

FIRST LOCAL NEWS

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December 2022



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Bobbie Jo Anderson, Demetris Camp and Nicole Dang helped distribute 758 Thanksgiving turkeys and 300 complete Thanksgiving dinners to area social service agencies and needy individuals at Local 249's union hall Nov. 18. Photo by Don Lehman.



Local 249 Recreation Committee members Jerrod Ballard, left to right, and Robin Bindel, present a donation of \$3,000 to Dana Chatlin, Director of Farmer's House, while Tony Renfro, Dana Davidson, Ellen Wry and Molly Atchison look on. Farmer's House helps developmentally disabled children and adults with job readiness and self-sufficiency skills. Photo by Don Lehman.



Local 249 Veteran's Committee member Hans Bebe displays challenge coins that are available for \$10. Members may purchase the coins at the union hall or at the UAW-Ford Training Center. Proceeds will support the committee's community service work.



The Greater Kansas City Coalition of Labor Union Women held a celebration of working women at Local 249 November 12.

First Local News

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UAW Local 249

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Officers of Local 249

President Tony Renfro
1st Vice President
2nd Vice President Tom Carr
Recording Secretary Shirley Mata
Financial Secretary Dana Davidson
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Trustees Ed Scaggs, Jeremy Fue, Sade Ott
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Bargaining Committee Dean Freed and Don Picard
Skilled Trades Bargaining Committee Member Scott Pyle
Parts Depot Bargaining Chair Brandon Zarda
Nurse's Bargaining Chair Barb Patton
Team Solutions Bargaining Chair David Norris
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 big red wave turns into a little pink splash

By Pat Hayes

From Fox News to MSNBC and the New York Times to The Kansas City Star, the pundits were convinced far right MAGA Republicans would sweep the midterm elections. In the same tone parents use when talking to children, they told us repeatedly that the combined effects of high inflation, Joe Biden's unpopularity and the history of midterm elections would end in a tsunami of Republican wins in November. The Democrat's warning that American democracy and women's reproductive rights were in danger, they assured us, were sure to fall on deaf ears.

Turns out they were wrong.

Sure, it costs more to drive to work, grocery bills are higher and both hurt. But most voters understood that high inflation was the result of the war in Ukraine and profit taking by greedy corporations. They rejected the Republican notion that worker's wages had grown too rapidly and, in any case, everyone knew Republicans had no plan to do anything about it.

What was plain for everyone but the experts to see was that voter registrations – especially among young women – rose rapidly after the Supreme Court's Dobbs decision. Early voting on both sides of the state line in this area indicated a near record turnout for a midterm election.

Turns out, people were concerned about the future of our democracy if Republicans won, and they were mad as hell about the threats to women's reproductive health.

I think there's another factor at work, as well. Next door in deep red Kansas, voters lived through the destruction left behind by Sam Brownback. They are still trying to repair the damage to their public schools and roads. Though deeply divided, voters there reelected Democrat Gov. Laura Kelly. They also reelected Congresswoman Sharice Davids even though Republicans shifted

voting boundaries to give themselves an electoral advantage in David's 3rd Congressional District.

The same is true in Michigan where Republicans once controlled both chambers of the legislature and all executive branch offices. In this election, Democrats won control of all three branches of state government.

Unfortunately, voters in Missouri have been slower to awaken to the damage being done to the state by a Republican Party that holds supermajorities in both houses of the legislature and, now, all statewide offices.

Voters here still seem to blame Democrats, but the truth is, Republicans have ruled the state now for two decades.

And while Republicans, the pundits and the news media keep voters focused on nonissues like transgender athletes and critical race theory, our economy is sputtering, our schools underfunded, our rural hospitals closing and our roads and bridges crumbling.

Two decades of Republican control have left the state near the bottom in every category including economic growth.

Until we waken to that reality – like voters across the nation who turned the tsunami into a ripple – we're doomed to watch our state fall further and further behind.

Labor News From the World Wide Web

The Picket Line

Illinois voters approve Worker's Rights Amendment to state constitution

Illinois voters approved the Workers Rights Amendment to the state constitution in the Nov. 8 mid-term election. With passage, workers now have a fundamental right to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing for the purpose of negotiating wages, hours, and working conditions, and to protect their economic welfare and safety at work. The amendment also prohibits any law that interferes with, negates, or diminishes the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively.

Unions supported the measure, while businesses and their Republican allies opposed it.

"It's going to help us put more money in the pockets of Illinoisans," said Joe Bowen, a proponent of the measure. "When working families do better, they don't hoard it for themselves. They contribute even more to the communities that they love and call home."

