wiped out by daycare costs. Throughout most of Missouri, childcare is either nonexistent, or so expensive that families have to choose between working or staying home with their children. The choice about when and if you have children has always been an economic one- where people with money have the ability to hire nannies to accommodate their lifestyles, most Missourians struggle to balance caring for their kids and making ends meet.

When politicians in Jefferson City attack our ability to organize and to collectively bargain for living wages- we know where they stand on working people. The attack on families' abilities to make the most important decisions in their lives is also an attack on working people. The current law in Missouri bans abortion even in situations where there has been rape

or incest- even when children are the victims. Doctors and hospitals across the state are ringing alarm bells that mothers will die from ectopic and molar pregnancies. It wasn't long ago that childbirth was the leading cause of death for women- and doctors are increasingly concerned that due to the law that threatens them with criminal charges and loss of licensure- that they will be unable to save women during medical emergencies. Extremists in the Legislature have made it perfectly clear that they are going to ban birth control next- they tried last summer and they'll try again soon.

These anti-union, anti-family politicians think they know how to run your life better than you do. When women cannot control their bodies, they do not control their lives. When families cannot make decisions for themselves, they do not control their futures. This is yet another way to control working people and to keep them from being able to rise up.

Capitol Report: Parson's race to the bottom

Missouri is 33rd in job growth, 35th in GDP growth, 45th in average teacher pay, 5th worst state to live, 42nd in healthcare, 45th in maternal mortality, 50th in starting teacher pay and 49th in percentage of state education funding. Some 27% of school districts in the state are on 4 day weeks, but Gov. Parson demands more tax cuts that favor the rich.

Democrats oppose a rushed special session on tax cuts because of the likely negative impact on the state's long-term financial stability. While Parson says his plan would cost about \$700 million a year in lost revenue, an analysis by the non-partisan Missouri Budget Project puts the cost at closer to \$1.1 billion annually.



Local 249 volunteers Darren King, left, and David Winkler frame in a wheelchair ramp for Katie Daniels' father, who suffered a serious heart attack.

Local 249 volunteers answer a cry for help

By Gary Thomas

It all started as a cry for help on Facebook. "My father suffered a medical emergency. We need a ramp built. Can anyone help?" wrote Katie Daniels, who works on Truck C-Crew. Daniels' father had suffered a widow maker heart attack. He'd been hospitalized for several weeks. To come home, a wheelchair ramp would need to be added to his home.

This is a story each of us are all too familiar with. We, as United Autoworkers, have excellent benefits. We have a team of representatives that help us navigate those benefits, we have union representatives to help us stay safe on the job too. Our family members don't have access to the same resources we do and it's frustrating.

For years the United Autoworkers and Ford partnered to build ramps for people just like Katie's father. Our Local was selected to be one of the few locals to have a dedicated ramp crew and over the years they have helped countless members of our community. Unfortunately, Ford shut down their partnership in the ramp initiative, which ended the program. While the ramp program is gone. The need has not.

Darren King saw Katie's post and recognized the need. He remembered

Katie from a Fight for 15 rally he attended and in Darren's words "I knew she fought for others. She fought and stood with workers who were fighting just so they had a chance at a life we, as union members, sometimes take for granted. I knew that I had to help the fighters keep fighting."

Daniels wasn't looking for a hand-out, she was looking for help but what she didn't imagine getting was the kind of help Darren was about to provide. Within a day of her original post Darren had not only secured the lumber, which he was going to originally use to build his new deck, he also had volunteers.

Nicki Dang, David Winkler, Gary Thomas, even Darren's infant daughter Adalyyn, joined in to oversee the quality of work. The team came out on days off, between family time and before work to get the holes dug, concrete

poured, posts set and framed.

What would have taken our ramp crew a day to build took the volunteers nearly a week. Despite this they persevered and helped a member in need. As Katie Daniels said, "I feel honored to be supported by my brothers and sisters of UAW Local 249. They brought

my dad home!"

And for Darren, the person who set this in motion, provided the materials and organized the volunteers, he simply said, "I want to thank all those who gave up their time for someone else. This proves that we accomplish more collectively than individually."



Local 249 CAP liaison Shirley Mata, center, helped get out the vote for State Rep. Ashley Aune Sept. 2 with Margaret Miles, Executive Director of CCDCC, Jacob Powell, a Local 42 firefighter, and Sarah Ennis, a community volunteer.

