

USW@Work

A Publication of the United Steelworkers

A Powerful Voice for Workers



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NURSES WIN STAFFING FIGHT 08

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“TO SAY WE’RE DISAPPOINTED IN THE ANNOUNCED DEAL BETWEEN U.S. STEEL AND NIPPON IS AN UNDERSTATEMENT, AS IT DEMONSTRATES THE SAME GREEDY, SHORTSIGHTED ATTITUDE THAT HAS GUIDED U.S. STEEL FOR FAR TOO LONG. REST ASSURED, OUR UNION WILL HOLD MANAGEMENT AT U.S. STEEL ACCOUNTABLE TO EVERY LETTER OF OUR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND OTHER EXISTING AGREEMENTS.” INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT DAVID MCCALL, DEC. 18, 2023

CURRENT



MEMBERS BREWING SUCCESS AT SCHELL

Workers in four separate USW units are part of each case of beer produced at Schell Brewing in New Ulm, Minn.

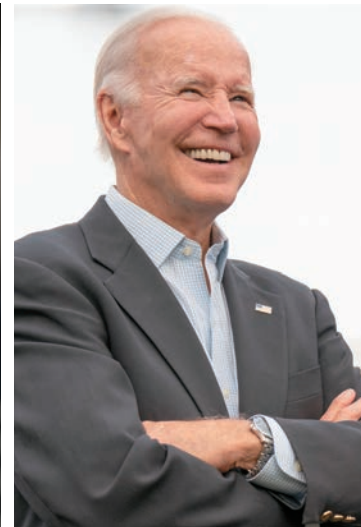
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USW@Work (ISSN 1931-6658) is published four times a year by the United Steelworkers AFL-CIO•CLC 60 Blvd. of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222. Subscriptions to non-members: \$12 for one year; \$20 for two years. Periodicals postage paid at Pittsburgh, PA and additional mailing offices.

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60 Blvd of the Allies
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USW@WORK
Volume 19/01
Winter 2024

Striking Workers Should Get Unemployment Benefits

Right now, there are only a few places in the United States where workers who are forced to go on strike can receive unemployment benefits from the state.

Lawmakers in some states are currently considering changing their rules to allow striking workers to access unemployment benefits.

This can be a huge difference-maker during a labor dispute. My fellow union members know that we don't take strikes lightly. When we strike, it's usually because our employers committed labor violations, pushed workers to the breaking point and left us no other choice.

That's why I'm hoping my fellow USW members will join me in pushing the lawmakers where they live to provide access to unemployment for workers on strike.

Striking workers often are facing off against billion-dollar companies that can simply try to outlast them financially. Unemployment benefits (which we, of course, pay into) can make all the difference, helping workers put food on the table, pay bills and keep fighting.

As more Americans join unions, and as they exercise their power to hold corporations accountable, this issue is going to be even more important. I would urge everyone to contact your lawmakers today and express your opinion on this issue.

*David Campbell
Local 675
Carson, Calif.*

Investing in NextGen Crucial For Growing Union

Why is the next generation important? The next generation should always aim to learn and grow from their current leaders' experiences and wisdom. This means we are responsible for bringing

in and mentoring those with the traits and drive needed to lead.

We all work hard to fight for our local members' and communities' needs, and this could mean nothing without setting up the next generation to continue this fight.

We always use the example of our local being like a family; we need to build up future leaders and set them up to succeed, which is what we should want for our children. The current generation will do great things. The next generation needs to be prepared to follow up on those accomplishments and take the labor movement to the next level.

As with every generation, the current leaders will one day retire and move on. The next generation will then take over, negotiate contracts, lead our locals, and take charge of the labor movement. If we are not prepared, then we are destined to fail.

Corporations are always trying to find ways to bust unions and take rights away from the working class. We can counter that by learning from our current leaders, being involved in our locals, and doing our due diligence to progress as a union and as individuals. I guess the question should be, why isn't the next generation important?

*Zack Mainhart (co-chair), Travis Laing (co-chair), Tim Denne, Tim Antonelli
Local 1557 NextGen Committee
Clairton, Pa.*

USW Members Must Stand Up for Veterans

I am a proud member of the USW, and also a proud member of the U.S. military – U.S. Air Force, 102nd Security Forces Squadron. I come from a military family, with a dad who was a Marine, a brother in the Army, and a son who is a Marine.

That's why I am so proud that the USW established the union's Veterans of Steel program to help union members advocate on behalf of veterans.

My father struggled with his finances, as well as with post-traumatic stress and other issues, before he passed in 2019. He was old school and often had no idea who to talk to. That's why Vets of Steel like me have been advocating for legislation to help veterans, like the law that recently passed in New York, which requires employers to notify workers about benefits and services available to veterans.

This kind of law would help people like my dad, as well as generations to follow. My dad had no idea what he was entitled to, and that isn't fair. A man who served 17 years in the military deserves to know what his benefits are.

When we send our brothers, sisters, sons and daughters to fight for our country, we should make it easy for them to transition back to civilian life and easy for them to get the benefits they are entitled to.

We owe it to the members of our military to stand up for them, when they are deployed and after they come home. That's why I would encourage all of my USW sisters and brothers to get involved in the Veterans of Steel program. Even if you're not a veteran, you and your fellow union members can fight for them.

When our troops raise their right hand and take that Oath of Enlistment, they give up their freedom. They sacrifice family, holidays, birthdays, graduations, weddings, births – the list goes on. When people sacrifice everything to protect this country, the least we can do is make sure they have easy access to the help they need.

*Tracy Gagliardi
Local 12012
Amesbury, Mass.*

STAY CONNECTED

We welcome correspondence from USW members, retirees and their families. Letters should be short and to the point. We reserve the right to edit for length. You can reach us via email at editor@usw.org or by mail at 60 Blvd. of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222.



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Watch us on YouTube

The Power OF OUR Union

On the Island of Puerto Rico, USW Members are Stepping up the Fight for Workers' Rights

Miguel Cruz spent 31 years as a union worker with Puerto Rico's electric power authority.

Although he reached an age at which he could retire for good, Cruz still serves as president of his unit and continues to champion the labor movement on the island of 3.3 million citizens, working alongside other USW members and prospective members to build worker power.

"This is my passion," Cruz said of his union work. "It isn't about money. It's about representation."

Stronger Together

The representation that Cruz fights for – what he calls "the power of our union" – is essential for the 1,000 USW members across Puerto Rico. That's a number Cruz believes could more than double in the next few years as multiple organizing drives begin to bear fruit on the island, an area about twice the size of the state of Delaware.

Sharon Pérez, Local 6135 president and journalist for GFR Media, said that extending the benefits of collective action to more workers in Puerto Rico will benefit everyone.

"When you're at the table, you're negotiating the future for our families," Pérez said. "There's no turning back."

With an amalgamated local that includes workers at Puerto Rico's largest newspaper as well as more industrial workplaces, Pérez faces the challenge of a diverse membership that is spread out geographically across the island.

For pressroom worker Agustín Santiago and many of his 120 USW siblings at GFR, the topics they typically discuss at the bargaining table – wages, benefits, health and safety, work-life balance – are the same as at other bargaining sessions. Other issues, however, are unique to a work force with a growing number of young, tech-savvy communicators in an ever-changing media landscape.

"We have to get more young members involved," Pérez said, "so they know the union work is worth it for them."

Organizing Efforts

Helping more workers – of all ages and industries – gain the benefits of unionism has been part of the USW's mission in Puerto Rico for more than five decades. However, that work has taken on a greater urgency in recent years.

Before becoming international secretary-treasurer in 2019, John Shinn served for seven and a half years as director of District 4, which includes Puerto Rico and nine northeastern U.S. states. As director, he began to shift more USW resources toward servicing and organizing members on the island, an effort that continued under his successors, including current Director David Wasiura.

"It's been clear for a long time that more workers in Puerto



Esteban Acevedo,
Arnaldo Rodríguez,
Sharon Pérez,
Iley Lopez,
Vladimir Salcedo



Rico want and deserve the benefits of unionism,” Shinn said. “With only about three percent of the private sector represented, the situation there offers tremendous opportunities for the labor movement to lift up the voices of working families across all sectors of the economy. Organizing more workers in Puerto Rico is good news for everyone on the island and beyond.”

Strengthening Bonds

Shinn and Wasiura recently joined International President David McCall, along with International Vice President Luis Mendoza, District 10 Director Bernie Hall and a handful of other USW leaders, on a weeklong trip to Puerto Rico to meet with members, visit workplaces, learn about workers’ issues, and strengthen the bond between members on the island and those on the mainland.

As part of that effort, Wasiura said, members in District 4 want to be attentive not just to the needs of workers, but those of people throughout the communities where they live.

“If we truly want to make a difference in people’s lives, that work can’t end when we walk out the door at the end of the day,” Wasiura said. “We

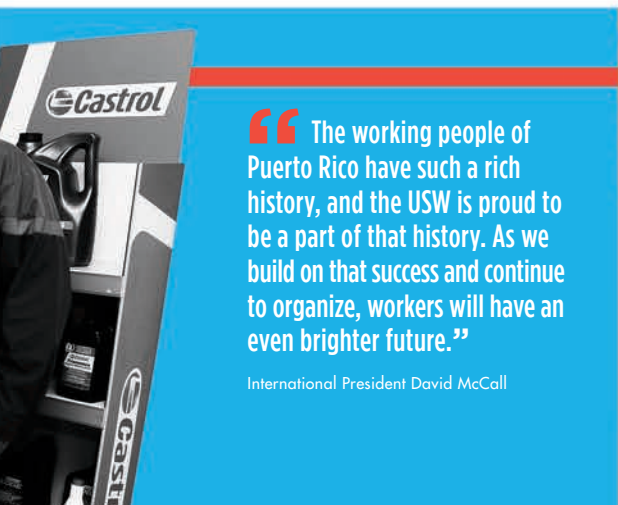
must be invested in the communities where workers live and focus on their well-being day in and day out.”

It was that approach that led Wasiura and other District 4 leaders to become supporters of the GoGo Foundation, an organization named in honor of a childhood cancer patient who passed away. The organization founded a clinic that provides comprehensive pediatric medical care to families in need.

Mayra Rivera, president of Local 8198, which represents municipal employees in Ponce, received a 2021 Multiplying Good award for her tireless activism on behalf of Puerto Rico’s workers and families, particularly in the wake of the devastation of Hurricane Maria six years ago, when she created a community alliance to bring supplies, support and hazard education to residents.

Rivera chose to donate her \$500 Multiplying Good prize to the GoGo Foundation, a decision that caught the attention of other leaders in her district and led them to get involved in the foundation’s fundraising.