Republican gubernatorial candidate Darren Bailey said similar policies are causing people and businesses to leave the state. "My message is this: Unions stay in your lane and everything will be fine," Bailey said. "Leave mom and pop and private business alone." Nearly 60% of Illinois voters chose to ignore Bailey's advice and cast ballots to approve the amendment.

Abortion rights supporters score midterm victories in 5 states

Voters in at least three states voted to protect abortion access through measures on the ballot in the Nov. 8 midterm elections scoring victories for abortion rights advocates who worked with urgency to preserve the right to end a pregnancy in the wake of the Supreme Court's decision overturning *Roe v. Wade* this year.

Abortion rights were directly on the ballot in California, Michigan, Vermont, Kentucky and Montana, through either proposed amendments to state constitutions or, in Montana, legislative referendum. In California, Michigan and Vermont, voters decided to enshrine abortion rights in their respective state constitutions.

Kentucky voters rejected a ballot measure aimed at denying any constitutional protections for abortion, handing a victory to abortion-rights supporters who have seen access to the procedure eroded by Republican lawmakers in the deeply red state.

In Montana, voters rejected a legislative referendum deceptively called "the Born Alive Infant Protection Act," had passed, medical professionals who did not could have faced punishments of up to \$50,000 in fines and up to 20 years in prison.

Members of the medical community opposed the amendment saying it represents government overreach in decisions made between a patient and provider.

Deep-red Nebraska joins liberal states in adopting \$15 minimum wage

Nebraska approved a \$15 minimum wage for workers amid a nationwide push for wage hikes that has predominantly taken hold in liberal states like New York, California and Illinois.

The referendum, called Initiative Measure 433, garnered support from 59% of voters in Nebraska, while ballots opposing the measure stood at 41%, according to results reported by ABC News.

The measure will incrementally raise the state's minimum wage from its current level of \$9 per hour to \$15 per hour by 2026. Over ensuing years, the minimum wage will move in accordance with inflation.

Nebraska joins at least nine states that have raised their wage floor to \$15 per hour, representing a combined 40% of the U.S. workforce, data from the National Employment Law Project showed. — *ABC News*

Local 249 retirees honor veterans

By Natalie Wood

Our November Retiree Meeting started off by calling all Veterans to come forward and be recognized for their services. Thank you to all UAW Veterans. We appreciate all that you did serving our country. Our very own retiree, Roberta Roberson, made quilts to hand out to those Veterans that had drawn a raffle ticket. Thank you, Roberta Roberson, for your very generous gifts.

Steve Hibbs, Benefits Representative encouraged members to check your mail from UAW Benefits Trust. Express Scripts is being replaced by Optum RX for your mail order medications. As of January 1, Optum RX will be shipping your medications. Be on the lookout for mail from Optum RX during the month of December. You will need to contact Optum RX to make arrangements to pay for your medications. Express Scripts will not transfer your payment information to Optum RX. This is something that you must do to keep your medications coming without delays.

The Aetna Medicare Advantage (MA) PPO plan will be eliminated for 2023. On January 1, 2023 Aetna Medicare members will be enrolled in a new MA plan offered through UnitedHealthcare.

The United Healthcare plan is a MA-PD plan, which means it's a plan with prescription drug coverage.

Retiree Chairman Mel Thompson reported that we will purchase a sound system at our new meeting place. Pleasant Valley Community Center, 6805 Sobbie Road, Pleasant Valley Mo.

Our next meeting is December 21. Thompson announced that we will be giving away 30 to 40 hams. This will be

determined if the supplies are there. Come on out, you may be holding the lucky ticket to take home a ham.

When entering our retiree meeting all retirees will receive a red ticket. You can purchase 50/50 raffle tickets as well. We will stop giving out the red tickets at 10:45 as well as the 50/50 tickets. You cannot get any raffle tickets after 10:45.

Thompson announced that Retirees will be donating \$500.00 to the Salvation Army.

Vice Chairperson of the Family Auxiliary, Lorie Marin called for anniversary, birthday or wedding anniversary recognitions. We recognized Jesse and Catalina Anaya 55 years of marriage, Estel Haltun 37 years of marriage, Bill and Ann Parker 28 years of marriage. Winners of the anniversary gifts were Estel Haltun and Bill and Ann Parker. Congratulations to all.

There were 72 Retirees and guest at our November meeting. Please follow National Weather Service's travel guidelines in the event of inclement weather. We love to see you here, but we want you to be safe. Pay attention to any cancellations due to changing weather.

Remember our UAW members that passed on. Keep their families in



Anita Myers Pickens, left right, Roberta Roberson and William Parker presented quilts sewn by Roberson to veterans at the November retiree meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

your prayers. They are Carole Hudson, Charles Laymon, Dena Howe, Ernest Hollimon, John Constant, Gary Davis, Gary Elliott, George Houser, Larry Dean, Patrick Baird, Robert Hamer, Samuel Frierson, Samuel Hallford, Wallace Glasco, William Cerutti.