Local 249 picnic is back with a bang

By Cecelia Davis

The time had finally come as Local 249 put on our union picnic and it was a success. After many years of having to put a temporary hold on the event, we came back with a bang.

The UAW 249 2022 Family picnic event was hosted on September 5, at LaBenite Park. The gathering was quite a site with close to 8,000 people in attendance. As you enter the event you are greeted by a few of our fellow Recreation Committee members offering raffles that you could take your chances on, winning multiple great prizes, from a 30-inch griddle, DeWalt industrial fan, an Igloo cooler, and even a Masterbuilt black electric smoker. As you continue to walk around the raffle booth, your eyes would have grown with amazement as you have officially entered the Local 249 fun zone for all ages.

Our union partnered with the Compass Rose Event to help revamp this year's picnic. Compass Rose is said to be the nation's largest turnkey event provider.

There were a lot of fun mechanical rides for all to enjoy. They had the Cosmic Tunnel that transported you into "outer space" as you balanced through the rotating tunnel. There was the Mindwinder ride, where you're coupled up in a spinning tub while you and your partner personally control the level of dizziness but then whirled around in a circle with the other eight tubs preoccupied with other coworkers. Next, they had The Pirates Revenge Mechanical ride which is where you climb aboard this makeshift ship. Make sure you hold on tight as you sway back and forth as the boat sliced through the rocky ocean.

After being rocked and rolled, it only made sense to jump up and down on the Trampoline Bungee Bounce. This was by far one of the most popular rides. While harnessed in you are allowed to bounce as high as you can and to do the most impressive flips you can imagine. The line was never ending for this attraction.

If testing your agility on a trampoline does not pump your blood, testing your skills on the Meltdown Inflatable will do the trick. For up to 8 players, this attraction challenges your stamina, balance, and reaction time as you soar through the air over the spinning and jerking boom stick that tries to knock you and your opponents off your podium. Duck, dive, and jump! Who will be the last one standing? If getting on a mechanical ride isn't your thing, they had plenty of interactive games

to entertain you, like midway carnival games. No matter what you played, everyone left as a winner, unlike our normal carnival games. You could hang out with the DJ as he played some funky tunes which kept the people in line grooving as they waited for their turns for even more excitement.

After making it through half of the attractions, you were destined to get some hunger pains. Not to worry, there was plenty to eat. There was a buffet service of delicious pulled pork, bratwurst, hamburgers, and all beef hot dogs with a side of assorted individual bags of potato chips and multiple options of soda, water, and juice to drink. Also throughout the area was a truck full of fresh sweet roasted corn, fluffy hand-spun cotton candy, warm funnel cakes, snow cones, and other tempting ice cream novelties.

Now that you were all stuffed with goodies, you could continue with the rest of the fun. There were plenty of inflatables from the climbing rock wall, the premium inflatable obstacle course, the inflatable corn maze, and the Zorb balls crisscross collision course. They had sand art, bead art and temporary tattoos, Bingo, archery with inflatable targets, Cornhole toss, and a giant Jenga challenge. They even had a great selection of arcade and pub games. Not one person could say that they were bored because there was just so much to do.

After making it to the back of the picnic, you could take a fun little train ride back to the front but don't forget to stop by the photo booth so you



Nearly 8,000 active and retired Local 249 members and their families attended the 2022 Union Picnic on Labor Day. Photo by Don Lehman.

could take a family keepsake home to put on your fridge.

"When going to the UAW 249 picnic this year, it was my first time since moving out to Kansas City 16 years ago." Said Shelby Liebel from the Union Label committee. "My family used to go to the ones in St. Louis before that plant shut down. Being able to see so many union members together after everything we've been through in the last couple of years with Covid, shutdowns, and loss, it was beautiful to see our community come together. People you don't get to see very often, different shifts, different sides of the plant. It was inspiring to see the love and passion. Even being able to let loose for a bit." As a first-time attendee, Shelby Liebel sounded like she had a great time.

"I would say this came back ex-

tremely well, with amazing weather and a great turnout." said Joshua Curtis, chairman of the Motorcycle Committee. "Remember you all deserve this! As I watched so many UAW family members indulge in a day away from the plant and enjoy their family time off with pay, I hope it helps make up for some of the things we must miss because of our crazy work schedules."

