

# FIRST LOCAL NEWS

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

August 2022



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8040 NE 69 Highway  
Pleasant Valley, MO 64068



Local 249's delegation to the 38th UAW Constitutional Convention held in Detroit July 25-29 included, front row left to right, Erica Eckart, Dana Davidson, Jason Starr, Dean Freed, second row, Cecelia Davis, David Russell, Sadie Bass, Tom Carr, Robin Taylor, Zach Lane, back row, Pat Hayes, Mike Wheeldon, Gary Thomas, Jeremy Fue, Scott Pyle and John Travers.



Local 249 members provided backpacks, haircuts and fun July 26 at the Back to School event sponsored by the Community Service Committee. Photo by Don Lehman.



Local 249's alternate delegates to the 38th UAW Constitutional Convention are Zach Lane, David Russell, John Travers, Brett Zorich, Chrissy Kline, Brandon Zarda, Sadie Bass, Pat West, Gary Thomas, Robin Taylor and Mike Wheeldon.



First place and big bass in the 8th Annual Wayne Pace Memorial Bass Tournament held July 24 at Smithville Lake were won by Ted Triggs and Doug Derry. Second place went to Anthony Scoma and Jason Westpfal.

## First Local News

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**Reporters** Cecelia Davis, Erica Eckart, Chrissy Kline and Gwen Starkey  
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## UAW Local 249

8040 NE 69 Highway  
Pleasant Valley, Mo. 64068  
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## Officers of Local 249

**President** Jason Starr  
**1st Vice President** Tony Renfro  
**2nd Vice President** Tom Carr  
**Recording Secretary** Shirley Mata  
**Financial Secretary** Dana Davidson  
**Treasurer** Chrissy Kline  
**Trustees** Ed Scaggs, Jeremy Fue, Sade Ott  
**Sergeant at Arms** Jay Bosler  
**Guide** Gary Thomas  
**Bargaining Chair** Jim Fisher  
**Bargaining Committee** Steve Chorbak, 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 Picket Line

## John Deere union members join CNH Industrial workers at picket line

It's been over two months since about 430 members of the United Auto Workers union at the Case New Holland Industrial plant in Burlington went on strike.

It marks the largest walkout in Iowa since UAW members working at John Deere went on strike for 35 days last fall.

About 600 UAW members at a CNH plant in Racine, Wisconsin, also went on strike Monday, May 2 in search of a better deal with the agriculture and construction equipment company.

"We're looking for better pay, a path to retirement with dignity, some relief on some of the overtime we've been working, a better benefits package, or at least to maintain our current benefits package, and adjustment on how we do our vacation," said Nick Guernsey, UAW Local 807 President and CNH employee of 12 years. "Year to year, they can change the insurance, it's not a guaranteed benefit. So we're looking for our current PPO plan as a guaranteed benefit, and we would be happy with that."

He added that starting wages for workers at some non-unionized CNH factories are \$5.50 per hour higher than those at the Burlington plant. The union is looking to increase wages by at least that much, Guernsey said.

Sunday, July 10 marked day 65 of the strike. John Deere UAW members from the Quad Cities traveled to Burlington on Sunday to join the CNH workers on the picket lines.

"We're here to support them and give them the community support that we had during our strike. And just to show them that they're not alone," said Local 865 President David Thompson. "We want the public to realize that our labor struggle is their struggle as well... We want to see them get a fair contract and be competitive and earn a living and retire with dignity." – *WQAD Davenport*

## 'Don't quit. Organize': Amazon union push spreads it wings after New York success

In the wake of a historic union election victory at the Amazon JFK8 warehouse in Staten Island, New York, more Amazon workers in the US are trying to replicate that success with their own organizing campaigns in other states.

In Garner, North Carolina, a suburb of Raleigh, workers are pushing to organize a union at the Amazon warehouse RDU1, a 700,000 sq ft facility with four floors.

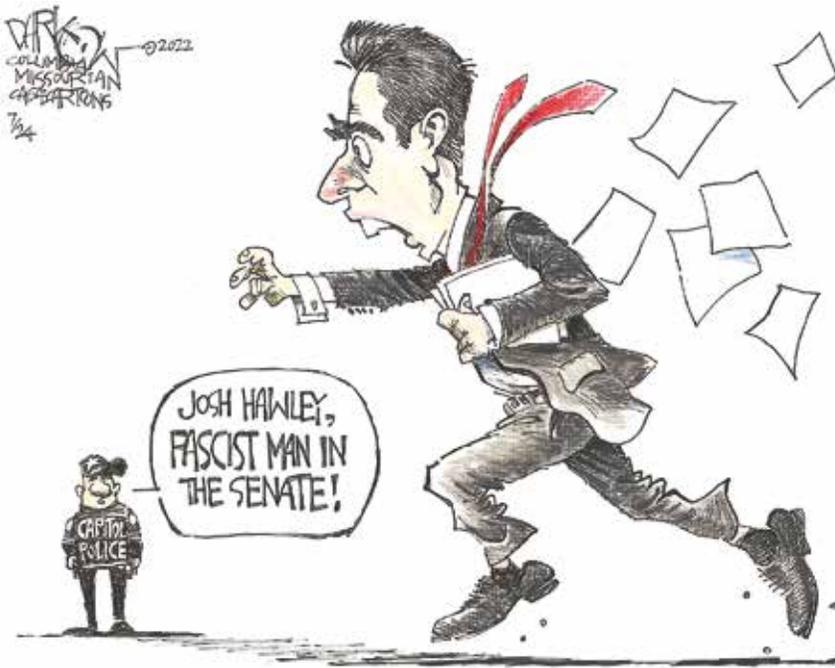
Through the grassroots organization Cause, Carolina Amazonians United for Solidarity and Empowerment, workers are demanding a \$5 an hour pay increase; a return to digital time clocks rather than physical ones, where workers are forced to wait in long lines to punch in and out; longer breaks; a revision to Amazon's time-off options; the formation of a worker committee to address grievances and appeals; and mental health resources for workers. – *The Guardian*

## Union elections increase amid worker organizing wave

With workers unionizing at companies like Starbucks and Apple, the number of election petitions shot up 58% so far this fiscal year.

growing number of workers are showing an interest in joining labor unions and asking to hold union elections at their workplaces, according to new data from the National Labor Relations Board.

