

# FIRST LOCAL NEWS

Published by United Auto Workers Local 249—Kansas City, Missouri

November 2022

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Local 249's father-daughter duo, Jon and Carly Sowell have worked the past two elections to get out the vote for worker-friendly candidates. Jon does the driver's side seat install in the Truck System. Carly is a sophomore at UMKC.



Winners of Local 249's Fall Brawl held at Smithville Lake Oct. 2, first place and big bass were won by Ted and Karen Triggs, left to right, second place went to Greg Proffitt and Jason Westpfahl, Doug Green and Tyler Trout came in third. Fourth place and 2022 Anglers of the year are Dave and Dylan Ferguson.



The children of UAW Local 249 members drew for Chief's tickets at the Oct. 16 membership meeting.



Local 249 Retiree Gerald Wilson got his free flu shot at the Oct. 19 Retiree Picnic. Retiree's enjoyed a meal together and participated in a drawing for prizes.

## First Local News

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## UAW Local 249

8040 NE 69 Highway  
Pleasant Valley, Mo. 64068  
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## Officers of 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

### 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](http://www.fordvehicleprograms.com)

**UAW-Ford Legal Services** 800-482-7700

**UAW-Ford TESPHE** 1-800-248-4444

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## Ashcroft brings book banning to Missouri

By State Rep. Wes Rogers

**T**he Missouri Library Association called an effort by Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft to strip state funding from public libraries that carry materials he deems inappropriate for minors is “an infringement on the professional judgment of librarians, and an effort to further stoke division in the communities that librarians serve,” the Columbia Missourian reported Oct. 19.

The association’s comments came in a statement responding to a proposed administrative rule Ashcroft, a Republican, filed Oct. 17 seeking restrictions on how public libraries operate and what materials they provide. Although the legislature appropriates some funds each year for libraries, they are locally governed and operated, and primarily financed by local taxpayers.

While executive branch agencies can promulgate administrative rules to assist them with carrying out their statutory duties, Ashcroft’s proposed rule arguably engages in legislating by purporting to grant his office the authority to withhold state funding from local libraries he deems not in compliance. However, only the Missouri General Assembly has the power to enact state laws.

In addition, key sections of the rule are vaguely written, including one prohibiting the use of state funds “to purchase or acquire materials in any form that appeal to prurient interest of any minor” without specifying a standard for determining what is “prurient” or making a distinction regarding whether such materials are intended for adult readers.

The proposed rule will be published in the Missouri Register on Nov. 15, which will trigger a 30-day public comment period. If the rule is finalized, the legislature has the authority to pass a concurrent resolution annulling it if lawmakers deem the rule was enacted

without legal authority or otherwise is inappropriate.

### State workers lose protection

The Missouri Supreme Court on Oct. 4 ruled a 2018 law making nearly all state workers “at-will” employees who “may be discharged for no reason or any reason not prohibited by law” doesn’t interfere with unionized workers’ constitutional right to collectively bargain.

The unanimous court reversed a 2021 decision by Cole County Circuit Judge Jon Beetem, a Republican, that Gov. Mike Parson’s administration violated the collective bargaining rights of unionized state employees when it stopped abiding by labor contracts after the enactment of the 2018 law, Senate Bill 1007. The law eliminated the 73-year-old “merit system” that had removed political patronage in state employment and provided basic worker protections. Three unions representing state workers brought the lawsuit challenging SB 1007.

In an opinion written by Judge W. Brent Powell, the court found Beetem’s ruling legally erroneous and said SB 1007’s requirement that state employees are subject to summary termination without cause doesn’t conflict the constitutional right to collectively bargain. Powell was appointed to the court by former Gov. Eric Greitens, an anti-union Republican who signed SB 1007 into law just hours before resigning in disgrace ahead of impeachment.

## Labor News From the World Wide Web

# The Picket Line

## Strike shuts down Independence Starbucks

**T**he Starbucks located at East 39th Street and Arrowhead Avenue in Independence, Missouri, was “shut down” [Oct. 9] due to an unfair labor practices strike, according to Workers United/SEIU organizer Mari Orrego.

CJ Miller, a former Starbucks employee, says he was fired after an investigation by Starbucks.

Miller says he was investigated for solicitation after posting flyers in the Starbucks lobby in what he says he believes are protected areas by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). — *KSHB*

## Railroad union rejects contract with employers, raising strike concerns

**T**he US’s third-largest railroad union rejected a deal with employers [Oct. 10] renewing the possibility of a strike that could cripple the economy. Both sides will return to the bargaining table before that happens.

Over half of track maintenance workers represented by the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division who voted opposed the five-year contract, which contained 24% raises and \$5,000 in bonuses. Union President Tony Cardwell said the railroads didn’t do enough to address the lack of paid time off – particularly sick time – and working conditions after the major railroads eliminated nearly one-third of their jobs over the past six years.

“Railroaders are discouraged and upset with working conditions and compensation and hold their employer in low regard. Railroaders do not feel valued,” Cardwell said in a statement. “They resent the fact that management holds no regard for their quality of life, illustrated by their stubborn reluctance to provide a higher quantity of paid time off, especially for sickness.” — *The Guardian*

## Union Strike Power Under Threat as Supreme Court Mulls Labor Law

**A**n upcoming US Supreme Court case has the potential to chill unions’ use of strikes as a bargaining strategy and tilt the balance of power in labor-management relations more toward businesses.