This was just one event that because of our union dues we were able to display the true meaning of solidarity not only with our work families but with our immediate families. Unions and Laborers before us understood the meaning of integrity, solidarity, and unity as they stood firm to their beliefs for us, as laborers, in providing us a holiday that we are very fortunate to have today. Thank you, Local 249 for a memorable and well-deserved Labor Day family picnic.

Labor Day originated in 1894, when President Grover Cleveland signed a law designating the 1st Monday in September a holiday for workers. Beatrice Alvarez, a journalist from Public Broadcasting Service also noted that "Labor unions and activists sacrificed to gain recognition of both the contributions and the mistreatment of workers at the time. Labor Day recognizes the social and economic achievements of American workers." It is noted that it is traditional that many Americans celebrate Labor Day with parades, picnics, and parties, so it was only fitting to celebrate our union party on Labor Day.



Local 249's Labor Day Picnic was a true family affair. Photo by Don Lehman.



Local 249 volunteers helped get out the vote for the November 8, general election at the Liberty Fall Fest and the Jesse James Parade in Kearney in September.

Local 249 volunteers get out the vote

By Erica Eckart

If you attended this year's Liberty Fall Fest or Kearney's Jesse James Parade you may have seen some familiar faces along the parade route. In what has become a yearly tradition, Local 249 has been a part of the parade either by just walking with UAW endorsed local candidates or proudly showcasing one of our Kansas City-made trucks while supporting those candidates.

The Jesse James parade was new for us this year but if you were there you probably noticed the familiar 1980s era fire truck frequently occupied by proud supporters of Clay County prosecutor Zach Thompson. Thompson is a proud supporter of the working class. He is a non-partisan candidate and is endorsed by the UAW. Zach also participated these last couple of years in the Liberty Fall Fest parade along with other UAW supported candidates Mark Ellebracht, State House District 17, Henry Martin, U.S. House District 6 and Sherry Duffet, Clay County commissioner, wife of one of our own, Larry Duffet, a retired Local 249 skilled tradesman.

These candidates are backed by Local 249 not because of what party they belong to, but because they've

committed to their beliefs in the "blue collar" working person's rights.

The working class, especially unions, have been under attack for quite some time. The UAW has been fighting for workers' rights and civil rights since the start of it all.

Since the 1940s and the Walter Reuther era, unions have had to fight tooth and nail for basic human rights and dignity in the workplace. From fair treatment all the way to safe working conditions, this battle has never really ended. The relationship between the bread box and the ballot box has not become distant over the years; it has, in fact, become a more solidified relationship.

Reuther once said, "what is bargained for at the bargaining table can be taken away with a swipe of a pen in the legislative halls." That could not be

farther from the truth today after all of these years. Most Republican lawmakers would like nothing else than to strip unions of their right to bargain in order to appease their more wealthy, corporate donors and that has been a hard pill to swallow for us union folks.

The truth is the Republican views have not always lined up with the views of the UAW which are basic human rights and as always safety and dignity in the workplace. Those two go hand in hand and should not have to be a fight at all if you think about it. You might find yourself wondering why that is such a problem. The sad truth is that it is an ongoing problem that is not likely to be relieved if we can't elect people that support our way of life.

That is why when we find political candidates that believe in those same views, we support them in any way we can, whether it be door knocking, monetary donations, or something as simple and fun as walking in a parade with them, holding signs and passing out candy to the local kids.

Elections are coming up in November and thanks to a certain party, there

have been some new laws put in place to make it more difficult for people to vote. One of those ways is the new voting law HB 1878, which went into effect on August 28, which requires you to have a state issued ID that cannot be expired, in order to cast your vote. You used to be able to show your voter registration card and be done, that is no longer allowed so if you're headed to the polls please remember your valid state ID.

This year's absentee ballots have to be requested and received by October 26, and returned by mail or in person no later than November 8.

You must be registered to vote by mail, in person or online, by October 12. To register or check if you're registered you may visit [vote.gov](https://www.vote.gov).

Voting deadlines in Missouri for early in person voting are October 25 though November 7. Regular in person voting deadline is November 8th. Please make sure you are registered and that you take this opportunity to let your voice be heard. Voting is a constitutional right, don't let them take it from you.

Retirees to hold picnic on Oct. 17

By Natalie Wood

The September Local 249 Retiree Meeting was held at the Pleasant Valley Community Center. This temporary location is where retirees will hold their monthly meetings until further notice.