The agency said Friday that election petitions had jumped 58% during the first nine months of fiscal year 2022 when compared to the same period the previous year. Workers submitted 1,892 petitions over that time period, versus 1,197 a year earlier, suggesting a significant spike in workplace organizing. – *Huffington Post*



# The value of the federal minimum wage is at its lowest point in 66 years

By David Cooper, Sebastian Martinez Hickey, and Ben Zipperer  
*Economic Policy Institute*

The value of the federal minimum wage has reached its lowest point in 66 years, according to an EPI analysis of recently released Consumer Price Index (CPI) data. Accounting for price increases in June, the current federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour is now worth less than at any point since February 1956. At that time, the federal minimum wage was 75 cents per hour, or \$7.19 in June 2022 dollars.

Last July marked the longest period without a minimum wage increase since Congress established the federal minimum wage in 1938, and continued inaction on the federal minimum wage over the past year has only further eroded the minimum wage's value. As shown in Figure A, a worker paid the current \$7.25 federal minimum wage earns 27.4% less in inflation-adjusted terms than what their counterpart was paid in July 2009 when the minimum wage was last increased, and 40.2% less than a minimum wage worker in February 1968, the historical high point of the minimum wage's value.

The minimum wage increases of the late 1960s expanded the coverage of the minimum wage to include industries like agriculture, nursing homes, restaurants, and other service industries. The earlier exemption of these industries from the federal minimum wage disproportionately excluded Black workers from this important labor protection. The application of the minimum wage

has eroded the value of the federal minimum wage and worsened racial earnings gaps.

As Congressional inaction on the minimum wage continues, 30 states and nearly 50 cities and counties have enacted higher minimum wages. This includes 12 states and the District of Columbia that have adopted minimum wages of \$15 or higher. Most recently, Hawaii lawmakers elected to raise their state's minimum wage to \$18 by 2028, and policymakers in New York are considering a proposal to raise the minimum wage to upwards of \$20 an hour in New York City, with minimum wages a few dollars lower throughout the rest of the state.

A national \$15 minimum wage would raise the incomes of tens of millions of workers, including servers in restaurants, grocery store employees, and essential health care workers—as many as 2 million direct care workers who provide long-term services and supports would benefit from a \$15 minimum wage

in 2025. Although the Biden-Harris administration recently raised the minimum wage to \$15 per hour for federal contractors, it is past time to raise the minimum wage for all workers.

FIGHT FOR  
**\$15**

# A transparent and ethical union

**By UAW President Ray Curry**  
*Excerpted from the President's Report to the  
38th Constitutional Convention*

**The disclosures and discoveries of the past few years have been deeply and rightfully troubling to members and leaders alike. We have acknowledged that several former Union officials engaged in terrible conduct. Our past financial controls were inadequate to catch and deter this misconduct. Crimes were committed. Trust was violated.**

Both President Rory Gamble and I have made it a priority to regain the respect of members and the public alike.

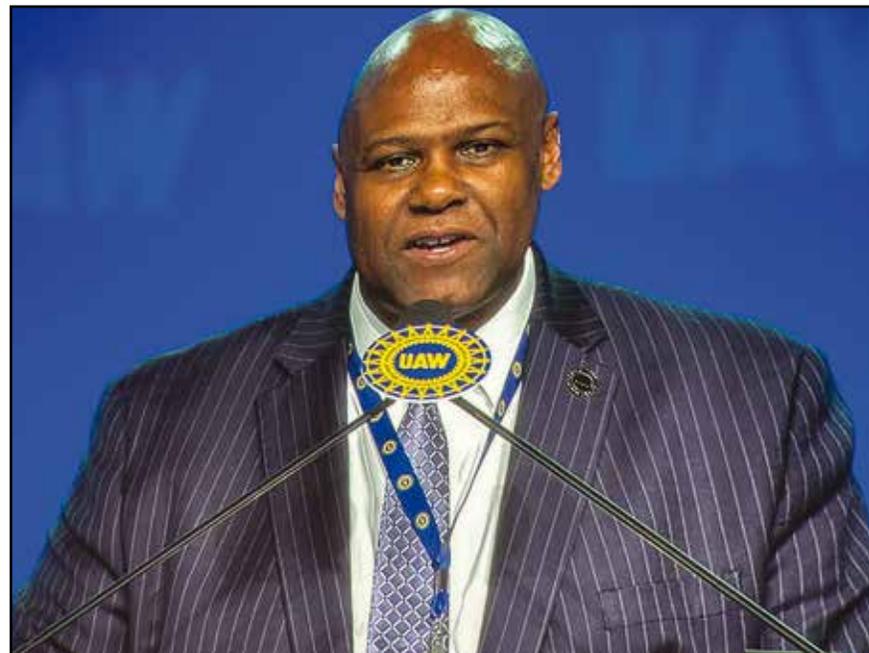
In December 2020 the Union reached an agreement with the United States Attorney's Office in Detroit which concluded the government's investigation of the UAW. That agreement – subsequently approved by the United States District Court in Detroit in January 2021 providing for the appointment of an independent Monitor – was built upon many reforms and fiscal policies which the UAW instituted beginning in November 2019.

These actions include establishing an independent Ethics Office to review and investigate allegations of misconduct involving International Union officials and employees, utilizing outside expertise in the areas of ethics, compliance and investigations. The UAW established an Ethics Hotline

through which members and others can confidentially provide information regarding suspected misconduct. An experienced governance and compliance firm serves as the Ethics Ombudsman to investigate allegations, after which they are referred to an independent Ethics Officer for action, as is necessary.

As part of our commitment to actively obtaining rank-and-file input into future ethics policy and ensuring the effectiveness of the Ethics Hotline, the UAW created the Member Advisory Committee on Ethics.

This committee, comprised of local union members from each UAW region who volunteered to serve and were selected in a blind draw conducted by the UAW Ethics Officer, also includes the UAW Public Review Board Co-chairs and the UAW Ethics Officer. The scope of its work includes



*UAW President Ray Curry speaking at the UAW's 38th Constitutional Convention in Detroit July 25.*

reviewing the union's existing rules and policies on ethical practices and financial matters – including the Ethical Practices Code – and making recommendations for improving such policies and providing education related to these policies.

