

The St. Paul Union Advocate

125th Year, No. 3, Issue 5449

For union homes in Ramsey, Dakota, Washington and Chisago counties

August 2021

Do Something!

Celebrate Labor Day with us at the State Fair

It has become one of the largest union gatherings on Labor Day in Minnesota, and the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation will do it again this year, sponsoring a marching unit in the Minnesota State Fair's parade through the fairgrounds Sept. 8.

All union members and relatives are invited to join the marching unit with their families. Free tickets to the fair are available to parade participants who RSVP in advance, provided space remains available.

Union members are encouraged to wear their union gear and carry their union banners.

The parade unit will line up at 12:45 p.m. across the street from the fairgrounds entrance on Corbin Avenue. The parade, which makes through the fairgrounds at a distance of about 14 blocks, begins at 2 p.m.

RSVP is required by Monday, Aug. 23, to Erica Dalager Reed at edlager@stpaulunions.org.

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www.stpaulunions.org
Connecting union members in Ramsey, Washington, Dakota and Chisago counties.



In St. Paul, home care workers, clients and allies march in support of proposed federal investments in home- and community-based care on a national day of action sponsored by the Service Employees International Union.

(Union Advocate photo)

'JOBS, CARE, JUSTICE'

Workers, clients push Congress to invest in home care industry

By Michael Moore

Union Advocate editor

With a march, rally and celebration near the Capitol in St. Paul last month, Minnesotans of all ages joined activists nationwide in lifting up the call for a \$400 billion federal investment in essential home care jobs.

"The future of work is service and care jobs,"

said LaTanya Hughes, a home care worker and vice president of SEIU Healthcare Minnesota, which organized the event locally July 13. "It's time we finally, really value the jobs that we all call essential."

President Joe Biden's \$2 trillion infrastructure proposal, the American Jobs Plan, includes

(Continued on Page 8)

Grower's contract offer leaves medical cannabis workers feeling 'insulted'

By Michael Moore

Union Advocate editor

When Viro Health needed help lobbying state lawmakers to expand Minnesota's medical cannabis program, employees and their union stepped up, helping push the measure across the finish line in May.

Unfortunately, that spirit of cooperation has not extended to the bargaining table this summer.

Workers at Viro Health's Otsego growing facility and eight Green Goods cannabis patient centers across the state voted unanimously to reject the employer's "last, best and final" contract proposal in June, a month after their previous agreement expired.

The unanimous vote by members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1489 came despite a charm campaign led by Viro's CEO, who traveled across the state to meet with workers in person and urge them to vote "yes" on a contract that would eliminate annual wage progression, among other take-backs.

Governance worker Nate Noel called the company's contract

(Continued on Page 7)

Teamsters accept improved offer from Marathon, ending work stoppage that lasted 166 days

By Michael Moore

Union Advocate editor

Members of Teamsters Local 120 began returning to work at the St. Paul Park oil refinery July 6, five days after they voted to accept Marathon Petroleum Corporation's improved contract offer and bring an end to the work stoppage that began Jan. 21.

From Day 1 of the contract dispute, union members said their top priority was ensuring the safety of the refinery, both for

themselves and surrounding communities. In that regard, terms of the new contract, which covers nearly 200 workers, are markedly better than Marathon's initial proposals, according to the union.

Teamsters won improved language limiting management's ability to outsource maintenance work to lowest-bidder contractors, often from out-of-state companies. That will ensure the presence of trained

(Continued on Page 10)



A member of Teamsters Local 120 reviews the contract with Marathon before the union's ratification vote. *(Union Advocate photo)*

Go Figure

\$14.6 million

Average CEO compensation last year at Minnesota companies in the S&P 500, slightly less than the national average, \$15.5 million

\$700,000

Average increase in CEO pay during the pandemic year at S&P 500 companies nationwide, despite well-publicized promises to freeze or reduce executive pay

299 to 1

Average S&P 500 company CEO-to-worker pay ratio nationwide

(Source: AFL-CIO Executive Paywatch)

ALWAYS KEEP IN MIND,
YOUR BOSS NEEDS YOU...



...MORE THAN YOU NEED
YOUR BOSS.



Labor Voices: Jeff Lacher

CenturyLink is shedding jobs, cutting services and putting communities at risk

CenturyLink, now Lumen Technologies, is trying to shed essential regulations that protect its customers in its recent filing with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. If approved, this change would allow CenturyLink to shirk its repair and service responsibilities to its lower-income customers and prioritize the big businesses and wealthier areas it serves. That's why any union, the Communications Workers (CWA), is demanding the PUC deny CenturyLink's request.

CenturyLink's petition to the PUC attempts to eliminate a current service quality rule requiring companies to address 95% of a customer's landline phone service repair or outage issue within 24 hours of the complaint. It should come as no surprise to many CenturyLink customers that the company already frequently fails to comply with that rule and repair phone service within 24 hours. The reason: CenturyLink has laid off, forced retirement, terminated, part-timed or otherwise eliminated 23% of its CWA-represented workforce in the past 18 months, with more reductions planned.

The decrease in well-trained, career employees maintaining the plant closely correlates with CenturyLink's dwindling infrastructure in Minnesota. You don't need to travel far in the state to understand what I'm talking about: it's those small green pedestals mounted on lawn near the side of the road that are knocked over with wires hanging out or just covered with an orange plastic bag.

CenturyLink's justification for eliminating the rules is that it "forces" companies to prioritize certain customers over others. But the rules only set minimum standards for all landline customers. The company is free to invest whatever it wants to improve its other services, such as broadband. Eliminating minimum standards, however, would allow CenturyLink to prioritize its most profitable residential and business customers and leave the rest of us with no assurance the company will get around to fixing our issues. This would overwhelmingly impact customers in remote or marginalized neighborhoods who rely on CenturyLink's landline services and have no competitive choice for an alternate service provider.

Another regulation CenturyLink is pushing to eliminate deals with the timeliness of answering repair service calls. The current regulation states that 90% of repair service calls, including calls to the business office, be answered within 20 seconds. Once again, as CenturyLink slashes its workforce, it wants to slash customer service to match. In public comments to the PUC, CWA urged the commission to reject

"The pandemic has revealed how access to telecommunications services is critical to citizens' well-being."

— Jeff Lacher



CenturyLink's request to eliminate call center answering time requirements. Many customers, particularly senior citizens, are not comfortable using the online forms and chats offered as an alternative, and need timely access to an experienced human representative to address their concerns.

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed how access to telecommunications services is critical to citizens' well-being. If these regulations are eliminated, vulnerable communities will pay the price because CenturyLink has made it clear that service for wealthy communities is its priority. When CWA investigated CenturyLink's service area, plans and equipment, we found that the company has failed to deploy fiber to 40% of its coverage area in Minnesota. Our analysis of FCC data revealed that the company is prioritizing network upgrades to wealthier neighborhoods, leaving lower-income communities with outdated technologies. In CenturyLink's service areas, the median income of households with access to fiber is \$73,774, while the median income of households with only access to DSL is \$36,536.

Elimination of service quality rules does not magically fix understaffing and poor investment in rural and lower-income areas in need of connectivity. Due to its limited obligations under the existing regulations on voice service, CenturyLink argues that it has insufficient technician resources available to carry out broadband expansion. But CenturyLink's concern, even if accurate, is a self-made problem, as it continues to eliminate technician positions throughout the state.