Mel Thompson, our chairman, spoke on the reason for our move. Not having a working elevator at the union hall to accommodate our members. We are searching for a replacement rather than repairing the elevator. So, until the elevator is replaced, we will be at the Pleasant Valley Community Center. We will be meeting in the lower level from now on. Our Picnic will take place at the community center on Oct 17. Smokehouse BBQ will be catering. So come on out and join us from 11 am to 2 pm. We will have some giveaways, gift cards, cash, food and fun.

The retiree flu shots are scheduled for the October picnic date as well.

Hibbs encouraged us all to open all incoming mail from the UAW Retiree Medical Benefits Trust. Be prepared for some changes in insurance that you may be required to sign up for.

There were 79 people at our September meeting. We recognized anniversaries and birthdays. Shirley Bell was our single birthday. So, we sang Happy Birthday to her. Grammas Catered our box lunches.

There were no reported deaths or newly retired members this month.

Come on out and join in on our Retirees Picnic and get your free flu shot. The picnic will replace our October meeting.



The September Local 249 Retiree Meeting was held at the Pleasant Valley Community Center. Retirees will continue to meet at the new location until the elevator at the union hall is replaced. Photo by Don Lehman.

Local 249 wings are a hit at Wings 4 Water event

By Cecelia Davis

On September 8, the motorcycle committee participated in the Wings 4 Water competition in the battle for the most delicious hot wings hosted in Lee Summit.

Wings 4 Water is an annual fund raiser where a community of people join together to compete over who can make the most mouth-watering chicken wings, in return for votes. They will then vote for their favorite wings with money.

The best part is that all the voting money goes to global clean water efforts and local relief efforts. Combined with the community vote, there are secret judges with impeccable taste buds that help sway the votes with pre-loaded voting tokens. They say that the winning team from each division with the overall points will not only win bragging rights but a one-of-a-kind plaque.

The Motorcycle committee happened to be one of those special win-

ners for their exceptionally popular Baptismal Chicken and their lip-smacking Honey Mustard. Both wings left the people wanting more. "Our award-winning Honey Mustard wings were a hit as well, but the Baptismal Chicken definitely was the star of the show," said Motorcycle Committee Chairman Joshua Curtis. "Thank you everyone for your continued support of what we do."

Due to this special annual event, to date, it is estimated that over 6,000 people have clean water access because of Wings 4 Water. Wings for Water is a great event with live music in the middle of summer while eating scrumptious wings while creating change in this world for the better. UAW Local 249 has yet again made an impact on our community.



Local 249's Motorcycle Committee cooked up wings that raised \$1,500 for Wings for Water, a group that provides access to clean water. Photo by Don Lehman.

Local 249 Retiree Picnic
October 17 from 11 am to 2 pm
at the Pleasant Valley Community Center

Free Retiree Flu Shots
October 17 from 11 am to 2 pm
at the Pleasant Valley Community Center

500 new hires to go directly to full time at KCAP

By Jim Fisher

The month of September came with another big announcement for KCAP's newest members. On September 9, KCAP and UAW Local 249 announced that an additional 500 new hires would go directly to in-progression full time status. However, those are just part of the conversions that our members have seen just this year.

In June UAW Vice President Chuck Browning announced that Ford had committed to hiring 3,000 temporary employees to full time across all assembly plants. To KCAP that announcement meant 390 TFT members were converting to full time. Then on August 11, Local 249 and KCAP followed that up with an additional 267 members being converted. Later in August that offer was extended to an additional 201 members.

The latest announcement added an additional 500 members to be direct hired to in-progression full time members. When you add all this together KCAP and Local 249 will have added 1,358 new full-time jobs to KCAP by either TFT conversions or through direct hiring to full time. These numbers only reflect the production members. In addition, KCAP has hired an additional 25 new skilled trades employees and there have been five members from Flat Rock Assembly Plant who transferred to KCAP due to a reduction in manpower at that facility.

While the auto industry continues to see issues with supply chains and unpredictable schedules, only Local 249 has made this large an announcement. We all know that since the beginning of COVID-19 in May of 2020 nothing has come easy or been anywhere close to normal. Our reputation of working through the toughest of times and being able to deliver products, while the rest of the auto industry was left scratching their heads, made the decision on where to invest more into manpower and production easy for Ford.