But that was just the start. We have

undertaken resets in key departments such as Public Relations which are opportunities to both better serve UAW membership but also explore new technologies that may let us work in a more efficient way. The UAW has retained outside experts to assist the union in analyzing and improving its accounting and financial controls systems, policies, and processes from top to bottom.

The union brought on board a new and more robust independent outside auditor to conduct the semi-annual and annual audits of the International Union's financial operations. We have taken action to hire a dedicated Compliance Director to oversee and direct a centralized compliance function. The UAW has directed the creation of a new, comprehensive Code of Conduct encompassing all the rules and policies governing ethical and workplace behavior and requiring annual certifications of compliance with that Code of Conduct and has mandated more systematic annual training on ethics and workplace behavior issues.

Going forward, we will continue to strengthen our policies and controls to ensure that we are good stewards of dues dollars. We will balance the urgent need to create necessary reforms with the equally urgent mandate to bargain equitable contracts and fight for public policies that protect members and their families. We remain committed to the path of reform and to building an even stronger union.

## The ballot box and the bread box

*Excerpted from UAW President Ray Curry's President's Report  
to the 38th Constitutional Convention*

**Simply put, elections matter. Decisions we make in the voting booth are impactful. Union households are more likely to vote than nonunion. We impact the fate of our legislative and regulatory agenda by voting. Elections determine whether we are working to protect hard-fought gains or advance an agenda that benefits working people.**

The final two years of President Donald Trump's administration illustrate how elections shape our laws and courts. Senate Republicans were united in their support for anti-worker judges and these judges have taken action to gut long-standing worker and consumer protections.

During the first two years of the Trump administration, the Supreme Court (SCOTUS) issued a devastating decision for union members by eliminating rights to retiree health care after the term of the contract. In the Janus decision, SCOTUS allowed free riders in public sector unions by making dues voluntary for these workers. Most recently, the conservative majority created by President Trump declared

that women do not have the right to reproductive choice, reversing fifty years of precedence and signaling that the rights we have come to rely on may not be secure at all.

The Biden administration has continued to make positive changes for workers. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is putting regulations in place to mitigate heat exposure and the Department of Labor.

Make no mistake, powerful interests would like no more than to take away the hard-fought gains made over the last couple of years. Anti-worker politicians and special interest groups are restricting access to voting and join a union to silence our voice.

Working with our Community

Action Program (CAP), UAW members have stood together to take the fight to anti-worker politicians and push for legislation that works for our families and communities. We stand in support of a broad agenda that includes the following:

- Passing the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act and the Striking Workers Health Care Protection Act into law.

- Pass legislation that would ensure taxpayer dollars are used to support good union auto jobs, lower prescription drug costs, and ensured the wealthy and corporations pay their fair share of taxes.

- Bolstering our supply chains by investing \$52 billion for semiconductor use in the U.S. and strengthening enforcement of our trade laws by passing the COMPETES Act.

- Passing the John Lewis Voting Rights Act would restore and strengthen parts of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to stop states from denying voters their right to choose their leaders.



Local 249 delegates to the UAW's 38th Constitutional Convention voted to approve amendments to the union's constitution to allow for direct elections of 14 offices including president, secretary-treasurer, three vice presidents (traditionally assigned to each of the Big Three automakers: General Motors, Ford, and Stellantis, formerly Chrysler), plus nine regional directors.

# UAW delegates approve direct election of officers

By Pat Hayes

**Local 249 delegates to the UAW's 38th Constitutional Convention joined delegates from across the country in approving changes to the union's constitution to provide for direct election of International Officers and Regional Directors.**

Approximately 1,000 UAW delegates from the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico met in Detroit July 25-29 to discuss and debate changes to the union's constitution and resolutions that will guide union policy for the next four years.

Last fall, rank and file members across the union voted 63.7% in favor of changing the election of the UAW's highest officers from the previous method of voting by delegates to the Constitutional Convention to a one person one vote direct election system.

The first day of the convention ended with the passage of amendments to the UAW Constitution to align the language with the referendum on direct elections of the UAW International officers and regional directors passed by the membership last fall.

"It's here that the future direction of the union is decided, and union democracy is on full display," UAW President Ray Curry, told delegates from the podium.

Delegates, including Local 249 President Jason Starr, who spoke from the floor of the convention, debated resolutions and amendments. A resolution calling for ranked choice voting was defeated, and members adopted runoff elections in the event there is no clear majority winner in elections for UAW International officers or regional directors instead.

"The membership spoke clearly in last year's referendum," said Local 249 Bargaining Chair Jim Fisher. "Local 249 delegates came to Detroit to make sure the referendum results were ratified and written into the union's constitution.

Local 249 President Jason Starr said, "direct election of union officers is an important, first step, but building a union capable of fighting successfully to win back what we've lost, organize auto workers at nonunion manufacturers and build a more just society will take more than elections. Leaders don't produce movements. Movements produce leaders. Winning the battles that lie ahead of us will require a labor movement on the scale of the one that built our union in the 1930s."

Local 249 Financial Secretary and elected delegate Dana Davidson was nominated for and overwhelmingly elected to serve as an International Trustee by delegates to the convention. Her term runs until 2034.

Delegates concluded convention business by approving the use of gender-neutral language and strengthening language on the duties of local union members. Another resolution added an organizing committee to the union's standing committees. Also, delegates unanimously approved a resolution to

authorize the International Executive Board to use legal resources to recoup from UAW officials convicted of felonies the estimated \$12.9 million in costs related to the court-appointed Monitor. This is in addition to the \$1.1 million currently still owed in restitution for monies fraudulently taken from the UAW.

In addition to discussion and debate on the issues, delegates heard from several guest speakers, including Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh, Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan, Congresswomen Debbie Dingell as well as AFL-CIO Pres. Liz Shuler.

NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson brought delegates to their feet saying, "When we keep democracy strong, we can keep capitalism in check."

Following his speech, UAW President Ray Curry presented Johnson with the Owen Bieber Social Activist Award given to individuals who advance the cause of freedom, justice, equality and human dignity.