“It was Mayra’s dedication and generosity that got the ball rolling,” said Wasiura, who joined USW leaders



“The working people of Puerto Rico have such a rich history, and the USW is proud to be a part of that history. As we build on that success and continue to organize, workers will have an even brighter future.”

International President David McCall



(Clockwise from top left) Efrain Montalban, Sara Del Valle, Ivette Espinoza, Raul Diaz, Nancy Arizmendi

for a tour of the GoGo Pediatric Institute facility last fall. “We hope that the USW’s partnership with the foundation continues for many years to come.”

Series of Setbacks

Despite the hard work of Rivera and many others across the island, some parts of Puerto Rico still have not fully recovered from the devastating effects of Maria, a Category 5 storm that tore through the area in September 2017. It was the region’s worst storm in more than 100 years, killing 3,000 and inflicting more than \$90 billion in damage.

Maria destroyed entire neighborhoods and laid waste to much of the island’s electrical grid. A lack of resources and a woefully inadequate federal relief effort only intensified those problems. Five years later, Hurricane Fiona, though not as deadly, brought with it days of massive flooding and more power outages.

For much of the time between those two storms, Puerto Ricans faced a series of earthquakes as well as another deadly crisis – the COVID-19 pandemic.

While that series of setbacks dealt devastating blows to the people of Puerto Rico, the island’s significant

financial and infrastructure problems pre-dated those disasters. More than a decade of debt-related austerity, a 2017 bankruptcy and widespread poverty also made the island’s population vulnerable.

So far, the Biden administration’s Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act has earmarked nearly \$700 million in funding for projects in Puerto Rico over 10 years, with more to come.

“Ensuring a strong future for the people of Puerto Rico depends on modernizing infrastructure, providing more strong, family-supporting jobs, and making sure the island is better prepared the next time a disaster strikes,” said Mendoza, the first USW international vice president of Puerto Rican descent. “These investments also will provide a significant economic boost to Puerto Rico’s working families and ultimately benefit every resident.”

Mendoza was one of about 20 USW leaders and activists whose stories were included in a USW-produced Spanish-language book “De Acero” (or “Of Steel”) – United Steelworkers En Puerto Rico.”

The publication – meant to be circulated widely to members on the island – was just one part of an effort by USW



District 10 Director Bernie Hall, International President David McCall and International Vice President Luis Mendoza

leaders and activists to educate themselves and other workers in Puerto Rico about the USW’s history and to ensure that the voices of Steelworkers are leading the way in strengthening the union’s presence on the island.

Mariel Cruz, who recently became the first woman president of Local 6871, was one member who shared her story in the book.

Cruz, also District 4 Women of Steel coordinator, said the most important thing union members can do is learn about their rights and how to fight for them.

“You have to educate,” she said. “That is the key to everything, to educate and sow the seed for just causes, if we want to have a broad and powerful trade union movement.”

Another story was that of Ernesto Sepulveda Rivera of Local 6588, who produces luxury hand-made carpets for V’Soske Inc.

Those USW-made carpets can be found in the White House, the Vatican, and in the homes of some of the wealthiest people on the planet.

Before he went to work at V’Soske, Rivera already knew the collective power of the USW



“If we truly want to make a difference in people’s lives, that work can’t end when we walk out the door at the end of the day. We must be invested in the communities where workers live and focus on their well-being day in and day out.”

District 4 Director David Wasiura



“Ensuring a strong future for the people of Puerto Rico depends on modernizing infrastructure, providing more strong, family-supporting jobs, and making sure the island is better prepared the next time a disaster strikes.”

International Vice President
Luis Mendoza



through stories from his father and grandfather, both of whom made carpets for V’Soske and were proud USW members.

Union Proud

USW members who work at Peerless Oil & Chemicals, Inc., outside of Ponce, express similar pride in the work they do, and in their USW connection. The workers there manufacture and distribute Castrol brand lubricants, detergents, and other petrochemical products at a sprawling site on the southern coast of the island.

Laborer Vladimir Salcedo, who has been a USW member at Peerless for more than 12 years, said he is thankful the union is there to ensure that he and other workers earn fair wages and benefits that allow them to take care of their families, and that they have the equipment necessary to make them safer at work.

“Thanks to the union, we have the PPE we need,” Salcedo said.

Knowing that he and his co-workers have a voice on the job is the most important reason to support the union, said mechanic Esteban Acevedo.

“We have a stable salary that we can count on,” Acevedo said. “And we have someone to stand up for us.”

The USW has a long history of standing up for workers on the island, despite the relatively small number of members there compared to other parts of the United States. That is a situation that members hope they can improve in the coming years as the political climate shifts in favor of unions, and the USW organizes across a number of sectors, including chemicals, pharmaceuticals, paper, and other manufacturing sites.

Over the past year, USW members have held training sessions for rank-and-file organizers and launched an effort to reinforce to workers what it means to be a Steelworker by convening focus groups, seminars, meetings and other educational efforts.

“The working people of Puerto Rico have such a rich history, and the USW is proud to be a part of that,” said International President David McCall. “As we build on that success and continue to organize, workers will have an even brighter future.”

‘The Fight is Coming’

The fallout from Puerto Rico’s

bankruptcy led to a push to privatize utilities such as power generation and distribution. That was part of what led Miguel Cruz’s former union, Unión de Empleados Profesionales Independiente (UEPI), to affiliate with the USW in March 2023.

Former UEPI members serve various roles as instrument technicians, construction inspectors and civil engineers.

Miguel Cruz said the USW’s effective representation of thousands of workers in energy and municipal government drove the decision to join the USW.

“We knew about the work they achieved representing thousands of workers in the energy sector,” he said.

He said the USW was attractive to the members of the formerly independent union because workers were able to maintain their identity and autonomy, while also growing their power by seeking out others to join the fight.

Puerto Rico’s effort to modernize its electrical grid to make it less vulnerable to weather makes the energy sector a hot spot for union organizing.

“As the transition to the private sector happens, the fight is coming,” Cruz said.



USW leaders meet with staff members during a tour of the GoGo Pediatric Institute in Ponce, Puerto Rico.



NURSES WIN

Members
Overwhelmingly Approve
Contract to End Strike,
Raise Standards
at RWJ Hospital

STAFFING FIGHT



Nurses who work at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Jersey voted overwhelmingly in December to ratify a new contract that ended a four-month strike and established staffing standards to protect workers and patients.

Local 4-200 President Judy Danella credited the solidarity of the local union's 1,700 members, as well as the support of other union members and the New Brunswick community, with helping to bring about the groundbreaking agreement that ended the nurses' unfair labor practice strike.

"This contract would not have been possible if the nurses hadn't stood together and demanded what our patients deserve," said Danella. "This campaign has always been about safety and quality care, and we are ready to get back to work doing what we love."

Return to Work

Nurses began returning to work in early January under new staffing rules and enforcement mechanisms to help ensure that the hospital maintains safe nurse-to-patient levels, as well as infrastructure to facilitate greater communication between front-line nurses and the hospital administration.

"We are very excited to go back to work with those rules," Danella said. "It's a start. We are the only contract that I know of in the state of New Jersey with these staffing ratios."

Under the agreement, the hospital also will add 70 registered nurse positions, effective May 1, 2024. Those positions will be a mixture of full-time and part-time employees.

"We are particularly proud that this contract includes accountability and communication, which will ensure that staffing will remain a top priority moving forward," Danella said.

International Visit

The nurses got a lift in their fight from workers across the world. In late August, USW members who were attending the Congress of UNI Global Union in Philadelphia led a delegation of 38 workers from 16 countries to join the Local 4-200 picket line.

In addition, the RWJ nurses received strong support from their fellow USW members across the country as

well as workers in their own backyard. Students and unionized faculty members at Rutgers University offered continuous support, as did members of the New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA), which includes workers who live just a short drive or train ride from the RWJ New Brunswick facility.

"We should not have to strike to win common sense solutions to protect our patients and communities," said Nancy Hagans NYSNA president. "It is the responsibility of our government to enact policies that will protect us."

New York nurses successfully pushed their state legislators to enact such policies, which went into effect in January 2023. Members of Local 4-200 have long been advocating for New Jersey to adopt similar safe staffing rules.

Staffing Fight

Last spring, before the strike began, USW members joined hundreds of other health care workers for a large rally in Trenton urging state lawmakers to pass measures similar to the New York law.

"Quite simply, safe staffing is good for patients and good for workers," said International Vice President Kevin Mapp, who oversees the USW's health care sector, which includes more than 50,000 workers across North America. "Health care workers put themselves on the line every day because they love what they do. Safe staffing improves patient outcomes and reduces burnout and turnover for nurses."

Danella promised that, following the victory at RWJ, the fight would continue for safe staffing across New Jersey and the United States.

"Now we'll take safe staffing to the next level," she said. "We will continue to try to get the state of New Jersey to pass the safe staffing bill."

As the strike neared the three-month mark in late October, USW members and other health care workers packed a nearby Rutgers University auditorium as U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont led a Senate committee hearing on safe hospital staffing.

"Nurses at Robert Wood Johnson and workers all over this country want better wages and better benefits, but that is not the primary reason for the

strike," said Sanders, chair of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. "What nurses have told me, and I've had the opportunity on several occasions to sit down and talk with these nurses, is that what this strike has everything to do with is the safety of their patients."

Strong Contract

In addition to delivering on the nurses' safe staffing priorities, the new three-year agreement includes annual wage increases, limits health care costs and boosts retirement benefits.

Though the fight was a difficult one for members, it also brought them together like never before, Danella said.

"People that you would never know, people you met on the picket line, we formed little families along the way," she said. "Some days, being on the picket line, it gave people the boost they needed to continue."

Now, Local 4-200 will shift the fight for safe staffing from the picket lines in New Brunswick to the halls of New Jersey government.

"It just kind of started a movement," Danella said. "It has been 20 years in the making, but I'm hopeful that it's taken to the next level. Every nurse and every patient in the state of New Jersey deserves safe staffing."



Check out the USW's *Solidarity Works* podcast on union health care workers who are making safety a priority. Find that and other episodes by visiting usw.to/podcast.





Brewing

LOCAL SUCCESS 11-118

USW MEMBERS TURN OUT HIGH-QUALITY BEER AT HISTORIC MINNESOTA COMPANY

Customers who purchase beer from Minnesota's August Schell Brewing are getting far more than just a high-quality, union-crafted beverage.

In each case, buyers get a package of top-to-bottom USW-made products, including the beer, the boxes, the bottles – even the sand used to make the glass. Down the line, USW members ensure customers receive the highest quality merchandise on the market.

"It all starts in the brew hall, and we follow it right on through to the package on the dock," Eric Stade, president of Local 11-118, said of the brewery workers' dedication to making top-of-the-line suds.