CenturyLink is requesting permission from the PUC to delay repairs for less profitable customers in favor of those who can afford the latest, fastest fiber services available. This is wrong. That's why CWA is calling on the PUC to reject both of CenturyLink's requests. And CenturyLink, if you're reading this, stop with the job cuts and invest equitably in our communities.

— Jeff Lacher is a CWA District 7 staff representative. His column originally appeared on MinnPost.com.

Letters

- Send letters to: 353 W. 7th St., Suite 201, St. Paul, MN 55102
- Fax them to: 651-293-1989
- Email them to: mnadv@stpaulunion.org

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353 W. 7th St., Suite 201, St. Paul, MN 55102
Phone: 651-222-3787 • Fax: 651-293-1989
Email: mnadv@stpaulunion.org

Editor: Michael Moore

SAINT PAUL REGIONAL LABOR FEDERATION

Phone: 651-222-3787 • Fax: 651-293-1989
Website: www.stpaulunion.org

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AFL-CIO COMMUNITY SERVICES

Phone: 651-222-3787 • Fax: 651-293-1989
Website: www.stpaulunion.org/tsc

Erica Dalghe Reed, Liaison



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Member-International Labor Communications Association

Report: Unionized construction a better deal for workers, taxpayers and communities

Shoot for a Cure set for Aug. 23

Registration is open for the Shoot for a Cure Charity Sporting Clays Shoot, planned Aug. 23 at Caribou Gun Club in Le Sueur. Proceeds of the union-sponsored event will benefit the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

Co-sponsors of the annual event, in its fourth year, include District Council 82 of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades and Labor Against Cancer, a project of the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

Teams and individual shooters will compete for awards at the event, which will also feature raffles and lunch.

Cost to participate is \$175 per shooter, and organizations are asked to sponsor teams of four. For more information or to register, contact Mark Gagliardi at 852-098-0773 or mark@shootforcuremn.com.

IUPAT charity golf tourney Aug. 25

Painters and Allied Trades District Council 82's annual PATCH Day Golf Fundraiser, in its 18th year, is scheduled for Aug. 25 at Majestic Oaks Golf Club in Ham Lake. Proceeds support the union's PATCH Foundation, which stands for Painters and Allied Trades for Children's Hope.

Registration for the 18-hole, four-person best ball event is \$120 per player, and includes 18 holes with cart, golf swing, breakfast and lunch. For registration or other information, contact Amanda Kennedy at 652-224-5480.

Freedom Library plans book talk, Night Out

Greg Pofert, a local labor and community activist, will discuss his new memoir, "Turning Points: Never Give Up on Anyone, Especially Yourself," at a History Revealed virtual event Aug. 12, co-sponsored by the East Side Freedom Library and the Ramsey County Historical Society.

Register to participate in the Zoom conference, scheduled to begin at 7 p.m., for free on the ESFL's website, eastsidefreedomlibrary.org. The event also will stream live on the ESFL's Facebook page.

In "Turning Points," Pofert reflects on his early years in St. Paul in the 1950s and '60s before moving on to stories about military service, labor struggles and strikes, directing youth theater, peace and justice actions, a sentence in federal prison, teaching social studies and experiencing the love of family.

National Night Out

The independent, nonprofit library will host a free National Night Out event Aug. 3, from 5 to 8 p.m., outside the building at 1105 Greenbrier St. in St. Paul. It's free and open to the public, with music, theater, games, food and more in the works.

Minnesota's unionized construction sector is no mean costly than its non-union alternative, according to a new report. But unions do produce higher wages, greater equality, safer workplaces and less reliance on social assistance - all while training more than 90% of the state's skilled trade apprentices.

The study, "Building a Strong Minnesota: An Analysis of Minnesota's Union Construction Industry," was published last month by researchers at the Midwest Economic Policy Institute (MEPI), the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Colorado State University-Pueblo.

Minnesota's \$36 billion construction industry has grown by 68% since 2000, and it now employs more than 130,000 workers.

The current workforce unionization rate is more than double the comparable national average of 18%. That's higher than every other Upper Midwest or Great Plains state except Illinois.

"In analyzing data on both the union and non-union segments of Minnesota's construction workforce, it is clear that the unionized sector delivers far superior outcomes for workers, their families, the industry and for taxpayers as well," said study co-author and MEPI Policy Director Frank Marotta IV.

"Unionized construction workers not only earn higher wages with less income inequality and better benefits, they contribute considerably more in income taxes, rely substantially less on public subsidies and jointly manage programs that train almost all of the state's skilled trade apprentices."

Additionally, Dr. Robert Bruno, a co-author of the study and professor at the University of Illinois, said researchers' findings point to a strong correlation between construction unionization and workplace safety and productivity.

"That's why, when compared to its seven Upper Midwest and Great Plains neighbors, Minnesota has the second-highest construction unionization rate, the third-highest rate of per-worker productivity and the second-lowest jobsite fatality rate," Bruno said.

In addition to measuring impacts specific to workers and the industry, researchers also examined the effects of unionization on both the broader economy and the overall cost of construction projects.

Wages paid to workers are ultimately socialized throughout the economy. Researchers used standard economic modeling to estimate the "downstream" economic impacts of the state's unionized construction sector.

In total, they concluded that Minnesota construction workers covered by collective bargaining agreements support more than 15,000 additional jobs across all economic sectors, while boosting the state's overall GDP by nearly \$2.7 billion per year.



Minnesota Building Trades unions' registered apprenticeship programs and facilities, like the Midwest Laborers Training Center in Lino Lakes, pictured above, are among the public benefits of the unionized construction industry, according to a new report. *The press*

To assess the impact on project costs, researchers examined 640 school construction projects - union and non-union built - in the seven-county metro area between 2015 and 2017.

After comparing the costs and outcomes involved, researchers concluded that "there was no statistically significant cost difference between union contractors and non-union contractors... [and] prevailing wage standards also had no statistically significant effect on school construction costs."

"Union contractors generally offset spending on higher skilled workers with comparatively lower spending on other cost components, while non-union contractors do just the opposite," said Dr. Kevin Duncan, an economics professor at Colorado State University-Pueblo.

"While the data shows that there is overall project cost parity between the union and non-union models of school construction in Minnesota, it's important to remember that there remains a substantial difference in terms of social and economic impacts on workers, the social assistance costs borne by taxpayers, and industrywide safety, productivity, and workforce development outcomes."

Finally, researchers noted that while the unionized sector of Minnesota's construction industry tends to focus on highways, schools, and other types of public infrastructure projects, it has yet to gain significant foothold in emerging sectors such as clean energy.

Despite rapid growth and investment in those technologies across Minnesota, workers in the clean energy sector currently earn an average of 22% less than those working on fossil fuel power generation.

"As lawmakers consider expansion of the state's clean energy capacity, Minnesota has an opportunity to attract a new generation of skilled workers and to extend the economic and social benefits it has already realized on other types of vital infrastructure by attaching labor standards to any public investments," noted study co-author and MEPI's Midwest Policy Researcher Jill Gignat.

"It is clear that such investments could not only advance the state's environmental and public health goals, they could promote an expansion of the union construction model that is clearly serving the Gopher State well."

The report is available online at midwestmepl.org.

After years of fighting, workers cheer as Twin Cities minimum-wage rules inch closer to \$15

Minimum wage went up July 1 in St. Paul and Minneapolis and at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, providing a raise to thousands of working people, many of whom have been on the front lines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Unions and other worker-advocacy organizations marked the annual increase as a reminder of the hard-fought victories won by low-wage workers advocating across industries and across the metro area to improve their wages and working conditions.