Approximately 1,000 UAW delegates from the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico met in Detroit July 25-29 to discuss and debate changes to the union's constitution and resolutions that will guide union policy for the next four years.

# Safe workplaces, fair pay, better job opportunities

**By UAW President Ray Curry**  
*Excerpted from the President's Report to the  
 38th Constitutional Convention*

**Over 50 years ago heading into the 1970 UAW Convention, the U.S. economy was in a state of recession and extreme inflation. At that convention, in one of his last public appearances, UAW President Walter Reuther said "I think we all realize that we live in a very troubled world. Collective bargaining, as we know it, does not take place in a vacuum. Our members do not live in a vacuum; they live in a real world, a world filled with all kinds of challenges, all kinds of changes, and all kinds of crises."**

That statement was true then and it is certainly true today, given our current set of significant economic challenges, such as the pandemic, supply chain disruptions, worker shortages and inflation. There is no doubt that collective bargaining is still the best and most vital tool available to protect the livelihoods of workers in this turbulent post-pandemic economy.

Over the past four years, UAW members have faced challenges head on and have stood together through the collective bargaining process for better wages, benefits and working conditions; never backing down even when it meant having to make the life-altering decision to go out on strike.

For example, in late 2019, UAW members at GM decided to stand up and say no more to management.

Over the course of a 40-day work stoppage that cost the corporation an estimated \$4 billion in lost profits, the strength and solidarity of UAW members at GM not only won significant gains in their contract, their work and sacrifice helped lift their fellow members by setting the standard for pattern bargaining at Ford and FCA (now Stellantis).

Members at GM, Ford and FCA achieved their top priorities of providing a pathway for temporary and supplemental workers to achieve full-time status, significantly shortening the in-progression period for current members to reach the top wage rate, and winning large future investment and job commitments, all while maintaining current health care plans with no premium sharing or additional cost.

GM, Ford and FCA members ratified contracts with large ratification bonuses of \$9,000 at both Ford and FCA and \$11,000 at GM to recognize additional lost wages due to the strike. There were also two general wage increases of 3% and two lump-sum bonuses of 4%. All permanent manufacturing employees who were employed as of the date of the collective bargaining agreement will reach the top rate of approximately \$32 by September 2023. For example, a UAW member that was making \$18 in 2019 will end up making approximately \$32 by the end of the four-year period. That level of increase in compensation can certainly be life changing for many workers and their families.

Additionally, the cap on profit-sharing payments, which was removed in 2015 at Ford, was also removed at both GM and FCA this time around. Removing the cap and an increase in the profit-sharing formula itself at FCA, coupled with the significant profits reported by its successor company Stellantis, resulted in a record setting eligible profit share amount in 2022 of \$14,670.

The language negotiated in the collective bargaining agreements also give a pathway from temporary to full-time status and has resulted in

thousands of UAW members being converted to full-time at the three companies. In addition, over \$20 billion in total future investment and 25,000 in job commitments were negotiated, including significant investment in the production of electric vehicles.

Although the last four years have brought significant improvements, we know that our work is far from done. Our goals remain the same, to protect the rights and dignity of workers and provide safe workplaces, fair pay, better job opportunities and a voice on the job. In uncertain times, the power to collective bargaining to protect and build on these goals is more important than ever.

As we move into the next four years, some of our top priorities will be raising standards across our key industries, addressing the growing inequality between working people and the top 1%, and negotiating significant investment into UAW production facilities, particularly around new technologies like electric vehicles. Collective bargaining remains the best tool to improve the wages and working conditions of our members and all workers. In the next four years, we will continue to demonstrate the power of collective bargaining as we strengthen and grow our union.

# Retirees updated on coming healthcare changes

By Natalie Wood

**R**epresentatives of the UAW Healthcare Trust, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, United Healthcare and Optum RX will be at the August 17 Retiree Meeting to report on changes to retiree health care plans that will take effect in 2023. If you want to learn more about these upcoming changes, please attend the August meeting.

The July retiree meeting kicked off with UAW Benefits Rep. Steve Hibbs reporting on the upcoming August 17th guest speakers. United Healthcare, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Medicare Advantage, and Optum RX representatives will inform everyone of their current offers and how we can make any changes. Come on out and hear for yourselves the latest information including cost for co-pays. One important change you will want to hear more about is that Express Scripts will be out as of December 31, 2022 and Optum RX will be in as of January 1, 2023. For some of the changes you won't have to do a thing.

Retiree Chairman Mel Thompson, spoke about the September meeting being replaced with the Retiree Picnic. The picnic will be held September 21 at Local 249 in our regular meeting place. The food will be catered from Smoke House. We will end the day with giveaways and fellowship. Mark

your calendars and come out and join us.

We were glad to welcome a couple first time attendees, Steve VanVeen and Charlie White, to the July meeting. Hope you enjoyed yourselves and looking forward to seeing you again.

We like to recognize retiree anniversaries and birthdays. Lori Morin announced Cleo Curtis had a birthday and celebrated 50 years of marriage. We all sang happy birthday and happy anniversary to him.

When we sign in at our meetings each attendee receives a red raffle ticket. Hold on to your ticket. You may be a winner if your number is called. We also offer a 50/50 raffle. You can purchase tickets for a chance at winning. You never know you could be holding the winning ticket.

Don't miss an opportunity for fellowship, enjoy a nice box lunch and gather information at our next Retiree Meeting on August 17. The meeting



Local 249 Benefits Rep. Steve Hibbs reported on upcoming changes to retiree healthcare at the July Retiree Meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

starts at 10:30am at the union hall. To keep things as safe as possible we are asking that no outside food be brought in. Masks are not required,

but are encouraged. Do what makes you feel safe. Bring a friend and make this our largest membership meeting this year.

## Local 249's Shirley Mata serves on Resolutions Committee at convention

By Pat Hayes

**L**ocal 249 Recording Secretary Shirley Mata, an elected delegate to the UAW's 38th Constitutional Convention held in Detroit July 25-29, was appointed to serve on the convention's Resolution Committee by Region 4 Dir. Ron McInroy. Mata spent two weeks in Detroit prior to the convention meeting with other members of the committee to review 431 resolutions submitted by locals and regions to prepare them for presentation to delegates.