Stade's local, which represents the approximately 25 hourly workers at the Schell brewing site in New Ulm, is one

of four USW units involved in producing the contents of those cases of Schell's beer. The others include Local 1259, which makes boxes for PCA, Local 129M, which produces bottles for Anchor Glass, and Local 460G, which supplies the sand used in the glassmaking process. All four are located in Minnesota.

Historic Location

The Schell brewery, which sits along the Cottonwood River in the small, picturesque town of New Ulm, is the oldest brewery in the Midwest, and the second-oldest in the country. The company, founded by German immigrant August Schell in 1860, is still owned and operated by Schell's descendants. The charming 22-acre worksite resembles a Victorian-era

German village, giving visitors the feeling they've been transported back in time.

The company regularly celebrates that heritage with annual Bock Fest and Oktoberfest events, while maintaining an on-site museum, open to the public, that tells the colorful story of the brewery's history.

Inside the production facility, the beer-making process is far from old-fashioned. USW members combine old-school recipes with new technologies to create an award-winning lineup of beers. The Schell brand is a legacy that workers hope to uphold for generations to come.

Stade, who has worked at the brewery for more than 20 years, said he takes pride in knowing that he's contributing a chapter to that story.

“This is my little thumbprint on the continuation of something,” he said. “That’s kind of neat.”

Dedicated to Quality

Like Stade, the other two dozen or so USW members at the Schell site take similar pride in their work, whether their role is in brewing, maintenance, bottling, distribution or the warehouse.

“The pride runs far deeper than just the family,” said company Vice President Kyle Marti, a sixth-generation descendant of founder August Schell. “We are very lucky to have the employees we have here.”

The family puts their company’s future directly in those dedicated workers’ hands, entrusting them with century-old recipes and encouraging them to develop new beer flavors of their own creation.

Brewer Jordan Walls, who started working at Schell in September of 2022, created the company’s peanut butter porter, one of the brewery’s more popular limited-edition flavors.

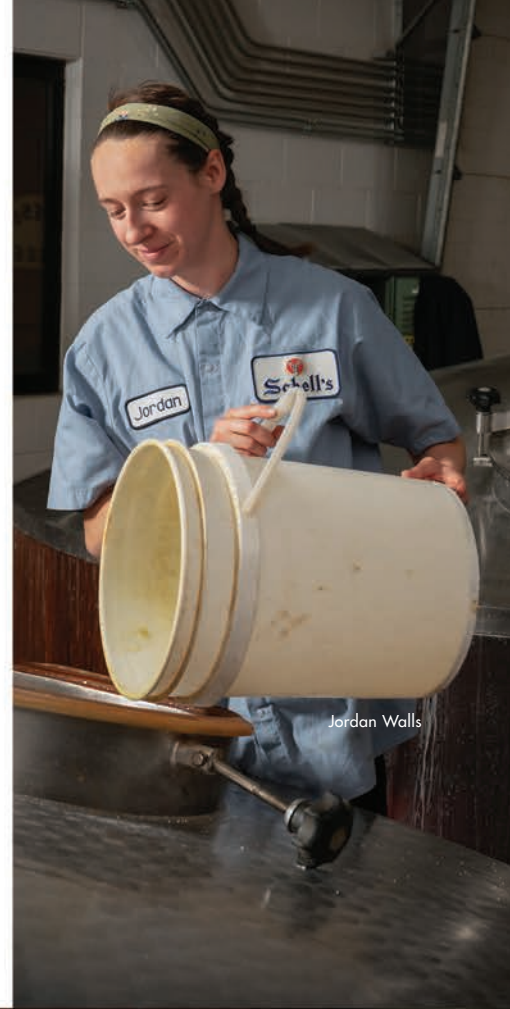
Extensive Lineup

Walls and the other USW members at Schell put in five- or six-day weeks, producing between 6,500 and 7,500 cases per day, as well as kegs. During a recent *USW@Work* visit to the site, the brewery had 19 varieties of beer available in the public tap house, along with two non-alcoholic sodas. One of those, the 1919 draft root beer, is a throwback to when the company had to survive Prohibition by selling root beer and other non-alcoholic beverages.

Schell’s offerings are available for purchase in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Nebraska and North and South Dakota.

Many of the workers at Schell are also regular customers, sometimes stopping in the tap house at the end of their shifts to socialize with co-workers before heading home. The large room, resembling an old German beer hall, is also where Local 11-118 members gather for their union meetings.

On weekends, the taproom, and the adjacent outdoor beer garden, are packed with locals and tourists sampling Schell’s craft brews and soaking



Jordan Walls



David Widner

“It all starts in the brew hall, and we follow it right on through to the package on the dock.”

Eric Stade, Local 11-118 president



Dave Reinarts



Eric Stade



(From left) Staff Representative Justin Recla, District 11 Director Cathy Drummond, International Vice President Emil Ramirez, District 11 Sub-Director Brian Ecker

in the atmosphere, which includes peacocks, deer and other wildlife roaming the grounds.

One of Schell's products, its Northeast amber lager, has become so popular locally that local distributors once had two- to three-week waiting lists for customers. The company eventually ramped up production to catch up with the growing demand.

Partners with USW

Marti said he was proud of the fact that the family-owned company has a strong partnership with its small USW work force, pointing out that negotiations for their most recent contract took 45 minutes, with only two proposals passing across the table between the two sides before they reached a tentative agreement.

"These are great people," he said, gesturing toward USW members at work. "People come here with the idea that it's a lifetime job."

Many of the workers at Schell express a similar level of respect for their employers. Production worker and soon-to-be brewer David Widner said the good wages and benefits at Schell allowed him to buy a home, and his union contract provides him with a sense of security.

"I've always wanted to work for a company that's morally sound," said Widner. "There's a lot of honor and pride in working here."

District 11 Director Cathy Drummond said that USW members should be proud of their history at Schell as they look forward to continuing the tradition of brewing the highest quality products for the next generation.

"Our union has a proud history of bargaining with employers to improve working conditions for members without compromising the viability of the company and sacrificing job security," Drummond said. "August Schell is clearly committed to keep brewing and providing good, union jobs in New Ulm, and USW members are excited to be part of continuing the tradition."

In addition to the pride they feel, the small, close-knit work force at Schell also genuinely seems to enjoy their jobs.

As Slade, the local president, put it, "there's a lot worse things you could be doing than making beer."



Local 11-118 is one of four Minnesota USW units involved in producing the contents of a single case of Schell's beer.



LOCAL 460G

Covia

Le Sueur, Minn.

Supplies sand for the glass.



LOCAL 129M

Anchor Glass

Shakopee, Minn.

Produces the glass bottles.



LOCAL 11-118

August Schell Brewing

New Ulm, Minn.

Brews the beer.



LOCAL 1259

Packaging Corporation of America

St. Cloud, Minn.

Makes the boxes.



Dar Kjelskus



Ryan Maher



Pat Davis

As the first craft brewery in Minnesota, Schell and its workers have always been on the forefront of the brewing industry. Today, the company maintains a collaborative relationship with its union work force, even encouraging USW members there to create new beer flavors.

Members Ratify WestRock Contract

NEW MASTER AGREEMENT COVERS 5,500 PAPERWORKERS IN 24 STATES

Members at more than four dozen WestRock locations across 24 states voted in December to ratify a new four-year master agreement covering more than 5,500 USW members.

The agreement, which members ratified by a more than 3-to-1 margin through mail-in ballots, covers paperworkers at 15 mills and 36 converter plants.

Aggressive Agenda

International Vice President Luis Mendoza, who leads bargaining in the union's paper sector, credited members for setting an aggressive bargaining agenda and demonstrating unwavering solidarity despite challenging circumstances.

"This bargaining team was determined to win a contract that would create stability and security for

members now and into the future," Mendoza said. "And they achieved that goal by working together."

The new master agreement went into effect on Jan. 1, 2024, and covers contracts with scheduled expirations through the end of 2027. The first year of the agreement includes a 3.25 percent wage increase, with a 3 percent wage increase in each subsequent year.

The master agreement covers workers at WestRock mills and converter plants in Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Best Deal in Years

Member Tim Cooks,

chief steward for Local 819 in Fresno, Calif., has worked for WestRock for 17 years and said it was the best agreement he's seen during his tenure with the company.

"All in all, we are moving in the right direction," said Cooks.

In addition to raising wages, the contract held the line on health care costs and provided members with significant improvements to retirement contributions and vacation.

"In this environment, this was as good a deal as we could have gotten," said Billy Smith, president of Local 9-0425 in Roanoke Rapids, N.C.

In addition to the across-the-board financial gains, the contract contained no concessions and eliminated a two-tier wage system that members had made it a priority to abolish.

The agreement also

improved life insurance and short-term disability benefits, while accelerating benefits for new hires.

Smith said that eliminating two-tier wages and improving benefits – particularly for newer workers – would improve members' lives while also strengthening the union.

"That's a big deal," Smith said. "We brought a lot of people up, and that's what we're here to do."

New Ownership

An added challenge that members faced as negotiations got underway was the announcement of a proposed merger of WestRock with Smurfit Kappa, one of the largest producers of containerboard in Europe, with additional operations in Mexico, Central America and South America.

Smurfit Kappa announced in September that



it had reached an agreement to acquire WestRock, with a plan to close the transaction in mid-2024.

Mendoza said that the union still has concerns about the planned merger, which would make the new company one of the largest, if not the largest paper and packaging company in the world by revenue.

“This transaction raises questions for workers, including who will be leading the combined company into the future, how they will manage their work force, and how the results could affect USW members,” Mendoza said.

The USW’s agreement with WestRock does include a successorship clause that requires any new owners to act in accordance with the terms of the union’s existing collective bargaining agreements.

SAVE THE DATE

PAPER CONFERENCE

AUSTIN
TEXAS



AUG. 5-8 2024

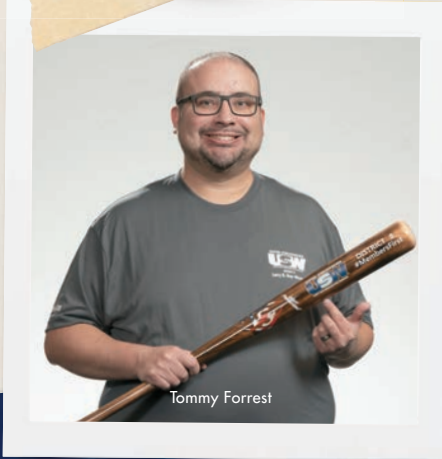
The USW will hold the 2024 National Paper Bargaining Conference from Aug. 5 to Aug. 8 in Austin, Texas.

The conference marks the first time in six years that USW paperworkers will gather in person to network, learn, build solidarity and, importantly, set the union’s National Paper Bargaining Policy. Check online for more information about the conference, including registration, hotel and travel.