The wage hike went into effect on one of the busiest travel days of the year at MSP Airport. The airport minimum wage, now \$14.25, has made a steep climb since members of the Metropolitan Airports Commission voted last fall, after years of advocacy by working people, to put the facility on track to a \$15 minimum wage by 2023.

"When we started this campaign people thought we were crazy to demand these kinds of wages," John Steiguf, directing business representative of Machinists District 77, said during a press conference in Terminal 1. "But through solidarity and collective action, we not only moved the needle in public opinion, but we're here today to celebrate this big

big raise."

Other unions that pushed hard for the MSP wage hike included Service Employees (SEU) Local 26, Teamsters Local 120 and UNITE HERE Local 17, which represents 1,300 food-service workers at the airport.

"For many of our members, it will mean that they won't have to decide between paying a bill and buying groceries," Local 17 President Christa Meffo said. "For many of them, it will mean they might not have to put in so many hours at a second job. They may be able to spend more time with their family at home."

In St. Paul, the minimum wage increased to \$12.50 per hour for businesses and other employers with more than 100 employees, \$11 per hour for employers with six to 100, and \$10 per hour for so-called micro-businesses.

The minimum wage in Minneapolis increased to \$12.50 for all employees and \$14.25 at franchises or employers with over 100 employees.

Magdalena Tadeo, a fast-food worker and leader with the worker center CTUL, called the citywide wage hikes "the fruits of workers' labor from the Fight for \$15."

"It is important for workers to have a dignified and fair wage for their labor," CTUL member Fátima Castro, who works



John Steiguf of Machinists District 77 speaks at a press conference at MSP International Airport on July 1, the day the facility-wide minimum wage increased to \$14.25. "When we started this campaign, people thought we were crazy," Steiguf said. The Machinists joined SEU, Teamsters Local 120, UNITE HERE Local 17 and other unions in recognizing the wage hike.

a temp agency, added. "This is important for equality. This increase came from workers uniting together and demanding more than the minimum."

Labor News in Review

IUPAT INITIATIVE EYED FOR FUNDS

At the request of U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum, the House Appropriations Committee has advanced a spending bill that includes \$2 million for an apprenticeship pathways program offered by District Council 82 of the Painters and Allied Trades union (IUPAT).

McCollum, who represents Minnesota's 4th Congressional District, requested funding for the Finishing Trades Institute of the Upper Midwest (FTIUM) and its Apprenticeship Pathways to Resolve Inequity for Access program in the 2022 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies bill, which advanced out of committee last month.

FTIUM's apprenticeship pathways program works in partnership with employers, schools, community groups and unions in to expand a workforce pipeline of middle and high school students, high school graduates and other young-adult candidates for registered apprenticeship programs in construction, manufacturing and industrial careers.

The program specifically targets underserved populations in Minnesota's 4th district, and it is delivering results, as women and people of color make up 47.6% of FTIUM's apprentices.

Jeff Stark, business manager of District Council 82 and co-chair of FTIUM's board of trustees, said the proposed federal funding would help make the apprenticeship pathways program more sustainable.

"The Congressman's leadership to secure funding builds on the school's success at providing equity to future career candidates and the ability to have sizeable impact on the underserved communities in the Twin Cities, greater Minnesota and western Wisconsin," Stark said. "We look forward to our continued partnership with Congressman McCollum and are grateful for her investment in this critical project."

McCollum also successfully fought to include \$800,000 for St. Catherine University's Advancing Scientific Excellence Initiative in the bill.

"This is a critical first step to bringing back federal

in-payer dollars in Minnesota's 4th District to increase access to apprenticeships and STEM-related careers throughout our community," McCollum said. "These projects will expand workforce development opportunities to a wider range of communities, and I look forward to continuing to work with the Finishing Trades Institute of the Upper Midwest and St. Catherine University to continue advancing this funding."

The bill next heads to the floor of the U.S. House for debate and approval.

STRIKE AVERTED IN HASTINGS

After filing notice last month that they planned to hold a five-day strike, members of SEU Healthcare Minnesota who work at Allina Health's Regina Hospital in Hastings reached a tentative agreement on a new union contract.

Members of the union's bargaining team unanimously recommended ratification of the contract. Terms include wage increases of 3.5% this year and 2% in 2023, with the potential for a wage adjustment in six months. Union members also prioritized - and won - lower health insurance costs. Some workers could see their premium costs drop by up to 31%, according to the SEU.

The proposed contract also includes new language protecting workers health and safety, boosting the hospital's commitment to safe staffing discussions and addressing equity and inclusion in the workplace.

The bargaining unit includes about 100 dietary aides, cooks, janitors, patient-care technicians, physical therapy aides and other frontline workers at the hospital. Donna Lindahl, a janitor and who has worked at the hospital since 1992, said union members deserved to be rewarded by Allina for their service during the pandemic.

"We feel like we haven't gotten recognition for the work we've done during and before COVID," Lindahl said. "We never got to take time off or work from home. We've been here taking care of patients and cleaning

up throughout COVID. We didn't get to sit at home. We didn't get bonuses. The people at the top are getting richer and richer, while those of us who worked throughout COVID aren't getting recognized."

ANTI-UNION LAWSUIT TOSSED

A Ramsey County judge last month dismissed a lawsuit filed by two Republican state legislators seeking to invalidate the union contracts of thousands of state employees and strip them of their collectively bargained wage increases.

In late December, Sen. Mark Korman of North Branch and Rep. Marlon O'Neil of Maple Lake used the Minnesota Management and Budget commissioner, whose office negotiated and implemented the union contracts, allowing raises scheduled for July 2020 to take effect.

The lawmakers asserted the contracts were not valid because, while the House voted to approve them in fall, the Senate voted to strip the raises out of the agreement. After a legal review, the MMB determined legislators may only approve or reject bargaining agreements, not alter them.

The court agreed, giving nearly 50,000 state employees reason to celebrate. AFSCME Council 5 Executive Director Julie Bleyhl said. She called the GOP lawsuit "harmful and egregious" in a statement reacting to the ruling.

"Our union proudly stood up for these workers in court, many of whom are our correctional officers and security counselors, public health professionals, university bookstore clerks, clerical workers, state parks employees and others who have kept our state working in the most difficult times we have experienced in generations," Bleyhl said.

"As thousands of our members are currently negotiating their next contract, our union members will continue to fight for contracts that treat all workers with the respect and dignity they deserve and demand and lift up all workers in our state," she added.

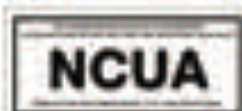
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IT'S A TREND: Workers at no less than 18 Twin Cities nonprofits – including education, social-service, arts, advocacy and other organizations – have organized unions since 2010.

MORE TWIN CITIES NONPROFIT WORKERS ORGANIZE

Union drives in Minnesota, across the nation putting the 'union' back in ACLU

Minnesota employees are part of a wave of organizing activity across the U.S. that is putting the "union" back in the American Civil Liberties Union.

After a speedy organizing drive that took just two months, eligible staff at the ACLU of Minnesota won voluntary recognition from the 70-year-old civil rights organization July 2, five days after the union announced it had surpassed from a "supermajority" of 11 eligible employees.