"It's been a pretty awesome experience," says Mata. "It's given me a major insight into how the membership makes the decisions that guide our union."

Mata joined the UAW when she hired in at the Ford Motor Kansas City Assembly Plant in 1995. She works in Truck Paint doing the scuff job and also serves as the Region 4 Political Liaison for Kansas City.

"Serving on the Resolutions Committee has changed me forever," says Mata. "I feel like every step I've taken in the UAW has prepared me for this role."

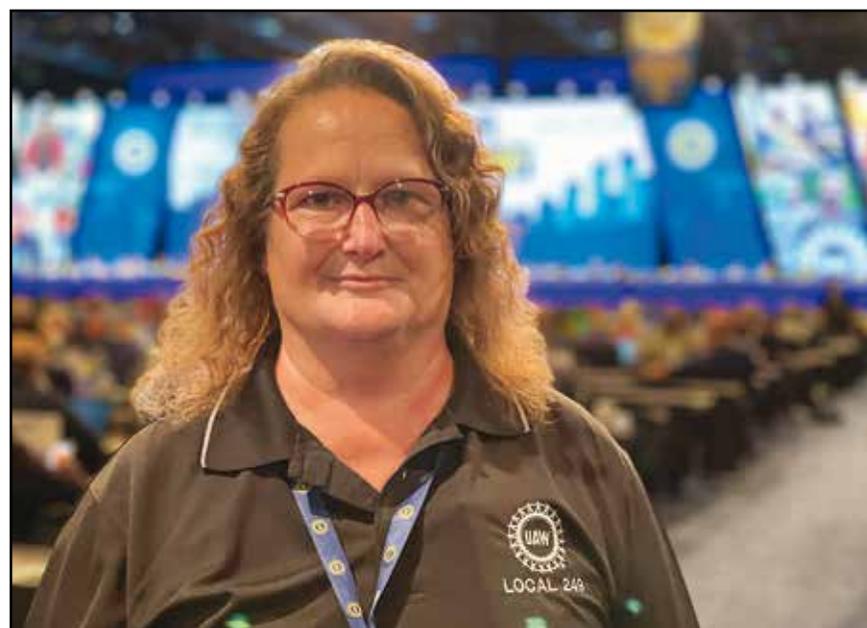
The Resolutions Committee is composed of members from every UAW Region and different sectors represented by the union. It's also made up of delegates of diverse races

and genders.

In her years on the plant floor, Mata developed strong feelings about issues affecting women workers. That's why she was especially excited to present sections of the resolutions committing the union to fight for women's equity in the workplace to the convention.

One section of the Advocating for Women's Equity resolution presented by Mata commits the UAW to advance legislative, legal, and collective bargaining strategies to end gender, race, and ethnic pay disparities."

It also calls for paid family and medical leaves, universal high-quality childcare for every family, expanded unemployment insurance and sick leave.



Local 249's Shirley Mata served on the Resolutions Committee at the UAW's Constitutional Convention July 25-29.

Following the recent Supreme Court reversal of Roe v. Wade, Mata is especially proud that the resolution demands the right for women

to control their own bodies including equal access to contraception and reproductive care, regardless of where they work and live.



Local 249 members Austin McFarland, front row left to right, Nicky Dang, Angie Messina, Marty Pinzino, Hattie Joyce, back row left to right, Jacob Horvatic, Joseph Barajas, Jon Sowell, Hillary Johnson, Cecelia Davis, Erica Eckart and Jess Adele attended Region 4 Summer School in July.

# 249 members learn new skills at Summer School

*By Austin McFarland*

**L**ocal unions from across Region 4 gathered for a week of summer school at the Pat Greathouse Education Center in Ottawa, Illinois. At the center, UAW members learn how to be leaders and contributors in their local unions and the communities in which they live. Members learn new skills, such as collective bargaining, grievance handling, strategic planning, labor history, public speaking, community service, and political action. In addition, many conferences are held for our standing committees.

Members from our local union were given the privilege to attend different classes relating to financial information, understanding grievances, legal rights on social media and how to increase membership involvement within our union.

During the last week of June, delegates elected and appointed by UAW locals in Region 4 attended the basic summer school conference at the Pat Greathouse Center.

Employees from Ford, GM, John Deere, Caterpillar, Oshkosh Defense and more. It quickly became apparent that the majority of students present were attending their first UAW confer-

ence. In fact, many were from small locals that have been appointed stewardship with as little as four months of seniority, simply because they were attending membership meetings and displaying interest in, or concern for their locals and their brothers and sisters on the line.

Ford and GM employees, having larger memberships and more experienced and knowledgeable delegates in attendance, quickly took a backseat to allow the newer advocates to participate and learn what older members have already learned.

Many Caterpillar workers participating in the classes made it increas-

ingly obvious that they are currently suffering and although there was plenty to be gained from the curriculum being offered, delegates from Caterpillar and Oshkosh Defense drew an abundance of knowledge from the other locals. Together we redefined what solidarity means to us.

If we aren't lifting each other up, we're letting each other down." There were some students that were learning about Red Shirt Wednesdays for the first time. This may seem insignificant, but it demonstrates the work that we must do collectively as an organization, to organize our membership. "An injury to one, is an injury to all.

A strong member to member communication network will be instrumental in realizing our shared goals and overcoming shared obstacles. Having this strong network of membership communication will be crucial for smaller locals, because their stewards are not allowed to conduct union business during working hours, or in

working areas.

A recurring motif throughout the week was a quote from Walter Reuther, "The breadbox is tied directly to the ballot box." This continues to be very true. We were reminded that "If you don't do politics, politics will do you." We must all continually educate ourselves on how we vote, and do so based on policy, not party. This is not an option, but our duty as UAW members, as outlined in Article 41; section 3 of our UAW Constitution.

In conclusion, words cannot effectively describe the amount of pride, honor, and thankfulness I have for being a union member, and being granted the opportunity to attend the Region 4 basic summer school conference. I would like to personally thank UAW President Ray Curry, Region 4 director Ron McInroy, the International executive board, and every dues-paying member of the UAW, especially my brothers and sisters of UAW Local 249, for making this conference possible. Solidarity Forever.