Looking forward to see you all on

December 21. Food will be catered by Grandma Catering service. Please refrain from bringing in any outside food. It is not required to wear a mask but do so if you feel more comfortable. Stay healthy and safe.

Christmas Wishes to all and a Happy New Year.



Rachel Hartford was presented with the James "Frog" Moran Solidarity Award at the November membership meeting. When Hartford learned a new co-worker wasn't going a doctor's appointment because she couldn't afford to buy her medicine. Hartford and another coworker put some cash together to help her buy the medicine. Rachel Hartford is a team leader in Truck Trim on B-Crew. Photo by Don Lehman.

UAW Local 249

CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT
Sunday, Dec. 11 at 10:30 am at the Union Hall

Entry Fee \$20 per person

Sign Up Deadline: Friday, Dec. 9 at 5:00 pm



Local 249's standing committee members came together to provide spooky good fun for children at the annual Trunk or Treat celebration of Halloween on Oct. 28. The event is sponsored by the union Women's Committee. Photo by Don Lehman.

Largest turnout ever for 249's Trunk or Treat

By Robin Taylor

The Women's Committee hosted another fun-filled Trunk or Treat for the membership and their families. All the standing committees provided decorated trunks for the annual event. As the children arrived dressed up as their favorite characters, the fun began. Upon entering Trunk or Treat Village they were given a UAW Local 249 drawstring backpack to trick or treat with.

They started their adventure with their first stop at a photo opportunity with the Community Services Committee and their spider theme. The gigantic creepy spider crawling up the side of the union hall was the perfect backdrop for awesome Halloween memories.

The next stop on their journey was this year's 1st place winner the CAP committee and their "Nightmare before Christmas" theme. This trunk was spectacular and all the rage with several fun character inflatables and props like the original movie. The kids were all smiles when trunk or treating at this trunk.

As the children displayed their approval through ear-to-ear smiles. They entered Jurassic Park, where the dinosaurs from the Member to Member Committee were eagerly awaiting their arrival. Lots of dancing and playing with this year's 3rd Place winner in the Trunk or Treat Contest.

The kids laughed and collected candy from very well thought out trunk themes. The skeleton crew of Consumer Affairs, the campground theme from Recreation and Conservation, and the Good Witch in the Candy Land game hosted by Union Label Committee.

Little did they know there was a

very scary trunk, where a zombie was waiting to pop out of a coffin, producing ear piercing screams of terror from the little trunk or treaters. The Education Committee took all the credit for this fun and frightening trunk.

The Ringmaster of the circus set up an outdoor movie, for those who wanted to have a seat and enjoy the delicious popcorn bags offered by the Civil and Human Rights Committee. The children who were having too much fun to sit down and watch a movie continued through the Trunk or Treat Village. Stopping at the creative trunk displays of the Chaplaincy, Motorcycle and Veteran's Committees. The last, but not the final, stop of the night was walking into the dark city of DC/Marvel characters. Batman was perched on top of this trunk keeping a watchful eye on the children as they exited Trunk or Treat Village. The Women's Committee

was proud to call this 2nd place trunk a product of their hard work that the kids fell in love with. Wow, what a fun and exciting adventure through the village.

The children were excited and running on a sugar adrenaline rush, as they entered the ball field to play in the three large inflatables that created lots of fun before heading home. As the families departed, they stopped to create a lasting memory of that night. The wonderful photo booth that included a giant spider created out of a bale of hay, set up by the Motorcycle Committee.

What a way to end the night! The Women's Committee would like to thank the membership and their families for the largest turnout ever. Thanks to the executive board, and all the standing committees for the creative trunks and their commitment to making this event a success.



Postal Service privatization a danger to us all

By Gary Thomas

The United States postal service has been in the news a lot lately. A name you may have heard regularly is Louis Dejoy. The 65-year-old CEO of Breed Logistics is the current head of the USPS. What people may not know is he is the first postmaster in two decades without prior experience in the USPS. Yet, his companies still hold active contracts with the United States Postal Service. This may seem like a conflict of interest to the working class because to the corporate class it's their only interest. As head of the USPS, Dejoy also is the boss of the union workers in the American Postal Workers Union. The APWU negotiates for 200,000 retired and active members. In 1970 Postal workers won collective bargaining rights after a national postal strike, later in 1971, five separate Postal workers unions merged to form the APWU.