[USW.ORG/EVENTS](https://usw.org/events)

HIT A HOME RUN WITH

Union-Made BASEBALL BATS



Tommy Forrest

WHO THEY ARE
LOCAL 1693-07

WHERE THEY ARE
LOUISVILLE, KY.

WHAT THEY DO
**MAKE WOODEN LOUISVILLE
SLUGGER BASEBALL BATS**

#USWMade is a feature focusing on products made by USW members that consumers can purchase in stores or online.

Follow the #USWMade hashtag on social media and check out the #USWMade playlist on YouTube to learn about other products made by USW members. If your local makes a product that you would like to feature in *USW@Work*, send an email to: editor@usw.org.

As Major League Baseball players prepare to head to Florida and Arizona for spring training this February, USW members at the Hillerich & Bradsby factory in Kentucky are already hard at work making Louisville Slugger bats during one of their busiest times of the year.

“From mid-December to the start of the season, that’s our busiest time for ballplayer bats,” said Unit President Tommy Forrest, who estimated that the factory, on average, turns out 100 to 200 ballplayer bats daily.

Forrest also serves as the recording secretary of amalgamated Local 1693, which, in addition to about three dozen members at the Slugger factory, represents workers at American Synthetic Rubber Co., Hussey Copper, Conco Inc., Bruce Fox Inc. and the Diageo beverage company, among other workplaces.

The wooden bats that Hillerich & Bradsby workers produce for parent company Wilson Sporting Goods are among the most well-known sports equipment in the country, wielded by some of the most productive players past and present, from Babe Ruth and Ted Williams to Ronald Acuña Jr. and Christian Yelich.

While the major league bats the workers produce are the most visible, they are just a small part of the factory’s output. The company produces more than 2,000 bats per day for retail sale and more than 2,000 miniature bats that are often used for ballpark giveaways and other promotions. Customers can purchase bats at Slugger.com

or at sporting goods outlets.

“If it’s a wooden baseball bat with ‘Louisville Slugger’ on it, it is made at our facility,” Forrest said.

USW members inspect, test, sand and finish each bat before it leaves the factory, making sure that each item conforms to player specifications as well as the company’s high-quality standards.

“We’ll try to make the bat fit the ballplayer the best,” Forrest said. “They swing the bats so much, they can tell minor differences.”

A second-generation Hillerich & Bradsby worker whose father spent 43 years at the factory, Forrest said he takes pride in knowing that he and his co-workers are part of a tradition that dates back to the 1880s.

“It’s a source of pride to know that you got to touch something that somebody’s using in the World Series,” Forrest said. “You really can’t help but to be proud that you helped make a part of history.”



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

The Right to Union Representation

When a member of management starts asking questions about an incident that happened at work, it can be a scary situation for any worker, but especially for a new employee or for someone who might be new to the union and unaware of what rights they have as a member.

Among the most important rights that union members in the United States have are known as “Weingarten Rights.” These rights resulted from a 1975 Supreme Court decision in which the court determined that union workers are entitled to union representation when management asks questions that could potentially result in discipline for the union member. In such cases, the following rules must apply:

- The union member or members must make clear their request for union representation before or during the interview, and management cannot punish a worker for making such a request.
- After the union member makes the request for representation, management can grant the request and allow a union representative to join the meeting, deny the request and give the union member the option of ending the meeting, or deny the request and end the meeting themselves.

Importantly, workers are protected and can file unfair labor practice charges with the National Labor Relations Board if management attempts to punish them for seeking union representation or if management continues to ask questions without union representation present.

Many USW locals provide printed cards, known as “Weingarten cards” that members can use if they are called to a meeting they think could result in discipline for them. Members who don’t have a Weingarten card of their own can cut out the bottom of this page and use it in the event they are called to such a meeting.

Some union contracts also contain language that requires management to inform union members of their Weingarten rights, but this is not always the case.

WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union representative, officer, or steward be present at the meeting. Without representation, I choose not to participate in this investigation.

The Know Your Rights is a USW@Work feature intended to help USW members learn more about their rights in the workplace and how to exercise them. For more information about Weingarten rights and other important information about your rights as a union member, visit education.usw.org.

McCall Unveils Ambitious Roadmap for 2024

International President David McCall's ambitious agenda for the year includes welcoming many new members into the union, expanding the nation's manufacturing capacity and safeguarding workers' rights while continuing to build the next generation of USW leaders.

McCall unveiled his roadmap for 2024 during a recent conversation with *USW@Work*. Here are the key takeaways, in his own words.

Growing the USW

More and more workers want to join unions, and the USW is uniquely positioned to help them because of the union's success in representing members across so many industries.

"Our ongoing organizing efforts touch every sector of the economy, including new and evolving fields.

Among other examples, we're assisting workers at the EOS zinc battery factory in Turtle Creek, Pa., the Bobcat plant in Litchfield, Minn., and the Redwood Materials complex in Carson City, Nev., as well as at three Corning locations in North Carolina," McCall said.

"In some cases, we're working with employers hoping to capitalize on the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the Inflation Reduction Act and the CHIPS and Science Act – legislation that the USW worked with Congress and President Joe Biden to enact.

"Companies want our assistance in leveraging a share of these historic investments. We're eager to help them create good-paying jobs, but we'll only support them if they pledge to respect workers' organizing and bargaining rights."

In addition, the USW achieved a first contract at Kumho Tire in Macon, Ga., last year and won a major organizing vote at the Blue Bird electric bus company in Fort Valley, Ga. McCall pledged that the union would continue helping workers organize rubber and tire plants, along with other workplaces in the South.

"The USW is everybody's union. Thousands more workers in education, health care and professional sports,

among other industries, also plan to vote on joining the USW this year."

Winning Strong Contracts

Legislation like the IIJA is already boosting the economy and helping the USW achieve good contracts in numerous industries, including steel, mining and paper.

"We're not only negotiating good wages and benefits but breaking new ground with domestic violence leave, the eradication of two-tier wage systems and the narrowing of wage gaps, as well as safe staffing initiatives in health care," McCall said.

“

The USW is everybody's union. Thousands more workers in education, health care and professional sports, among other industries, also plan to vote on joining the USW this year.”

International President David McCall

"We intend to continue that momentum this year as we enter bargaining with numerous key employers, including Allegheny Technologies Inc. (ATI), Ahlstrom-Munksjo, Ardagh, Conti-Tech, Domtar, the International Paper converters, Kaiser Permanente, Neenah Paper and Owens-Illinois.

"Some of these companies have a history of attempting to deny workers a voice and their fair share. But with our members' support and solidarity, we'll continue to negotiate contracts that raise the bar for workers across the country."

Leveraging the Ballot Box

McCall pointed out that 2024 is a crucial election year, and union fami-

lies need to leverage the power of the polls to protect and advance workers' rights.

"Within a couple of months, we're going to resume the 'Your Union, Your Voice' program and hold meetings in every U.S. district, in person and online, to listen to members' priorities and discuss where the candidates stand on the issues most important to us," he said.

The future of workplace safety, pro-worker legislation, trade enforcement, job creation, manufacturing capacity, Buy America policy and labor rights all hinge on which candidates workers choose, at the local, state and national levels.

"Your Union, Your Voice' gives us an opportunity to rally around the candidates who share our priorities," McCall said. "We don't care whether they're 'R's' or 'D's.' We want them to be 'W's.' We want them to stand with workers."

Fighting for Fair Trade

McCall noted that many governments around the world subsidize the production of materials and goods, then dump them at artificially low prices in U.S. markets.

"This isn't just unfair, it's illegal, and the USW seeks justice for workers through anti-dumping and countervailing duties on the cheaters' products," he said. "We recently won trade cases helping to level the playing field for our members in the tin mill products and off-road tire industries, and the union still has another dozen or so petitions pending before the U.S. Commerce Department and International Trade Commission."

While enforcement of trade laws saves vital industries, the USW believes that it also provides opportunities to go further – to create new jobs, expand manufacturing, build out supply lines, and generate increased demand for American-made goods. In the coming months, the USW plans to launch a new initiative pursuing these kinds of opportunities.

Building Capacity

To continue all of this work, it's essential to build the capacity of our union. McCall pledged that the USW would educate members, train activists, build power, and develop the next generation of leaders in the coming year.

The NextGen conference will bring hundreds of young and emerging union leaders to Pittsburgh in March for training, actions and empowerment.

Then, in May, USW and SOAR activists will gather for the Rapid Response, Legislative & Policy Conference in Washington, D.C., where members will lobby Congress and policymakers on bills important to workers.

"We want to build on our legislative successes of the past few years and push legislation across the finish line to protect health care workers from violence, make it easier for workers to form unions, end tax breaks for union-busting, and restart the Trade Adjustment Assistance program, ensuring workers harmed by unfair trade have support to start over," McCall said. "In addition, we're making plans for another mining conference, our second in three years, to be held in Minneapolis in July. The IIJA and CHIPS and Science Act create new markets for copper, iron ore, nickel, platinum, and other raw materials that USW members produce, and it's critical to maximize the impact of these once-in-a-generation investments."

The USW reached a memorandum of cooperation with NewRange Copper Nickel LLC to create union mining jobs in northeastern Minnesota. The mining conference will bring together USW members from the United States and Canada to discuss additional organizing prospects, bargaining, health and safety, and other key issues.

Moving Forward Together

"This will be an incredibly busy and important year for the union," McCall said. "But we'll tackle the challenges together and leverage the power of solidarity to build a brighter future for working people. That's the union way."

"This will be an incredibly busy and important year for the union. But we'll tackle the challenges together and leverage the power of solidarity to build a brighter future for working people. That's the union way."

International President David McCall



PLANNED U.S. STEEL SALE MEETS ANGER, SKEPTICISM

USW VOWS TO FIGHT TO MAKE SURE COMPANY LIVES UP TO OBLIGATIONS



USW leaders and lawmakers across the political spectrum were united in voicing their disapproval when U.S. Steel announced in December that a Houston-based subsidiary of Japan's Nippon Steel Corp. was planning to purchase the iconic American company for \$15 billion.

"To say we're disappointed in the announced deal between U.S. Steel and Nippon is an understatement," International President David McCall said when the bid was announced on Dec. 18. "It demonstrates the same greedy, shortsighted attitude that has guided U.S. Steel for far too long."

Fighting for Jobs, Benefits

While the union voiced its strong objections to the planned acquisition, McCall assured members and retirees that the union would fight with every tool at its disposal to protect good jobs, benefits and retirement plans.

"Our union intends to exercise the full measure of our contract to ensure that whatever happens next with U.S. Steel, we protect the good, family-sustaining jobs we bargained," McCall said. "We also will urge government regulators to carefully scrutinize this acquisition."

Nippon Steel is Japan's largest, and the world's fourth-largest, steel company, with an annual output of more than

44 million metric tons. By comparison, U.S. Steel's output in 2022 was about 14.5 million metric tons.