# Transit and F-150 in high demand

By Jim Fisher

**T**he last month has been very busy to say the least for Leadership of Local 249. We have seen several schedule changes during the month of July, and I would anticipate this continuing over the next few months. Both Transit and F-150 remain in very high demand and KCAP is a priority plant for Ford Motor Company. Unfortunately, just as we get into a normal routine, the parts start to run out again. The company has posted for several Super Production Schedules, and due to parts, we have seen multiple cancellations. Parts availability and production schedules are still being decided on a week-to-week basis. There is optimism from the company that parts issues will be improving by year end. If this does become the case, we anticipate an increase in overtime to catch back up with orders that still need to be filled, and to build back up inventory levels for our dealers.

During the past couple of weeks in the Transit System management simply failed at all levels to process SUB payments on time. This is completely unacceptable and there is no excuse for this. The leadership team was in contact with Ford's Labor Affairs Department in Detroit and went all the way to the Vice President of North America until the payments were processed. So, everyone understands, it's the company's responsibility to pay their employees. The union has no access to the payroll of the company. For a company that's been making record profits and has thousands of employees here in Kansas City, there is no excuse for the pay errors that have been made.

We have heard every excuse from there aren't enough supervisors, there are a lot of new managers, the company must loan too many people to different departments, and anything else they can come up with. Not one of those reasons are acceptable. The bottom line is when you come to work, you need to be paid correctly and on time. Nothing else is acceptable. At the current time there is next to no language that discusses Ford and how to handle pay errors. However, due to the current situation and until this is completely resolved, we are committed to raise ever single pay error to the highest levels if this is not resolved.

The plant has seen several issues with manpower over the past couple of months. This has not been caused by absenteeism as KCAP is currently the best plant in the system for absenteeism percentages. There are several reasons for this. However, some of the manpower problems have been for positive reasons. The addition of the Transit BEV, training members for the Transit C Crew Pre-Delivery Department, members being released from the line to begin their apprenticeship training in Skilled Trades, and expansions in the Stamping Plant have led

to hundreds of new jobs being added to KCAP just this year. However, due to the current hiring wage and TFT language the overall plant population has not increased to keep up with the added jobs. In addition, during the past few weeks we have seen an increase in heat restrictions due to the time of year we are in and an increase in COVID 19 medical leaves. The shortages have led to the company offering voluntary overtime for Truck Trim and Chassis members by stating that until September 4, all Truck Trim and Chassis employees are being offered to work their RDO days. Those members interested in the additional overtime need to report to J3 and C5 at the start of the shift. While limited by the current language in the National Contract, Local 249 Leadership and the company continue to work on options to help the hiring process.



Local 249 Bargaining Chair Jim Fisher served as a full delegate at the 38th UAW Constitutional Convention in Detroit July 25-29.

On a final note, I want to thank the membership. We have seen a lot of obstacles over the past couple of years. Our members may not have liked going through these changes but have answered every challenge. While we have seen the company looking to invest and expand their growing business plans, your commitment has made KCAP an obvious place to expand and invest in. This has helped create a stronger foothold on our future.

As most members know, in July Local 249 Delegates attended the UAW Constitutional Convention in Detroit. While these conventions always lead to discussion on how the International Union will be ran and debates can be intense at times, I would like to say thank you to our delegates. I'm very proud of the professionalism and knowledge our delegates displayed during the convention. It's very clear that Local 249 sets the bar to a very high standard.



Local 249 Women's Committee members Porsche Thomas and Robin Taylor, seated, Sydne Donaldson, standing left to right, Melody Decourdes, Lamaesia Harris, Dominique Carter, Stielita Locke, Kaylee Knowland, NaTisha Johnson and Lynn Brown greeted participants in the union's annual Father Daughter Dance July 31. Photo by Don Lehman.

# Sometimes pain is the price of progress

By Jason Starr

**O**n July 25th, the UAW's 38th Constitutional Convention was called to order by our UAW President Ray Curry. This convention brings delegates from across the United States, Puerto Rico, and Canada together to discuss not only our constitution as a document but what it means for us as members and as an organization. This is the document that speaks to what is important to us, what our values are, and how we will govern ourselves as a labor union moving forward.

The UAW is more than autoworkers, we represent everything from agricultural workers to adjunct professors, aerospace workers to casino staff, consisting of locals of less than 100 members to locals of over 10,000 members. The Constitutional Convention is a place to work towards consensus for the UAW as a whole and this year brought new processes and progress, despite being painful at times. Some of the topics discussed were contentious and it was evident that not all delegates were focused on building consensus and the broader needs of our union.

A small group of delegates attempted to use the convention as a personal platform. Taking the opportunity to use their floor time to disrespect leadership, obfuscate the truth, work to confuse delegates about what was being voted upon, engage in tirades lacking merit or facts, and vent their frustrations in a grand fashion at a group of individuals that have shouldered the burden of trying to push this union forward and away from the recent past that shadows us. It was obvious there was an agenda of division and distraction that did not support building a vision of progress for our Unions future, and as such, they were unsuccessful in organizing support and instead chose to twist the narrative for their own gains.

The delegates elected by the membership of UAW Local 249 took our responsibility very seriously and worked in the best interest of not only our Local but the future of our organization itself. Our delegates worked through the hundreds of complex resolutions and amendments presented from locals throughout the UAW to the convention Credentials, Rules, Resolution, and Constitutional Committees. These Committees worked tirelessly in the months leading up to the convention to prepare and present the delegates with detailed reports from each committee. Local 249 Recording Secretary Shirly Mata served on the Resolutions Committee and represented our local at a very high level.

Following the presentation of Committee reports the delegates were

presented with a resolution because of the referendum vote to amend the Constitution to outline the process of direct International Executive Board positions. This resolution was adopted by the delegates and the 2022 Constitution will now reflect this change. Additionally, a resolution was presented by the monitor to institute ranked-choice voting. This resolution was debated on the convention floor and was ultimately defeated, and direct runoff elections were adopted.