As Dejoy took over his position as Postmaster general the fight to privatize the USPS gained momentum. Companies like United Parcel Service, Fed-Ex, Amazon, Walmart XPO Logistics are fighting for control of the coveted markets the USPS currently hold. Many of these companies already rely on the USPS to deliver to rural areas and hard to reach destinations. The reason for this is that USPS is required by law to deliver to every citizen in the United States. This is infrastructure prebuilt for the large nonunion conglomerates that they view as cost saving to the bottom line. Those savings aren't passed on to the customers or employees but to the shareholders.

Privatization of the Postal Service is a danger to every unionized auto worker in America. The USPS employs 73,000 Veterans in high paying union

jobs, making it one of the nation's largest employers of service members. The Postal Service is one of the leading employers of minorities and women, with minorities comprising 49 percent and women comprising 46 percent of the workforce. 21 percent of employees are African American; 8 percent are Hispanic; 8 percent are Asian-American/Pacific Islander; and 0.67 percent are American Indian or Alaska Native. The USPS also employs 35,000 differently abled people and 10,000 differently abled Veterans. The average pay of a Postal worker is 61,000 dollars a year compared to the average salary of a non-union worker in FED-EX, which is 35,000 dollars a year. If privatization takes hold of the USPS, then wages are cut in half, communities impoverished, benefits lost.

One of the reasons we hear so much about the privatization of the

United States Postal Service is due to the low cost of shipments compared to the for-profit parcel companies. One of the major reasons is The Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA) required the USPS to create a \$72 billion fund to pay for the cost of its post-retirement health care costs, 75 years into the future. This burden applies to no other federal agency or private corporation. The bill was introduced in the United States House of Representatives by Tom Davis, a Republican from Virginia, and cosponsored by Republican John M. McHugh of New York and Democrats Henry Waxman of California and Danny K. Davis of Illinois. As the chair of the Senate Oversight committee, Senator Susan Collins of Maine shepherded the bill's passage through the Senate. The bill was approved during the lame duck session of the 109th Congress, and approved without objection via voice vote.

PAEA was the first major overhaul of the United States Postal Service (USPS) since 1970. It reorganized the Postal Rate Commission, compelled the USPS to pay in advance for the health and retirement benefits of all of its employees for at least 50 years, and stipulated that the price of postage could not increase faster than the rate of inflation. It also mandated the USPS to deliver six days of the week. According to Tom Davis, the Bush

administration threatened to veto the legislation unless they added the provision regarding funding the employee benefits in advance with the objective of using that money to reduce the federal deficit. When he signed the bill on December 20, 2006, Bush issued a signing statement that said that the government can open mail under emergency conditions, though Waxman asserted that the government cannot do this without a search warrant. This sounds good on paper, but it is setting the stage to bust the union and lower wages just to let the rich get richer.

As the United Auto Workers now elect the International executive board directly, voting by mail has become the standard. In the one member one vote referendum nearly 85 percent of autoworkers didn't vote. When done correctly, voting by mail has been proven to be one of the safest ways to practice our rights to choose our leadership. Protecting the USPS should be on the forefront of every autoworker's mind. If not, we could face dire consequences in the form of corporate interference, mismanagement to make profit, low paid apathetic workers, the shedding of nearly 200,000 union jobs, not to forget that the USPS employs the largest number of vets, women and minorities in America. The war on the United States Postal Service is a war on the working class.

In December 1937 Local 249 members took to the streets in

The Battle of Ford Park

"After the smoke cleared it was a bloody mess."

By Pat Hayes

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

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

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

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

The police waded into the melee

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

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

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

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

to side with Ford and actively break the strike. The union was denied the constitutionally guaranteed right to assemble on public streets to picket in front of the plant. Even the strikers' wives and children were arrested when they attempted to peacefully picket the plant.

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

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

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

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

One of the union men in the green sedan with Minshall, Steve Schmidt, told *The Kansas City Star* their side of the story.

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

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

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

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

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

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



Members of Local 249's standing committees joined State Sen. Barbara Washington and community volunteers at the Swope Health Center Nov. 5 to distribute food essentials to those in need. Photo by Don Lehman.

Local 249 celebrates the spirit of giving

By Erica Eckart

On Saturday November 5, State Sen. Barbara Washington hosted her annual Thanksgiving community food drive. The food drive takes place at the Swope health center in Kansas City. As usual the drive was a huge success with volunteers coming from all over the metro to help make this event a success including our very own members from local 249.

"Our members never miss this event," said Shirley Mata, regional CAP liaison and proud member of Local 249. "This is the epitome of what Local 249 is all about. We love giving back to our community in any way we can, and we never miss an opportunity to partner up with like-minded individuals like Senator Barbara Anne Washington who has devoted herself to helping those in need throughout our community."