The same week, employees at two other state affiliates of the ACLU, Arizona and Illinois, announced union drives of their own. In all, employees of 12 state ACLUs have gone public with their unions.

"We're the ACLU; we're built for this," staff attorney Isabella Nascimento said with a laugh. "We have community organizers who do this work on a day-to-day basis. So it was very easy to have conversations with our colleagues about organizing a union."

Locally, ACLU-MN Staff United is affiliated with the Minnesota Newspaper and Communications Guild, TNG-CWA, local 37002. Negotiations with the ACLU of Minnesota on a first contract have yet to begin.

In a statement, union members said they hope collective bargaining will "create organizational stability and transparency; promote pay equity; develop stronger support systems for staff; increase equity and inclusion within the organization and its leadership; and hold management accountable for implementing the organization's external principles – including its commitment to organized labor – within the walls of their workplace."

They also expressed solidarity with "the growing movement of non-profit workers" organizing for more stable, inclusive and equitable workplaces.

Since 2010, workers at no less than 18 nonprofit and advocacy organizations in the Twin Cities have organized new unions – a trend that picked up steam in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the nationwide reckoning on racial justice following the murder of George Floyd.

"Throughout these several months of uncertainty, the mission of the staff at the ACLU of Minnesota has remained unchanged: to hold government accountable when it harms people and builds on their civil rights and liberties," ACLU-MN Staff United said. "The staff expects that the face the organization projects to the public will match its internal ethos. Our decision to prioritize represents an internal accountability mechanism and the



"We're the ACLU; we're built for this. We have community organizers who do this work on a day-to-day basis. So it was easy to have conversations with our colleagues about organizing a union."

— Isabella Nascimento, staff attorney

staff's unwavering commitment toward the organization's success."

The bargaining unit is likely to grow as the ACLU of Minnesota fills multiple open positions, Nascimento said. She said the organization has roughly tripled in size in recent years, resulting in some "growing pains that it was becoming increasingly difficult to fit internally without speaking with a collective voice."

The successful organizing drive also puts employees in a better position to influence the process of hiring a new executive director. The ACLU of Minnesota's previous executive director resigned, as planned, June 30.

"We think it's really important staff has a voice in choosing the successor," Nascimento said. "We know what makes for a successful organization for us and for the personalities we have in the office."

In the meantime, leadership's decision to recognize and respect its employees' choice to form a union is having a positive effect on workplace morale. Nascimento said union members were pleased to see the organization live up to its stated position that collective bargaining is fundamental to workers' ability to exercise their rights of speech, assembly and petition.

"It went very quickly, very seamlessly and non-contentiously," she said. "It's very collegial, and the atmosphere at the office is really energetic. It's a huge show from leadership that they really are pro-union."

Follow ACLU-MN Staff United on Twitter [@aclumnsu](#).

— Michael Moore, UA editor

ILSR staff seek union to 'internally reflect what we are externally organizing for'

After staff members at the Institute for Local Self-Reliance announced last month that they had formed a union, leaders of the Minneapolis-based nonprofit went suspiciously quiet.

Fearing management was consulting with an anti-union attorney, workers scrambled to rally public pressure on the nonprofit organization's leadership.

"We're pretty disappointed," Jess Del Fiocco, a union activist who works as ILSR's communications manager, said at the time. "Our organization is publicly very supportive of organized labor. I personally expected them to voluntarily recognize our union. But we're still hopeful that we'll get there."

Within a week, their request for voluntary recognition of the new bargaining unit had been granted.

Under voluntary recognition, members of the ILSR Staff Union, an affiliate of Office and Professional Employees (OPEIU) Local 12, were able to bypass the lengthy union-election process governed by the National Labor Relations Board and, instead, collect signed cards requesting union representation.

The union and employer will now begin bargaining a first contract.

With offices in Washington, D.C., and Portland, Maine, as well as Minneapolis, the ILSR's mission is to strengthen local economies and communities by fighting corporate control, making the organization a natural ally of organized labor.

The bargaining unit at ILSR includes 14 workers. They began discussing the idea of forming a union last summer, Del Fiocco said, with the organizing drive entering full swing by fall.

An overwhelming majority of eligible staff members signed onto the union drive, according to organizers.

ILSR union members said they believe collective bargaining will give them more power to promote equity



and transparency at the organization – and to advocate for their own well-being.

Del Fiocco said ILSR staff members face issues common to nonprofit workplaces, like pay disparities, uncertain rules and responsibilities stretching beyond employees' job descriptions.

But she added, "We don't see this as any kind of response to a terrible workplace or anything like that. I have nothing but respect for the leadership of the organization and the work we do. We're excited to help build an organization that's even stronger together."

To push the ILSR to agree to voluntary recognition, union members set up an online petition that drew over 100 signatures, and called out the organization's co-directors on social media.

While the delay was frustrating, Del Fiocco said, members never gave up hope that management would come around – sooner or later.

"We really want our workplace to reflect the values our organization has," Del Fiocco said. "ILSR works for democratic institutions, and we think there's no reason we shouldn't internally reflect what we are externally organizing for."

Follow the ILSR Staff Union on Twitter at [@ilslstaffunion](#).

— Michael Moore, UA editor

CTUL staff form union with MN Guild-CWA

The staff of Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en Lucha (CTUL) have formed a union. The announcement came during a staff meeting June 16. The directors of CTUL voluntarily recognized the union.

Staff at CTUL have been organizing a union on and off for many years, but more formal efforts began toward the end of 2020. The staff at CTUL overwhelmingly support the union, with 100% of eligible workers signing their cards and support from 100% of CTUL workers in management positions.

CTUL is a worker-led organization where workers organize, educate and

empower each other to fight for a voice in their workplaces and communities. The CTUL union believes that this must include both the membership of CTUL and the rank-and-file staff of CTUL.

The CTUL Union aims to create a workplace at CTUL where union members within the organization have a voice in working conditions, salary, benefits, work-life balance, hiring and firing practices – and worker voice in decisions that impact their jobs. Additionally, workers believe that improving the rank and file working conditions will collectively raise the standards for all workers at CTUL.

Planning a summer home-improvement project? Be sure your contractor is licensed, state warns

Minnesota investigators joined a national enforcement effort to uncover and eliminate unlicensed contractor activity this summer, leading to multiple formal cases under investigation.

Now, the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry is rolling out a public campaign to raise awareness of the advantages of hiring licensed contractors—and the potential pitfalls of hiring unlicensed contractors.

DLI partnered with other members of the National Association of State Contractors Licensing Agencies on an enforcement initiative June 7 through 25. In addition to their regular casework, investigators with the Construction Codes and Licensing Division devoted time each day to searching various online platforms for unlicensed residential building contractors offering services for which licensure is required.

Many of the consumer complaints DLI receives relating to unlicensed contractors are from homeowners who found their contractor on websites like Craigslist, Facebook, Home Advisor, Neighborhood and Thumbtack.

In one case, a DLI investigator discovered an unlicensed contractor who posted TikTok videos of himself

performing work that requires licensure. DLI had already ordered this contractor to cease and desist from unlicensed activity and fined him earlier this year, so he now faces further fines and possible criminal prosecution.

In all during the special investigation period, DLI investigators identified 56 unlicensed contractors and have, so far, opened 28 investigations. But in many cases the contractor provides only a first name and phone number, which makes identifying them difficult for enforcement purposes and points out the danger these unlicensed individuals pose to homeowners, DLI said.