Supporting Cliffs Bid

McCall pointed out that U.S. Steel management failed to consult with USW members before moving ahead with its plans.

"Neither U.S. Steel nor Nippon reached out to our union regarding the deal, which is in itself a violation of our partnership agreement that requires U.S. Steel to notify us of a change in control or business conditions," McCall said. "We remained open throughout this process to working with U.S. Steel to keep this iconic American company domestically owned and operated, but instead, it chose to push aside the concerns of its dedicated work force and sell to a foreign-owned company."

In January, less than a month after U.S. Steel announced the planned sale, the USW filed grievances against the company, in part because of management's failure to live up to its numerous obligations to the union.

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown of Ohio agreed and said that if U.S. Steel must be sold, the winning bid should go to Ohio-based Cleveland Cliffs, which announced an effort, with the strong support of the USW, to purchase U.S. Steel after the

123-year-old company announced in August that it was accepting bids.

"Nippon and U.S. Steel have insulted American steelworkers by refusing to give them a seat at the table and raised grave concerns about their commitment to the future of the American steel industry," Brown said.

In a letter to members at U.S. Steel, McCall and District 7 Director Mike Millsap noted that the company has a history of broken commitments, including shutting down steelmaking and other operations at Great Lakes and Granite City. U.S. Steel also broke a promise of more than \$1 billion in new and updated technology in Western Pennsylvania, and instead purchased Big River Steel in Arkansas.

U.S. Steel has shut down the East Chicago Tin Mill, the UPI Tin Mill and idled tin operations at the Gary plant. In addition, the company shut down Lone Star Steel, the Lorain, Ohio, plant and coke batteries in Clairton, Pa. Rather than changing course, Nippon intends to follow the current U.S. Steel business plan, McCall said.

National Security Concerns

In addition to the issue of jobs, shifting ownership of U.S. Steel, once the world's most valuable company, outside the United States raises na-



“Nippon and U.S. Steel have insulted American steelworkers by refusing to give them a seat at the table and raised grave concerns about their commitment to the future of the American steel industry.”

U.S. Sen. Sherrrod Brown, Ohio



tional security concerns, given the need for steel in infrastructure, military and defense applications.

For their part, many officials reacted with similar skepticism when they learned of U.S. Steel’s plans, echoing the USW’s concerns about jobs as well as economic and national security.

U.S. Sen. John Fetterman of Pennsylvania, a longtime USW ally whose home sits across the street from the entrance to U.S. Steel’s Edgar Thompson Works in Braddock, Pa., said he would work vigorously to prevent the sale.

“It’s absolutely outrageous that U.S. Steel has agreed to sell themselves to a foreign company. Steel is always about security – both our national security and the economic security of our steel communities,” Fetterman said. “I am committed to doing anything I can do, using my platform and my position, to block this foreign sale.”

Fetterman’s fellow Pennsylvanian, Sen. Bob Casey, also voiced strong objections to the sale, as did a group of Republican lawmakers who wrote a letter to Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen asking her to actively oppose the acquisition.

The government “can and should block the acquisition of U.S. Steel by NSC, a company whose allegiances clearly lie with a foreign state and whose record in the United States is deeply

flawed,” a group of three conservative Republican senators wrote to Yellen.

Dan Simmons, president of Local 1899 at U.S. Steel’s Granite City Works in Illinois, said he initially hoped the potential sale would bring a “fresh vision” to the company, but the Nippon acquisition did not present that opportunity.

“This entire process was not conducted as it should have been, but rather in typical U.S. Steel fashion of keeping the union in the dark,” Simmons said. “We now find ourselves facing a new owner with the same U.S. Steel leadership and business plan that, frankly, got us here in the first place.”

In addition, McCall said, trusting an iconic U.S. company to overseas control raises concerns about fair trade. The United States currently imposes 12 different anti-dumping tariffs on Japanese steel, McCall said.

U.S. Steel, he said, “has been an active participant in these anti-dumping cases. We should question if Nippon Steel gets control of U.S. Steel, it could use its status as a ‘domestic producer’ to work against the trade cases from the inside,” he said. “Nippon Steel could order U.S. Steel to change its long-standing position.”

Regulatory Review

Still, the agreement between U.S.

Steel and Nippon is not yet a done deal. Federal regulators, including the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, which includes leaders from the Departments of Defense, State, Homeland Security and Justice, will review the bid, as will President Joe Biden.

Lael Brainard, director of the National Economic Council, said the president “believes the purchase of this iconic American-owned company by a foreign entity – even one from a close ally – appears to deserve serious scrutiny in terms of its potential impact on national security and supply chain reliability.”

Regardless of what the future holds for the company, McCall vowed that the USW will continue to fight to make sure that its owners live up to their obligations to workers and retirees.

“This includes not just the day-to-day commitments of our labor agreement but also significant obligations to fund pension and retiree insurance benefits that are the most extensive in the domestic steel industry,” he said. “No union has actively engaged in more acquisitions in its core industries than the USW, and rest assured, our union will hold management at U.S. Steel accountable to every letter of our collective bargaining and other existing agreements.”

BIDEN A CHAMPION FOR WORKERS AND UNIONS

White House Victories Include Infrastructure, Pensions, Wages, Health Care

Ryan Andreas helped the USW push through legislation for a national infrastructure program two years ago, believing that historic upgrades to America's utilities, ports and bridges would mean a brighter future for workers like him and other members of Local 289M at Travis Pattern and Foundry.

Sure enough, Andreas and his colleagues in Washington state saw skyrocketing demand for clamps, vacuum tub-

ing and other products after President Joe Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act in November 2021, prompting the company to expand production and create hundreds more good union jobs.

"We've almost had to turn away business," Andreas said. "It's benefited us tremendously."

Infrastructure and Jobs

When Biden took office, getting a groundbreaking infrastructure plan through Congress was no sure thing. To help it gain traction in 2021, the USW launched the "We Supply America" campaign, a grassroots, state-by-state effort that helped to convince members of Congress to pass the legislation.

The \$1.2 trillion law is an opportunity to rebuild and revitalize the nation, creating millions of jobs in the process — one that the previous administration promised, but one that Biden was able to deliver. And Biden hasn't just won historic infrastructure investments; he insisted on strong Buy America requirements to ensure that U.S. workers benefit.

The story of Local 289M in Spokane is just one of countless USW workplaces where the infrastructure program is already making a difference, and just one of the numerous ways in which President Biden has proven himself to be a friend to working families.

Retirement Security

USW members said repeatedly that they want the union to fight for their core values of good jobs, secure pensions, health care, fair trade and workers' rights. Time and again, Biden has proven his commitment to those same values.

The president championed the American Rescue Plan, which included the Butch Lewis Act. That measure, a longtime union priority, saved more than 130 distressed plants and secured the retirements of more than 1.3 million workers, including more than 100,000 USW members.

One of those was Doug Kameron of Local 1-243 at Etched Metal Co. in Solon, Ohio. The union's pension fund was in danger of failing before Butch Lewis became law.

"This is huge," Kameron said of the bill. "What a weight off my mind."

Joel Buchanan, a member of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees in Pueblo, Colo., felt similar relief after President Biden reached across the aisle last June and struck a deal with Republicans to protect Social Security and Medicare.

"He was the adult in the room," Buchanan said of Biden. "He knows how to get things done on Capitol Hill."

Focus on Workers

The White House also was the driving force behind the CHIPS and Science Act, which provided billions for research and manufacturing and bolstered vital supply chains, as well as the Inflation Reduction Act, which cut prescription drug prices and other costs, and made historic investments in clean energy.

In naming Katherine Tai as the U.S. trade representative and standing firm on much-needed remedies like the Section 232 tariffs on steel and aluminum, Biden demonstrated his commitment to worker-centered trade policies.

The administration has, at Biden's direction, sought a new approach to trade policy that defends workers' rights and seeks to end the global race to the bottom. That approach paid off, particularly with China, one of the most notorious violators. According to Commerce Department data, the U.S. trade deficit with China was on track to be the smallest in a decade in 2023.

"Time and again, this administration demonstrated a clear commitment to defending domestic steel and aluminum workers," International President David McCall said.

Executive Actions

President Biden also has advocated for fairness for workers. The president has urged Congress to pass the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, which would level the playing field for workers trying to organize unions.

Biden created the White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment, which directs federal agencies to support workers' efforts to organize. These initiatives set the tone for an administration focused on strengthening the labor movement.



Federal Agencies

President Biden's commitment to worker well-being has been evident in the appointments he made to federal agencies and in his support for their work.

He consistently named representatives with strong pro-worker backgrounds to influential positions, including tapping a union leader as secretary of labor, naming a former USW representative to assist the top federal health and safety official, and naming pro-worker members to the National Labor Relations Board.

The administration led efforts to enhance regulations on worker classification, to strengthen protections for federal workers, to prioritize safety and health, and to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

"President Biden has delivered for working people on the most critical issues we face," AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler said. "Including making historic investments in good jobs, rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure and bringing manufacturing home."

Higher Wages

Biden has used his pulpit to voice his unwavering support for a \$15 minimum wage for all workers. While the president needs help from Congress to achieve that goal, he signed an executive order that raised the mini-

imum wage to \$15 per hour for federal contractors in 2022 and to more than \$16 per hour in 2023.

By championing fair compensation, Biden ensured a ripple effect of economic growth in countless communities, and demonstrated a commitment to ensuring that workers are fairly compensated.

"This increase will provide those workers and their families a little more breathing room," Biden said. "And because we know that higher wages boost productivity and mean lower job turnover, these orders will allow the government to do its work better and faster."

Marching with Workers

Beyond just policy achievements and directives, President Biden has shown symbolic support for the labor movement. He publicly celebrated a USW organizing victory last spring at Blue Bird bus company in Macon, Ga., and later invited organizer Delushundra "Dee" Thomas to the White House for a young workers' summit.

In a historic move, he became the first president in modern history to visit a picket line, standing in solidarity with the United Auto Workers (UAW) during the union's six-week strike against the Big Three U.S. automakers last fall.

Long before his time in the White House, Biden made a tradition of spending Labor Day marching and

celebrating with union members, one that he continued in 2022 when he visited Local 2227 in Western Pennsylvania and sat down for a cookout with a few hundred USW members and their families.

"Wall Street didn't build this country," Biden declared as he stood on the picket line in Wayne County, Mich., in September. "The middle class built this country, and unions built the middle class."

YOUR UNION, YOUR VOICE

Since before the 2020 elections, USW leaders have worked hard to stay in touch with members, to learn about the issues and policies that working families care about. Through the "Your Union, Your Voice" program of surveys, panel discussions and town hall meetings, union members have made it known time and again that their priorities include the core issues of good jobs, secure retirements, quality, affordable health care, fair trade and workers' rights.

