

Minneapolis Labor Review

116th Year

No. 7

December 16, 2023

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Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation, AFL-CIO

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MN labor unions gear-up for major escalation in 2024

— See story, pages 9-10



Geoff Dittberner photo

The Minnesota AFL-CIO offered a “Strike School” December 9 for members of local unions (photo above). The training event at Southwest High School in Minneapolis drew about 150 participants. Several unions are in the midst of contentious contract campaigns with contracts already expired or expiring early in 2024. They’ve begun working together to plan, strategize, and possibly coordinate their contract campaigns under the umbrella, “What could we win together?” See story, pages 9-10.

Forecasted budget surplus will greet 2024 legislature



2024 Legislature

By Steve Share,
Labor Review editor

SAINT PAUL — With the December 6 release of a projected \$2.4 billion state budget surplus for fiscal year 2024-2025, Minnesota labor leaders are calling for this one-time surplus to be invested in education, in infrastructure, and, in the words of Minnesota AFL-CIO president Bernie Burnham, “in a way that benefits working Minnesotans in every corner of our state.”

At this time last year, the projected budget surplus was \$17.6 billion — so the new forecast is relatively small by comparison.

Still, a forecasted budget surplus — as opposed to a forecasted deficit — will set the tone for the 2024 session of the Minnesota legislature.

“After 2023’s historic pro-worker legislative session, Minnesota’s state budget remains stable and more than ready to cover the investments

state leaders made earlier this year,” Burnham said.

“While the overall balance sheet shows a modest budget surplus, it’s important for working people to know this is one-time money,” Burnham added. “That means lawmakers should be intentional about using the surplus and avoid the reckless tax giveaways to the rich that some are proposing.”

“The legislature made historic
LEGISLATURE page 7

AFL-CIO partners with Microsoft to develop worker-friendly AI

WASHINGTON — Almost every day, news headlines herald some new development in the broadening scope of AI — artificial intelligence — and how this powerful, new computer software tool offers both promise and peril.

Now, in a historic agreement, the national AFL-CIO has announced a partnership with tech giant Microsoft to work together

to jointly develop digital technologies like AI with labor union and worker input and participation.

According to a December 11 news release from the AFL-CIO, the new “alliance” with Microsoft “will educate workers, incorporate labor’s voice in tech development and help shape policy that supports workers.”

In addition, the news release continued, the newly-announced

partnership “includes an agreement with Microsoft that provides a neutrality framework for worker organizing by AFL-CIO affiliate unions.” This agreement builds on a prior agreement between Microsoft and the Communications Workers of America.

“This partnership reflects a recognition of the critical role workers play in the development, deployment, and regulation of AI

and related technologies,” said Liz Shuler, AFL-CIO president. “The labor movement looks forward to partnering with Microsoft to expand workers’ role in the creation of worker-centered design, workforce training, and trustworthy AI practices. Microsoft’s neutrality framework and embrace of workers’ expertise signals that this new era of AI can also catalyze positive change.”
AFL-CIO page 8

Integrating Artificial Intelligence — AI — into the labor movement

By Chelsie Glaubitz Gabiou, President, Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into the labor movement marks a significant paradigm shift, transforming traditional working dynamics. As industries evolve and technology becomes more ingrained in our daily lives, the labor movement is not only acknowledging AI but also strategically embracing it to navigate the changing landscape.

One notable aspect of this embrace is the recognition that AI has the potential to enhance efficiency and productivity. Labor unions, once perceived as resistant to technological advancements, are now collaborating with industries to implement AI solutions that streamline processes. From automated data analysis to predictive maintenance in manufacturing, these innovations aim to augment human capabilities rather than replace them, fostering a symbiotic relationship between workers and AI.

Additionally, the labor movement is increasingly focusing on upskilling and reskilling initiatives. Recognizing that AI can create new job categories and alter existing ones, unions are taking proactive measures to ensure their members are equipped with the necessary skills. Training programs tailored to the demands of an AI-driven workforce are becoming commonplace, empowering workers to adapt and thrive in a rapidly evolving job market.

Moreover, AI is becoming a powerful tool for collective bargaining and advocating workers' rights. Data analytics powered by AI enables unions to negotiate from a position of strength, armed with insights into industry trends, company performance, and market dynamics. This data-driven approach enhances the bargain-

ing power of labor organizations, enabling them to secure better wages, working conditions, and benefits for their members.

On the flip side, concerns about job displacement due to AI have prompted the labor movement to advocate for policies that safeguard workers. This includes pushing for legislation that ensures a just transition for employees affected by automation, such as offering retraining programs, unemployment benefits, and support for displaced workers to find new opportunities in emerging industries.

Collaboration between labor unions and tech companies is a notable development in this evolution. By fostering open dialogue and partnerships, both parties can work towards a future where AI is harnessed responsibly to benefit workers and businesses alike. This collaborative spirit reflects a departure from the adversarial relationship often depicted in the past, signaling a shared commitment to shaping a positive and inclusive future for the workforce.

In conclusion, the labor movement's embrace of AI signifies a transformative approach to the evolving world of work. From enhancing efficiency and productivity to advocating for workers' rights, the integration of AI is reshaping the way labor operates. This proactive stance positions the labor movement at the forefront of a future where humans and AI collaborate harmoniously, ensuring a more resilient, adaptable, and empowered workforce.

Full disclosure: The column above was 100 percent written by ChatGPT in response to the following prompt: "Can you write a 400 word column about how the labor movement is embracing AI?" The real Chelsie Glaubitz Gabiou will explore how AI is impacting the labor movement in a future column.



The labor movement is not only acknowledging AI but also strategically embracing it

Labor Review wins three awards in ILCA's annual labor media contest

SAN DIEGO — The *Minneapolis Labor Review* recently won three awards in the annual labor media contest sponsored by the International Labor Communications Association (ILCA).

Announced December 1 in San Diego at ILCA's first in-person conference since the pandemic, the awards recognize work produced in 2022.

The *Labor Review* awards — all for stories written by editor Steve Share — include:

■ Second place, for a special Saul Miller Award for best story about collective bargaining, "After negotiating 19 months, Augsburg Staff Union wins first contract," *Minneapolis Labor Review*, November 19, 2022.

■ Second place, for a special Saul Miller Award for best story about organizing, "Voting 'yes' for union, workers at local Starbucks join nationwide movement," *Minneapolis Labor*

Review, May 21, 2022.

■ Third place for a writing award for best labor history story, "Nellie Stone Johnson Statue Unveiling: Program honors legacy of Black labor activist Nellie Stone Johnson, now celebrated by a statue placed at the Minnesota state capitol," *Minneapolis Labor Review*, December 17, 2022.

For the ILCA Labor Media Awards contest, the *Labor Review* competed in a category for local, regional and state labor unions and federations.

Founded in 1907, the *Minneapolis Labor Review* is published by the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation, AFL-CIO.

Steve Share has served as *Labor Review* editor since 2003 and is a member of the Minnesota Newspaper Guild/CWA Local 37002.

Visit laborcommunicators.org for the full list of ILCA awards and winners and more about ILCA.

Labor Review sets 2024 publication schedule

MINNEAPOLIS — The *Minneapolis Labor Review* will publish a total of 10 issues in 2024 — publishing monthly except for January and June.

The publication date normally will be the last Saturday of the month or the second to last Saturday of the month.

The 2024 publication dates will be: February 17 (January 31 deadline); March 23 (March 6 deadline); April 20 (April 3 deadline); May 25 (May 8 deadline); July 27 (July 10 deadline); August 24 (August 7 deadline); September 21 (September 4 deadline); October 19 (October 2 dead-

line); November 16 (October 30 deadline); December 14 (November 27 deadline).

See also page 23 for the 2024 schedule.

Discounted ad rates will be available for the May issue (*Labor Review* 117th anniversary issue), August issue (Labor Day issue) and December issue (holiday issue).

For more information, to suggest a story idea, or to advertise, contact editor Steve Share at 612-715-2667 or e-mail laborreview@minneapolisunions.org.

MRLF delegates unanimously elect slate of officers and executive board members — see page 19

Minneapolis Labor Review

Since 1907

Steve Share, Editor

Next issue: AFL-CIO

February 17, 2024
Precinct Caucus Issue

Deadline:

January 31, 2024

See page 23 for complete 2024 schedule

"The rights labor has won, labor must fight to protect."
—Floyd B. Olson, Minnesota Governor, 1930-1936

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Events

January 12-14: National AFL-CIO hosts '2024 MLK Civil and Human Rights Conference'

MONTGOMERY, AL — The 2024 AFL-CIO Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Civil and Human Rights Conference will run Friday to Sunday, January 12-14 in Montgomery, Alabama. The conference theme will be "Our Voice, Our Ballot, Our Future."

The general registration fee for the conference is \$250 or \$175 for young workers.

Discounted hotel rates and discounted Delta Air Lines rates are available for the conference.

Conference organizers encourage booking travel to arrive January 11.

Visit TheMLKconference.org for more information about the conference agenda, hotel discounts and airfare discounts.

January 20: Labor Education Service offers workers rights training for teen-aged workers

SAINT PAUL — A free community class to teach teenaged workers about their rights on the job will be offered in January by the University of Minnesota Labor Education Service and the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry. The class, "Youth @ Work," will be Saturday, January 20, from 9:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Dendros Group, 2642 University Ave. W., Suite 140, in Saint Paul.

The class will explore topics including:

Why do workers organize? What is a union? What are your rights as teenage workers? How can you advocate for yourself and others?

Space is limited and pre-registration is required.

For more information or to register, call 612-625-2394 or e-mail williac@umn.edu.

Lunch will be provided as well as a \$50 gift card for participation and completion of the class.

January 25-27: MN Orchestra performs score with 'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows'

MINNEAPOLIS — Harry Potter fans: it's time to go hunting for Horcruxes once more! While part one of "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows" is projected on a giant screen, the Minnesota Orchestra will perform the film's score live for three dates in January.