These new jobs are a positive reflection on our membership. Local 249's members reputation of hard work and dependability has very simply made our members lives better and delivered good jobs and a secure economy to our local communities. I hope all our members take pride in these conversions, because without your hard work these announcements would not have been possible.

KCAP has reported several improvements out of the Quality Department for the F-150. We are pleased to see these reports and ask members to remain mindful of our products and

customers. On the same note we still expect adjustments for the rest of the year to production schedules. These decisions continue to be announced at the last minute and we will continue to keep the membership informed as soon as we have been notified.

We have now entered officially into the final year of both our local and national contract agreements. Down the road we will be asking members to submit contract proposals for both agreements. For new members I would like to explain the difference in the two agreements.

The Local contract is negotiated by the Local 249 Bargaining Team. This agreement covers the day-to-day operations at KCAP. It covers items such as job bidding, the calendar program, and Quality Stop Button Program.

The National Agreement is negotiated by the UAW International Team. Some items covered in the National Agreement are pay rates, pensions, health care, and scheduling language.

Of course, both agreements contain much more than the examples I've listed. The reason I bring this up now, is because I want to challenge



Local 249 Bargaining Chair Jim Fisher reported that KCAP has the approval to hire an additional 500 more full time in-progression employees. Ford and Local 249 will have converted a total of 968 members to full time in-progression since Aug. 11. Photo by Don Lehman.

the membership to spend some time reviewing both agreements. Over the next 12 months there is a lot of serious work to be done. We are going to be asking all members to participate actively in developing our contract proposals. If you have a question about a proposal, you can visit with your District Committeeperson or a member of the Bargaining Committee.

Like we do before every negoti-

ating cycle, we would like to remind members that even though next September sounds like a long way off, this is the time to start having discussions with your family about all possibilities of contract talks. This would include the potential of a work stoppage. While this of course this would be the last resort option, members and their families need to be prepared for all scenarios.



First place in Local 249's September 25 Bass Tournament held at Lake of the Ozarks went to Don Jobe, and pictured, and Fred Jobe. Troy and Sue Akers to second place and Sue Akers landed the Big Bass of the tournament. The event is sponsored by the union's Conservation and Recreation Committee.

Turning back the clock on women's rights

By Tony Renfro

In 1973, the year I was born, my mother, Pat, couldn't buy a car in her own name simply because, like half the population, she was a woman. She couldn't get a credit card or bank account without a man's permission, either. If she was unfortunate enough to be a victim of unwanted sexual advances on the job, there was no remedy because she couldn't file sexual harassment charges. She could be fired for getting pregnant. She couldn't even serve on a jury.

In the years that followed, it seemed that American women like my mother made a lot of progress. By 1970, 50 percent of single women and 40 percent of married women were participating in the labor force, according to the Brookings Institution.

In 1974, women won the right to apply for credit in their own name without a male co-signer for the first time. In 1978 the Pregnancy Discrimination Act prohibited discrimination based on pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions in the workplace. Although sex discrimination had been illegal since passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, it wasn't until the 70s, when large numbers of women entered the workforce that sexual harassment suits began to be filed.

At the same time, access to birth control increased, allowing married couples greater control over the size of their families, and giving young women the ability to delay marriage and to plan children around their educational and work choices.

Both the U.S. House and Senate had approved the Equal Rights Amendment by 1972. Though never ratified by enough states to become part of the Constitution, the movement fighting for passage reflected the determination of women to achieve full equality with men.

In 1973, the Supreme Court ruled that women have a constitutional right to abortion. The decision, overturning state laws criminalizing abortion, gave women the right to control their own bodies for the first time.

Study after study demonstrates that equal rights for women speeds economic growth, increases the number of jobs available for both men and women and reduces poverty. While women still earn less, overall, than men for doing the same work, there is no question that all of us are better off because half the population has been allowed to enter the workforce and discrimination against women has been significantly reduced though not entirely eliminated.

Unfortunately, the progress of the last 50 years is now in danger of being reversed. This past summer, a Supreme Court packed with antiwomen ideologues, overturned a half century of precedent when it ruled that women's right to control their own bodies is not protected by the constitution. Here in Missouri, the ruling instantly made abortion illegal under the state's trigger law passed in 2019. There are no exceptions for rape or incest. Under the law hospitals have refused to perform abortions even when the woman's life is in danger for fear of prosecution under the new law.