Senator Washington has developed a widespread connection to volunteers, donors and recipients in response to recognizing the needs of

our community and her constituents.

"We've always had a food insecurity problem in Kansas City," says Sen. Washington. "COVID only lifted the veil to alert more people to the needs in our community. I've done canned goods drives for a decade, but the first Saturday food essentials is my way to help more people with more food and more essentials."

"Without the volunteers from UAW Local 249 and all the unions here, I wouldn't be able to do what I do," says Washington. "Union workers are known for improving lives so partner-

ing up with them is not only logical, but necessary."

"Members of Local 249 met on a rainy, snowy cold morning to help one of our own, Senator Barbara Washington, give back to our community," said Jay Bosler, CAP chair and Sergeant at Arms for Local 249. "Twice a year, once at Easter and once at Thanksgiving, she and her organization help out the community with 500-600 households receiving goods like laundry supplies, blankets, diapers, cleaning supplies, coats and food consisting of turkey, ham, potatoes, fruit, milk, juice, eggs and cheese," said Bosler.

"Local 249 came out huge this year with about 25 members from our standing committees, like CAP, Member to Member, Community Service, Veterans, Women's, Motorcycle, Education, Union Label and Consumer Affairs

committees, all had volunteers show up and help," Bosler said. "I say it all the time, but it is more and more true, the reason we do the things we do is NOT for the pats on the back but because it's the right thing to do."

Local 249 members arrived at 7:30 am. The line started at 9:00 am and ended around noon.

As volunteers were helping to clean up, Senator Washington provided Lunch from Chick Fil A to all the remaining volunteers. We would like to thank Senator Washington for her dedication to improving our community, as well as all the volunteers who came out to support these efforts. Special thanks to Local 249 and all the standing committees for volunteering and keeping the vision of family and community unity alive, we couldn't do this without you.

Looking back and looking forward

By Jim Fisher

It's hard to imagine that the end of 2022 is now here. For just a quick look back there were several significant accomplishments during the past year. Local 249 was successful in bringing in new members as full-time direct hires and for those members being able to skip past the temporary status as outlined in the National Agreement.

Local 249 added in an additional 35 members as apprentices into our Skilled Trades Program. And, as we worked through the COVID-19 protocols, members were finally able to work inside the facility without wearing a mask, there were additional investments added to our facility, and our Local 249 reps fought around the clock to hold the company accountable for pay errors and make sure members pay was corrected when an error had occurred, and finally Local 249 members had the opportunity for the first time to take part in the election process for the International UAW Executive Board positions.

Now on to the next year. In 2023, there will be several important topics for our members and the leadership team to be involved with. First off, Ford has already committed to invest \$2 million dollars in upgrades to new lighting inside the plant. There is also a commitment to upgrade the Main Plant tunnel with new painting, and upgrades to the cafeteria including new tables and chairs. In addition, Ford has committed a \$4.3 million dollar investment into makeovers in the plant bathrooms. In a separate topic pertaining to the restrooms, we have announced that KCAP will not renew the Team Solutions contract and will be bringing in a new cleanup company in mid-December of 2022.

In 2023, we expect to continue to see parts supply chain issues for most if not all the year. Therefore, schedule changes will most likely be an issue next year as well.

Next year, KCAP also plans to launch a C-Crew for the Transit System. KCAP has notified Local 249 that the tentative launch date will be April 3, 2023. Obviously, there is a lot that goes into the additional shift. The tasks of getting manpower into position, making facility adjustments, and getting the suppliers ready are still large projects that will need to be completed for a successful launch.

In 2023, members will go through the process of both a new National Agreement and a new Local Agreement.

It would have been easy over the past three years to just look the other

way and blame COVID and microchips on a hard time and bad luck. Instead, Local 249 experienced growth in membership, plant expansions, and investments in both our plant and our community.

Local 249 works as a team. From our elected reps to our appointed reps, and our great members I can't say enough how proud I am to be a Local 249 member. Next year will be very challenging. We have a lot of expectations to meet, and goals to accomplish. It will take all 8,000 of us working together next year to meet all these challenges. As you're making your New Year's resolutions for 2023, I challenge all of you to make a resolution to make an extra effort to support each other as union brothers and sisters next year. 2023 will be very challenging for all



Local 249 Bargaining Chair Jim Fisher reviewed the accomplishments of 2022 and looked ahead to the challenges of 2023 in his report to the November membership meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

of us. When 8,000 of us move in one direction and with the same goals we become very powerful.

Finally, on behalf of the entire

leadership team of Local 249, we wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Be safe and enjoy the time away with your family and friends.

A photograph of a person dressed as Santa Claus, wearing a red suit with white trim and a red hat with a white pom-pom. The person is waving their right hand. The background is a solid blue color.