The dates are Thursday through Saturday, January 25-27, at 7:00 p.m. at Orchestra Hall in downtown Minneapolis.

Running time will be two hours, 45 minutes, including intermission.

Sarah Hicks will conduct.

The members of the Minnesota Orchestra are members of Twin Cities Musicians Union Local 30-73.

For additional information or to reserve tickets, call 612-371-5600 or visit minnesotaorchestra.org.

'Fare For All' offers savings of 40 percent on groceries at monthly community pop-up sales

MINNEAPOLIS — Stretch your grocery dollars by visiting a community location for a Fare For All pop-up food sale, which offers discounted grocery packages.

Fare For All offers a savings of 40 percent on grocery items.

Fare For All's regular offerings include a produce pack for \$10, a mini meat pack for \$11, a combo produce and mini meat pack for \$20, a mega meat pack for \$25. Other monthly specials also are available.

Fare For All is open to everyone and has no income requirements.

Cash, credit cards, debit cards, and EBT cards are accepted. Checks are not accepted. No need to call or register in advance — just stop in to shop!

Since the *Labor Review* does not publish in January, here is the schedule for January and February for Fare For All's sites in the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation's seven-county region, listed alphabetically by city:

■ **Anoka, Thursdays, January 25 and February 22, 4:00-6:00 p.m.**, Zion Lutheran Church, 1601 S. 4th Ave.

■ **Blaine, Thursdays, January 18 and February 15, 3:00-5:00 p.m.**, Christ Lutheran Church, 641 89th Ave. NE.

■ **Bloomington, Fridays, January 19 and February 16, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**, Creekside Community Center, 9801 Penn Ave. So.

FARE FOR ALL page 23



Save these 2024 dates!



COPE Brunch

January 26

Workers Memorial Day

April 29

Fishing Trip

May 22

Trades Night at Target Field

June 18

MN Building Trades Convention

July 17-19

DADs Day Golf Tournament

September 4

Please contact us for more information.

mplstrades.org

For more information: 612-379-4234

Happy Holidays



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Ongoing Saturdays: Mentors offer History Day help at East Side Freedom Library

SAINT PAUL — Students taking on Minnesota History Day projects can get help from mentors and access to resources each Saturday morning through April at the East Side Freedom Library.

For 10 years, ESFL has assembled a team of History Day mentors, including retired teachers, college students, and others.

The Saturday mentoring sessions will run from 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon at the East Side Freedom Library, 1105 Greenbrier Street in Saint Paul.

“We are also happy to connect with students by appointments after school or at other times, and by Zoom,” said Peter Rachleff, ESFL co-founder.

This year’s History Day theme is “Turn-

ing Points in History” which, Rachleff notes, “is squarely in our wheelhouse... We will be encouraging young scholars to grapple with key strikes, elections, and movements, especially in Minnesota but across our country if that captures their imaginations.”

ESFL’s on-site resources include books, videos, works of visual art, musical recordings and more, which can be used as resources.

ESFL also has had success connecting students with participants in historic events to arrange oral interviews.

For more information about ESFL’s mentoring sessions and resources, e-mail peter@eastsidefreedomlibrary.org.

February 2–3: Education Minnesota plans political conference to prep for 2024 elections

MINNEAPOLIS — To kick-off political work for the 2024 elections, Education Minnesota plans a two-day political conference for members Friday through Saturday, February 2-3.

The conference will take place at the Radisson Blu Mall of America hotel.

The conference will begin Friday evening, February 2 at 6:00 p.m. with a meeting with state leaders, followed by regional networking receptions.

The Saturday, February 3 program runs from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., with general sessions and break-out sessions including:

- Winning local elections;
- Running for office and recruiting and supporting candidates for local office;
- Volunteer recruitment for worksite leadership, Labor 2024 and candidate campaigns;
- Get-Out-The-Vote leader training;

■ We’re all worth more — pensions pay, and health care in advocacy and the campaign;

■ Race class narrative: Effective messaging techniques for responding to divisive and dog-whistle rhetoric in the 2024 campaign.

The closing general session will be: “The road ahead and building strong worksite relational programs in the 2024 campaign.” This session will help every attendee to develop action steps to organize their workplaces. A plated lunch will be served.

The Saturday program also will include a session with BIPOC elected officials for BIPOC members only.

Registration for the conference closes January 29. For a link to the conference registration page, Education Minnesota members can visit educationminnesota.org.

February 9: MN Orchestra offers free, live broadcast of Prokofiev’s ‘Romeo and Juliet’

MINNEAPOLIS — Free live broadcasts of Minnesota Orchestra concerts continue with Friday night performances February 9, March 22, and June 21.

The concerts will air live on Twin Cities PBS (TPT-2) at 8:00 p.m. The three concerts also will be broadcast live on Classical Minnesota Public Radio (KSJN 99.5 FM). The three concerts also are available to stream through each respective weekend at no cost.

The members of the Minnesota Orchestra are members of Twin Cities Musicians Union Local 30-73.

The February 9 program will feature

Ruth Reinhardt, conductor, and soloist Steven Banks, saxophone. The performance will include Smetana’s “Sarka” from “Ma vlast” (“My Homeland”), Childs’s “Diaspora” (concerto for saxophone and orchestra), and Prokofiev’s “Romeo and Juliet.”

The March 9 program will include Dvork’s “Symphony No. 8” with Dominigo Hindoyan, conductor.

The June 21 program will include Tchaikovsky’s “Symphony No. 4” with Thomas Sondergard, conductor.

For additional program information, visit minnesotaorchestra.org.



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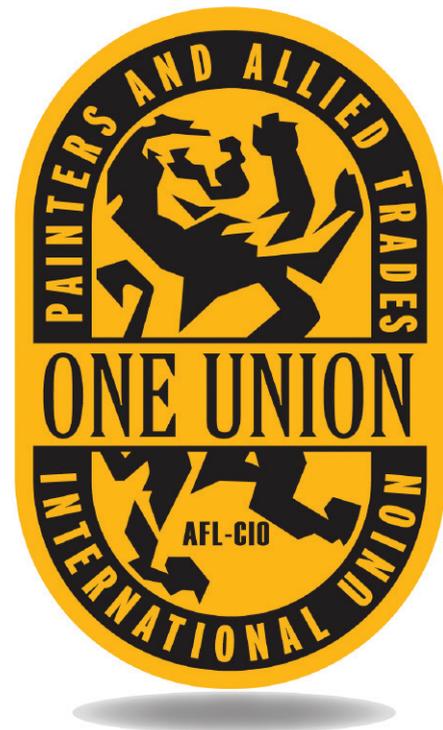


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Legislature: Unions call for investments in education, infrastructure, not tax cuts for rich

continued from page 1

investments in working Minnesotans this year, but a single session cannot make up for two decades of underinvestment in schools, infrastructure, and vital public services,” Burnham said.

Education Minnesota president Denise Specht called on legislators to invest the surplus to address teacher shortages facing schools statewide.

“From kindergarten to campus, Minnesota’s educators are being burned-out covering for open jobs that can’t be filled at current compensation levels and working conditions,” said Specht. “We’re asking lawmakers to dedicate money toward making these jobs more attractive, with higher pay, reduced workloads, more affordable health insurance and significant pension reform. Minnesota’s students and educators deserve better than the current learning and working conditions at many sites.”

Education Minnesota locals across the state currently are at odds with local school districts in contract negotiations, facing what the union called “lowball offers” that fail to keep pace with inflation and rising health insurance costs.

The 2024 session of the legislature will

not convene until February 12 but still must adjourn by statute by the first Monday after the third Saturday in May — May 20, 2024. In a year with a so-called “short session” like this coming year, passing a bonding bill to invest in state infrastructure needs typically is the chief focus of the legislative session.

The state’s building trades unions will be advocating for infrastructure investments from both the one-time budget surplus and from passing a bonding bill.

Joel Smith, president and business manager of LIUNA Minnesota and North Dakota, commented: “Continued investments in infrastructure, along with a large, balanced local jobs and projects bill, will provide much-needed assistance to communities throughout the state. Investments in statewide infrastructure should include robust funding for roads and bridges, and transformational investments in wastewater, drinking water, stormwater infrastructure, repairs to prevent infiltration, and the replacement of all lead service lines in the state.”

An updated budget forecast will be released by Minnesota Management and Budget in February.

State’s unions announce 2024 lobby days

MINNEAPOLIS — Minnesota unions will be bringing members to the State Capitol in 2024 to lobby legislators in-person and to make some noise in the Capitol’s rotunda to call for action on their legislative agendas.

The calendar for union lobby days or for a “day on the hill” so far includes:

Tuesday, March 5

Minnesota Nurses Association
mnnurses.org

Thursday, March 7

North Central States Regional
Council of Carpenters
northcountrycarpenter.org

Wednesday, March 13

SEIU Minnesota State Council
seiumn.org

Tuesday, March 26

IBEW Local 292
Call 612-379-1292 to register
ibew292.org

Tuesday, April 2

AFSCME Council 5
afscmemn.org

Union members should check their union websites or Facebook pages for additional information about plans for the day, including how to register in advance.

2024 Political Calendar

January 19

Early voting begins for Minnesota Presidential Primary

February 12

Minnesota legislature convenes

February 27

Minnesota Precinct Caucuses

March 5

Minnesota Presidential Primary

April 30

Hennepin County District 6 Special Primary Election

May 14

Hennepin County District 6 Special Election

May 20

Minnesota legislature adjourns

June 28

Early voting begins for Primary Election

July 15-18

Republican National Convention, Milwaukee

August 13

Primary Election

August 19-22

Democratic National Convention, Chicago

September 20

Early voting begins for General Election

September 22-24

Minnesota AFL-CIO Convention, Duluth

November 5

General Election

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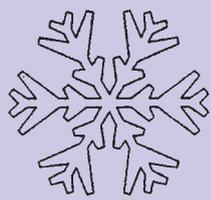
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AFL-CIO: Deal expands worker role in AI future

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lyze a new era of productive labor-management partnerships.”