Local 249 President Tony Refro chaired the September 18 membership meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

The Supreme Court ruling also opens the door to state level restrictions on birth control and gay marriage. Although Kansans recently voted to preserve the right to abortion written into the state constitution, Republicans in Washington have promised to pass a nationwide ban on abortion if they win a majority in the House or Senate this November.

Many state laws outlawing abortion provide no exception for rape, incest or the health of the mother. Already there have been cases of women who have medical conditions that will kill them if their pregnancy is not terminated who have been denied an abortion. Others have been condemned to carry the pregnancy to term even if the fetus has no chance of survival. In Ohio, a 10-year-old rape victim had to flee her state to have a safe and legal abortion.

And the Supreme Court decision is just the beginning of widening war on women's rights that some on the far right plan to push far past the progress made since the 1970s. Peter Thiel, the secretive tech billionaire and Republican megadonor published an essay in 2009 where he wrote that the 1920 constitutional amendment giving women the right to vote was a blow to democracy. He is not alone.

Although voter ID laws are widely seen to be directed at people of color, recently married women are finding it difficult to obtain approved identification cards under their married names

in some states. Likewise, recently divorced women who revert to their maiden names face obstacles to obtaining IDs that will allow them vote.

Some will say that these aren't union issues. That the UAW has no business getting involved in women's rights. That's wrong. Our union gets its power by representing all our members. A union that allows itself to be divided by gender, race, color, national origin or religion is a weak union. Our strength is in our numbers. That's why we believe that an attack on any of our members is an attack on us all.

Our union has a long, proud history of defending women's rights. We have always believed that a woman's place is in her union. In 1944, the UAW's National Women's Conference ratified a resolution reaffirming "the democratic principle that all members shall be guaranteed the fullest protection of their union membership without discrimination based on sex or marital status."

A strong resolution affirming the UAW commitment to equal rights – including reproductive rights – was adopted at our most recent Constitutional Convention this past July, as well.

The effort to turn back the clock – 50 maybe even 100 years – isn't just an attack on the victories of my mother's generation. It's an assault on the expectations of equality that my wife, Amanda, and my daughter Jocelyn have grown up believing is their birth right as Americans. It's an attack on our union. It's an attack on all of us.



Todd Wyse, center, Local 249 Job Sourcing and Production Standards Rep. retired in September. Wyse was first elected as an alternate committeeperson in 1999. He won election as a district committeeperson in 2004 and was re-elected in 2005 and 2008. In 2011, he was elected to the Bargaining Committee. Photo by Don Lehman.

Missouri's family farms on the brink

By Jessica Piper

There is value to rural communities and farms in Missouri, but this value is consistently undermined by the Missouri GOP. Missouri's elected Republicans claim to stand with rural communities like mine while they simultaneously defund our schools and roads and lead the attack on small farmers across the state. The Missouri GOP has had a legislative supermajority for two decades, and in that time, rural communities have suffered.

I live in Northwest Missouri and own a very small plot of land in a two-story farmhouse that was built in 1900 with five bedrooms to hold all the children one would need to run a family farm. It proudly stood in front of hundreds of acres that were farmed by the original owners. This acreage was sold little by little until my husband and I purchased the home and the six remaining attached acres. We have a very small hog operation—about 30 hogs at one time. We grow our own beef and the vegetables we need for our own canning and consumption. We are a dying breed.

The family hog farm has nearly been wiped out of the state by corporations with the aid of legislation passed by the Missouri GOP.

The Missouri family hog farm has been nearly decimated in one generation. Missouri hog farmers numbered over 20,000 in the mid 1980s. We now number around 2,400. Across the country, the number of pork farmers has declined by 75 percent over the last thirty years, while the number of hogs being raised has increased by nearly 50 percent. Now, four companies, Smithfield, Tyson, JBS, and Hormel, control two-thirds of the US pork market (Communities Organizing).

These corporate farms are referred to as CAFOs. Many Missouri CAFOs aren't even owned by Missourians. They are owned by Chinese and Brazilian corporations—but how did this happen?

Foreign corporations haven't been allowed to own Missouri farmland since the 1970s. This all changed in 2013. That year, a measure was put forth and passed by the Missouri GOP to allow foreign governments to own as much as 1% of Missouri farmland—a Chinese corporation was able to buy Smithfield Foods and 42,000 acres of Missouri farmland. This is a national security risk—our farmland and the water on the land are now controlled by a nation that can send the resources of Missouri farmland back to their country.