Day two of the convention was called to order and US Congresswoman Debbie Dingle gave an impassioned speech that motivated delegates for the day's work ahead. Then multiple resolutions were brought to the floor for discussion including updating the preamble of the UAW Constitution which was adopted. This was followed by a resolution to allow retired members to seek IEB positions. This was heavily debated and was resoundingly rejected by delegates. The proposal to amend the constitution to mandate the rejection of all contracts with tier pay scales was denied and sent to the upcoming Bargaining Convention. A resolution to prohibit the use of contributions from sources outside of UAW members was debated and passed. A constitutional change was adopted to clearly outline the salaries of IEB members and international representatives. This change eliminated the confusing percentage language from the 2018 UAW Constitution. A highlight from day two was the creation of a new Region 6 in our Union. This was passed resoundingly and is a great indication of the growth within our Union.

Day three brought guest speakers Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh, who is a card-carrying union member. Both speakers openly voiced their support of the UAW and pledged to be there with us in our fight for justice. Following the speakers, the delegates went straight to work passing a resolution to strengthen and build on the support of Women's issues in the workplace and our communities. A resolution surrounding the utilization of Strike Fund Interest earnings was heavily debated and ultimately



Local 249 President Jason Starr on the floor of the 38th UAW Constitutional Convention in Detroit July 25.

tabled until a full report from the Secretary-Treasurer could be given on the financial impact the change may have.

Following a debate on resolutions and amendments, tributes to retiring IEB members were presented. One of the retirees was UAW Region 4 Director Ron McInroy. It has been an absolute honor to work with Director McInroy over the last couple of years. His steadfast leadership during the transition to Region 4 was exactly what we needed at the time. He and his staff welcomed us with open arms to provide all the resources we needed during that very difficult time. His relentless nature and focus on membership education has given our Local so many tools to build power. I wish him and his family all the best in retirement.

The final day of the Convention was called to order and the first point of business was nomination and election for International Trustee. I am very proud to report the election of our own Financial Secretary, Dana Davidson, to the position. This is a huge honor for Dana and our Local as it is a testament to the diligent work, she has done managing our local's finances responsibly and honestly. We know that she will serve the UAW with the same integrity in this new role as well.

Day four brought issues from the previous day to the floor for final resolution including the debate on strike pay. Delegates from Local 249 supported the resolution to initiate Strike Pay beginning on day one but could not support the additional in-

crease to \$500 per week. It was our determination that the aggressive increase to \$400 plus medical insurance coverage and the elimination of the rule prohibiting working while on strike give the membership the ability to sustain a prolonged strike but also has the potential to create a serious financial strain on our strike fund. The additional cost would have even greater potential to negatively position the organization. Currently, the Strike and Defense fund has roughly \$830 million dollars. A sustained strike, at Ford for example with nearly 57,000 members, would cost upwards of 42 million dollars a week and this would not include any strike resource costs. This is an example of just one company and if you can envision a scenario with multiple companies out at the same time it is a legitimate concern that the fund could quickly become insolvent.

None of the decisions made by our delegates were easy, as I said sometimes, they were downright painful. In the end, though, we made progress that I am very proud of. We made some important changes to our Constitution; we showed our ability to exercise the democracy this great organization was built upon, and we were able to come to a consensus on some very difficult topics. To move forward, changes need to be made, and that starts with clear, transparent leadership that is willing to push through the barriers ahead of us to get us on the path to unity and strength where we belong.

# New Missouri law makes voting harder

By Wes Rogers

**T**here was no evidence of serious voter fraud in Missouri in 2020. Nor in 2018. Nor in 2016. By almost all accounts from elected Republican, elected Democrats, and everybody in between, Missouri's elections are fair and secure, and they have been for as long as anyone can remember. Everybody agrees that Donald Trump won Missouri by more than 15% and that Republican Governor Mike Parson won reelection by over 16%.

None of that stopped our legislature from passing HB 1878, which becomes law on August 28 and totally overhauls Missouri's elections to make them fair and secure.

Here are some of the more significant changes to the law that were included in the bill.

## Presidential Primaries

The bill eliminated Missouri's Presidential primary and creates instead a caucus system like they do in Iowa.

## Affiliated voters

One thing people don't realize about Missouri is that our voters are not registered with any party. You are not a "registered Democrat" or a "registered Republican" in Missouri. Not only that, on primary election day, you can pick the primary ballot for whichever party you choose. Under the new law, you can now officially register with a political party if you so choose, but you are not required to do so.

## Security checks

The law created several new "security checks" that were inspired by debunked conspiracies pushed by Mike Lindell who was previously known for selling pillows on cable television. If local election authorities do not follow the security checks, the local election authority risk losing funding. There has never been any evidence presented, including during House hearings in the summer of 2021 focused specially on this issue, that these new "security checks" will any further secure our already secure elections.

## Touch screen voting machines

Touch screen voting machines are now prohibited.

## Voter Registration

The most controversial piece of this bill creates limitations on somebody's ability to help other people register to vote. The bill requires people who choose to help register more than ten people to vote to report their activity to a government agent so that your name can go into a government database. It also bars paying people to register voters.

## Photo ID

In order to vote, voters will need to show a government-issued photo ID. If the voter cannot provide government-

issued ID, then they will be allowed to cast a provisional ballot. The ballot will only count if the voter returns later in the day with a government-issued photo ID or the election authorities are able to validate the provisional ballot by matching signatures to old voter records.

This disproportionately hurts older voters of color because many do not have a government-issued photo ID.

## No-Excuse Absentee Voting

The new law did create a two-week period where voters can cast an absentee ballot without needing an excuse like an upcoming vacation or a surgery. The votes must be cast in person and every county is limited to a single absentee voting location. This includes counties with big populations like Platte, Clay and Jackson. For example, if you live in Platte and want to vote early, you can but you will have to drive to Platte City to do it.

Missouri's courts have long held that requiring government-issued photo ID to vote violates the state Con-



Former State Rep. Wes Rogers speaks in solidarity with striking UAW members at the General Motors Fairfax Assembly Plant in Kansas City, Kan.

stitution. That's why the Senate made a compromise where if the courts invalidate the new voter ID law that the no-excuse absentee voting goes away with it. It's both or neither.