“By working directly with labor leaders, we can help ensure that AI serves the country’s workers,” said Brad Smith, Microsoft vice chair and president. “This ground-breaking partnership honors the rights of workers, learns from the advice of labor leaders as we develop technology, and helps us provide people with the skills that will become essential in a new AI era.”

The announcement of the agreement outlined three main goals:

- Microsoft will offer “formal learning opportunities” for labor leaders and workers to better understand AI trends, opportunities and challenges. Beginning this coming winter, Microsoft will offer learning sessions, provide additional on-demand online resources, and work with the American Federation of Teachers to jointly develop career and technical education programs.

- Microsoft will provide direct access for labor leaders and workers to share their concerns and insights with the company’s AI developers. Also beginning this coming winter, Microsoft will host “labor summits” to connect with labor leaders and workers “to co-design and develop ‘worker-centered technology.’”

- Microsoft and the AFL-CIO will jointly develop and advocate for policies to enable workers to succeed and prosper in the new “AI-powered economy.” The two new partners “will support the expansion of registered apprenticeships” in the tech sector.

For more on the possibilities which AI offers to the labor movement, see page 2.

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What Could We Win Together?

Minnesota labor unions gear-up for a major escalation in 2024

With a string of contracts expiring in the new year, Minnesota unions and community groups are gathering to unite around a strategy for better jobs, housing and schools and a cleaner environment

By Isabela Escalona and Amie Stager, Workday Magazine

MINNEAPOLIS — Minnesota unions have been planning for this moment for a decade.

Over the years, several unions meticulously coordinated their contracts to expire at the same time in order to maximize unity and bargaining power. Now, as these expiration dates are within sight, union organizers and rank-and-file members are beginning to prepare.

SEIU Local 26 has a contract expiring December 31, 2023 for 4,000 commercial janitorial workers. Local 26 contracts for another 1,000 airport workers and 500 retail janitorial workers expire January 31, 2024. And the contract is up for 2,500 security workers on February 29, 2024.

In the world of public schools, the contracts for the St. Paul Federation of Educators Local 28 (SPFE), the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers Local 59 (MFT), and SEIU Local 284 (which represents school support staff), already expired June 30, 2023 but those contracts remain in effect until an agreement is put in place due to the Public Employment Labor Relations Act.

The Metro Transit contract for Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1005 (ATU) also expired over the summer — July 31, 2023 — but workers are continuing to work under the old contract.

In September, ATU Local 1005's Metro Transit bus operators and rail operators, mechanics, maintenance workers and others voted by a 94 percent margin to authorize a strike. One of Local 1005's main demands: a cost of living adjustment plus one percent.

While the unions highlighted above are organizing and bargaining separately, the shared expiration timeline was no accident. After decades of communication and coalition, many Minnesota unions have been eyeing opportunities like this in order to pool resources, strategize around bigger demands, and build a synergy they hope will lead to major gains.

In October, they took a big step forward. Convened by the Minnesota AFL-CIO, thousands of workers from



SEIU Local 26 members and supporters marched through the downtown Minneapolis skyways December 7 as part of the union's mobilization campaign to win a new contract for commercial janitors.

these unions — together with a smattering of community groups — gathered October 7 at the J.W. Marriott hotel at the Mall of America in Bloomington to strategize and reflect on what many believe will be a pivotal moment for labor in Minnesota. As they gathered, they centered the discussions around four tenets of a society where working people receive their fair share: dignified work, good schools, stable housing and a livable planet.

Participating unions and organizations included: SEIU Local 26, Minneapolis Federation of Teachers, St. Paul Federation of Educators, SEIU Healthcare Minnesota & Iowa, ATU, Centro De Trabajadores Unidos En La Lucha (CTUL), Inquilinx Unidxs por Justicia (IX), Minnesota Uber/Lyft Drivers Association (MULDA), Laborers International Union of North America Local 363, UNITE HERE Local 17, AFSCME Local 3800, Communication Workers of America Local 7250 and others.

“Workers rights are being trampled on and our planet is being destroyed,” said Shanaz Padamsee from SPFE's climate action committee, who spoke about the vision for a livable planet. “What would a different Minnesota look like for you, your family, your community?”

Members of the different unions and community organizations donned brightly colored scarves representing their different groups. There were so many people that they filled the halls and meeting rooms.

At the beginning of the day, each group met individually to discuss everything ranging from the past year's wins to upcoming contract expirations to ef-

orts to text-blast city council members. They also engaged in political education and no small amount of chanting and singing.

Afterward, everyone came together and the main program, translated from English into Spanish and Somali, began with a raucous standing ovation from a crowd of thousands as local members from the United Auto Workers (at that time engaged in a nationwide strike against General Motors and Stellantis after recently reaching a tentative agreement with Ford) were recognized for their efforts and for a contract campaign that many say could have transformative effects for the entire working class.

“Where Minnesota goes, the United States will go, too,” Brenda Johnson, a member of the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers, told the energized crowd. Johnson grounded her speech by asserting Minnesota's transformative place in global movements for justice, invoking the police killings of George Floyd, Philando Castile and Jamar Clark that led to unprecedented worldwide protest movements against racism, militarism and state violence.

It was also clear from the entire gathering that as various Minnesota unions look ahead to continuing contract expirations, all around the first few months of 2024, they are planning to ride the historic waves of worker organizing seen over the past few years since the pandemic. Speakers shared news headlines about the strikes by Starbucks Workers United, Writers Guild of America, and Screen Actors Guild—American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, SEIU United Healthcare Workers West at Kaiser Permanente and the United Auto Work-

ers' “Stand-Up Strike” at the Big Three.

Workers and their unions also were celebrating and building momentum off of 2023's legislative wins in Minnesota, including the establishment of the nursing home workforce standards board, driver's licenses for all, unemployment insurance for hourly school workers, and free breakfast and lunch for students across the state. In Minneapolis, support is building for a Labor Standards Board.

Now workers want to push even further.

The event signaled that the unions and community groups had core demands that centered around “dignified work” and included wages that keep up with inflation, the right to retire with a pension, safe working conditions, affordable healthcare, and reducing gender and racial pay gaps.

It was notable that they not only discussed working conditions and pay, but also voiced demands that generally fall outside the scope of traditional bargaining, including environmental protections, affordable housing, and improving the quality of public education. Unions like the Chicago Teachers Union have used this strategy, known as “bargaining for the common good,” not only to improve their members' working conditions, but also to fight for structural change within their communities.

“We are the ones who make the Twin Cities work,” said Eva Lopez, vice president of SEIU Local 26. Lopez formerly worked cleaning the offices at the Mall of America where the event was held — now she's organizing to improve conditions for workers like her. “Today we ask what could we win together? We will bring these demands together because we know all of our struggles are linked.”

Marcia Wyatt has worked in education for 30 years. She is a transition specialist in Minneapolis Public Schools and member of MFT who went on strike in 2022 over demands like higher pay for education support professionals and more resources for student mental health.

“Some of the richest Minnesotans are working to weaken or eradicate public schools,” she said of corporate influence on education. “They are more concerned about their pockets and not concerned about their people.”

The St. Paul Federation of Educators' Shanaz Padamsee said teachers are organizing for green technology, solarization and electric buses. Minnesotans, like the rest of the planet, have been experiencing the effects of climate change including record snowfall, drought, poor air quality

2024 page 10

What Could We Win Together?

2024: 'Bringing all the movements together to make a bigger impact'

continued from page 9

ty, and temperatures so high that events like the Twin Cities Marathon needed to be canceled.

"As a union we're taking steps to address climate change," Padamsee said. "We know we cannot address this climate crisis alone. I am here today because we need each other. We all need to be in this fight to save our beautiful planet."

On the vision of dignified work, Douglas Guerra of CTUL spoke on behalf of non-union construction workers fighting wage theft and misclassification, and how CTUL had rallied support for the formation of a Minneapolis Labor Standards Board.

MULDA member Marianna Brown spoke about issues rideshare drivers face, including below-poverty wages, injuries without accountability from the rideshare company, violence, and car theft without recourse.

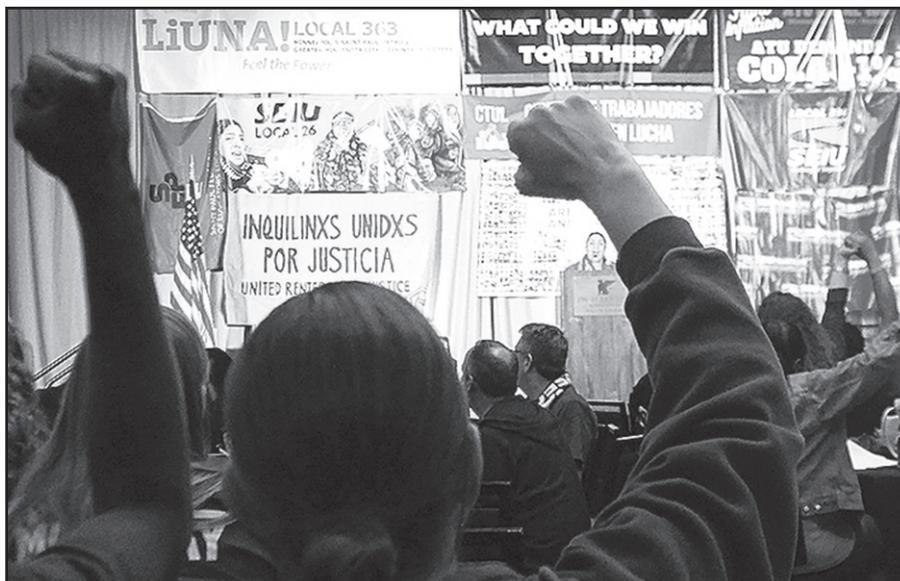
"All of us know our work isn't always valued or treated with dignity," said Brown, noting that around 90 percent of drivers depend on their income from driving to make a living, debunking a long-standing myth that rideshare drivers are just supplementing their existing income. "Drivers are making very little money while big corporations are making fortunes," said Brown.