The justices agreed to consider the question of whether there’s an exception to federal labor law preemption of state lawsuits if the employer makes common-law allegations of intentional destruction of property during a labor dispute.

Such an exception likely will trigger costly employer lawsuits against striking unions based on the economic consequences of their protests and spark legislation in conservative-leaning states to restrict union conduct during strikes, labor law observers said. — *Bloomberg Law*

## Labor Dept. fines Hyundai, Kia parts supplier over Alabama child labor violations

**T**he Department of Labor found that SL Alabama LLC illegally employed children as young as thirteen and was fined \$30,076 to address their child labor violations. The Alabama Department of Labor also fined SL Alabama and JK USA, a temporary employment agency, \$17,800 each for violating state laws that forbid underage children in manufacturing jobs.

“This distressing story is not the first of its kind,” says UAW President Ray Curry. “Reuters reported this summer that another Hyundai supplier – SMART Alabama – employed children as young as 12 to work in their stamping plant. Exploitation of children is shameful in any circumstance, but it is especially distressing to see it take place at a supplier to a major automotive company such as Hyundai.” — *UAW*



Education Committee Chair Gary Thomas, right, presents Darren King with the James "Frog" Moran Solidarity Award at the October Membership Meeting.

# Solidarity runs deep in the Local 249 family

By Gary Thomas

**D**arren King of Truck C-Crew MP&L is October's James "Frog" Moran Solidarity award winner. In September King organized a group of UAW members to build a wheelchair ramp for the father of another member. King originally planned on building a deck for his young family. When he saw the ask for aid, he knew that he had the tools, the resources, and the skill to help someone else in need. In following the spirit and intent of Article 41 of the UAW Constitution, Darren King secured his nomination and win of the coveted award.

Darren started as a member of Team Solutions in 2010, barely 18 years old. That was an informative time for him.

"I didn't know what to expect being in a union. I met the team solutions committeeperson when I was being harassed by management and I knew that's what I wanted to be," he said.

When Team solutions fired Darren's Committee man unjustly, Darren stood up to fill in. In this role, Darren got to see a bigger picture. He noticed apathy in management and his coworkers, he saw fear and despair as safety rules were violated and management worked the grievance process to fix it rather than taking a proactive approach to fix the problem.

This influenced King even as he

transitioned to becoming an employee of Ford Motor company. After working the brake pedal job in Truck Trim, he moved on to being a team leader. King recalls a burst sewage pipe leaking on members, how management tried to force the members to continue to work, despite the dirty, stinking water pouring down on them. He was infuriated by their indifference and their willingness to put members in precarious situations.

"I used the quality stop button procedure, followed the safety rules and regulations and management still threatened me. I stood firm, knowing my rights and contract. Despite this, management continued to call, threaten and harass me until my committee

person came up to the floor along with UAW Safety Reps. I was grateful to know my union wanted a safe work environment."

Years later, Darren left the team leader position to move to Trim utility and then to the MP&L department.

Having a young family, newly married and his attention focused on home, Darren admits, "I stopped fighting as ferociously as I used to. It wasn't until I was selected to attend an advanced strike and bargaining seminar at Region 4 that I knew I had to get back into the union mindset.

"Watching Todd Hillyard, Jason Starr, Jim Fisher, Dean Freed, Don Picard and Steve Chorback win fights I thought couldn't be won showed me that the more of us involved the faster those wins come," he says. Shortly after becoming a Hilo operator, Darren joined the Education Committee. He also volunteered to help tenants' unions, and fought for service industry workers. He is on guard for the safety of those on the line.

When asked about his future goals within the UAW, Darren says "I want

to be a committeeperson. Our union has so many talented, dedicated, and thoughtful people in various positions. I would be very fortunate to be able to help identify, teach and fight for those currently here and those looking to join in the battle for workplace safety and contractual rights.

"I would also add that the work standing committees do behind the scenes is mind blowing. The Education Committee works non-stop, and those members don't get enough credit. If it were up to me, each of them would win this award."

Sometimes doing what is right isn't easy but doing what is easy is hardly ever right.

The James "Frog" Moran Solidarity Award is a monthly award presented at each month's membership meeting. It's named posthumously after the UAW Local 249 member to have achieved the highest seniority in the history of the local. If you have a nomination, please submit it to the UAW Local 249 Education Committee or contact a member-to-member communicator or tell your committee man.



Steven Taylor, Josh Curtis Matt Lacey and Jacob Scott, members of Local 249's Motorcycle Committee went door to door to get out the vote for State Rep. Mark Ellebracht who represents the parts of Liberty, Pleasant Valley, Kansas City, and Claycomo (District 17) surrounding the Kansas City Assembly Plant. Ellebracht has been a key ally for Local 249 members in Jefferson City.

# CAP Committee volunteers knock doors

By Erica Eckart

**M**embers of Local 249 and the CAP committee have been working hard on the political front. It has been no secret that the Republican party has been hell bent on stripping the rights of union workers and our right to collectively bargain. Whether you want to acknowledge it or not, the facts are facts and their public voting records are proof of their intentions.

While it's easy to focus on all of the hot button topics like abortions, gun laws, LGBTQ rights etcetera, we have to maintain a level of awareness towards what's gonna affect us personally, not emotionally, but financially. For example, does Jane Doe's abortion affect me really? It might affect me emotionally but physically or financially.