At the same time, the USW has regularly surveyed candidates from across the political spectrum to learn about their positions on these essential issues and find out how their priorities align with ours.

The USW will be continuing the "Your Union, Your Voice" program this year as the November 2024 election approaches. You can learn more about the union's core issues and what we expect from our candidates by visiting uswvoices.org.

USW PUSHES ‘WALKAROUND RULE’

PROPOSAL WOULD ALLOW WORKERS TO CHOOSE REPRESENTATIVES IN HEALTH AND SAFETY INSPECTIONS

The USW is urging the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to adopt a proposed rule that would protect the rights of workers to have representatives of their own choosing take part in OSHA inspections in the wake of health and safety incidents or complaints.

The so-called “walkaround rule” has existed in some form since the creation of OSHA in 1971. In a 2013 letter of interpretation to the USW’s Steve Sallman, OSHA clarified that all workers, even those in non-union workplaces, are free to choose their own representatives during such inspections. The proposed rule would formalize that interpretation and clarify the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

OSHA strictly enforced the “Sallman Letter,” as it came to be known, during the remaining years of the Obama administration. After Donald Trump took over the White House in 2017, however, the new administration pulled back on prioritizing workplace safety, rejecting the letter’s interpretation that workers had the freedom to choose their own representatives in OSHA investigations.

Since 2021, Sallman has served as the union’s director of health, safety

and environment. Having 30-plus years as a workplace health and safety activist, he has participated in countless inspections following incidents and complaints across every industry and believes that providing workers the freedom to choose who goes along with them is critical to their success and safer workplaces.

“What this rule would do is level the playing field,” Sallman said of the proposal. “Why wouldn’t workers have the same rights as an employer?” Sallman asked.

Having those rights was critical for Kyle Downour of Local 1-346, who was forced to deal with the aftermath of a fire and explosion that tragically took the lives of two co-workers and USW siblings at the BP-Husky refinery in Oregon, Ohio, in September 2022.

Downour had the help of a USW health and safety representative when federal investigators carried out a painstaking inspection of the damaged facility and held follow-up meetings after the tragedy.

Other workers, union and non-union, deserve the same kind of reliable assistance in a crisis, Downour said.

“It was all priceless,” he said of the help he and other members received from a USW health and safety

representative during the inspection and months-long investigation. “The rep was on top of something before I could even get to the point of thinking about it,” he said.

Some employers, Sallman said, want to stop unions from bringing in outside representatives for inspections, fearing the added scrutiny.

The walkaround rule would give workers a stronger voice, participation, and greater confidence in inspections, he said.

“You’re going to be involved and hold employers accountable,” Downour said, summing up how workers feel when they’re adequately represented. “You’re going to be heard. You’re going to have your rights and exercise them.”

The USW is among a number of unions and worker advocacy groups voicing support for the walkaround rule. The proposal also has the support of leading members of Congress and of Jordan Barab, a former deputy assistant secretary at OSHA, who wrote that the rule would “help workers come home alive at the end of the day.”

The USW and the AFL-CIO offered comments in support of the rule in November 2023, arguing that

the rule would benefit all working Americans.

“The proposed rule will meaningfully affect OSHA’s ability to effectively conduct its inspections and gather evidence of worksite hazards,” the USW said in its comments.

Importantly, Sallman said, the rule would apply to workers at any job site, not just those who belong to unions.

“This is not just a union issue,” he said. “It is a worker issue.”

Also, the fact that the Trump administration did not prioritize the rule is an illustration of why elections matter and why all workers must make their voices heard at the ballot box on such issues, Sallman said.

“It was a good example of why who is in the White House makes a difference for worker safety, day in and day out,” he said. “Elections have benefits, and elections have consequences.”

The U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), a separate agency from OSHA also under the direction of the U.S. Department of Labor, already affords miners the right to decide who will represent them during inspections. OSHA’s proposed rule would simply extend those protections to tens of mil-

lions more workers.

Workers, as well as federal investigators, often need help during investigations because they are not always experts or familiar with the issues raised during inspections. Bringing in outside representatives allows for a “different set of eyes,” said Kerry Halter, president of USW Local 752L, which represents workers at Good-year’s Cooper Tire plant in Texarkana, Ark.

One of Halter’s co-workers was killed on the job in July. In the aftermath of that tragedy, he said, he was grateful to have the assistance of an Ohio-based, union negotiated health and safety representative from the USW who specializes in tire plants and who provided the OSHA inspector with insights into industry-specific equipment and practices.

Halter said it makes no sense for corporations to oppose the walkaround rule when unions bring such knowledge and skill to investigations.

“Who doesn’t want their workers to be safer?” said Halter, noting employers even have self-serving reasons for building safer workplaces. “You have fewer injuries, you have less lost time. I think everybody wins.”

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USW MEMBERS SUPPORT TIRE CASE

The U.S. International Trade Commission's (ITC) announced in November that it had made affirmative preliminary determinations on dumped truck and bus tires from Thailand.

The ITC investigation came in response to a USW-filed petition seeking anti-dumping duties on the imports. It was the 13th such petition the USW led or supported on unfairly traded tire and rubber products.

Anti-dumping duties are applied to imports that are sold – or dumped – in the United States at below fair market value.

“USW members take immense pride in making high-quality truck and bus tires, but the recent spike in imports from Thailand, underwritten by Chinese investments, put both their jobs and the communities they support at risk,” said International President David McCall. “We’re gratified that the

ITC in its preliminary determination affirmed our position and provided a path forward to protecting U.S. tiremakers from illegally dumped products.”

The ITC’s determinations came just a few weeks after a half-dozen USW leaders traveled to Washington, D.C., to offer their testimony to the commission on the effects the unfair imports have had on good jobs in the United States.

Local leaders who testified in support of duties on the imports included Jody Juarez of Local 307 at Goodyear in Topeka, Kan.; Pete Morton of Local 831L at Goodyear in Danville, Va.; Tom O’Shei of Local 135L at Sumitomo in Tonawanda, N.Y.; Drew Rodriguez of Local 1155L at Bridgestone in Morrison, Tenn.; and Jon Wright of Local 1055L at Bridgestone in LaVergne, Tenn. Kevin Johnsen, chair of the union’s Rubber and Plastics Industry Conference, also testified.

Wright said he has worked for Bridgestone for 27 years and has seen first hand the damage that imports have done at his plant.

“In the past, our plant has produced

as many as 6,000 tires a day, but we are currently targeting a production level of just 4,000 tires a day,” he said. “Demand for truck and bus tires is not the problem – it is the flood of imports from Thailand that has hurt our plant.”

Juarez, a tire worker for 38 years, said that he was troubled by the fact that his plant had to cut production in 2022, even though it was a year of peak demand for truck and bus tires in the U.S.

“But 2022 was also a year of record high imports from Thailand,” he said. “From 2020 to 2022, imports from Thailand more than doubled, surging to over 10 million tires last year.”

The U.S. Commerce Department is expected to issue its determinations in the case this spring, with final orders on potential duties expected this August.

McCall said that duties would help to ensure that U.S. tire workers are competing on a level playing field.

“USW members are highly skilled, but they need rigorous enforcement of our nation’s trade laws,” McCall said. “Today’s decision is a step in the right direction.”

TRADE BRIEFS

Member Testifies in Brass Rod Case

Jill Stough of Local 7248 at Wieland Chase in Montpelier, Ohio, testified in December before the International Trade Commission (ITC) in support of duties on

unfair imports of brass rod.

The hearing was part of the ITC’s anti-dumping duty investigations on brass rod from Brazil, India, Israel, Mexico, Korea, and South Africa, and countervailing duty investigations of brass rod from India, Israel, and Korea.

Antidumping duties are applied to imports that are sold – or dumped – in the United States at below fair market value. Countervailing duties are meant to offset illegal subsidies that foreign governments provide to their manufacturers.

Stough’s employer filed

the case along with other U.S. brass companies in April 2023. Her testimony was key to the ITC’s determination that the imports were causing material injury to U.S. producers, the final step before duties are applied.

USW Welcomes Report On China Economic Policy

The USW in December welcomed a comprehensive report from the U.S. House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party, which included more than 100 policy recommendations.

“Our union applauds the committee’s work to safeguard domestic indus-

tries, and in particular its acknowledgment that Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China negatively impacts American workers,” said International President David McCall. “The USW further welcomes the committee’s clear prioritization of common-sense enforcement tools like the Leveling the Playing Field Act 2.0, as well as reforms to the Generalized System of Preferences and renewal for Section 421 of our nation’s trade code.”

McCall also called on Congress to restore workers’ access to Trade Adjustment Assistance and cautioned against changes to Sec-



Jill Stough

TIN MILL CASE MOVES FORWARD

The U.S. Department of Commerce issued final positive determinations for duties on tin mill products from four countries in January, following a year of activism by USW leaders seeking relief from unfair imports.

The department's investigation found dumping of tin mill products from Canada, China, Germany and South Korea, as well as subsidized imports of tin mill products from China.

The investigations stem from a petition the USW filed in partnership with Cleveland-Cliffs in January 2023, following a surge in unfairly priced – or dumped – tin imports in the prior two years.

Mark Glyptis of Local 2911, which represents 900 workers at the Cliffs tin mill in Weirton, W.Va., joined Cleveland-Cliffs CEO Lourenco Goncalves and District 7 Director Mike Millsap, along with lawmakers from West Virginia and Ohio, in testifying before the International Trade Commission in support of the case.



“The communities in the Ohio River Valley that rely on the good-paying, family-sustaining, union jobs that the Weirton mill provides,” Glyptis told the commission.

“For many years, Weirton was subject to a barrage of unfair trade. I saw mills being shuttered and Steelworkers being laid off. That’s material injury,” he said. “To succeed, we need you to issue affirmative injury determinations to allow for these instances of unfair trade to be addressed and remedied. On behalf of Weirton’s workforce, I respectfully implore you to do just that.”

Millsap told the commission that USW members at Cliffs, U.S. Steel and Ohio Coatings are the only workers in the U.S. who make the kind of tin products cited in the case.

“This case isn’t complicated,” Millsap said. “Foreign producers were

desperate to make sales. In less than a year, imports flooded the market, domestic producers had to slash production, and hundreds of good, hard-working Americans lost their jobs.”

The only remedy, he said, is for U.S. producers to regain a level playing field with duties placed on the unfair imports.

“If you do not grant this relief,” Millsap said, “we are likely to lose this industry altogether.”

Commerce and the ITC jointly investigate cases of dumping and unfair subsidization, focusing on the practices of overseas producers and the effects of those practices on U.S. companies and workers. The two agencies both must make affirmative determinations before duties can be applied.

The ITC was expected to make its final determinations in the case as *USW@Work* went to press.

tion 232 tariffs on steel and aluminum.