Property owners should always get a contractor's full name and address, and check their state license status before considering hiring them.

"Minnesota homeowners are able to obtain compensation from the Contractor Recovery Fund if they suffer a loss as a result of a contractor's failure to perform," said DLI Commissioner Roddy Robertson, "but only if the contractor they hire is licensed."

Consumers can find more information about the Contractor Recovery Fund and tips about hiring a contractor, including an online license lookup tool, on DLI's website at www.hirehicensedmn.com.

After recruiting workers' help at the Legislature, Vireo Health stiffens them at the bargaining table

(Continued from Page 3)

offer "insulting," particularly in light of the union's contribution to the successful lobbying push, which will allow Vireo Health and other manufacturers to introduce cannabis flower to its available treatments.

"They got what they wanted, and now they're backtracking," Noel said. "And it's really disheartening that our efforts are being diminished while the fruits of our labor are going to be more publicly visible once we start selling flower."

At the same time, Vireo Health stands to be much more profitable. In a recent promotional release, the company cited "growth catalysts driven by changing regulatory frameworks," among other factors, in projecting revenue of up to \$380 million in the coming fiscal year. That's more than double the previous year's amount.

Local 1189 members say Vireo's contract demands would cut them—and, more drastically, the company's future hires—out of those gains. The proposal would replace annual wage progressions, also known as "steps," with across-the-board raises, and it would implement lower wage scales for new hires.

"They are trying to transition our work to more of a dead-end job with no opportunity for growth, and it's not being received well," Noel said. "How often do 35 people completely agree that something is a terrible offer?"

Adding to workers' frustrations, management at Green Goods patient centers made a unilateral decision recently to retrofit workstations originally designed for use while sitting, forcing workers to stand for the entirety of their shifts.

"They want to create more of a retail environment," Local 1189 organizer Claire Van den Bergh said, noting that cannabis patient centers are legally classified as health care facilities. "I've been to every one of the patient care centers, and they are not as busy as your usual retail store."

Workers who accepted jobs with the understanding they would be able to sit most of the workday are now being forced to adjust—or pay for a consultation with a doctor in the hopes of forcing Vireo to make accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, Van den Bergh said.



Do Something! Sign a petition in support of Vireo Health and Green Goods workers at chng.it/V0Q8LyT.

"People are really upset about their desks being taken away."

Noel, the 18th employee hired by the company—formerly Minnesota Medical Solutions—after its founding in 2014, said employees are determined to take a stand for good wages and a voice on the job now, while the industry is still in its relative infancy. Noel noted that he already has reached the top pay scale, meaning the company's effort to remove wage progressions from the contract would have no impact on him.

"The company has been growing and expanding, and we feel like the workers have been left behind," Noel said. "We all feel fortunate to do what we do. A big part of our interest is a good deal for the people that will someday replace us at work as we move on or retire."

Local 1189 has filed charges of unfair labor practices against the company. Workers' plans to picket facilities in late June were called off after management agreed to additional talks, scheduled to resume late last month.



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Minnesota home care workers on track to \$15 wage floor after Legislature ratifies new contract

Minnesota home care workers and their clients have raised standards in the industry since winning the right to collectively bargain a union contract with the State of Minnesota six years ago.

That trend continued in 2021.

With bipartisan support, legislators funded and ratified a new contract covering nearly 29,000 home care workers as part of the state's Health and Human Services budget bill, signed into law by Gov. Tim Walz in June. The contract took effect July 1.

The new contract will raise the pay floor for home care workers to \$15.25 on July 1, 2022. Minimum wage in the union's first contract with the state, which took effect in 2015, was \$10.50, meaning the pay floor will have gone up 45% by the end of the new agreement.

Home care workers have earned the raise, said Kristina Walker of Crystal, who helps provide care for her brother, a stroke victim.

"Home care workers did so much this last year, and have so much dignity in our work," Walker said. "So winning this wage increase, increased training gains and extra benefits will be a big step towards getting us where we need to be."

Other gains in the contract include more paid time off, two new floating holidays paid at time-and-a-half each year and state funding for worker trainings – with \$500 stipends for home care workers who complete a set of courses, improving the quality of care they are able to provide to people with disabilities and seniors.

Home care workers, who are members of SEIU Healthcare Minnesota, reached a tentative agreement with the state on the new contract Jan. 15 and voted overwhelmingly to ratify it in February.

The union's negotiating team included not only home care workers, but clients and family caregivers as well. Lauren Thompson, a home care client from Crystal, was part of the bargaining process.

"Funding home care and making sure people can live at home is not only the right thing to do, but saves lives and money," Thompson said.

"This contract, and the other improvements to home care made by Gov. Walz and state lawmakers, is a step towards dismantling ableism and creating equity not only in terms of helping build a sustainable workforce for workers but also making it so clients have access to our community and can simply live our lives."



Clockwise from top-left: Jillian Nelson (center) of the Autism Society of Minnesota is flanked by two members of her home care team; disability-rights advocate and Maplewood City Councilor Nikki Villavicencio leads chanting during the march; LaTanya Hughes, a home care worker and union vice president, emcees a press conference; after the march and rally, families enjoyed lunch, ice cream and a bounce house to celebrate home care workers' most recent union contract.

Union Advocate photos

Home care workers, clients push Congress to act

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

\$400 billion for home- and community-based care, enough to create over 1 million living-wage jobs in the industry.

The proposal also includes jobs-creating investments in roads, bridges, transit, schools, housing, research and manufacturing. Home care workers and clients across the U.S. are organizing, with support from SEIU, to make sure their industry – the so-called "caring infrastructure" – isn't left behind as the legislative process plays out.

More than 90,000 people work as home health aides and personal care assistants in Minnesota, and home care workers here already have formed a union to improve their wages, benefits and training opportunities.

But advocates say the federal government must do more to stabilize and professionalize the industry's workforce, which is marked by high rates of turnover.

"The home care industry has been ignored for too long," said Lauren Thompson, a disability-rights advocate who has cerebral palsy. "The workers are

underpaid and overworked. This causes a dangerous domino effect that trickles down to me and clients like me."

Lack of stable care, she said, limits opportunities for many Americans with disabilities to live independently. Thompson called it a choice "between our freedom and our safety" that results in a "loss of our humanity."

"Stable home care means stable client lives," she added.

Jillian Nelson, an autistic adult who works as a policy advocate for the Autism Society of Minnesota, attended the march and rally with two members of her home care team. Their work, she said, makes it possible for Nelson to pursue her own career, and the result is a net gain for the economy as a whole.

"Far too long, we have been framed as a burden on society," Nelson said. "We don't just use resources, but create jobs and community... It is time that that economic framework be valued and strengthened like every other sector of our country's economy."

Investing in the care economy is also a

matter of racial and economic justice, advocates said.

The home care workforce is overwhelmingly made up of women and people of color. That makes the Biden plan, which includes "neutrality" language requiring projects funded through the legislation to offer workers a fair opportunity to form a union, an opportunity to create the foundation of a more diverse, resilient middle class.

"It would be a jobs act, it would be a racial justice act and it would be a care act," Hughes said.

Home care workers and clients also took time at the event to celebrate gains made during the recently concluded legislative session, including approval of workers' union contract with the state. That agreement will raise minimum pay to \$15.25 in July 2022 and expand workers' access to paid time off and holiday pay.

The St. Paul event was part of a 24-city day of action organized by SEIU, kicking off a major campaign centered around jobs, care and justice for the 2.3 million home care workers nationwide.