The answer is no. What Jane Doe decides to do with her body has no bearing on my livelihood. Those hot button topics are designed to engage an emotional response so strong that we are left divided and ignorant of the real work being done in the background, which is stripping the working class, specifically unions, of their right to bargain. That is why the CAP committee is fully committed to working so hard to make sure we have the right

candidates in office to maintain our collective bargaining status and protect our livelihoods and the benefits we have as a direct result of our collective bargaining process.

The UAW and its CAP Committee don't make endorsements based on party. Support for candidates and elected officials is based on their voting record and political positions regardless of party. The union lends its support to candidates for public office who pledge to defend the rights of working people. Their right to join a union. Their right to job safety. Their right to compete with foreign companies on a level playing field.

CAP Committee volunteers have been organizing mass literature drops and door to door canvassing for the candidates we support, like Mark Elle-

bracht, who has proven over the years that he stands with us union workers, specifically his family here at Local 249. Again, voting records and action are keys in determining where these candidates stand when it comes to us and our livelihoods.

There's been a big push for newcomer Trudy Bush Valentine, who also has spoken forcefully about maintaining a focus favoring the working class.

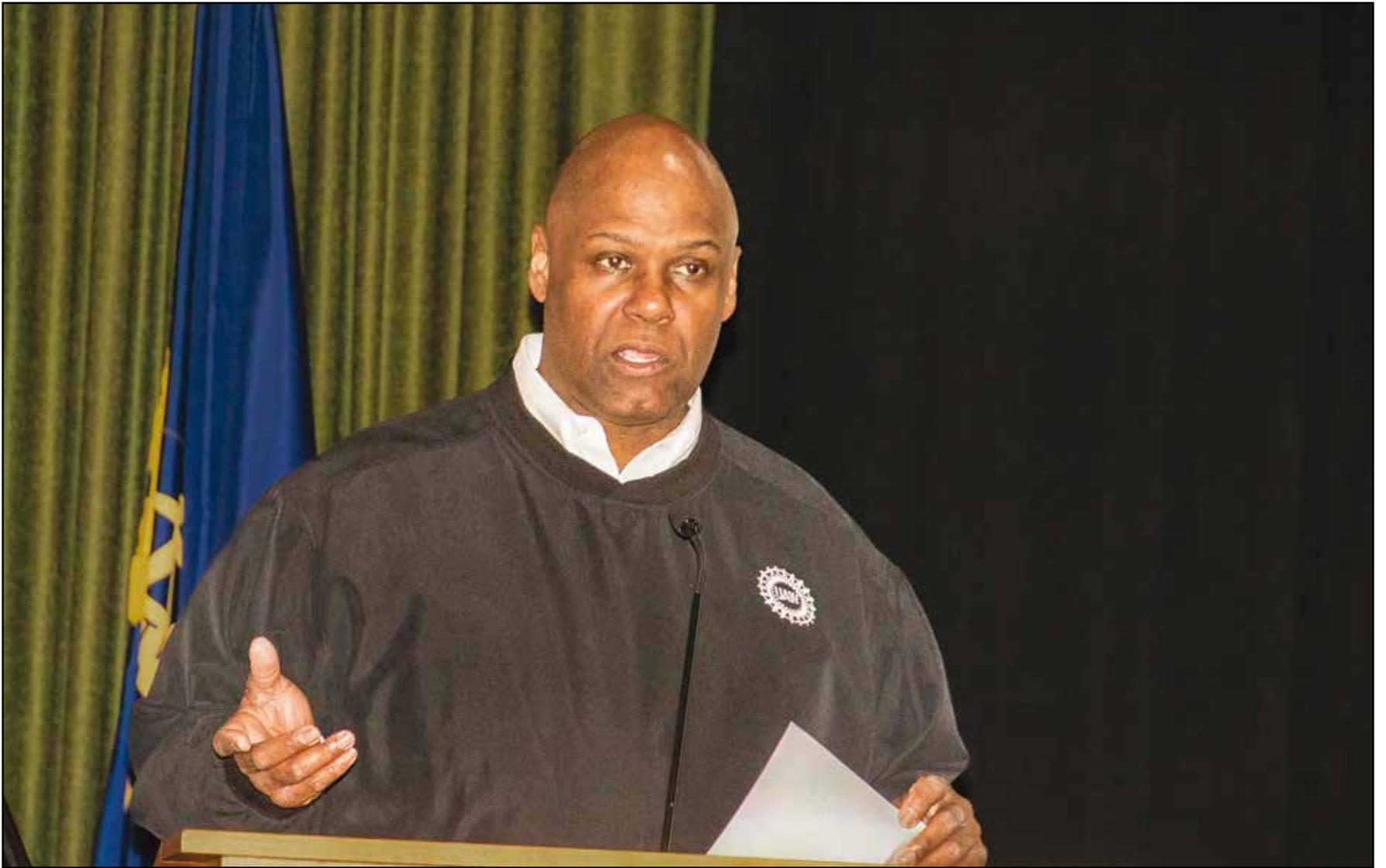
Overall, in just one week, Local 249's standing committees and volunteers have delivered fliers to 2,971 doors and sent out 4,700 text messages.

"What we are seeing across the nation is an upper class growing richer at the expense of working families like ours. They back candidates up and down the ballot who support policies that help the top 1% while leaving the working class behind," says Shirley Mata, former CAP chair and our current region 4 CAP Liaison.

"If we do not elect politicians who support unions and the working Americans over multi-million dol-

lar corporations, workers like us will continue to struggle. These mid-term elections are important because we have an opportunity to take back our power in Missouri. We have 163 seats in the legislation and Democrats hold 49. If we flip 6 seats, Maga Republicans will lose their super majority and Democrats will have bargaining power. That means we could block right to work legislation, we could fight to fully fund programs like Medicaid, and we can ensure that the voices of the hard working Missourians like us, are fairly represented in places of power".