Local 249
Breakfast with Santa
Saturday, December 17
From 8:00 — 11:00 am
At Local 249 Union Hall
Whoville Games From 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

Local 249 accomplished a lot in 2022

By Tony Renfro

It's around this time of year I always find myself reflecting on the past year. What have we done well, what could we have done better and what can we work on next year. As a union we have done so many good things that have gone unsung, I would like to give you just a small recap of all we have done over the past year.

Our CAP Committee put in countless hours in helping campaigns for local politicians that are on our side and help fight for us and our way of life as workers.

Our Veterans Committee did many things through the year helping service the needs of vets. They worked with local organizations to aid homeless veterans as well as selling challenge coins to raise funds for different programs, but what they are most proud of was the Thanksgiving dinner at St. Michaels Veterans Center.

The Women's Committee put on many successful events for kids; the Easter celebration, the father-daughter dance and Halloween Trunk or Treat. They will end the year with the Breakfast with Santa and Whoville at the Hall on December 17. The amount of candy and treats that have been given out to hundreds of little smiling faces is astounding. They worked on the Habitat for Humanity's Women's build, Community LINC and Kaye's corner, and Journey to New Life. They did all this as well as working with local women's organizations around the area, making this committee one we

should all be proud of as UAW Local 249 members.

The Recreation Committee got back to normal after two years of COVID restrictions and hosted many events. Just a few events were: an amazing BBQ contest, a corn hole tournament, a float trip, Family Day at the K, and a Stay and Play golf trip at lake of the Ozarks. We are looking forward to next year's events already.

The Education Committee hosted union classes – providing a good base of knowledge for many members – ran the UAW Local 249 Podcast "Solidarity Academy," and educated members with gate actions. They also sponsored the Charlie Suffridge Scholarship Contest which provides scholarships to the children of three UAW Local 249 members each year, so be on the lookout for that again in the spring.

The Motorcycle Committee hosted the Spring Fling, Wings for Water charity event, Roses for Widows, many charity motorcycle rides. They've spent countless hours helping those in need in our local communities and other committees as well. They will end the year with the Santa ride visiting



Local 249 President Tony Renfro thanked standing committee members for their hard work over the past year at the November membership meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

TNC community on December 8, and Wreaths Across America December 17.

The Member-to-Member Committee has been canvassing the plant, conducting member surveys and recruiting communicators trying to figure out more ways to strengthen our membership and find new and innovative ways to communicate.

The Community Service Committee was involved with Habitat for Humanity, Pawportunities, held a Back-to-School event with community partners including MO-Chip, delivered Blessing Bags to homeless women on Mother's day, and most recently oversaw the Thanksgiving turkey and meal drive, which was a huge success.

The Human and Civil Rights Committee held a MLK Day of Action partnered with Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, held a Cinco de Mayo celebration, sponsored the Ethnic Enrichment Festival, participated in the Juneteenth parade and Juneteenth Memorial in Clay County, and supported PrideFest.

The Consumer Affairs Committee has been scouring the local business scene, recognizing business that support us and our families, as well as negotiating discounts for our members. You can see a list of the participating business at UAW Local 249 Consumer Affairs Committee Facebook page or the Local 249 website.

The Chaplaincy Committee held the first UAW Gospel Night at the hall and volunteers monthly with Avenue

for Life. They are constantly on the lookout for people in need and have helped many members this year. Whether it be a situation that needs professional counseling or a helping hand, or just a sympathetic ear in someone's time of need this is a special group of people capable of a level of compassion that is very rare.

Union label has been putting together lists of union made and American made goods and will have them ready for display once the tunnel renovation is completed. They also have been eagerly helping with the other committees' events.

All the standing committees came together to fully support union wide events such as the St. Patrick's Day float and parade, helping staff donation drives at Swope Park for families in need, providing Thanksgiving turkeys and dinners, and attending countless rallies, strike lines, pickets and more in support of the poor and working class fighting for a better life.

The thing I am most proud of is the way all the members of all the standing committees will jump at the opportunity to volunteer for all events being put on by another committee. The standing committees are many times the first impression of UAW Local 249 the public sees, and our face in the community. These members represent the best of us. I want to personally thank everyone of them for all their hard work and dedication.

249 is here 24/7



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www.local249.org

A winning combination in Platte County

By State Rep. Jamie Johnson

The impact of the support of labor in our political environment cannot be understated, neither can the clear and discernible evidence of who is supportive of working-class families. I will readily admit that as a first-time candidate in a competitive seat, the election process was, at times, quite overwhelming for me. As I left Jefferson City on February 22, after having successfully completed the process of putting my name on the ballot for the primary election I had very little idea where to start. One of the first things I was told, by people who knew, was focus on raising money and talking to voters.