“We look forward to working with Congress to make many of these recommendations reality,” McCall said.

USW: EU Deal Must Level Playing Field, Cut Emissions

International President David McCall called on the Biden administration to continue to prioritize workers’ rights, fight for fair trade and seek emissions reductions from overseas producers following the president’s meetings with top EU officials and the announcement of a path forward on the Global Arrangement on Sustain-

able Steel and Aluminum in November.

“The Biden administration negotiated with the EU for two years in an effort to reach an agreement that would forge long-term, durable solutions to non-market excess capacity and carbon intensive production,” McCall said. “Time and again, the administration demonstrated a clear commitment to defending domestic steel and aluminum workers, rather than bowing to outdated thinking on international trade and the EU’s political pressure. Now we must stick to this path.

“Steel and aluminum are vital to our national defense

and critical infrastructure,” McCall said. “The United States acted under Section 232 of our trade laws in 2018 to maintain domestic capacity and keep us safe. These continue to be urgent concerns, and we appreciate that the Biden administration kept these priorities in the foreground in charting a course forward.”

Preliminary Ruling on Paper Bag Petition

The U.S. Commerce Department late last year announced preliminary affirmative determinations in its anti-dumping investigations of paper shopping bags from Cambodia, China, Colom-

bia, India, Malaysia, Portugal, Taiwan, Turkey, and Vietnam. The department also announced preliminary affirmative determinations in countervailing duty investigations of paper shopping bags from China and India.

The investigations came in response to a petition from the USW in partnership with Novolex and the Coalition for Fair Trade in Shopping Bags. About 375 USW members produce paper shopping bags at Novolex facilities in Florence, Walton, and Erlanger, Ky.

The department is expected to announce final determinations in the cases this spring.

NEWS BRIEFS

USW MEMBERS PROTEST TREATMENT IN VIRGIN ISLANDS

USW members on the U.S. Virgin Islands took their fight for fair contracts and safe working conditions to the streets in January, holding protests as Gov. Albert Bryan Jr. was preparing to deliver his State of the Territory address.

Dozens of members gathered outside the Legislative Hall in St. Thomas and at the Government House in St. Croix to call on the governor to honor the union's contracts covering about 1,500 members who work in emergency management, crime scene investigation, school counseling, nursing, accounting, and other departments. Members also held a series of protests on the islands in September.

The workers' concerns include workplace health and safety, as well as a government that has failed to live up to ratified contracts. In some instances, contracts expired and the government refused to set bargaining dates. Some workers have

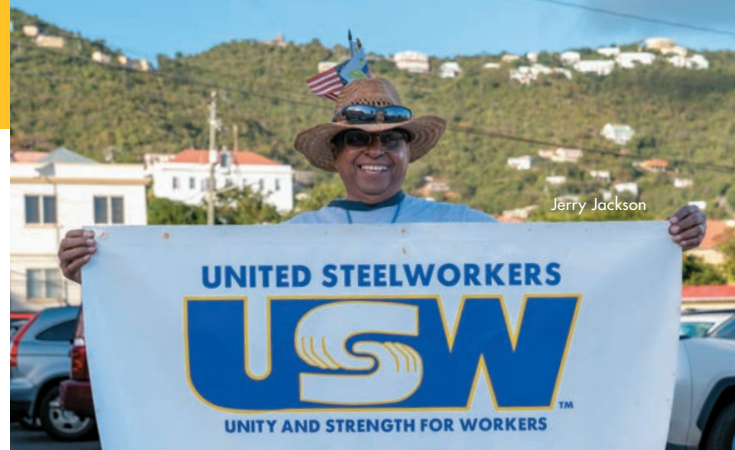
yet to receive wage increases that went into effect in 2022.

"Our members simply want the security that a collective bargaining agreement brings," said District 9 Director Dan Flippo, who testified in November before the V.I. Legislature about the lack of respect the government has shown to USW members. "Union workers rightfully expect that when they negotiate with the government, reach a tentative agreement, and then ratify that agreement, the government will honor the agreement."

Austin McKenzie Sr. of Local 8994 and Kristel Carr of Local 8248 said they hoped the public protests would show the government workers are serious about enforcing their contracts.

"It makes me feel that the work that I do is unappreciated," Carr said. "We need to stand united as workers."

Gleneva Berkeley of Local 8248 said that tourists may see the islands as a "paradise," but government workers there often are forced to hold two jobs to make ends meet.



Jerry Jackson



Amber Francis, president, Local 8713



V.I. Sen. Franklin Johnson, District 9 Director Dan Flippo

"The governor is not taking us as seriously as he should," she said.

Clarence Payne of Local 9488 said Bryan's disrespect toward workers is unacceptable, and workers are going to be more proactive in the future to fight for their rights.

"His inaction is affecting a lot of people," Payne said. "People are motivated to get involved."

Flippo said USW members working in government agencies are on day-to-day contracts with a 72-hour notice before termination.

"We have health and safety issues that we are very concerned about," Flippo said. "The government isn't moving to get those things fixed."

Members can learn more and support the workers by visiting usw.org/uswvi.

BLACK LABOR WEEK AIMS TO EDUCATE, INSPIRE

As *USW@Work* went to press, about 300 labor and civil rights activists from around the United States were preparing to spend a week in the greater Chicago area, working together to strengthen communities of color and grow the union movement through the annual Black Labor Week.

Founder and organizer E.J. Jenkins said the event, in its 13th year, aims to bring the principles and opportunities of the labor movement directly to marginalized and underserved communities.

"Over the years, Black Labor Week has evolved into doing whatever we feel is going to educate, motivate and inspire people," Jenkins said. "We want

to let people know it's time to step up."

This year, the event, held from Feb. 19 to Feb. 23, was scheduled to include several community outreach initiatives and a college day and career day aimed at helping young people find their callings, as well as workshops and panel discussions, including one featuring a number of the nation's Black mayors.

Jenkins said that connecting the labor movement to historically underserved communities is good for both the people in those communities and for the labor movement as a whole. The USW has already seen examples of the success of that approach in its recent organizing victories at the Kumho Tire and Blue Bird factories in the traditionally anti-union South.

"There are a lot of Black workers in the South, and a lot of them want to be union, and that only enhances us as a movement," Jenkins said. "That is giving us an opportunity to take that ground and run on it. Now, we've started listening to more workers in the South, and we can see that those workers want to be organized. They just need to be approached by those who look like them, those who know about them. They need something tangible that they can actually believe in."

Displaying more Black leadership within the USW through platforms such as Black Labor Week helps to promote the message of diversity and inclusion and to inspire the Next Generation of activists and leaders, Jenkins said.

VP BROWN NAMED TO 'TIME' CLIMATE LEADERS LIST

Time magazine named International Vice President Roxanne Brown to its 2023 list of the 100 most influential climate leaders in business.

In its profile of Brown published in November, *Time* credited her with centering the voices of workers as the nation transitions toward a clean energy economy, including bringing the concerns of union workers into the process of crafting and passing

the Biden administration's Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, considered the most important climate-related legislation in the nation's history.

Brown told the magazine that the transition to an environmentally sustainable economy "is the Industrial Revolution of our time."

"We cannot achieve our sustainability or climate goals without a strong, skilled, and stable workforce. Workers across the U.S. have real, tangible opportunities," Brown said. "My hope is that people

will embrace the opportunity before us, including the massive effort to train, recruit, and develop workers in the manufacturing, service, energy, and construction sectors."

Among the other notable leaders on the *Time* list were Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, former Secretary of State John Kerry, who now serves as a U.S. special envoy for climate, Grammy-winning musician and activist Billie Eilish, and Ajay Banga, president of the World Bank.

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Roxanne Brown

ILLINOIS LABOR GROUP HONORS USW LEADERS

The Illinois Labor History Society inducted several current and former USW leaders into its Hall of Honor during the society's annual awards presentation in December.

Honorees included AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Fred Redmond; late International President George Becker, a native of Granite City, Ill.; and longtime USW activists Norma Gaines of Granite City and Roberta Wood of Chicago.

Redmond, a Chicago native, served as USW International Vice President prior to his election as the top financial officer of the AFL-CIO.

Gaines said she was "awestruck" to be recognized alongside labor giants such as Redmond, Becker and Wood, and pointed out that Redmond's status as the highest-ranking Black labor leader in U.S. history is evidence of the progress the movement has made since she began her career at the Granite City mill in 1977.

Gaines, the daughter of two Steelworkers, said that in her

early days as one of the few women working in the Granite City mill, she and other women had to fight even for the most basic rights, such as having access to their own restrooms and locker rooms.

"We developed a sisterhood and tried to make life in the mill a little bit better for us as well as the men, even if they didn't look at it that way," Gaines said. "For all of us, every day was a brand new world, every day was a challenge, but we persevered."

Part of that same sisterhood was Wood, who was a founding co-chair of the union's District 31 Women's Caucus in northern Illinois and northwest Indiana, and who helped to inspire Gaines to likewise become a founding co-chair of the union's District 34 Women's Caucus in southern Illinois.

"I can't think of a bigger honor than to be honored by a labor history society," Wood said. "The labor movement is the essence of the working class. We're living labor history, and even more, our future is part of labor history, too."



(From left) Greg Becker (son of late International President George Becker), honoree Norma Gaines, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Fred Redmond, District 7 Director Mike Millsap, honoree Roberta Wood.

NEWS BRIEFS

DOW DUPONT COUNCIL DISCUSSES ORGANIZING, SAFETY

Union members who serve on the Dow DuPont North American Labor Council gathered in Niagara Falls, N.Y., last fall for their annual meeting to discuss challenges in the sector as well as opportunities to improve health and safety.

Local 6992, which represents 325 members at the DuPont Yerkes plant in Buffalo, N.Y., hosted the event, along with USW District 4.

International allies from the United Kingdom, Argentina, and Turkey also joined the meetings.

“This council has done a great job forming a global communications network so we can stay updated on what’s going on with the company at the international level,” said Kent Holsing, who serves as president of Local 12075 and chairs the Dow DuPont Council. “IndustriALL, in particular, has been a great asset over the years and we have members who serve on their board.”

MCCALL JOINS AFL-CIO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

International President David McCall took the oath of office in November as a member of the AFL-CIO Executive Council, the governing body of the largest union federation in the United States.

The executive council consists of the AFL-CIO’s two top officers and 55 vice presidents who represent the 12.5 million members of the federation and are responsible for guiding its work. International Vice President Roxanne Brown also serves on the council.

“The labor movement was founded on the basic principle that all workers deserve fair compensation, safe working conditions and a dignified retirement – and that the best, most reliable way to achieve these goals is through unity and solidarity,” McCall said following his swearing-in. “I’m deeply honored to have this opportunity to represent the USW on the AFL-CIO Executive Council alongside USW International Vice President Roxanne Brown, and I look forward to working with President Liz Shuler, Secretary-Treasurer Fred Redmond and all the other council members as together we continue the fight for good jobs, healthy communities and fair treatment for all working people.”