It is important to vote. So many races are won or lost by a few hundred votes. Jobs and parts of our everyday lives can be better or worse depending on who is in office. Many people think their votes don't count but they do. Please get out and vote. Our union negotiated a paid holiday to make it easy for you to get out and vote. Please do your research and hopefully you will vote in favor of your paycheck and issues that actually affect you directly, not emotionally.



UAW International President Ray Curry spoke to local union communicators about the importance of local union communications at the Local Union Communications Conference at the union's education center located at Black Lake in Michigan in October. Photo by Don Lehman.

# Ray Curry speaks at UAW LUCA Conference

*By Cecelia Davis*

**A**t the 2022 Local Union Communication Association conference held at the Walter and May Reuther Family Education Center in Black Lake, Michigan, Local 249 members Don Lehman, Erica Eckart and I, who work on the union newsletter, got the opportunity to join communicators from other local unions across the country to enhance our skills in gathering and delivering information to the membership.

UAW International President Ray Curry was the main speaker at the conference. He spoke with wise words and advice to the members that seek the answers to some difficult communication issues that they struggle with.

"Your obligation is communicating most effectively with your local leadership more so than anybody else who's standing within the union," said Curry. "You play the most significant role in being the messenger. Now that's the messenger of truth, not the falsehoods, it's easy to get the falsehoods out there. What you write, what you design, what you tweet, and what you bring out in communication help your

membership to understand what is taking place."

It is incredibly important that as writers, editors, and photographers that we get the right facts when reporting issues or events so that we all stay current with what is happening within our union.

"I would just suggest that everyone that has high seniority, that you grab someone by the hand and you give them the information," said Vaquita Taylor, a LUCA delegate from Local 151. "I think that is the biggest thing about communication that there is a disconnect with those that are coming in. Because they need to know what you guys have been through. And once

that happens, I believe there will be a fire in the bones of those that come into the union."

Curry agreed, "knowledge is power. And if it's not shared, no one has the benefit in the game."

"They used to hold what was called a breakfast and learn piece, said Curry. They would have biscuits in the mornings hosted at the hall and an education program that would start 30 minutes after the shift was over. And they would go through a program for about an hour. It was an opportunity to learn something about the local union and international union during those times.

During the day, they provided lunch or hotdogs and did different things, Curry added. It was always a great chance for people to come and interact. I think the local union Education Committee is key and that is why every local union must have one.

Typically, most of your chairs have come to conferences they're able to

take information back, Curry continued. New member orientation kits have been recently improved. We have great new leadership kits for new leaders, and we got brand new member kits that even talk about the basics of UAW one-on-one. Usually, we want to talk about the foundational pieces of where we've been and where we are in real-time.

"Everything on the shop floor right now is about the contract of 2023," said Luigi Gjokaj, a delegate from Local 151. How do we communicate to our members what we are going for, what are we fighting against and what are we going to get?"

"I can tell you letters are going to start going to all locals," said Curry. "GM letters just went out on Friday, and the rest of the letters will go out this coming week. In March we will provide a resolution book at the Bargaining Convention. Those resolution books come back to local unions, and they're available for the members.



The father-daughter team of Jon and Carly Sowell combine family time with union activism by getting out the vote for worker-friendly candidates with Local 249's CAP Committee. Photo by Don Lehman.

# UAW father-daughter duo get out the vote

By Pat Hayes

**W**hen Jon Sowell worked as temp at plants in Kansas City, he was shocked at how badly he and his fellow nonunion workers were treated by the company. Then he came to work at the Ford Motor Kansas City Assembly Plant in 2014 and joined UAW Local 249. It didn't take long to learn what a life-changing difference union membership makes.

Sowell soon saw that at Local 249 members work together to negotiate and enforce a contract with management that guarantees decent raises, affordable health care, job security, and a stable schedule. He also found that UAW membership provided job safety and better working conditions without the fear of retaliation.

The union difference made such an impression on Sowell that he got active with the union's CAP Committee, and he tried to get his family involved with the union as much as possible. Over the past two years, when he's not installing driver's side seats on F-150s, he and his daughter, Carly, have

been going door to door with other CAP members to drop off literature for worker-friendly political candidates and talk to voters about the issues.

Having seen first-hand how union membership improved the quality of their lives both want to extend those benefits to others by helping to elect leaders who will protect union rights and write legislation that makes it easier for others to join unions.

"Everyones family should have the right to union-negotiated benefits," says Sowell. "I enjoy helping our community and spending time with Carly while we're working together is really nice."

Carly, a Sophomore at the Univer-

sity of Missouri – Kansas City, plans to go to nursing school. She hopes her many hours of work with her father and the union's CAP Committee will help her meet the requirements for the UAW-Ford Community Engagement Scholarship for Dependent Children. The \$1,500 scholarship requires a minimum of eight hours of community service to qualify.

Carly's work with the UAW on behalf of worker-friendly candidates is about more than winning the scholarship though.

"Seeing my dad be a part of it. His passion about the issues we face," she says is what drives her to go door to door to get out the vote week after week.

Like many young people, Carly's activism is driven by the unresolved issues facing her generation: the environment, global warming, health care and worker's rights. She is among the

many young women fired up about the recent Supreme Court decision on abortion and women's reproductive health.