“That’s it, raise money, knock doors. Don’t worry about anything else.” the advice was resoundingly consistent from many experienced candidates and elected officials.

So, when UAW 249 and other labor organizations offered to help with our campaign field strategy, I welcomed their notable experience. We were able to take my vision of a field strategy and put it into action to make it a reality.

We had a simple plan. Each area of my district divided into maps would be blanket lit dropped by UAW volunteers. A week or two following the completion of that lit drop I and other volunteers would follow with a targeted canvass.

This strategy allowed my name, face, and message to be familiar to a community before I showed up to have conversations with individual voter households. Through this strategy I was able to introduce myself before I showed up on the voters’ doorstep.

Long story short, our strategy, with some additional pieces, worked and worked well. As a result of the work we

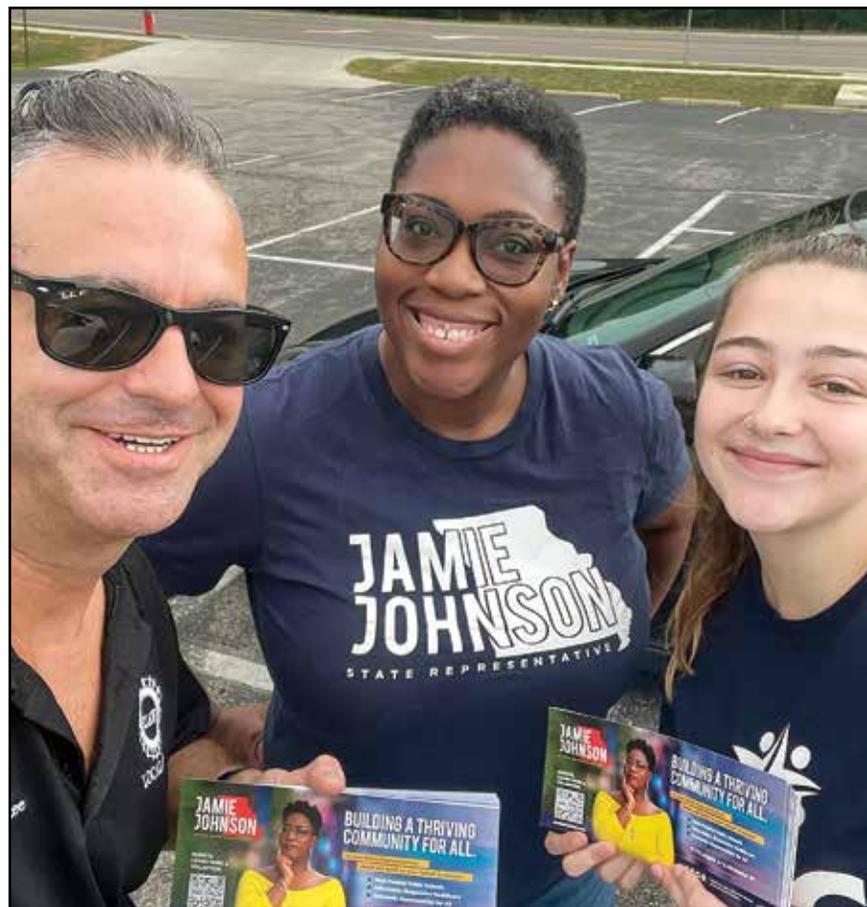
put in, I was able to securely win my seat with over 600 votes in difference between myself and my opponent.

This is a momentous shift in Platte County politics, here’s why. First, as recorded by the 2020 Census, Platte County is the fastest growing county in Missouri by percentage. Because of that growth a House seat was added to the county through redistricting, Platte County now has three seats in the MO House.

As a result of 2022 election, two of the now three seats are held by Democrats: my seat in House District 12 and that of my friend and legislative neighbor Representative Ashley Aune in House District 14.

As well, despite being told by many, both friend and foe, that the challenge was completely impossible I made history as the first Black person to be elected to the state legislature from Platte County.

I view these shifts as an opportunity for further infrastructure building in Platte County and the opportunity to make shifts in our political culture



Newly elected State Rep. Jamie Johnson, shown here with Jon and Carly Sowell, became the first Black person elected to the state legislature from Platte County Nov. 8 with the help of Local 249.

both up and down the ballot in the very near future to elect people who support labor and the values of working-class families. The support of labor and labor organizations are a huge

part of this moment and this movement to restore balance and stability to not only our state government but to our counties, cities, boards, and commissions.