In the past year, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz and Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey both vetoed protections for rideshare drivers after Uber and Lyft threatened to pull out of the state and city.

Members from IX (United Renters for Justice), a renters nonprofit in Minneapolis, told *Workday Magazine* and *In These Times* about the importance of affordable housing, their demand for increased funding for "social housing," the need for additional protections for renters, and about their organizing efforts against neglectful and exploitative landlords and development companies that hurt workers and renters alike.

Arianna Anderson, a member of IX, spoke to *Workday Magazine* and *In These Times* about the experience of renting with Progress Residential (formerly HavenBrook Homes), one of the largest corporate landlord companies in the United States, which was sued in 2022 by the Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison. She alleged that these corporate landlords "buy up homes in Black and brown communities," and often neglect repairs while increasing home prices in low-income communities of color, making homeownership more difficult for locals.

Anderson and her family experienced



Amie Stager photo

So many people attended the October 7 gathering for "What Could We Win Together?" at the Marriott hotel at the Mall of America that they filled the halls and meeting rooms. The Minnesota AFL-CIO acted as convener and is providing training and support.

'Where Minnesota goes, the United States will go, too... We're going to change the world.'

— Brenda Johnson,
Minneapolis Federation of
Teachers, ESP chapter

exactly this dynamic—after years of repair neglect that left their home uninhabitable, they were displaced from her home in north Minneapolis and forced to relocate to the suburbs.

Brianna Lofton, also a member of IX and standing alongside Anderson, emphasized the importance of linking the renters movement with the labor movement. "These people from these organizations have been exploited in some type of shape, way, or form," Lofton said. "So instead of us being separate with our movements, bringing all the movements together [makes sense] to make a bigger impact."

Both Anderson and Lofton bonded over being displaced from Minneapolis to the greater Minneapolis suburbs and experiencing the difficulty of the transition.

"An organized foe is never to be underestimated," said Yolanda Roth of the progressive organizing hub TakeAction Minnesota, which is "organizing to change who decides and who benefits in our democracy and our economy," according to their website. Roth was narrating an interactive performance about the current struggle for power in the state, a struggle being waged by working communities as resistance against increasing corporate and private power.

One powerful group discussed with disdain at the October 7 conference was the Minnesota Business Partnership, which consists of executives from more than 100 companies and multinational conglomerates headquartered in the state, companies who receive tens of millions of dollars in tax breaks from the state of Minnesota.

The Minnesota Business Partnership promotes policies leading to the reduction of state business property taxes, lower income taxes, and state preemption of local governments' workforce mandates. They also champion increased funding for charter schools and additional standardized testing.

Both the Minnesota Business Partnership and Progress Residential did not respond to requests for comment from *In These Times* and *Workday Magazine*.

Other Minnesota-based companies also were singled out during the convening because of their practices that participants at the event said harm workers and their communities. One was Ameriprise Financial, a wealth management company headquartered in downtown Minneapolis that manages working people's savings for retirement through pension funds. The rise in subcontracting in the 1980s eliminated pensions for many janitors who work cleaning corporate offices like at Ameriprise. In 2022, Ameriprise CEO James Cracchiolo received more than \$22 million in compensation, making him the highest paid CEO in Minnesota.

U.S. Bank is widely reported to have been partially responsible for the 2008 housing crisis, which many Black and brown working people never completely recovered from financially. U.S. Bank

also is a longtime partner of Dominion, a housing developer and opponent of rent stabilization.

Also decried at the event was manufacturer 3M Company, which has faced litigation for their role in disposing polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), or "forever chemicals," into environments across the country and polluting drinking water. The company reached an \$850 million settlement with the state of Minnesota in 2018, and then this year reached a \$10.3 billion settlement with water providers in cities across the United States. One of the things that was frustrating to people at the conference was that these payouts ultimately reduce the company's tax bills as a business write-off.

"Corporations should pay their fair share of climate impacts," said Shanaz Padamsee of the St. Paul Federation of Educators. "No more getting away with destructive practices, and no more tax breaks for corporations paying lawsuits for the harm they inflicted."

President Joe Biden recently became the first sitting president to stand with striking workers on a picket line and workers said they expect his administration to continue supporting pro-worker causes.

Workers also are determined to hold on to the attention of leaders and the public as they continue bargaining with their employers. "We're still in the fight of our life," said MFT's Brenda Johnson, whose union is in bargaining right now with Minneapolis Public Schools. "We know that Biden stood not long ago with the workers, so we're expecting he's going to stand with us. They're watching everything that we do, and we're going to change the world."

While it's not yet clear what specific actions each union that attended the October 7 event is planning to take moving forward, or whether or not any will go on strike in 2024, workers are laying the groundwork for solidarity and mass action if contract campaigns do escalate, and part of their preparation includes fundraising now.

This kind of cross-sectoral organizing is not common in the United States but workers in Minnesota are taking a bold and unique step toward building greater unity within the broader labor movement.

This story originally was published online October 31 by *Workday Magazine* in collaboration with *In These Times*.

To follow the campaign, search Facebook for "What Could We Win Together? MN 2024."

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— *From MFT Local 59*



Dr. Lisa Sayles-Adams previously worked for the Minneapolis Public Schools as a teacher and school principal — and she is a former member of MFT Local 59.

Dr. Lisa Sayles-Adams currently is the Superintendent of the Eastern Carver County Schools.



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IBEW Local 292 Children's Christmas Party

New union hall hosts holiday open house

BROOKLYN PARK — For a first in-person Children's Christmas Party since the pandemic, IBEW Local 292 hosted an open house December 2 at its new union hall in Brooklyn Park. The event featured photos with Santa, food, craft activities, music with the Teddy Bear Band, and gift bags and gift cards.

The format was a change from pre-pandemic times, when the party took place at the Minneapolis Convention Center. "This is wildly successful," said Local 292's Andy Snope. "People can come and go as they please."

Photo, right: Mom Mallory Tulp coaxes a smile from daughter Honey, age 7 months, for a photo with Santa. Honey is the granddaughter of Kurt Tulp, Local 292 member and executive board member.

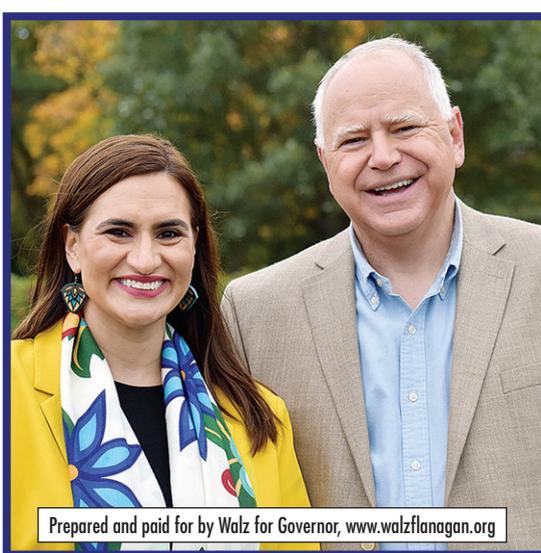


Photo above, left: 21-year Local 292 member Erik Anderson, Minneapolis (center), with his kids Charlee (left) and Eli (right).

Photo above, center: Passing out gift cards that read, for example, "Clean the bathroom," the Grinch had young helpers Yang and Ning. They are the children of second-year apprentice Anna Ellers, Minneapolis.

Photo below, left: Abby asked Santa for an American Girl doll while Easton asked for a kids' 4-wheeler. They are the grandchildren of retiree Brian Mickelson, a 43-year Local 292 member.

Photo below, right: A favorite attraction at the party for many years, the Teddy Bear Band got the kids up on their feet dancing with their bears. The band included Twin Cities Musicians Union members Ron Gustafson (left), Steve Miller (right), and Lauren McArthur (not pictured).



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Concrete Christmas

Cement Masons' annual training exercise goes back-to-basics

NEW BRIGHTON — “Heads up!” A cement truck backed into the open garage door of the Cement Masons training center November 30, where about 40 apprentices quickly got to work. They shoveled the “mud” into step forms they had built a previous day for 20 sets of steps, each six risers high (*photo, right*), then finished the mud using hand tools. After 90 high-energy minutes of what apprenticeship coordinator Brian Farmer described as “organized chaos,” the job was done.

The training exercise was part of Cement Masons Local 633’s annual “Concrete Christmas.” This year’s focus on a back-to-basics experience building steps meant that the decorative touches came after the concrete hardened, with the addition of holiday decorations, pine boughs, and inflatables.

Apprentices expressed many reasons for joining the trade: a chance to join a union, better pay, a change of lifestyle.

John Foster, Faribault, previously spent 16 years working as an automotive technician. He’s now a third-year apprentice who works for Concrete Arts. “There’s a lot more opportunity to thrive in this; It’s a no-brainer,” he said.