"I don't even have words," she says about her reaction to the Dobbs decision reversing the 50-year-old right of women to control their own bodies. "At my age, it lit a fire under me. I couldn't just stand by and do nothing."

Between Carly's studies and Jon's work on the line it can be hard for the father-daughter duo to spend time with each other. That makes their time together working for the CAP Committee – which really means working for themselves, their family and all the workers who suffer in nonunion workshops across the country – precious.

"It's something we can do together," she says. "It's something I can do through the union that made such a difference in our lives."

# Local 249 retiree picnic a big success.

By Natalie Wood

**O**ur Retirees picnic was a big hit. The turnout, largest since we resumed meeting due to COVID, filled the Pleasant Valley Community Center. Smoke House Barbecue catered the event. The food was good. We dined on turkey, beef, baked beans, coleslaw and potato salad. There were 115 members and family in attendance. We beat last month's attendance by 40 more retirees. If you were lucky enough to get a gift card or cash, I'm sure it made your day.

We had planned on deferring the normal business of our regular monthly meeting, scheduled for October 19, so that members could enjoy the picnic. However, we had a special guest speaker, Chuck Browning, UAW Vice President and Director of the Ford Department.

Browning joined the UAW in 1987 and became a member of Local 3000 when he went to work at the Mazda Plant in Flat Rock, Michigan. He held various positions that included committeeman, bargaining committee and plant chairman. During his tenure as chairman, the membership transitioned to representation under the UAW-Ford National agreement.

Looking to the future, Browning noted that the next Ford contract – less than a year away – will be negotiated at a time when working people have begun to demand better pay and benefits and shown they're willing to fight for it. The days when the union was forced to swallow takebacks or simply defend past gains is over, he

said. Now is the time to take a big step forward.

The organizing drives at places like Amazon and Starbucks, Browning said, show that there has been a change in the way working people look at their jobs that started during the COVID pandemic.

Ford's decision to move all temps to full time is one indication of the changed environment the new contracts with Ford, GM and Stellantis will be negotiated under next year.

The contract the union negotiated with John Deere last November is the kind of step forward that should serve as a model for what can be won under these new circumstances. The new UAW-Deere contract included an \$8,500 signing bonus; 20% increase in wages over the lifetime of the contract with 10% this year; return of Cost of Living adjustments; three 3% lump sum payments; enhanced options for retirement and enhanced CIPP performance benefits. Health-care remains the same for the life of



Chuck Browning, UAW vice president and director of the Ford Department spoke about the upcoming contracts with the Detroit 3 and the fight to restore retiree benefits at the October retiree picnic.

the agreement.

Current and future UAW-Deere retirees won new benefits following the two-week strike, said Browning. Although a Supreme Court decision bars unions from negotiating directly for retirees, union negotiators would find other ways to get Ford, GM and Stellantis to agree to restore Christmas bonuses for current retirees.

The union, he said, will be working through negotiations to restore pensions and health care to members hired after 2008.

The next Retiree Meeting is scheduled for November 16 at 10:30. We will meet at the Pleasant Valley Community Civic Center on the lower level.

Masks are not required but are encouraged. Join us for fellowship and information.



Open Enrollment

## Dependent Care Assistance Program

October 24 - November 30

The Dependent Care Assistance Program (DCAP) helps you stretch your budget by letting you set aside tax-free dollars for certain dependent care and elder care expenses for qualified dependents. You determine the amount of pre-tax dollars to contribute from your pay to your account. You can then use the pre-tax money during the Plan Year to reimburse yourself for eligible dependent care expenses (like daycare, preschool, after school programs and day camps). For more information, call the NESC at 1-800-248-4444 or contact your local UAW Benefits Representative.

## 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.

# 249 accepting national contract proposals

By Jim Fisher

**T**here has been a lot of discussion inside the plant about the 2023 National Agreement and the expectations members have for the next contract. While the current contract still has 10 months remaining until expiration, a lot of work lies ahead of us in getting ready for the next round on negotiations.

For our members, I would like to describe some of the upcoming timelines in these processes. In Mid-October your district committee representatives began handing out fliers for the national contract proposals. On the back of these fliers are spaces to write down proposals that our members would like the National Negotiating Team to discuss at the Bargaining Table.

Some of the topics covered in the National Agreements are temporary employee language, job security, wages, health care, and scheduling.

We are asking members to fill out their proposal forms and either give them back to your district committeeperson or turn them into the union hall. If members would like to turn in additional proposals, they can either contact their district committeeperson or come to the union hall to pick up additional forms.

We would like to see every member submit a contract proposal. It's important that all our members present new ideas on how to improve the national agreement. If you need assistance filling out your form, stop by any of the union offices in the main plant tunnel or talk with any Local 249 union representative for assistance.

As we have talked with members, we understand that there will be key topics members are wanting to see addressed. We understand that items such as hourly wages, adding COLA back in, post-retirement health care, and pensions will be proposed several times. However, there is so much more to the national agreements. I want to challenge members to study and understand the national agreements. We are looking for proposals that will affect members and improve their experiences at Ford Motor Company and as a UAW member.