Republican lawmakers turn up their noses at Missouri voters

By Pat Hayes

Missouri voters approved Amendment 3 legalizing recreational marijuana use by adults age 21 and older Nov. 8. The Constitutional Amendment expunges arrest and conviction records for non-violent marijuana offenses, except for driving under the influence and sales to minors. It passed 53% to 47%.

Medical marijuana was legalized in state when voters approved Amendment 2 in 2018.

In both cases, voters finally acted when Republican lawmakers refused to do what legislators in 39 states where medical marijuana is legal and the 21 states recreational use is legal had already done.

This isn’t the first time voters have overruled their representatives. In 2020, voters finally tired of foot dragging in Jefferson City and approved Medicaid expansion extending health

coverage to some 275,000 Missourians.

The list goes on. Missouri voters voted down right-to-work legislation repeatedly approved by anti-worker Republican legislators.

In 2018, voters went over the heads of their representatives to raise the minimum wage after the Jefferson City stepped in to block minimum wage increases approved in Kansas City and St. Louis.

Tired of the corruption in Jefferson City, voters also approved the Clean Missouri Initiative, a constitutional

amendment to make changes to the state’s lobbying laws, campaign finance limits for state legislative candidates, and legislative redistricting process.

Republican legislators were so alarmed at the passage of Clean Missouri that they placed a deceptively worded question on the ballot in the next election that succeeded in watering down the intent of the law.

In February, the Missouri Supreme Court ruled that state lawmakers have illegally limited citizens’ right to weigh in on laws, a decision that could make it easier for people to force a statewide vote on laws they don’t like in the future.

In their decision, the judges wrote that Missouri citizens’ right to overturn laws passed by the Legislature is a “fundamental expression of the power held

by the people.”

Right-wing Republican legislators who have ruled Missouri with an iron fist for more than two decades are vehemently opposed to expressions of power by the people.

They fear that their cherished trigger law banning most abortion in the state — even when they endanger the life of the mother or are the result of rape — might be in danger if put up to a vote.

They only have to look across the state line to Kansas to see what happens when people get to vote on women’s reproductive rights.

That’s why Republican lawmakers are putting a priority on “reforming” the initiative process. It’s already hard to put change on the ballot. They want to make it harder.



Local 249 volunteers distributed 785 turkeys and 300 complete dinners to area social service agencies and needy individuals Nov. 19. The annual Turkey Drive caps a year of social service work by the union and members of its standing committees. Photo by Don Lehman.

Local 249 Turkey Drive a great success

By Cecelia Davis

Local 249 has a lot of things to be thankful for this year. We hosted multiple events to help not only our membership but for our local community. One of our main events that we do every year to give back is the annual Turkey Drive.

The Turkey Drive was held on November 18 at our local union hall. It was organized by the Community Service Committee. Solidarity came alive when our members formed their own assembly line when it came to loading our UAW bags full of Thanksgiving food items from veggies, sweet desserts, dressing with delicious gravy, and of course a large family-sized turkey.

Community members formed a line outside the union hall parking lot and waited in their vehicles as Local 249 volunteers loaded their cars up with the holiday goodies. Not only were there items to eat, but we also provided coloring and activity booklets for the children. In just a 3-hour span, Local 249 donated 785 turkeys and 300 complete dinners.

"Giving back to our community has been the most rewarding experience for myself in our local union," said Nicky Dang, who is a member of the

Member to Member committee. "You see people's smiles and a little sense of relief that they will be able to share a meal with their loved ones this holiday season. It brings me so much gratitude

and makes me feel extra thankful."

That is what's special about these types of events that our union provides. Not only does it help our community and give people hope, but it leaves an everlasting feeling of love and compassion within each one of our members who volunteered for that event.

"It was amazing to see so many of our local membership joining to-

gether for such a great cause," said Amy Minich, who is a Region 4 member organizer. "This is the first Thanksgiving my family will spend without my grandmother who passed away just a few short months ago. She taught me so many amazing things throughout my life. I would not be who I am without her. I am compelled to honor her memory by leaving this world a better place and a little brighter than when I arrived."

"Walter Reuther said it best," said Minich "there is no greater calling than to serve your fellow man. There is no greater contribution than to help the weak. There is no greater satisfaction than to have done it well. There is no power in the world that can stop the forward march of free men and women when they are joined in the solidarity of human brotherhood."

"I know my granny is smiling upon us knowing we are making an impact in the lives of others," Minich added.

Although Thanksgiving may look different for everyone, this day always reminds Local 249 of how blessed we are as a union to be able to spread the warmth of grace and gratitude every year. Happy Holidays Local 249.



On November 18, the Veterans Committee and members from Local 249's standing Committees served Thanksgiving dinner to 150 Veterans at St. Michael's Veteran Center in Kansas City. Photo by Don Lehman.