USW SUBMITS COMMENTS ON LONG-TERM CARE STAFFING

The USW submitted comments to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on the agency’s proposed rule for minimum staffing standards at long-term care facilities.

The comments were based on testimonies submitted by USW members who work at long-term care facilities.

“The need for some form of a national standard in staffing for long-term care is much overdue,” the union said in its comments. “CMS itself noted the ‘strong and compelling’ evidence for having minimum staffing levels all the way back in 2001.”

The union also noted that 48 percent of USW members who submitted comments said that they currently work in a health care facility staffed below

USW MEMBERS LEADING AFL-CIO GROUPS

Several USW members recently assumed leadership roles with two constituency groups – the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA) and Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA), during the groups’ 2023 conventions.

At the 24th national LCLAA convention, two USW activists were elected to leadership roles. Xochitl Cobarruvias of Local 675 in Carson, Calif., will serve as executive vice president, and Jessica Rios Viner, of the union’s strategic campaigns department, will

serve as the USW representative on the LCLAA board.

APALA is the nation’s first national organization of Asian American and Pacific Islander workers that focuses on advancing worker, immigrant, and civil rights. Members of the organization re-elected Sabrina Liu, who founded the Pittsburgh chapter of APALA in 2018 and who also works in the union’s strategic campaigns department, as the USW representative on the APALA executive board.

For more information about APALA, visit apalanet.org, and to learn more about LCLAA, visit www.lclaa.org.

NLRB ACTIONS COULD AID UNION ORGANIZING

The NLRB took a pair of actions in 2023 that, taken together, would make it easier for workers to gain union recognition from their employers and for the board to handle election disputes more quickly.

In the Cemex Construction Materials Pacific ruling, the board ruled that, if a majority of employees sign union cards, an employer must either recognize and bargain with the union or file a petition for an election. However, if company management commits unfair labor practices that would require setting aside the election, the employer would then be required to recognize and bargain with the union right away.

While falling short of “card check,” the new rule provides the labor board with more power to require employers to recognize unions, while also providing additional deterrents to illegal union-busting by employers.

The NLRB also issued a new rule, which took effect in December, reversing a Trump-era amendment that introduced new delays into the union election process. The new rule allows for faster elections, ensures that pre-election hearings happen more quickly, that election information is disseminated to employees more quickly, and that election-related hearings are more efficient.

the proposed level of 0.55 hours per resident day.

“While USW members have slightly better staffing levels than the national average due to their collective bargaining agreements, the majority of the industry is non-union,” the USW said. “As such, these minimum staffing levels would undoubtedly represent a major step forward for health care workers.”

USW SUPPORTS DIRECTIVE ON GLOBAL LABOR POLICY

The USW welcomed President Joe Biden's signing of a memorandum in November that directs federal agencies to advance labor rights and worker empowerment outside the United States.

"The USW welcomes today's global labor directive and the Biden administration's continuing commitment to ensuring our nation's diplomatic efforts and foreign engagements further labor rights abroad," International President David McCall said. "Our union has seen time and again how worker abuses and violence against trade unionists hurt

workers the world over, driving down wages, undermining our trade system and hollowing out communities."

McCall said the effort would help to ensure that workers' rights receive the same consideration as corporate interests in foreign policy and that labor standards abroad will not be weaponized against foreign or domestic workers.

"All workers deserve a voice, regardless of their nationality," McCall said. "We look forward to working with the Biden administration as it uses its influence to curb violence against union leaders, promote democratic values and fight for justice and dignity for workers across the globe."

USW BACKS CANADA'S ANTI-SCAB LEGISLATION

The USW celebrated the introduction in November of federal anti-scab legislation in Canada and called for lawmakers to strengthen the bill before passage.

Banning the use of replacement workers in the event of a strike or lockout has long been a USW priority, said Canadian National Director Marty Warren.

"Steelworkers have been part of the fight for anti-scab legislation for decades," said Warren. "This bill is not perfect, but it's a big step in the right direction and proves the work we've been doing is delivering results."

Data shows that bans on replacement workers improve labor relations, reduce the number and length of disputes, and lead to better working and living standards for workers. The provinces of British Columbia and Quebec already have anti-scab laws on the books.

NOTICE TO ALL EMPLOYEES COVERED BY A UNION SECURITY CLAUSE

All USW represented employees covered by a union security clause have the right, under *NLRB v. General Motors*, 373 U.S. 734 (1963), to be and remain a nonmember subject only to the duty to pay the equivalent of union initiation fees and periodic dues. Further, only such non-member employees have the right, under *Communications Workers v. Beck*, 487 U.S. 735 (1988), to limit payment of union-security dues and initiation fees to certain moneys spent on activities germane to a union's role as collective bargaining representative. This latter statutory right is embodied in the USW's Nonmember Objection Procedure.

The Procedure is available to any USW represented employee who is subject to a union security clause but who is a non-member and who objects to his or her union security fees being expended on nonrepresentational activities. Paragraph 1 of the Procedure states:

"1. Any individual, who is not a member of the United Steelworkers and who is required as a condition of employment

to pay dues to the United Steelworkers pursuant to a union security arrangement but objects to supporting ... political or ideological expenditures by the United Steelworkers which are not necessarily or reasonably incurred for the purpose of performing the duties of an exclusive collective bargaining representative shall have the right upon perfecting a notice of objection to obtain an advance reduction of a portion of such individual's dues obligation commensurate with expenditures unrelated to collective bargaining as required by law."

An eligible employee who objects to the USW expending monies for nonrepresentational activities such as charitable or political activities may choose to perfect a notice of objection under Paragraph 2 of the Procedure, which states:

"2. To perfect a notice of objection, the individual must send an individually signed notice to the International Secretary-Treasurer during the first thirty days following either the individual's initial date of hire into the USW represented unit or an anniversary date of such hiring; provided, however, that if the individual lacked knowledge of this Procedure, the

individual shall have a 30 day period commencing on the date the individual became aware of the Procedure to perfect a notice of objection; and, provided, further, that a member who resigns membership shall have the opportunity to object within the 30 day period following resignation.¹

Objectors are not USW members and have no right to vote in union elections or to be a candidate, no right to participate in union meetings or activities, and no right to vote on contract ratification.

Upon perfecting properly a notice of objection, the objector is entitled to an advance reduction of a portion of his or her union security obligation commensurate with expenditures unrelated to collective bargaining, as required by law. International Secretary-Treasurer John E. Shinn has determined, based upon expenditures for the calendar year 2021 that the reduction percentage under the Procedure is 10.85% (18.26% if organizing expenditures were to be included).

There are court decisions holding that organizing activities are non-representational activities. The USW does not agree with those rulings. However, without intending to waive its position that its

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UPCOMING USW EVENTS

MARCH 3 - MARCH 8

International Next Generation Conference, Pittsburgh

MAY 19 - MAY 22

Rapid Response Legislative and Policy Conference, Washington, D.C.

JUNE 9 - JUNE 12

Civil and Human Rights Conference, Detroit

AUG. 5 - AUG. 8

National Paper Bargaining Conference, Austin, Texas

AUG. 18 - AUG. 23

Health, Safety and Environment Conference, Pittsburgh

For more information about these events and how you can participate, visit usw.org/events.

organizing expenditures are not subject to objection and without intending to waive its right to assert its position if there is a challenge to the reduction percentage, the USW has deemed it expedient to apply the 18.26% figure to most current and future objectors. Therefore, an objector will be charged 81.74% of the regular dues amount. Each objector will be given a detailed breakdown between representational and non-representational activities with a report by an independent auditor.

The Procedure contains an appeals system under which challenges to the reduction percentage determination must be filed within 30 days of the Notice of Determination and are to be decided by an impartial arbitrator appointed by the American Arbitration Association. Disputed amounts are escrowed pending appeal.

While a notice must be individually signed and timely mailed, there is no form for a notice. Processing is faster, however, when the notice contains the objector's name, address, local union number, and employer.

¹ Any right of a resignee to pay a reduced amount under this Procedure may or may not be superceded by the resignee's check-off authorization."

Have You Moved?

Notify your local union financial secretary, or clip out this form with your old address label and send your new address to:

USW Membership Department,
60 Blvd. of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Name _____

New Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

You may also email the information to membership@usw.org



Javen Munce

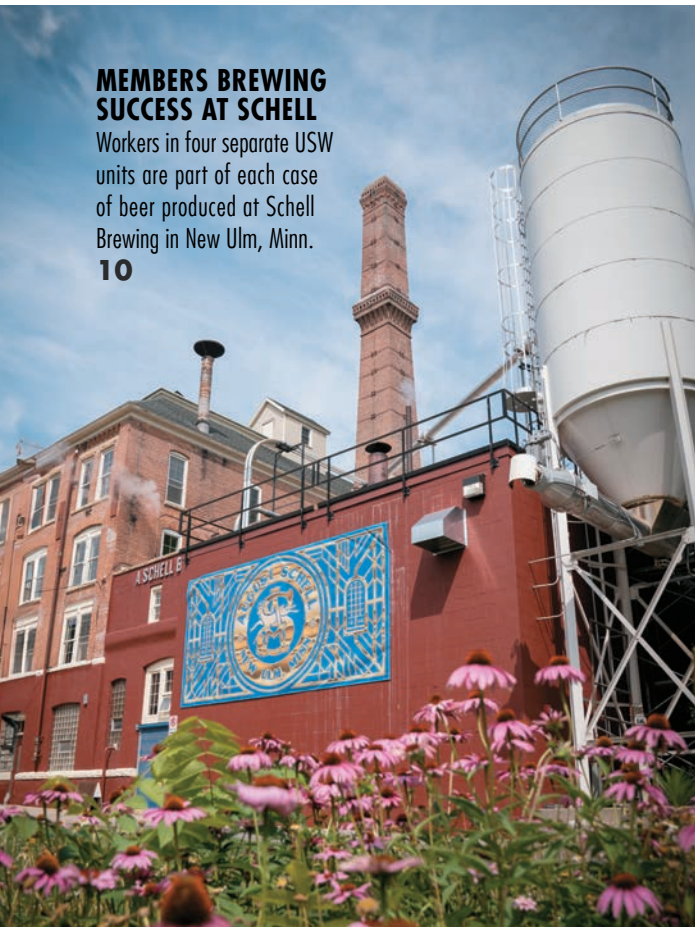


Pat Davis

MEMBERS BREWING SUCCESS AT SCHELL

Workers in four separate USW units are part of each case of beer produced at Schell Brewing in New Ulm, Minn.

10



Schell's

SINCE **BEER** 1860



Ryan Maher