Let me provide an example. The national contracts covers both bereavement and AXZ Plans. Our married members will confirm that their spouses have played a part in their success in them working for Ford Motor Company. Our spouses have also had to adjust their lives around our schedules either due to down weeks, shift bumps, or mandatory overtime

due to an always changing issue with either parts or our production schedules. Ford recognizes our spouse's and their supporting roles by including not only them, but also allowing their brothers and sisters, to qualify for AXZ Plans and offering them discounts on new Ford products. However, if your spouse's, brother or sister should pass away, they don't qualify for bereavement leave or pay. In the current language Ford choses to recognize them for a discount on a new truck, but not when your family needs our member back at home, when they are in need the most during the time of their death. Examples like this also need to be addressed.

It's not unusual during the life of a four-year agreement to see the needs and proposals of the membership change. Going into the 2019 contracts the number one demand from the membership was to get all members that were hired before the start of the 2019 agreement to be brought to full scale by the end of the agreement, and during the past four years that commitment is being completed. However, since 2019 the market has changed again. No one in 2019 negotiated for the COVID pandemic or did anyone expect fast food restaurants hiring wages to be more competitive than Ford Motor Company's. That's why the more pro-



Local 249 Bargaining Chair Jim Fisher reported on the upcoming production schedule at the October membership meeting.

posals submitted will give us a larger view of meeting our members goals in the next agreement. All members should take advantage of getting their proposals submitted.

For new members who have not been through this before, we will warn you now, there are going to be rumors and scare tactics you're going to hear from management during this process. Make sure the information you're getting is fact based and from either the UAW International Union or UAW Local 249. You can follow both organizations on their Facebook pages at "UAW International Union" and "United Auto Workers Local 249" for current and truthful information.

The deadline for turning in National Contract Proposals is January 6, 2023. After we have completed this

process, an additional flier will be sent out to the membership asking for proposals for the Local Agreement. I expect those to be handed out in early spring of 2023.

Your voices and opinions do matter. In the 2019 National Agreement, Local 249 was successful in turning seven of our national proposals in new language for the 2019 agreement.

In the month of November, the plant will be on holiday shutdown on November 8 for Federal Election Day, November 11 for Veterans Day, and November 24 and 25 for Thanksgiving. These are paid days off for all members with more than 90 days of seniority, as part of your UAW negotiated benefits. We hope all members enjoy the holidays and get to spend time with their families and friends.

## In Memoriam

Joseph Arroyo  
Patrick Baird  
Mark Carter  
Lester Cockrum  
John Constant  
James Cox  
Gary Davis  
Robert Duncan  
Alvie Durham

Linda Freeman  
Lawrence Hess  
Clifford Hicks Jr  
Ernest Hollimon  
George Houser  
Dena Howe  
James Jelinek  
Kevin Kolbe  
Anthony Leone  
Harvey Mayberry

Fred Obermeier Jr  
Laurence Robinson  
Phillip Schaedel  
Warren Steverson  
Terrence Thoe  
Robert Thompson  
Henry Tolliver  
Helen Troncin  
John Wiegand

*In gratitude for their many contributions and mindful of their survivors sorrow we keep them in our hearts.*

# Are you voting for family or hot button issues

By Tony Renfro

**P**ersonally, I love the fall. It is my favorite time of the year. I love the weather the High school sports, the football on Sundays, all of it. I love to make a pot of chili or stew and have it be the first thing you smell when you walk in the door. It is about spending quality time with the family, and friends. It's about Halloween, football games and thanksgiving.

My priorities are always family. I always say family first. So, I want to make sure we as a union are taking care of our families. It is as critical as ever to make sure we are voting to do that very thing. First, make sure you vote.

Vote for who and what is right for your family. Educate yourself on the issues and the candidates. Don't get caught in a party tribalism, meaning don't just vote for one party because that is what you think is popular.

In today's society, many are guilty of blind bias to one party or the other, but if we ask any group of people the same 100 questions, we would all have very similar answers.

We all want the same basic things, good jobs good education, roads with no potholes, etc.

It's the hot button issues we get hung up on, the ones that evoke an emotional response or bias. We must get away from this way of thinking. The one constant is money, it makes the world go round, as they say. It takes money to provide for your family, so vote the best way to protect that.

This edition of the paper should be right before the elections so be sure to look for UAW endorsements, that are based on the voting record that benefit us as the working class. Go Chiefs!



Local 249 President Tony Renfro spoke about the importance of voting at the October membership meeting.

## Union retirees say expand Social Security now

From the Alliance for Retired Americans

**F**or decades, Social Security has delivered guaranteed benefits over time and without interruption to millions of Americans. Americans earn their Social Security benefits, contributing into the system with every paycheck.

These benefits are essential to all who rely on them, including seniors, people with disabilities and families of deceased workers.

Today 65 million Americans – one out of every five households – relies on Social Security's lifetime, guaranteed benefits.

To continue to provide retirement security for current and future generations, it is time to strengthen and expand Social Security and increase benefits. Many members of Congress recognize the need for action and are proposing legislation that will ensure the Social Security system remains strong and Americans receive the benefits they have earned.

The Alliance for Retired Americans strongly supports legislation introduced in Congress that increases Social Security benefits, extends the solvency of Social Security and repeals the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO). We believe a practical and fair way to accomplish this is to lift the cap

on Social Security payroll taxes above the current \$147,000 and require that wealthy Americans pay their fair share of taxes into the system.

The Social Security 2100 bill also repeals the WEP and GPO, provisions which prevent nearly two million Americans who worked for a period of time in jobs not covered by Social Security from receiving the full Social Security benefits they would have otherwise earned. These provisions disproportionately fall on lower-income workers and women, leaving many to face extreme economic hardship during retirement.