At the Capitol

Session ends with some victories, but partisan gridlock blocks needed progress

By Steve Share

Minneapolis Labor Review editor

Minnesota currently has the only state Legislature in the nation where Democrats control one chamber and Republicans control the other chamber.

Indeed, over the course of the 2021 legislative session, labor saw many of its priorities pass the DFL-controlled House but go nowhere in the Republican-controlled Senate.

The Legislature went into overtime with a special session to conclude unfinished business. When the special session adjourned July 1, the state's labor unions claimed wins to celebrate, even as other key priorities failed to advance.

Most notably, the Legislature agreed to direct \$250 million in federal funds to support essential workers who were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This funding, however, should be seen only as a first step, maintained the Minnesota AFL-CIO.

"Countless working Minnesotans across multiple sectors and in every corner of our state put themselves in harm's way for more than a year, many going without pay when forced to quarantine at home," said Bill McCarthy, Minnesota AFL-CIO president. "These workers, many of whom continue to face racial and economic disparities on top of pandemic stress, need to be made whole for the extraordinary work they do and the sacrifices they made."

The Legislature acted to put state law in conformity

with federal law so that workers would not need to pay state income tax on extended federal unemployment benefits – truly significant for workers.

The state's labor movement went into the special session with four priorities – and helped pass one of the four.

Blocked by Senate Republicans: a bonding bill to invest in jobs, an essential worker emergency leave act and a refinery safety bill.

Passed with bi-partisan support was a tax credit to boost the film industry.

Despite the Legislature's failure to pass a bonding bill, Building Trades unions praised several measures that did pass.

Joe Fowler, president of the Minnesota State Building and Construction Trades Council reported: "In the last few days of session, some important legislation was passed that will take a significant step forward towards investing in Minnesota's aging infrastructure. Legislation that will help create a more stable path to clean energy production that will also create jobs for the skilled and trained local workers in organized labor."

Fowler also celebrated legislation "that helps combat wage theft and strengthens enforcement and funds additional OSHA staff — all of which help to protect the workers in the field."

"Those investments along with added language in the Public Safety bill that requires oil refineries to

maintain full-time fire departments were all key initiatives supported by the Minnesota Building and Construction Trades Council," Fowler said.

However, Fowler added, "we continue to be concerned and extremely disappointed that the refinery safety language that had bi-partisan support in both the House and Senate just a few days before, was removed from the Omnibus Jobs Bill along a party line vote in the Senate by Republicans."

Education Minnesota, the statewide union of educators, welcomed legislative action to increase school funding.

"This budget contains the single largest increase in the per-pupil funding in more than a decade, preserves thousands of pre-K seats and makes a wise, strategic investment in increasing the number of Minnesota's teachers of color," said Denise Specht, Education Minnesota president.

"We are disappointed by the lack of certain equity provisions supported by educators, but this budget is a meaningful step toward fully funding public education," she said.

AFSCME Council 5 welcomed several actions by the legislature:

- The tax bill expanded eligibility to the Working Family Tax Credit to include 19- and 20-year-olds without dependents, providing greater financial stability for young people.

- Counties will receive a new form of state aid specifically designed to fund programs aimed at homelessness prevention and assistance.

- An additional \$78.5 million for state agencies and constitutional offices, such as Administration, Management and Budget, Attorney General's Office, Secretary of State's Office, MN IT Services, Department of Revenue and others.

- Over \$100 million in funding to update the maximum rates for the Child Care Assistance Program.

And SEIU Local 284, which represents workers in public school districts, celebrated the Legislature's action to ban school practices that shamed students for unpaid school lunch accounts.

"No student should ever go hungry at school," the local said. "Cooks and food service workers who are members of our union have been fighting for this change for years. Too often our members were told to enforce unfair and cruel rules, and this law will help make that a thing of the past."

Another SEIU Local 284 priority, however, was blocked by Senate Republicans: fixing a gap in state law so that hourly school employees and hourly workers at colleges and universities could qualify for unemployment insurance.

Celebrating the Minnesota film industry's big break



Union leaders and elected officials celebrate Minnesota's new film production tax credit during a reception hosted by the Minnesota Film and Television commission July 15. Passed by the Legislature and signed into law by Gov. Walz on July 1 as part of the omnibus tax bill, the film credit will provide incentives to lure production crews back to Minnesota at a time when demand for the content they create has never been higher. That's not just good news for actors and others working on the set. Film production creates jobs for hospitality, transportation and construction workers, creating a positive ripple effect throughout the economy. Pictured from

left to right at the celebration are (front) Kera Peterson, St. Paul Regional Labor Federation president; Rep. Dave Lislegard; House Speaker Melissa Hortman; Mary Em Burns, SAG-AFTRA Twin Cities Local secretary; Ed Reynoso, Teamsters Joint Council 32 political director; (back) Bill Hendrickson, SAG-AFTRA director of locals administration; Casey Hudek, Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation campaigns manager; Mike Arnold, Teamsters Local 638 motion picture member; Casey Lewis, SAG-AFTRA Twin Cities Local board member; Scott Lecy, Teamsters Local 638 business agent; Mark Bradley, SAG-AFTRA Twin Cities Local first vice president. Union Advocate photo

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Refinery workers cite community support, safety legislation in winning improved offer

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

and permanent workers at the sensitive facility, the union said.

Local 120 also worked in partnership with other unions at the Capitol, successfully lobbying bipartisan support for a new law that will require oil refineries like Marathon to maintain full-time fire departments.

And refinery workers will continue striving to make their facility as safe as possible, Local 120 Business Agent Scott Kroona said, “through the grievance process in the contract and by advocating legislatively for policies that improve refinery safety at every site in our state.”

“This has been a long battle, with many twists and turns, but we are immensely proud of our members who put their livelihoods on the line to demand better working conditions and protect their community,” Kroona said in a statement released after the membership vote. “Teamsters Local 120 members are the best at what they do, and they are eager to get back to work.”

David vs. Goliath

From the coldest days of the polar vortex to the stifling heat of summer, Local 120 members never gave up the line outside Marathon’s St. Paul Park refinery. Despite not getting a perfect contract, refinery worker Ryan Bierman said union members are proud of the fight they gave the nation’s largest independent oil refiner.

“Think about how long we stood together and how strong our group was from start to finish, most of us anyway,” Bierman said. “We fought like hell.”

Teamsters applied pressure to Marathon on a number of fronts, from the legislative push at the Capitol to a consumer-awareness campaign at local Speedway gas stations, which are supplied by the Marathon refinery. They lobbied shareholders to vote down a pay increase for the company’s CEO and even traveled to corporate headquarters in Findlay, Ohio, to rally support.

In return, Teamsters said, Marathon dug into its deep pockets to make workers feel the company’s power in ways big and small, like shipping in scabs, hiring private security and surveilling workers’ social media accounts.



Members of Teamsters Local 120 hold a meeting outside American Legion Post 98 in St. Paul Park before voting to accept an improved contract offer from Marathon Petroleum, ending a lengthy work stoppage at the refinery. Union Advocate photo

“They were mean,” said Dean Benson, chief steward of Local 120’s bargaining unit. “If there was ever something they could do to hurt us, they did it. I mean, they got rid of our burn barrels when it was 30 below outside.”