The question is why? Why would Missouri Republicans allow the sale of our farmland?

As Stephen Webber, a former

Missouri Democratic Representative, stated, "Missouri Republicans don't help the Chinese Communist Party because they're communists.

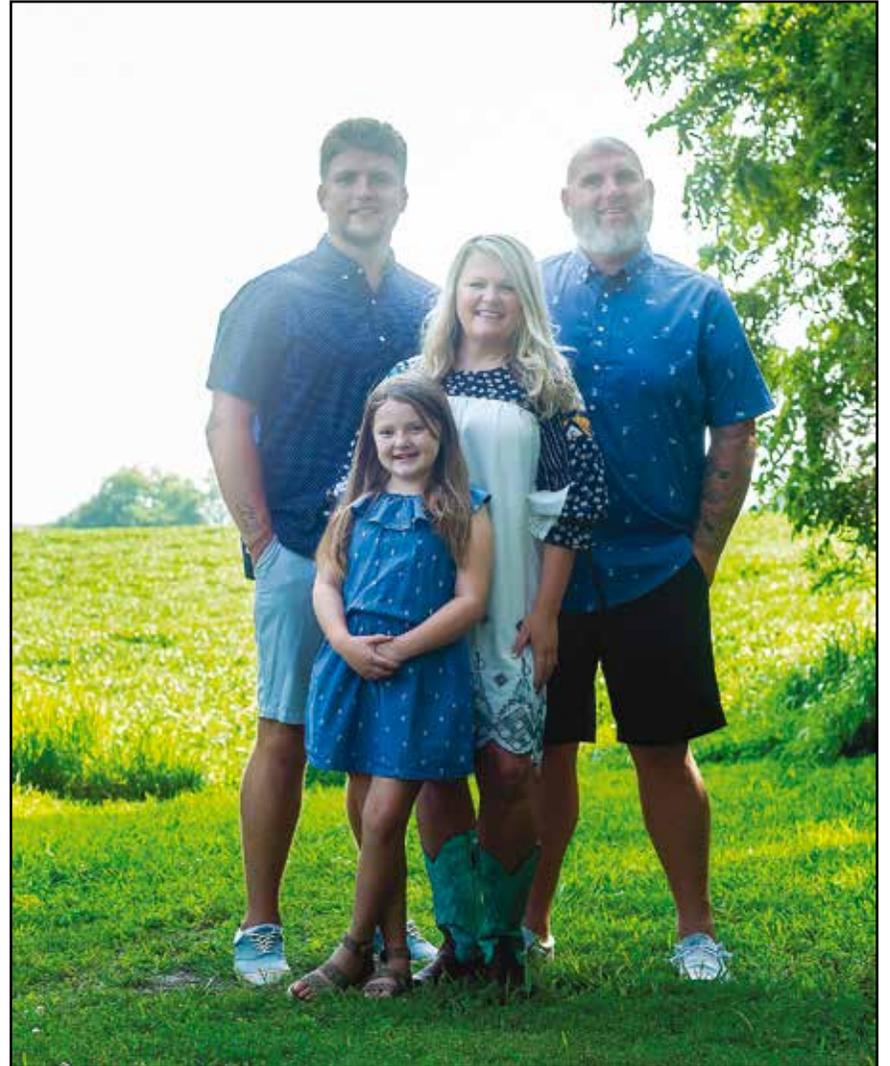
They do it because they always side with big business and they value their campaign donations, and the power those bring, more than they value standing up for working Americans." I can find nothing but truth in that statement.

The Missouri GOP consistently undercuts small farmers while pretending to stand with us. They stand with corporations, not the regular Missourian. This is something that is misunderstood in our state. Missourians get used to voting a certain way and associating the GOP with rural values. Let me be clear, as a rural Missourian, I know the Missouri GOP does not stand with us.

Case in point, the de-regulation of CAFOs. Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations were deregulated in 2019 with SB 391. This law stripped rural communities of our ability to keep CAFOs out. The Missouri GOP stood side-by-side with corporate farms as they barged into our communities and brought thousands of animals who live in barns, on concrete floors – many who will never walk on grass or graze in the sun.