The Social Security 2100 Act, H.R. 5723 and S. 3071, introduced by Representative John Larson (CT) and Senator Richard Blumenthal (CT), increases benefits for all beneficiaries and requires that wealthy Americans pay their fair share of Social Security taxes. The bill lifts the payroll cap, subjecting earnings above \$400,000 to the Social Security payroll tax and extends the solvency of Social Security by making

up more than half the shortfall in the Social Security Trust Fund.

Additionally, the legislation increases benefits by two percent for all current and future beneficiaries; adopts the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E); allows widowed spouses to keep 75% of the Social Security household benefits they received prior to the death of their spouse; provides a caregiver credit for caregivers who drop out of the workforce or reduce hours to care for a child under 12 or a dependent relative; and raises the threshold when Social Security income must be included for tax purposes from \$25,000 to \$35,000 for singles and from \$32,000 to \$50,000 for married couples.

The Social Security Expansion Act, S. 4365 and H.R. 8005, was introduced by Senator Bernie Sanders (VT) and Representative Peter DeFazio (OR). It expands Social Security and increases benefits by requiring that wealthy Americans pay their fair share.

This legislation would extend the solvency of Social Security for 75 years by lifting the cap and subjecting all income above \$250,000 to the Social Security payroll tax.

The bill increases the Cost-of-Living-Adjustments to more accurately measure the spending patterns for

seniors by adopting the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E). It also expands Social Security benefits across the board for current and new beneficiaries, increasing benefits by \$200 per month beginning in 2023. It improves the Special Minimum Benefit for Social Security recipients, restores student benefits up to age 22 for children of disabled or deceased workers, and combines the Disability Insurance Trust Fund with the Old Age and Survivors Trust Fund so that all Americans receive the benefits they have earned.

The Social Security Fairness Act, S. 1302 and H.R. 82, introduced by Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Representative Rodney Davis (R-IL), repeals the GPO and the WEP.

The WEP affects nearly two million public sector retirees with public pensions, while the GPO reduces by two-thirds the spousal or survivor benefits of nearly 800,000 retirees who collect a public pension. These are outdated provisions that deprive educators and other public employees of the benefits they have earned and the secure retirement they deserve. Moreover, eliminating the WEP and GPO would also serve as a tremendous financial boost not only to seniors but for the United States' economy overall.

# Gov. Parson's reverse Robin Hood tax trick

By State Sen. Lauren Arthur

**W**orking families across Missouri are wondering where their tax cut is. They are tired of watching corporations and special interests get all the breaks while working moms and dads struggle with the rising price of gas and groceries.

They are mad. And they should be. Senate Democrats support cutting taxes for low-income and middle-class families. That's why we passed legislation in May to give a \$500 check to single filers and \$1,000 to married couples.

Our version of tax relief would be paid with money from the American Rescue Plan Act, meaning no state services would be jeopardized.

Our bill was a fiscally responsible solution to provide immediate relief to Missourians struggling with inflation.

But the Governor vetoed that legislation because he wanted more money to go to the ultra-wealthy.

Then, the governor called a special session to pass his version of a tax plan, which would give working families less money and the wealthiest one percent even more. For example, families making about \$50,000 annually will receive about \$131 in tax relief; millionaires will see nearly \$10,000 more a year.

This sort of trickle-down fantasy has never worked before, and it won't work now.

While GOP lawmakers scream and yell about hot button issues that excite their base, they quietly, and efficiently, are working on passing laws that hurt working families.

Their real agenda is clear: They want to pass Right-to-Work. They want to defund Medicaid. They want to eliminate prevailing wage. They want to pass paycheck deception.

Meanwhile, they distract everyone with culture wars to hide their real agenda.

They don't care about the policies they pass or the people they hurt.

After 20 years of Republican control, Missouri is near the bottom for job growth, minimum wage, and work-force. We are dead last in teacher pay.

But the damage isn't done.

Just last month, Republicans in the Legislature pushed our state dangerously close to blowing a \$2 billion hole in our budget with the largest proposal of corporate tax handouts in state history.

During the budget hearings, they were told about state child abuse investigators who had to give blood just to make ends meet because of poverty wages. They were told of teachers leav-

ing the profession in droves because of low pay. And they were told of Missouri veterans who are being turned away from our Veterans Homes because the state will not offer competitive wages to hire caregivers.

They were told all of this. But they didn't care.

I'll be honest - if we lose Democratic legislative seats in 2022, Republicans will double down on their horrible policies.

The good news is, this November we have a chance to elect leaders who will protect working families.

Voter turnout in non-presidential years is usually low. I am asking you to not sit on the sidelines. Vote on November 8th like our future depends on it. Because it does.



Lauren Arthur is a member Missouri State Senate for District 17 and a former member of the Missouri House of Representatives. Photo by Don Lehman.

## High court upholds law limiting state worker bargaining

**T**he Missouri Supreme Court on Oct. 4 ruled a 2018 law making nearly all state workers "at-will" employees who "may be discharged for no reason or any reason not prohibited by law" doesn't interfere with unionized workers' constitutional right to collectively bargain.

The unanimous court reversed a 2021 decision by Cole County Circuit Judge Jon Beetem, a Republican, that Gov. Mike Parson's administration violated the collective bargaining rights of unionized state employees when it stopped abiding by labor contracts after the enactment of the 2018 law, Senate Bill 1007. The law eliminated the 73-year-old "merit system" that had removed political patronage in state employment and provided basic worker protections. Three unions representing state workers brought the

lawsuit challenging SB 1007.