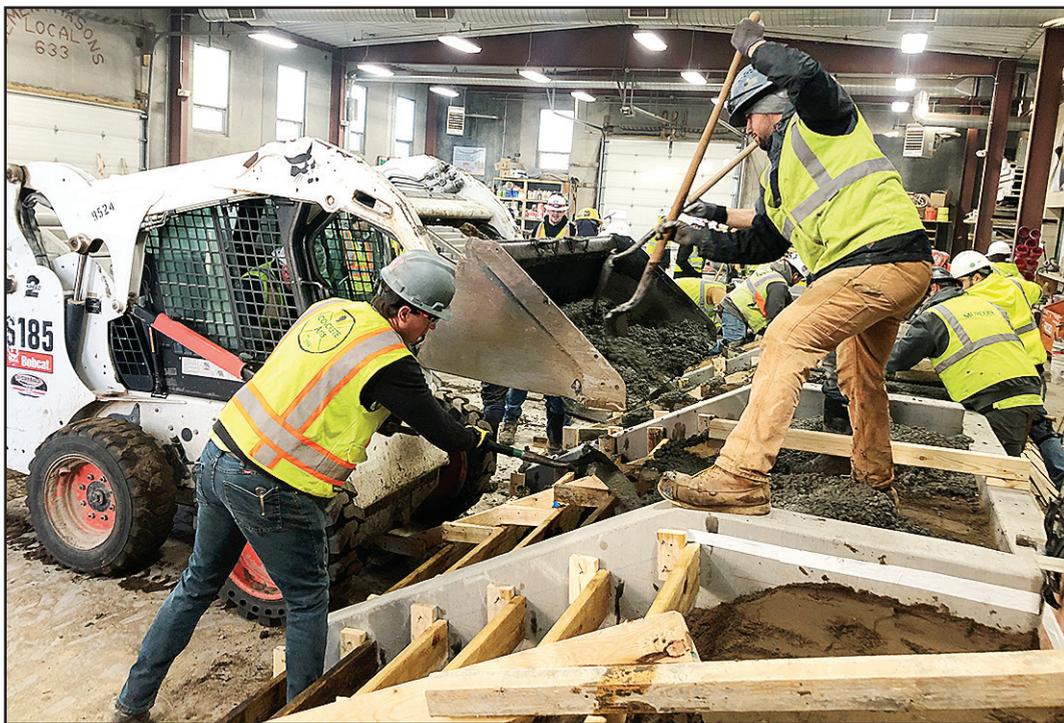


Photo above: Instructor Jerry Grob, Bloomington, 30-plus year Local 633 member (left), offers tips to apprentice Kiera Robinson, Deer River (right).



Photo above, center: Third-year apprentices (left to right): Dylan Thornton, Coon Rapids; Dakota Neid, Brooklyn Park; Aaron Traxler, Silver Lake.



Photo above, right: Third-year apprentice Ben Franzen, St. Cloud, striking off the 3-foot landing elevation with a rod board.

Photo below, center: Sister and brother Kiera Robinson, Deer River, and Frank Robinson, Rochester, entered the trade through MnDOT Tribal, a pre-apprentice program for members of the state’s tribal nations.



Photo below, right: Five days later, the steps were decorated for viewing by Local 633 members for the union’s December meeting and holiday party.



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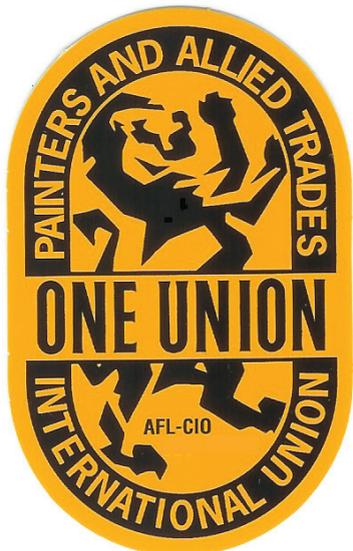


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**from
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Holiday Greetings

— 2023 —

May the Joys of the Season be Yours



Report exposes record of worker exploitation in Minnesota's affordable housing industry, which gets millions of public dollars

By Isabela Escalona, *Workday Magazine*
MINNEAPOLIS — At least \$84 million in Minnesota state and municipal funds earmarked for affordable housing projects have gone towards contractors with records or accusations of worker exploitation, from wage theft to misclassification to labor trafficking to sexual abuse, according to a new report.

Subsidizing Abuse: How Public Financing Fuels Exploitation in Affordable Housing Construction was published November 14 by North Star Policy Action, which describes itself “an independent research and communications institute.” The report was co-authored by Jake Schwitzer, executive director of North Star Policy Action, and Lucas Franco, Ph.D., research manager for LIUNA Minnesota & North Dakota.

The report finds that the \$84 million sum is made up of \$31 million from the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and \$53 million in tax increment financing (TIF), awarded to developers building affordable housing in Minnesota. However, due to little oversight and lax labor provisions, developers are benefiting from the use of contractors on these projects who cut corners and underpay workers, the report finds.

The report details the story of Arturo Hernandez, a construction worker who was working for Painting America, a contractor based in Hudson, Wisconsin. After being owed three weeks of wages, his foreman put him in contact with Eduardo Venezuela, who insisted on paying-out Hernandez's missing wages in drugs for the worker to sell, according to the report. Hernandez, who testified to the Minnesota legislature in 2019, stated that this happened to other workers on the job site as well.

Painting America is just one of seven contractors the report names as “problem” contractors with both proven and alleged worker rights violations. The researchers have documented work by Painting Ameri-

ca and the other problem contractors on numerous publicly financed affordable housing projects in the Twin Cities metro area in recent years.

The report names three Minnesota developers in the multifamily housing industry — Dominion, MWF, and Roers — that receive the most funds through LIHTC and TIF, while continuing to work with subcontractors with egregious records of worker exploitation.

The problem contractors named by the report go beyond Painting America. They also include: Absolute Drywall, Lakeville, Minnesota; Environmental StoneWorks, North Branch, Minnesota; Wolf Construction Services, Inc., West Des Moines, Iowa; Merit Drywall, Clearwater, Minnesota; Stone Pro Masonry, Eau Claire, Wisconsin; and Ed Lunn Construction, Rochester, Minnesota.

While prosecution of these sorts of worker rights violations historically has been rare — and often only results in negligible fines — more Minnesotan contractors have been prosecuted in court in recent years. In 2019, labor broker Ricardo Batres plead guilty to labor trafficking of immigrant construction workers, resulting in the first conviction of labor trafficking in Hennepin County.

In addition to Hernandez's case, Painting America faced charges from the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry in 2017 for misclassifying employees as independent contractors and was ordered to pay a fine of \$5,000. Misclassification is a common form of wage theft, by avoiding paying benefits, overtime, workers' compensation, and underpaying insurance costs.

Absolute Drywall also was one of the companies at the center of a massive wage theft case on the Viking Lakes project in Eagan, Minnesota, and was involved in a sexual assault case of a worker, as reported by the *Minnesota Reformer*. In June 2023, *Workday Magazine* interviewed Francisco Lozano, a construction worker who was

misclassified and threatened by a supervisor at Absolute Drywall.

The *Subsidizing Abuse* report claims that many of these worker rights abuses are underreported, and that the evidence documented in the report is just the “tip of the iceberg” in an industry with widespread and pervasive worker exploitation.

This reported abuse is taking place against the backdrop of a housing crisis, the report notes. Over the past decade, the supply of affordable housing has decreased while the cost of home ownership has doubled. In 2022, there was a 33 percent increase in evictions over pre-pandemic state eviction filings, impacting both renters in the Twin Cities metro and greater Minnesota alike, the report says.

While state and local governments are investing in new housing development (lawmakers earmarked a record \$1 billion for housing affordability in 2023), the report calls for more oversight and labor provisions for developers benefiting from affordable housing tax credits.

The report argues that while building new affordable housing is key to alleviating the housing crisis in Minnesota, taxpayer-supported development must include labor provisions that protect, not exploit, construction workers, who often have precarious documentation statuses, making them especially vulnerable to abuse and intimidation.

The report concludes with several preventative policy recommendations at the state and local level. First is a call for increased transparency of the use of subcontractors by developers. Currently, developers are not expected to report which contractors they hire on their project. Developers seeking public subsidies should be mandated to disclose a list of subcontractors on projects, the report urges.

Other recommendations include: evaluating developers on their commitment to providing family-supporting jobs; municipi-

pal criteria that reward the use of responsible contractors; implementing worker-driven models such as the Building Dignity and Respect Program; and investing in enforcement of existing legislation and increased worker education.

Several Minnesota lawmakers already pledged support for the legislation advocated for in the *Subsidizing Abuse* report. Minnesota State Representative Emma Greenman, Minneapolis, released a statement on X.com (formerly Twitter) stating, “we must not tolerate companies that exploit workers, steal wages, and break the law, especially not when the projects are publicly-funded. Our communities need affordable housing and expect it to be built [by] workers who are paid a living wage and safe on the job.”

Minnesota State Representative Michael Howard, representing Richfield and a portion of South Minneapolis, also showed support for increased oversight and labor provisions advocated by the report, describing the reports of wage theft in the for-profit affordable housing development industry as “jaw-dropping.” He called on the Minnesota Legislature to “take action to ensure that when we build affordable homes we aren't doing so on the backs of Minnesota workers.”

With Minnesota's legislative season beginning in February 2024, the next few months will be key in deciding whether trade unions, worker advocate groups, and supportive legislators will push policy recommendations from the *Subsidizing Abuse* report into action. Given the historic and labor-friendly advances of the 2023 legislative season, advocates say the stage could be set for change for developers in the affordable housing industry.

Visit northstarpolicy.org for a link to the full *Subsidizing Abuse* report.

Isabela Escalona is senior associate editor of *Workday Magazine*, published by the U of M's Labor Education Service.

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A message from the men and women of the
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Local 363 members press Minneapolis City Council, Park Board for fair contracts

By Steve Share, Labor Review editor

MINNEAPOLIS — Voicing the message, “workers have budgets, too,” members of City Employees Local 363 clad in orange t-shirts have turned out in force to recent budget hearings December 5 at the Minneapolis City Council and earlier November 15 at the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

The workers are in the midst of contract negotiations with both the city’s Public Works department and the independent Park Board.