The definition of "water" is constantly changing as these CAFOs pollute our streams with spills and runoffs. A CAFO generally produces thousands and even millions of gallons of waste that is contained in a "lagoon". These lagoons can easily leak and leach into our water supply.

In a community close to mine,



Jessica Piper is a mom, teacher, rural Missourian, and candidate for State Representative in District 1 located in northwest Missouri. She has been endorsed by the UAW's Midwest States CAP for her support of working families. Photo by Don Lehman.

Livingston County, a group of farmer activists were able to keep a CAFO at bay while also understanding that the company will just find another rural community to locate. We only have so many resources to fight back when even our representatives are on the side of corporate farms.

I believe in our rural communities and whether it's our schools, roads, or family farms, the Missouri GOP

has defunded and undercut us for decades. We must stand up and fight back against the legislation written by those in Jefferson City who would drive us from our land and our communities and hand it over to corporations.

We must hold the Missouri GOP accountable to us and address the impacts of corporate control of our farmland, food systems, and rural communities.

ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE ?

In Missouri, the last day to register for the Nov. 8 General Election is October 12.

To register online go to <https://s1.sos.mo.gov/elections/voterregistration>



UAW members from Locals 249 and 31 Kirsten White, Danny Mertell, Darren King, Christopher Allinder, Gary Thomas, Clarence Brown, Katie Daniels, Nicki Dang, Jonatan Mejia, Matthew Nilges, Shirley Mata and Lukas Taylor joined striking Taco Bell workers on the picket line Sept. 1.

Kansas City Taco Bell workers strike

By Gary Thomas

On September 1, workers at the Taco Bell on Wornall Road in Kansas City walked off the job to protest working conditions there. Taco Bell workers, like Fran Marion, say they have endured inhumane working conditions for months. Working as a burst pipe flooded the store and being told to continue to work, as customers hurled racist comments, management ignored pleas for higher pay and safer working conditions. Even as the workers walked out to chants of “We got your back” cars lined up to sling insults at the workers.

“Learn a skill!” said a man, visibly angry he couldn’t get his meal. Was he angry he couldn’t eat cheaply? Was he irate that the workers fighting for their rights reminded him of how little he fights for his? Was he upset because he liked the way they made the food and could only vent his frustration in insults to the very people who serve his food?

Stories like Fran’s and the other workers at Taco Bell are all too familiar. Like the autoworkers who started Local 249, they are caught between bosses who undervalue them and a society class that doesn’t respect them. Despite the obstacles, like the Autowork-

ers who helped start this union, they press on to gain respect and security for themselves.

Recently, the California State Senate passed the Fast-Food Accountability and Standards Recovery Act. This act does many things to even the playing field for workers in the state but most notably it could raise the states minimum wage by \$6.50.

Many of our own members, forgetting the UAW’s history, argue that a service industry worker doesn’t deserve to make \$22 an hour. They believe service industry work is low skill. This is fighting against their own good. We have seen, in our plant, what low wages do

to the workforce.

Because service industry workers are angry and fighting back their pay now surpasses, in some cases, the wages entry level workers at Ford earn. We have also seen that as service industry workers win gains in pay, our temporary auto workers also win higher pay and move to full time ahead of schedule. This is because a rising tide lifts all boats.

As wages in sectors deemed low skill rise so do wages in all other sectors. As Fran Marion said to the crowd of labor, faith and tenants’ rights organizers “Everything is going up but pay. We’re human like everyone else. We may not be doctors or lawyers but we’re still workers. Workers who struggle to provide for our families.”

As service industry workers make gains in some states, they lose in others. Starbucks workers are facing harassment by managers, store closures after winning union elections, illegal firings and union busting. Recently, the

Starbucks on the Plaza in KC was closed because workers voted to unionize there. Despite National Labor Relation Board rulings against his illegal firings, Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz still presses on with his war on the working class.

This war on the service industry is a proxy war on the autoworkers of Local 249 and across the country. As of right now, unionized auto workers are the minority in this country. Nonunion Toyota, Nissan, Volkswagen, Tesla now employ more workers in America than Ford, GM and Stellantis combined. This means as contracts come and go, the longer we accept lower wages for anyone the sooner we accept lower wages for ourselves.

The fight for service industry workers is and always will be the fight for autoworkers. Any fight for the safety, stability and economic freedom of the working class is a fight an autoworker should engage in. In times of feast or famine, what we allow for others is what we allow for ourselves.