It is already against the law in Missouri for voting machines to be connected to the internet. That will continue to be illegal, which is good.

The bottom line is that the state

legislature chose to create a whole bunch of laws to make voting harder and more cumbersome for normal people. The legislature did this even though its members knew that our elections are already safe.

Wes Rogers is a former Missouri State Representative who is running for the City Council in Kansas City's 2nd District.

## Parson: Special Session won't include clarifying abortion law

By Mo. State Rep. Ashley Aune

**G**ov. Mike Parson won't expand a possible special session on tax cuts to include clarifying the scope of Missouri's extreme new anti-abortion law that has prompted confusion about whether birth control remains legal and what exactly constitutes a "medical emergency" that allows an abortion to be performed. Parson made his comments during a July 14 news conference in St. Louis, according to *Spectrum News*.

The new law took effect in June after the U.S. Supreme Court's far-right majority eliminated the constitutional right to an abortion that had existed for nearly a half-century. The Missouri law makes abortion a criminal offense in nearly all circumstances, including those involving rape or incest. Although the law contains an exception allowing abortion in "cases of medical emergency," there have been reports in Missouri and elsewhere about doctors delaying treatments for miscarriage and other conditions fatal to the fetus and dangerous to a mother's health due

to concerns over possible criminal prosecution.

The top Democratic leaders in the Missouri General Assembly on July 11 asked Parson to add the issue to his special session agenda to clear

Parson says Special Session won't clear up ambiguity in the law regarding whether medical providers or women could be prosecuted for prescribing, dispensing or using birth control under new abortion law.

up any ambiguity in the law regarding whether medical providers or women could be prosecuted for prescribing, dispensing or using birth control, as well as when a medical emergency

justifies performing an abortion.

The day before Parson shot down a special session on the subject, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services issued a fact sheet telling medical providers the agency can offer no guidance as to what is legal and what isn't and that it's up to local police, prosecutors and the Attorney General's Office to decide if the law is violated. The department's lack of straightforward guidance raised even more concerns.

In June, Parson announced his intention to call a special session later this year to enact additional income tax cuts but has given scant details on the proposed legislation and no indication when the session will take place. *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reported Parson met with House and Senate Republican leaders on July 19 to discuss the proposed session but that no agreements had been reached.



Local 249 activists Stephanie Taggart, kneeling front row, right to left, Shauncie Gray, Stephanie Simpson, Kaylee Nowland, Stephanie Henderson, Lynna, Kingston Wiley, and Bobby Anderson, second row, A.J. Hernandez, Chris Allinder, Regina Anderson, Tonya Hargriss, Sadie Bass, Rakisha Theiss, Lynn Brown, Gwendolyn Ind, Jay Bosler, Tylor Riley, back row, Gary Thomas, Demetrius Camp, Shanna Lamb, Dave Grant, Josh Curtis, Luke Taylor, Daryl Stewart, Darren Pippier, Greg Wolf, Chris Theiss distributed back to school supplies July 26 at the Claycomo Community Center. The Back to School event was sponsored by the union's Community Service Committee. Photo by Don Lehman,

# Local 249 sponsors back-to-school bash

*By Erica Eckart*

**F**or the last several years, Local 249's Community Service Committee has partnered with an area organization to do a back-to-school event. This year, Local 249 partnered up with the NKC school district, MoChip, Liberty Masonic and the Pleasant Valley Police department.

Local 249, like always, came out strong to help those in our community. We had members from CAP, Education, Community Service, Member to Member, Veterans, Chaplaincy and the Motorcycle committees.

"Backpacks and school supplies were given out to about 400-500 kids," said Jay Bosler, CAP Chairman and Sergeant at Arms. "We also had a few fun things like 249 balloons, face painting, cotton candy, popcorn and temporary tattoos sporting the UAW Local 249 wheel. Chaplaincy Committee Chairman Darrel Steward gave about 40 free haircuts. In my opinion, this is one of the most rewarding events we do, because we are investing in kids and their ability to learn. We do these events not for the pat on the back but because it's the right thing to do," said Bosler

"It's always a blessing to give to

the kids" said Daryl Steward, Chairman of the Chaplaincy Committee. "I felt honored to be able to give the children free haircuts and be able to see them smile and feel good about themselves. It's always better to give than receive and I'm grateful for that. I would like to thank the rest of the Chaplaincy Committee for the prayer, fellowship and volunteer work within the community."

Missouri's Masonic Children's Foundation, Liberty Lodge No. 31, Compass Lodge No. 120, Alpha Lodge NO. 659 and the Pleasant Valley Police Department hosted the MoChip child ID event, which is a comprehensive child identification program designed to give families a measure of protection against the ever increasing problem of missing and abducted children, which has been deemed by the national center for Exploited and Missing Children

(NCEMC) as "one of the most comprehensive child recovery programs in the nation".

The program consists of five major components, digital photographs, digital fingerprints, child information and emergency contacts, dental bite impressions, two laminated ID cards.

Together these five measures provide a powerful identification and recovery tool. The program uses an Amber Alert compatible computer disk to provide their child's critical information to the parents and the parents are armed with a single preprinted envelope that instructs authorities in the event of an emergency, something a parent in crisis would undoubtedly have trouble with, and a proactive measure to combat the time sensitivity involved in recovery.

Within a matter of minutes, the MoChip CD can be loaded into a computer directly from a police officer's automobile and entered into the Amber Alert System. The Missouri Freemasons bring this program to communities throughout the state as part of their

ongoing commitment to Missouri's children and families.

Amidst all the fun, the Clay County Sheriff's department displayed a SWAT tactical truck that kids were able to climb around in and explore as well as several squad cars with full access to try out the several siren buttons and lights. They also enjoyed a special visit from a police K-9 unit which brought out a pup in training for the kids to pet and visit with.

"I was very pleased with the outcome of this event," said Sade Bass, Chairwoman of the Community Service Committee. "We hope to do it even bigger next year. I want to give a huge thanks to every one of the standing committees for sending so many volunteers to help with the back-to-school bash, we couldn't have done it without them, they helped to make this day such a great success. Each volunteer was appreciated in every capacity that they've volunteered in and I'm so thankful that we have such a great membership and solidarity at Local 249."