“My department is ridiculously short-staffed,” said Local 363 member Joe Ohlgren, who works in solid waste and recycling, testifying at the city budget hearing. “I live, work, play and spend my money in this city. I love being a civil servant. Post these jobs and pay us a competitive wage!”

“Sometimes I feel like all my co-workers are only numbers to the city,” charged Local 363 member Scott Yahr. “I know the names of the people I work with... they are one of the most diverse workforces in the city.”

He urged, “please deliver a fair contract so we won’t feel just like numbers.”

“COVID sent everybody home — not us,” reminded Local 363 member Eric Sowder. City workers showed up through the pandemic and through the period of civil unrest following George Floyd’s murder by police in 2020. “Here we are continuing to do the things that nobody else wants to do — it’s us!”

“Pay us enough so we can afford to live in the city,” Sowder implored city council members.

“This city is the best city in the state... and we’re making minor league pay,” said Local 363 member Josh Faulkner.

“The city’s current offer remains below market rates,” said A.J. Lange, Local 363 business manager, and that’s having an impact on recruitment and retention.

“We show up everyday to serve the city with compassion and dedication,” Lange said.

He reminded council members that the city’s labor relations department represents them. “I’m asking you to use your authority to direct labor relations to offer us a fair contract that reflects the value of our work.”

After Lange spoke, Local 363 members filed out of the council chambers



More than 100 strong, City Employees Local 363 members turned out to City Hall.

and overflow viewing room, stopping for a group photo beside the Father of Waters statue.

Local 363 member Sean Miller told the *Labor Review* why he came that night. “I like to support my union broth-

ers and sisters and get our wages up to similar to our surrounding cities. We do the hard, dirty work and we get the least amount of pay.”

Local 363’s City and Park Board contracts both expire December 31, 2023.



The overflow crowd included Jessica Askew (left) district social studies teacher.

Anoka Hennepin teachers continue ‘Walk Out Wednesday,’ rallies at school board

ANOKA — Members of Anoka Hennepin Education Minnesota have continued their campaign for a fair contract, walking out of school at the end of the contracted work day each week for “Walk Out Wednesday” and turning out in large numbers for rallies outside school board meetings, most recently December 11.

The union and the school district will enter mediation January 3.

November 13, AHM members rallied outside the school board meeting and then presented board members with a giant-sized mock check for more than \$16 million — representing the total cumulative amount of unpaid

time which teachers volunteer each year. “We care deeply about our students and our community, that is why we donate so much time,” said Val Holthus, AHM president.

Listening to the school board meeting with the overflow crowd in the hallway, 22-year district social studies teacher Jessica Askew said, “we’ve all volunteered countless hours... Those hours add up.”

Askew said the district’s lowball contract offer “was a slap in the face.”

“We want to continue to be there for the kids,” she said, “but we also need to be able to pay our mortgages and take care of our own families.”



Workers at three Twin Cities Starbucks stores join one-day national Unfair Labor Practice strike

MINNEAPOLIS — Workers at three Twin Cities Starbucks locations joined a one-day nationwide Unfair Labor Practice strike November 16. The job action impacted 200 Starbucks stores across the country and came in response to the company’s continuing refusal to bargain in good faith with workers who have voted to organize. The workers’ union, Starbucks Workers United, dubbed the one-day strike “the Red Cup Rebellion,” targeting the company’s promotion of November 16 as “Red Cup Day,” which is one of the busiest customer traffic days of the year.

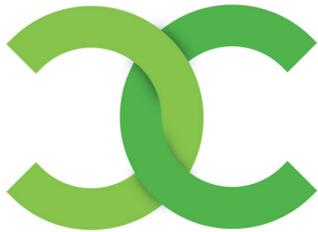
The November 16 strike shut down the Starbucks location at 4712 Cedar Ave. So. in Minneapolis, where workers and supporters walked a picket line (photo above).

“Our store won our union election in May of 2022. Starbucks still has not negotiated with us,” reported Rev Beeby, who has worked about one year there. “The company’s whole strategy is to wait us out and rely on turnover to have stores lose interest in the union.” But, Beeby added, “I value being part of a union because it’s good to know my co-workers have my back and I have theirs.” Beeby said the company’s resistance shows it fears the workers’ power. “They know as soon as we do get a contract and show what we can win, a bunch more stores will organize.”

The two other local locations where Starbucks workers have organized are 300 Snelling Ave. S. in Saint Paul and 3704 Silver Lake Rd. NE in Saint Anthony.

HOLIDAY GREETINGS

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and healthy for everyone*



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Season's Greetings!

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Wishing all our siblings in the labor movement a very happy holiday season!



From AFSCME Local 34 Hennepin County Social Services and Related

Happy Holidays from the Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers Local #1 MN/ND/SD



www.bac1mn-nd.org



Newly-elected MRLF officers and executive board members took the oath of office.

MRLF delegates unanimously elect slate of officers and executive board members

MINNEAPOLIS — Voting December 13, delegates to the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation, AFL-CIO voted unanimously to back a slate of officers and executive board members for four-year terms.

Chelsie Glaubitz Gabiou, who led the slate, was elected to a third four-year term as MRLF president. She first became involved in the labor movement as a grocery store worker and member of UFCW. She joined the MRLF staff as political director in 2012 after working as field organizer for Minnesota's Southeast Area Labor Council.

Other members of the slate of officers and executive board members, together with their union affiliation, included:

- Executive Vice President: Greta Callahan, Minneapolis Federation of Teachers;
- Financial Secretary-Treasurer: Dan McConnell, Minneapolis Building Trades;
- 1st Vice President: Jeff Heimerl, IBEW Local 292;
- 2nd Vice President: Scott Bultena, NALC Branch 9;

- Recording Secretary: Cabbas Abdi, AFSCME Council 5;

- Register Clerk: Ternesha Burroughs, Education Minnesota Osseo;

- Deputy Register Clerk: Annette Davis, Robbinsdale Federation of Teachers;

- Sergeant-at-Arms: Tommy Bellfield, ATU Local 1005;

- Reading Clerk: Grace Baltich, AFSCME Local 34;

- Trustees: Uriel Perez Espinosa, UNITE HERE Local 17; Aaron Hill, North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters; Russ Scherber, Pipefitters Local 539; Mary Turner, Minnesota Nurses Association; Jigme Ugen, SEIU Healthcare Minnesota & Iowa;

- At-Large: Judy Russell Martin, Minnesota Nurses Association; Sterling Sanders, LIUNA Local 563; Chris Stinson, SEIU Local 284;

- Minneapolis Regional Retiree Council Representative, Leif Grina.

The newly-elected officers and executive board members were sworn in by Bernie Burnham, Minnesota AFL-CIO president.

Minnesota AFL-CIO hosts 2024 trainings for racial justice, organizing, union member candidates

SAINT PAUL — The Minnesota AFL-CIO has announced a series of training workshops for affiliated locals and their members for 2024.

The training sessions will include: Racial Justice and Solidarity, the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute, and the Union Member Candidate Program.

Racial Justice and Solidarity

This training session will be offered April 18-19 in Cloquet and June 5-6 in the metro area.

AFL-CIO Organizing Institute

This training workshop will be offered May 1-3 at the offices of the Min-

nesota Nurses Association in Saint Paul.

Union Member Candidate Program

This training session, to be offered July 20-21 in Saint Paul, is aimed at union members who are thinking about running for local elected office or for the state legislature. Learn skills needed to plan, run and win a campaign.

The workshops are available to any local regardless of ability to pay.

For more information about the three 2024 workshops, or to inquire about customized training, contact the Minnesota AFL-CIO's local training specialist, Robyn Gulley, at rgulley@mnaflcio.org.

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To all our union brothers and sisters and their families

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Happy Holidays!

Please don't drink and drive. We don't need the business.

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Latonya Reeves, *President*

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Alistar Nairn, *Treasurer*

Alexis Riehm and Mackenzie Hill, *Co-Chief Stewards*



Holiday Greetings!

From the Members of Local 1005

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year



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Joyous Holiday Season and a
Prosperous New Year

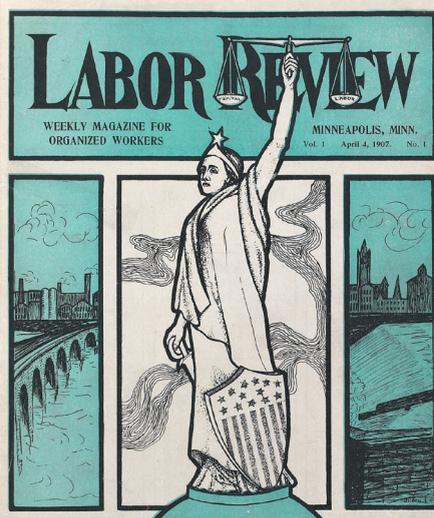


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Best Wishes for the New Year!

*From your brothers and sisters of
USW Local 2002*

Local Union News

Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1005: David Stiggers elected president

With continuing Metro Transit negotiations underway, members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1005 voted November 14 to elect new leadership for three-year terms.

Incumbent president Ryan Timlin chose not to run again, leading to several contested races.

In a two-candidate race for president, current interim vice president David M. Stiggers defeated Jacquie Perkins.

In a two-candidate race for vice president, Dave Butts defeated current recording secretary Miriam Wynn.

The race for recording secretary drew four candidates, with no candidate receiving a majority. In a two-way run-off election December 12, Andrew Boardman won more votes than Veronica Carter.

Tommy Bellfield, incumbent financial secretary-treasurer, had no opponent in seeking re-election.

The executive board taking office January 1 will include six incumbents and 10 new members. Four incumbents lost re-election bids.

“The main goal of an incoming president is to unify all the members and get everybody on the same page,” said Stiggers, who takes office January 1 as Local 1005 president along with the other new-

ly-elected officers and executive board members. “My goal is to be as transparent as possible with our members and spark them to be more involved... Unity is everything.”