Minnesota vs. Marathon

Benson and other members of the union’s negotiations team had a hunch Marathon was taking an aggressive tack in negotiations before the work stoppage began. Bargaining with the company “was like beating your head against the wall for six weeks,” Bierman said.

What did take members of Local 120 by surprise, though, was the outpouring of community support – particularly from the labor movement and the communities surrounding the refinery – after the picket line went up.

“Good people stick to good people,”

Benson said. “Every labor union around, you’d see them at any different time on the line with us, it seemed like. The Laborers fed us every day for two months. Teachers, nurses, autoworkers out of Hudson – so many members from other unions showed up.”

The St. Paul Park American Legion post opened its doors to striking workers for meetings. Two local lawmakers – Rep. Keith Franke, a Republican, and Sen. Karla Bigham, a DFLer – worked across party lines to build support for the fire safety bill. Union volunteers helped distribute thousands of pounds of free food during distribution events in the community.

“These members took a bold stand for community safety and safety on the job,” St. Paul Regional Labor Federation President Kera Peterson said. “The

Regional Labor Federation and our affiliate unions were proud to stand with them in solidarity.”

The support only grew as Marathon workers expanded their campaign’s public outreach.

“I know we had an impact,” Bierman said. “We’d go to these gas stations that would be slam packed with people, show up with the megaphone and a truckload of people, and 10 or 15 minutes later there would be one or two cars left, sometimes none.”

They may be going back to work, Benson said, but Teamsters are not walking away from the fight.

“I would want people in the community around the refinery to know we did everything we could to help make it safer to live right next door,” he said. “We might not have got all of it, but we’ll keep trying.”

Federal investigation nets \$435,000 in back pay for restaurant workers in Cannon Falls, Red Wing

Two Minnesota restaurants must pay \$435,000 in back wages after a U.S. Department of Labor investigation found they illegally misclassified cooks and dishwashers as independent contractors and not hourly employees, and cheated servers out of wages for hours they had worked.

Thirty-six workers at Rancho Loco Grill and Bar in Red Wing and Rancho Loco Mexican Grill and Bar in Cannon Falls are eligible for back pay after investigators with the department’s

Wage and Hour Division determined most workers received only about half the pay they had earned.

A federal judge later upheld the investigation’s findings and ordered the restaurants to make workers whole. “Our investigation found this employer broke the law deliberately,” said Wage and Hour Division Assistant District Director Kristin Tout in Minneapolis. “Employers who misclassify employees as independent contractors cheat those workers out of

wages and deny them other workplace protections.

Restaurant servers often would work 60 hours per week but get paid for just 30. The employer also frequently required servers to report early for prep work but only allowed them to “punch in” when the first customer arrived.

Cooks and dishwashers would work 10 hours a day or more for a flat salary, with no minimum wage and overtime protections because the employers

wrongly classified them as independent contractors.

“Restaurant employees are among the nation’s lowest paid essential workers and they are often unaware of their rights to minimum wage and overtime,” Tout said.

“The U.S. Department of Labor is committed to using every enforcement tool available, including litigation, to ensure they are paid every penny they have legally earned for their hard work.”



Minutes of the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation

JUNE 9, 2021

The Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation met in regular session remotely due to COVID 19 on the above date and was called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance by President Peterson at 6 p.m. Board members in attendance were Beissel, Edwards, Engeldorf, Faber, Guertin, Luneburg, Madden, Markham-Kocurek, McNamara, Michelson, Peterson, Schmidt, Slattery, St. Aoro, Tastad-Damer, Terry, Vandassor and Varco. Excused were Gibbons, Gorman, and Ryan. Absent were Beedle, Hoppe, Jones, and Sansom.

CREDENTIALS

Credentials were received from Saint Paul Federation of Educators Local 28. President Peterson administered the Oath of Obligation to those new delegates and alternates present online.

MINUTES

• **M/S/C TO APPROVE MINUTES OF APRIL 14, 2021, AS PUBLISHED IN THE UNION ADVOCATE NEWSPAPER AFTER THE ACTING SECRETARY-TREASURER NOTES THERE ARE NO ADDITIONS OR CHANGES CALLED FOR.**

COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL EDUCATION (COPE) MINUTES JUNE 9, 2021

COPE met in regular session remotely on the above date and was called to order by President Peterson at 5 p.m. Board members in attendance were Beissel, Edwards, Engeldorf, Faber, Guertin, Hoerth, Krey, Luneburg, Madden, Markham-Kocurek, Mayer, McNamara, Michelson, Peterson, Schmidt, Slattery, St. Aoro, Tastad-Damer, Terry, Vandassor and Varco. Excused were Gibbons, Gorman, Lohmann, and Ryan. Absent were Beedle, DeRoy, Hoppe, Jones, Nabeth, Sansom, and Wise.

Items to come before this board included:

- President Peterson reported on the PRO Act and that it is the number one priority at the National Level.
- There are no candidate screenings set for this month.

There being no further business to come before this committee the meeting adjourned.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES JUNE 9, 2021

The Executive Board met upon conclusion of COPE with those same members present who are duly elected to this board.

Items to come before this board included:

- **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**
President Peterson reported the St. Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center's Tenth Annual Labor Bowl; approval of the Saint Paul RLF marching unit in the Labor Day Parade at the Minnesota State Fair; the passing of political organizer Colleen Nocerini's son; Nick Faber, SPFE Local 28 retirement; updated 2021 budget; and the special Executive Board meeting called to discuss and settle a staff grievance as requested by the union.
- **ORGANIZING UPDATES/CAMPAIGNS:** AFSCME, APWU, Minnesota Nurses Association, NALC, Teamsters Local 120 and UFCW Local 1189 gave updates on their organizing activities.
- **M/S/C TO HAVE THE ST. PAUL RLF PARTICIPATE IN THE LABOR DAY PARADE AT THE MINNESOTA STATE FAIR.**
- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$500 DONATION TO THE 2021 LIUNA FAMILY FUN-RAISER BEING HELD ON AUGUST 21, 2021, AT COMO REGIONAL PARK.**
- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$250 DONATION TO THE JEAN JONES SCHOOL SUPPLIES INITIATIVE.**
- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$500 CONTRIBUTION TO THE TENTH ANNUAL LABOR BOWL.**

There being no further business to come before this board, the meeting adjourned.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Acting Secretary-Treasurer Beissel reported on the financial status of the Federation as of May 2021. The report was accepted as read.

PRESIDENTS REPORT

President Peterson reported on State bills getting passed, contract actions with MNA, SEIU and Teamsters, Tenth Annual Labor Bowl, participating in the Labor Day Parade at the Minnesota State Fair, Nick Faber's retirement, updated 2021 budget, settlement of a staff grievance as requested by the union and connecting with different unions.

STAFF/LABOR LIAISON REPORTS

- Jasmine Kitto, Political Organizer, reported on picketing with MNA, SEIU and the Teamsters.
- Erica Dalager Reed, AFL-CIO Community Liaison, reported on the Farmers to Family food distribution program ending on May 31, the Tenth Annual Labor Bowl, and Colleen Nocerini's son passing away.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

- Michael Madden reported on behalf of the Chisago County Labor Assembly. We held our first annual School Supply drive. We will be screening ISD 2144 School Board candidates. Our next meeting will be the fourth Thursday of the month at 4:30 p.m. via zoom.
- Connie Beissel reported on behalf of the Dakota County Labor Assembly. The Teacher's Levy passed in Lakeville, USW Local 662 participated in Hastings Park Clean-up Day and we will be donating books to high schools again this year. Our next meeting will be the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. via zoom. If you would like to participate RSVP to Colleen Nocerini.