In an opinion written by Judge W. Brent Powell, the court found Beetem's ruling legally erroneous and said SB 1007's requirement that state employees are subject to summary termination without cause doesn't conflict the constitutional right to collectively bargain. Powell was appointed to the court by former Gov. Eric Greitens, an anti-union Republican who signed SB 1007 into law just hours before resigning in disgrace ahead of impeachment proceedings relating to personal and

professional misconduct.

"Because the scope and definition of at-will employment provide for indefinite duration and termination without cause, SB 1007 prevents the State from negotiating employment terms and conditions that limit the duration of employment or require cause for termination of employment," Powell wrote. "This Court finds these restrictions on collective bargaining do not infringe on Missouri's constitutional right to bargain collectively. SB 1007 also does not violate the contract clause of the Missouri Constitution because terms included in the collective bargaining agreements between Unions and the State explicitly account for modification of the agreements upon a change in law, such as SB 1007."

However, the court did agree with Beetem that the Parson administration acted without legal authority in promulgating several administrative rules placing further restrictions on collective bargaining that went beyond at-will employment and declared those rules "unlawful." The court remanded the case, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, et al., v. State of Missouri, to Beetem for further proceedings.

UAW Local 249

**November Membership Meeting**

**November 20 at 2:00 pm at the Union Hall**

*Nominations for the open Bargaining Committee position will be taken at the meeting*



Members of Local 249's Consumer Affairs Committee Caleb Wetherton, left to right, Jacob Coutts, Clayton Tryon, Jessica Humes, Jennifer Cherco, Camalee Hefty, Kim Hicks, Shawna Crosby and Alstan Walker. Not pictured Rachael Young, Josh Shaw, Mandy McKinney, Colby Peterson, Brittany O'Hara and Andrew Snow gather outside the Walgreen's Pharmacy in Claycomo, one of the union's community partners.

# Local 249 building community partnerships

*By Shawna Crosby*

**The United Auto Workers Local 249 have always had a strong presence in the community. With a workforce of over 8000 members and the prospect of another 1000 employees and an additional shift. Our support in the community has never been more important. The Consumer Affairs Committee has always had a focus on building community partnerships with local businesses. The goal is to help enrich the community by educating members on safe and honest products and services, along with making them aware of potential scams. By taking a more active role in developing relationships, we can strengthen community ties that reflect our union members and their views.**

The Consumer Affairs Committee currently has partnerships with 40 businesses which is a direct reflection of the efforts put forward by committee members during September's day of action. That day, the Consumer Affairs Committee members reached out to various businesses throughout the community to establish partnerships. These businesses range from locally owned restaurants like Ma and Paws Kettle Kitchen, located right by the plant in Claycomo, to MVP Pizza in Northmoor, and larger businesses such as Carhartt located in Independence. Even independently owned businesses such as Gaugers Little Bullies and Regal Detailing have a partnership with Local UAW 249. These businesses offer support in a variety of ways from monetary yearly donations to discounts on their goods and services.

The Consumer Affairs Committee

has also partnered with American Fusion Wheels to host a fundraising event called Car & Bike Meet & Tacos. This fundraiser will provide underprivileged children with Christmas presents this year. The event will feature a car show and food vendors for patrons to enjoy while the Consumer Affairs Committee collects donations. This event is just one example of the positive effects a community partnership can yield when we have the support of businesses that care about our members and their views.

The Consumer Affairs Committee has been focused on putting its energy towards launching a new advertising approach with the UAW Local 249 Consumer Affairs Committee Facebook page. This approach focuses on informing members of the various types of community partners and the prospects of our impact on the community. We will spotlight one business a week

by providing an in depth look at the company's history, services they provide, education opportunities for our membership, and why it is important to them to be part of this partnership and the impact it has on the community. By focusing on these key points, we hope to enrich the bond between our members and the various community partners. The Consumer Affairs Committee will keep a current active list of all the businesses that have established a community partnership with the UAW Local 249 Consumer Affairs Facebook page.

Our community partners have various ways of supporting UAW Local 249 that are just as diverse as our members. Buck and Up, located on Parvin road in Kansas City, is another community partner supporting the UAW Local 249 by making quarterly donations. This quarter's donation is a LC550 video projector and a 14-foot inflatable projection screen. Tickets will be sold at the membership meeting and by our members. We will raffle the projector and screen during the UAW Trunk or Treat event on October 29 from 6 to 9 pm. The annual event is hosted by the Women's Committee.

The Consumer Affairs Committee provides continuing diversity of community partnerships. If you know of

an individual, businesses or organizations that you believe share our values and would be interested in joining a community partnership, let us know at [consumeraffairs@local249.org](mailto:consumeraffairs@local249.org) or through our Facebook page UAW Local 249 Consumer Affairs Committee.

It is through our partnerships that we can achieve our various goals. It is important that we establish these relationships and continue to be a pillar of positivity and growth in the community. The Consumer Affairs Committee members are committed to being positive role models in the community. With the midterm elections quickly approaching next month the importance of our commitment to help strengthen our community is critical. That is why the consumer affairs committee had members walk in the Liberty parade to represent Henry Martin for Congress and Sherry Duffett for Clay County Eastern Commissioner.

The new focus for the Consumer Affairs Committee comes at a pivotal moment. With the up-and-coming 2023 International contract quickly approaching, our relationship within the community can provide the necessary support to our local members when challenging times occur. It is through this mutual support that we can remain united in achieving our goals and strengthening our community.