Stiggers, Minneapolis, has been a Local 1005 member since 2006 and worked as a Metro Transit bus operator out of the south garage. He has served as Local 1005’s interim vice president since October 2021. Before joining ATU, “I had worked in the IT field for a while,” said Stiggers, 56, but “I really enjoy driving so I applied at Metro Transit.”

Stiggers has five grown children including a union member daughter who recently was on strike in Los Angeles as a member of SAG-AFTRA.

He recalled joining picket lines as a youngster with his mother, who was a member of the American Postal Workers Union and who later worked as a teacher.

Incoming ATU Local 1005 vice president Dave Butts has been a Local 1005 member for 26 years and has served as an executive board member for nine years.

Butts, Big Lake, currently works for Metro Transit as stockkeeper for the North Star commuter rail line.

He said he originally sought to work at Metro Transit for the pension and benefits.

Butts said he became active in the

union because “if you feel you can add something to the mix, don’t just sit on the sidelines.”

Ryan Timlin, Local 1005 president for the past six years, said he will return to his job as a Metro Transit bus operator. “I’ll still be active in the local,” said Timlin, who also previously served nine years on the executive board. “I’d rather go back to the rank and file and do union work.”

IBEW Local 292:

Blood drive planned December 28

IBEW Local 292 will host a blood drive Thursday, December 28 from 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Local 292 hall, 6700 W. Broadway Ave. in Brooklyn Park. To register to donate blood, call 1-800-RED CROSS or 1-800-733-2767 or find a link to register online at ibew292.org.

Laborers Local 563:

Local will move this coming spring to new union hall near U.S. Bank Stadium

Laborers Local 563’s union hall will move this coming spring to a new high-visibility location just about kitty-corner from U.S. Bank Stadium in downtown Minneapolis.

“We needed a bigger space,” said Joe Fowler, Local 563 business manager. “We literally don’t have enough space for the staff we have,” he said, plus many union meetings can become stand-

ing-room-only.

Formerly the site of Douglas Corporation, Local 563’s new quarters will be in a one-story building built in 1959 at 620 12th Avenue South and will offer about 32,000 square feet, Fowler said.

That’s about four times larger than the 8,000 square feet at Local 563’s current building, located at 901 14th Ave. NE — just off of Central Ave. in northeast Minneapolis — which has served the local since 1977.

The move also was prompted, Fowler said, when the City of Minneapolis re-zoned a parking lot that members could use at the current union hall. “We started looking for a new location with more parking.”

At the new location, “we will have an event space/union hall that can be rented out for events,” Fowler said. “We’ll also have a rooftop patio” — with a postcard perfect view of U.S. Bank Stadium. “We intend to rent it out for events.”

The new site offers 90 parking spots plus additional public parking nearby.

Renovations at the new site began in September 2023, with substantial completion expected by April 2024. M.P. Johnson Construction is the general contractor.

“We will have our branding on the building,” Fowler noted, including the **LOCAL UNION NEWS** page 22

Retiree Meetings

IMPORTANT NOTICE

If your union retiree group is meeting in-person or online, and you want to share that information, or if you have other important announcements, contact the editor at laborreview@minneapolisunions.org or 612-715-2667.

Minneapolis Regional Retiree Council: Next meetings January 18, February 15

The next regular monthly meeting of the Minneapolis Regional Retiree Council, AFL-CIO will be a hybrid meeting — in person and by Zoom — Thursday, January 18 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Lunch will be provided for people at the in-person meeting after the meeting adjourns. The in-person meeting will be in Room 218 at the United Labor Centre, 312 Central Ave. SE, Minneapolis.

The February meeting will be Thursday, February 15 at the same time and location.

Parking will be reimbursed if you park in the Saint Anthony Public Parking Ramp (at the corner of 2nd St. SE and University Ave. SE), across University from the United Labor Centre building. Just park and when you come to the meeting we will give you a parking voucher.

To request the Zoom link for the January 18 and February 15 meetings, or for more information about the Council, contact Graeme Allen, community and political organizer for the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation, at 612-481-2144 or e-mail graeme@minneapolisunions.org.

ATU Local 1005 Retirees:

Meet first Wednesday of the month

The Southside Retirees of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1005 are now meeting for breakfast the first Wednesday of the

month at 8:00 a.m. at the Richfield VFW, 6715 Lake Shore Drive South, Richfield.

Carpenters Retirees:

Next meeting January 25

After a break for November and December, Carpenters Retirees will resume meeting Thursday, January 25 at 10:00 a.m. at the North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters union hall, 710 Olive Street, St. Paul. Lunch follows the meeting. The meetings will continue through October on the last Thursday of each month.

IBEW Local 292 Retirees:

‘Senior Sparkies’ will meet January 9

The IBEW Local 292 Retirees — “Senior Sparkies” — will meet Tuesday, January 9 at IBEW Local 292’s union hall, 6700 West Broadway Ave. in Brooklyn Park. A buffet lunch will be served at 11:30 a.m. and the meeting will begin at 12:30 p.m. We will be having a guest speaker.

Save the date for special 2024 events: Spring casino trip, April 30; Boat trip, June 19; Retirees summer picnic, August 8.

For more information, contact the IBEW Local 292 office at 612-379-1292.

Minneapolis Retired Teachers, Chapter 59:

Next meetings January 23, February 27

The Minneapolis Retired Teachers, Chapter 59 will meet Tuesday, January 23 and Tuesday, February 27 at 10:00 a.m. — both meetings via Zoom. The January meeting topic will be resolutions for precinct caucuses and the 2024 legislative session. The February meeting topic will be public safety.

Upcoming meeting dates include: a Zoom meeting for March 26 and in-person meetings April 23, May 28 or 29.

The April and May meetings will be in-person at the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers office, 67 – 8th Ave. NE. (in-person only). Lunch will follow at 12:00 noon.

For more information, e-mail RTC59info@gmail.com.

Pipefitters Local 539 Retirees:

‘Fazed Out Fitters’ meet third Wednesday

Pipefitters Local 539 retirees — the “Fazed Out Fitters” — meet the third Wednesday of each month at 11:00 a.m. at Elsie’s, 729 Marshall St. NE, Minneapolis. New members welcome.

Plumbers Local 15 Retirees:

Meet the third Tuesday of each month

All retired Plumbers Local 15 members are invited to attend retiree meetings, continuing the third Tuesday of every month at 12 noon at Elsie’s Restaurant, Bar & Bowling Center, 729 Marshall St. NE, Minneapolis (corner of Marshall and 8th Ave.). For more information, contact the Local 15 office at 612-333-8601.

Sheet Metal Workers Local 10 Retirees:

‘Rusty Tinnners’ take winter break

The Sheet Metal Workers Local 10 “Rusty Tinnners” retirees club will take a winter break for January and February. We wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a safe, healthy and happy New Year.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, March 12 at the Maplewood union hall, 1681 E. Cope Ave. Details to follow in the February 2024 issue of the *Labor Review*.

All retired Sheet Metal workers and spouses are welcome to our monthly meetings. We meet the second Tuesday of the month, September through December and March through May. For more information, contact Frank Costa at 651-484-1363.

U of M Facilities Management and Maintenance Retirees: Meet last Tuesday of month

Retirees from the University of Minnesota Maintenance Department have resumed meeting the last Tuesday of each month at 9:30 a.m. for breakfast at Elsie’s, 729 Marshall St. NE, Minneapolis. New retirees welcome!

continued from page 21

Local 563 logo on the roof and, on the rooftop patio, sun-shades with the orange and blue colors of the Laborers International Union of North America. Colored lights on the exterior will be able to change to purple for Vikings game days.

Local 563's current building will be put up for sale, Fowler said, while the union was able to purchase the new building "at an affordable cost" due to the currently depressed real estate market in downtown Minneapolis.

"It was important for us to stay in Minneapolis," Fowler said. "Even though we cover two-thirds of Minnesota... we're known as the Minneapolis local."

At the new location with its high visibility, "you'll be able to see the LIUNA flag and the U.S. flag," Fowler said. "We want people to see our union hall and ask, 'who are they and what do they do?'"

MN Newspaper Guild: CTUL staff ratify first contract

Nearly two years after winning union recognition, the frontline staff at Minneapolis-based worker center CTUL have ratified a first contract as members of the Minnesota Newspaper and Communications Guild/CWA Local 37002.

CTUL — Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en la Lucha (the Center for Workers United in Struggle) — organizes among low wage workers to win better working conditions.

CTUL staff decided to unionize to have a greater voice in the organization, attain better work-life balance, and ensure better working conditions.

The 28-month contract will bring 6 percent wage increases over the course of the contract and revises the salary system to a flat-rate for bargaining unit employees.

CTUL strategic campaigner Kali Suchy, a member of the union negotiations team over the last nine months, was especially proud of the time off they won.

CTUL's first contract will include un-



Climbing gym workers organize with UFCW

MINNEAPOLIS — Workers at five Minnesota climbing gyms operated by Vertical Endeavors have voted to organize with the United Food and Commercial Workers. The mail-in vote announced November 29 by the National Labor Relations Board was 81.8 percent in favor of unionizing. Workers at VE sites in Bloomington and Minneapolis will be members of UFCW Local 663. Workers at the VE site in Duluth and two sites in Saint Paul will be members of UFCW Local 1189. See story, this page.

limited sick time, which Suchy said was "important to come out of people's experiences with COVID... having that in a contract is really big."

The bargaining unit includes 13 members.

MN Nurses Association: Chris Rubesch elected president to follow Mary C. Turner

Chris Rubesch, R.N., will become the new president of the Minnesota Nurses Association, taking office January 1.

Rubesch, a cardiac nurse at Essentia Twin Ports in Duluth, ran without opposition. He is MNA's current first vice president.

Rubesch became a union steward when he joined MNA eight years ago and served as a member of the MNA negotiating team in 2019 and 2022. He joined the MNA board of directors in 2020.