NEW BUSINESS

Janey Atchison, SPFE Local 28 reported on School Board elections for endorsed candidates.

GOOD AND WELFARE

- Dalager shared details of the memorial for Nocerini's son.
- President Peterson shared that we would be looking into returning to in-person meetings this fall.

Labor mourns loss of ATU's Jones

Doni Jones, vice president of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1005 and a member of the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation Executive Board, died July 4.

Local 1005 President Ryan Timlin shared news of Jones' death on the union's social media accounts. He called Jones, a bus operator with Metro Transit since 2006 who founded the union's Black Caucus, a "very important member" of the Local 1005 family.

"For those that knew him, he was an unforgettable soul who worked tirelessly for the members and



Doni Jones (file photo)

this local," Timlin said. "Doni was one of a kind, irreplaceable and will be deeply missed by all in Local 1005. Words cannot express the loss we feel today."

There being no further business to come before this delegation, the meeting adjourned.

Submitted by,
CONNIE BEISSEL
Acting Secretary-Treasurer

SPECIAL MEETING MAY 28, 2021

The Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation met in special session remotely due to COVID 19 on the above date and was called to order by President Peterson at 10:00 a.m. Board members in attendance were Beissel, Edwards, Engeldorf, Faber, Gibbons, Guertin, Luneburg, McNamara, Michelson, Peterson, Ryan, Schmidt, Slattery, Tastad-Damer, Vandassor and Varco. Absent were Beedle, Gorman, Hoppe, Jones, Luneburg, Markham-Kocurek, Sansom, St. Aoro, and Terry.

ST. PAUL LABOR STUDIES AND RESOURCE CENTER

Business to come before the

LSRC board to be acted upon consisted of a staff grievance related to an IAM Local 459 contractual issue.

M/S/C TO AUTHORIZE SETTLEMENT OF THE GRIEVANCE AS REQUESTED BY THE UNION.

There being no further business to come before this board the meeting stood adjourned.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board met upon conclusion of LSRC with those same members in attendance who are duly elected to this board.

Business to come before the Executive Board to be acted upon consisted of a staff grievance related to an IAM Local 459 contractual issue.

M/S/C TO AUTHORIZE SETTLEMENT OF THE GRIEVANCE AS REQUESTED BY THE UNION.

There being no further business to come before this board the meeting adjourned.

Submitted by,
BERNADINE ENGELDORF
Secretary-Treasurer

Saint Paul RLF endorsement notice

At the Aug. 11 delegate meeting, the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation may consider recommendations from its local labor assemblies for granting labor endorsement in upcoming local elections.

Elected offices that may be considered include Saint Paul mayor and Saint Paul Board of Education.

For more information on the SPRLF's endorsement process, call 651-222-3787.



Let's get together, union members!

The St. Paul Regional Labor Federation's local labor assemblies bring working people and retirees together to exchange ideas and take action on issues that matter most in their communities. Assembly meetings are open to all union members who live or work in our four-county area.

Chisago County Assembly

Aug. 26, 4:30 p.m.

To register for the Zoom meeting,
email cnocerini@stpaulunions.org

Dakota County Assembly

Aug. 12, 7 p.m.

To register for the Zoom meeting,
email cnocerini@stpaulunions.org

Ramsey County Assembly

Aug. 24, 6 p.m.

To register for the Zoom meeting,
email jkitto@stpaulunions.org

Washington County Assembly

Aug. 25, 6 p.m.

To register for the Zoom meeting,
email jkitto@stpaulunions.org



www.stpaulunions.org

Exit Interview: Samantha Schanus

Roofers local's new secretary-treasurer breaks ground

July was a winning month for Samantha Schanus.

The journey-level roofer from Mora was one of four Tradeswomen Heroes award winners, named monthly by North America's Building Trades Unions. The awards highlight outstanding achievement within the ranks of the Building Trades' affiliate unions.

Just days after receiving the award, Schanus was sworn in as the new secretary-treasurer of Roofers Local 96, becoming the first woman elected to serve as an officer since the local's founding in 1929.

"It definitely shows we are a diverse local, and everyone's equal," Schanus said, pausing for an interview during her lunch break on a job at Fairmont Elementary School last month. "Anybody can hold a position, as long as they can do the job. To me, it's a special position to be in, to have that title."

Schanus, 30, reflected on her accomplishments since joining the Roofers union five years ago – and some of the challenges she faced along the way – in this interview, which has been lightly edited for space and content.

UA: Congratulations on the award. How did you find out you'd won?

SS: Local 96 nominated me, and they only told me after the nomination had already been sent in.

Honestly, it was a privilege to be nominated, and it was even more exciting I was chosen. I never really thought that all the things I was trying to do were all that recognizable, and it was nice to know people saw the effort I put in.

UA: How did you decide to join Local 96 and pursue a roofing career?

SS: I tried out all different kinds of trades through a pre-apprenticeship program. I initially wanted to be a Laborer, but at the time they didn't need me. So I

called the Roofers.

I liked the brotherhood, and I especially liked the work. It was awesome to be physical and active and hands on.

UA: What was the reaction of family and friends?

SS: My dad wasn't very happy. He's a 49er (operating engineer) and wanted me to do something less invasive on my body like he does. And I think he wanted me to be a part of his working life, too. But after he could tell I enjoyed the work, he was happy for me. He was proud. Nobody ever discouraged me from working construction.

UA: How many other women typically are on the jobsite with you?

SS: I'm pretty much always the only one, and it's been that way for the last two or three years. I've only worked with one woman before. There are days when it would be nice to have someone I could relate to other than the guys, but for the most part they've been very kind. I've had a couple incidents, but I've made some good friendships, good relationships too.

UA: Looking back, is there a moment when you knew you'd made it as a roofer?

SS: After my first job at a school in Eden Prairie. It took us three months to finish it and was definitely one of the worst jobs I've been on. It had all different kinds of personalities, I guess you'd say. I had days when I didn't know whether to cry or quit. When I made it through that all on my own, that's when I knew I would be making a career out of this.

UA: What do you like about working union?

SS: I like the teamwork. I like the physical, hands-on work of constructing something.

With the brotherhood, I like just knowing some-



Samantha Schanus, the newly elected secretary-treasurer of Roofers Local 96, was named one of four Tradeswomen Heroes award winners in July.

submitted photo

body has your back. Unions make a big difference that a lot of people don't realize. Union wages set everyone else's wages. Union benefits create a competitive market, so the employers who aren't union have to do better. It's nice to be behind the scenes in making things better for people who aren't in the union – and for the current brothers and sisters I have.

UA: What would you tell other women considering a career path like yours?

SS: Don't get discouraged until you make it to the end of your worst day. Then you can make a decision if you want to stick it out or not. It's hard in construction. You're going to get a lot of negativity and a lot of BS, but it can also be rewarding, too.

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Building Trades Credit Union is celebrating YOU in honor of Member Appreciation Week! Please join us for Doc E's BBQ food truck, raffle items and more at our convenient locations:

Shoreview: Tuesday, September 7, 12-4 p.m.

Bloomington: Wednesday, September 8, 12-4 p.m.

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RAFFLE ITEMS INCLUDE:

- Troll Co. Clothing gift card
- An Orca cooler
- Red Wing® Shoes gift card
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- And more!

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