Rubesch will succeed Mary C. Turner, R.N., an ICU nurse at North Memorial Medical Center in Robbinsdale. Turner first won election as MNA president in 2015 and served the limit of two four-year terms.

"I thank my fellow nurses for the trust they have placed in me to carry our mission forward," said Rubesch. "The corporate policies pushed by our hospital CEOs are hurting nurses and patients at the bedside, driving nurses out of the profession, increasing prices, and limiting access for those in need of care. I am ready to work to educate, engage and empower nurses for the fight ahead against corporate greed in our healthcare system."

"Representing our MNA nurses for the past eight years has been the honor of a lifetime," said Turner. "From a historic statewide strike to important gains for nurses and patients in our contracts and at the Capitol, I am so proud of the work we have done together. Rest assured; I stand

side by side with all our nurses in the fight ahead to put patients before profits in our hospitals."

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Turner worked in the COVID ICU at North Memorial.

In 2021, Turner was selected by President Biden to serve as the only frontline healthcare worker on his COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force.

In 2023, Turner was selected by the Minnesota Legislature to serve on the University of Minnesota Board of Regents.

SEIU Minnesota State Council: Recruiting member political organizers

The SEIU Minnesota State Council is recruiting member political organizers for the 2024 election season.

"Member political organizers will do paid work in next year's election, which will be critical as we fight to keep and expand champions for working families at the Capitol," said Laura Carpenter, political organizer for the State Council and a former member of SEIU Local 284. "We will build a solid team, learn together and work on leadership development."

To learn more, SEIU members in Minnesota can contact Carpenter via e-mail at lcarpenter@seiumn.org.

UFCW Local 663:

Vertical Endeavors workers organize

With 81.8 percent voting in favor, workers at five Minnesota climbing gyms operated by Vertical Endeavors have voted to organize with the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

Results of the mail-in vote conducted by the National Labor Relations Board were announced November 29.

The bargaining unit will include 90 workers at Vertical Endeavors locations in Bloomington, Duluth, Minneapolis, and Saint Paul plus Vertical Endeavors-Twin Cities Bouldering in Saint Paul.

"We unionized because we want better pay and healthcare, and a voice in the decisions that are going to affect employees and customers," said Hailey Jarmon team coach/counter rush at Vertical Endeavors in Bloomington. "I hope that more rock climbing gyms unionize so standards are raised for how employees are treated. We deserve it."

The workers will be represented by either UFCW Local 663 or UFCW Local 1189, depending on location.

UFCW Local 663:

Lunds & Byerlys Fresh Kitchen workers ratify contract

Lunds & Byerlys Fresh Kitchen employees voted unanimously October 31 to ratify a two-year contract.

The bargaining unit includes nearly 50 workers who are represented by UFCW Local 663.

The contract included: Wage increases of \$2 per hour for year one and \$2 per hour for year two, pay equity, employer paid health and welfare, better overtime protections, improved bereavement, lead pay in base wages, and increases in shift differentials.

Pay increases will be retroactive to April 3, 2023, the union reported.

In addition, the union reported, the contract included no takeaways.

The Fresh Kitchen workers prepare all the "grab and go" deli items for all of the Lunds & Byerlys stores throughout the entire metro area.

UFCW Local 663:

REI Maple Grove workers join one-day, three-state strike

UFCW Local 663 members at the REI Maple Grove location participated in a one-day, three-state unfair labor practice strike October 27. The other stores where workers went on strike were in Chicago and Boston.

The strike aimed to protest REI layoffs at stores nationwide.

"REI's nationwide layoff is a clear violation of federal labor law and management's latest failure to meet their obligation to bargain in good faith with Maple Grove workers," read a statement by REI Maple Grove UFCW members.

Since last year, workers have organized at eight REI retail stores across the country — including the Maple Grove store, where workers voted June 9 to unionize in a National Labor Relations Board election (*Labor Review*, July 22, 2023).

REI is a consumer co-op selling outdoor gear, operating 165 retail stores in 39 states.

November 15, workers at REI stores across the country filed 80 complaints with the National Labor Relations Board.

Sources: *Labor Review* reporting and local unions. Next deadline: January 31.

Pipefitters Local 539

PIPERS

Happy Holidays!

Please remember to pay your January-June 2024 dues. You are able to pay online for your dues on the Pipefitters website. You do not need to log in to do so.

Initiation: January 3

Initiation will be held January 3, 2024. Information will be sent out to the new initiates.

If you would like something added to the Pipers section of the *Labor Review*, call the office at (612) 379-4711.

Paid for by Pipefitters Local 539 • www.pipefitters539.com

Fare For All: Offers fresh produce packs and frozen meat packs, beginning at \$10-\$11

continued from page 3

■ **Buffalo, Tuesdays, January 9 and February 6, 4:00–6:00 p.m.**, Zion Lutheran Church, 1200 Highway 25 South.

■ **Chaska, Thursdays, January 25 and February 22, 4:00–6:00 p.m.**, Crown of Glory Lutheran Church, 1141 Cardinal St.

■ **Fridley, Fridays, January 26 and February 23, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon**, Fridley Community Center, 6085 7th Street NE.

■ **Golden Valley, Fridays, January 26 and February 23, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**, Animal Humane Society, 845 Meadow Lane N.

■ **Hutchinson, Thursdays, January 11 and February 8, 3:30–5:30 p.m.**, Oak Heights Church, 1398 South Grade Road SW.

■ **Minneapolis, Fridays, January 12 and February 9, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**, Laborers Local 563 union hall, 901 14th Ave. NE. (one-half block west of Central Ave. on 14th Ave. NE).

■ **New Hope, Wednesdays, January 17 and February 14, 3:00–5:00 p.m.**, St. Joseph Parish Center, 8701 36th Ave. N.

■ **Norwood Young America, Tuesdays, January 4 and February 1, 3:00–5:00 p.m.**, All Saints Lutheran Church, 511 Merger St..

■ **Richfield, Tuesdays, January 23 and February 20, 1:00–3:00 p.m.**, Richfield Community Center, 7000 Nicollet Ave. So.

■ **St. Louis Park, Wednesdays, January 17 and February 14, 4:00–6:00 p.m.**, Vista Lutheran Church, 4003 Wooddale Ave. So.

See www.fareforall.org for more information and dates for all 30-plus locations.

Fare For All's Meat and Produce Packs

Fare For All offers fresh fruits and vegetables and quality frozen meats:

■ **Mega Meat Pack, \$25** — includes 6-8 frozen meat items (chicken, turkey, pork, beef, or fish);

■ **Mini Meat Pack, \$11** — includes 3-5 frozen meat items (no pork);

■ **Produce Pack, \$10** — includes 2-3 fresh fruits and 3-4 fresh veggies;

■ **Specialty Pack, \$35**, available for seasonal holidays — typically includes protein, veggie sides, and dessert.

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IBEW Local Union 292 Minneapolis Electrical Workers

Holidays

Local 292 wishes friends and family a safe and festive Holiday Season.

The office will be closed on the following days:

■ The Christmas Holiday will be observed on Friday, December 22 and Monday, December 25.

■ Monday, January 1, New Year's Day.

Brotherhood

The Local 292 Brotherhood Committee assists Mem-

bers in need or distress, either with a gift card from our Local 292 food shelf or teams of Brothers and Sisters helping around the house. If you need assistance or know of another Member in need, please call our Brotherhood line at 612-617-4247 or send an e-mail to brotherhood@ibew292.org.

Condolences

Brother Duane A. Olson; Brother Robert G. Cheriali; Brother Jerome M. Berrini; Brother Michael E. Hamm

See you at the General Membership Meeting, 5:30 p.m. on the Second Tuesday

Paid for by IBEW Local 292 • www.ibew292.org

Minneapolis Labor Review 2024 Publication Schedule

The Labor Review will publish 10 issues in 2024. Note: NO issue published in January and NO issue published in June. The publication date normally will be the last Saturday or second to last Saturday of each month.

January

No issue published

May 25

Deadline: May 8
116th Anniversary Issue

September 21

Deadline: September 4

February 17

Deadline: January 31
Precinct Caucus Issue

June

No issue published

October 19

Deadline: October 2
General Election Issue

March 23

Deadline: March 6

July 27

Deadline: July 10
Primary Election Issue

November 16

Deadline: October 30
Holiday Shopping Guide

April 20

Deadline: April 3

August 24

Deadline: August 7
Labor Day Issue

December 14

Deadline: November 27
Holiday Issue

Next Special Issue:

May 25, 2024 — 117th Anniversary Issue!

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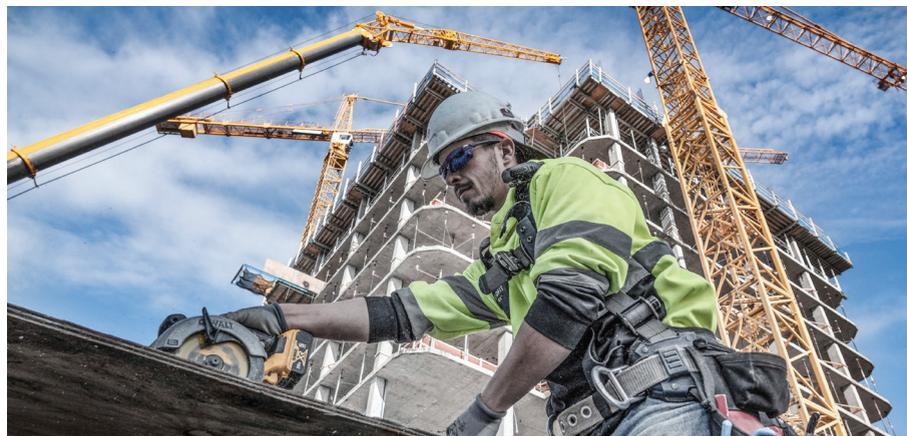
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