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NEWS FOR THE UNITED STEELWORKERS IN

DISTRICT 4

UNITY AND STRENGTH

United Steelworkers. Unity and Strength for Workers. This is the name of our union and the words on our USW logo. Many of us proudly wear shirts, jackets and hats that have the blue and gold USW logo with these words emblazoned on them, but do we ever stop to think about what these words really mean and how they relate to us every day? Do we think about what it means to be “United” and about the strength that comes through unity? If we don’t, we should.

On March 30 of this year, our members at nine facilities of Allegheny Technologies, Inc. (ATI), began an unfair labor practice strike. There are two ATI locations in District 4. We have 45 members at Local 9436 in Lockport, N.Y., and 64 members at Local 1357 in New Bedford, Mass. There was a third ATI plant in Connecticut, but the company closed that location prior to the strike.

On May 17, 190 members of Local 4-2058 at Unifrax LLC in Tonawanda, N.Y., also went out on an unfair labor practice strike.

These are different employers but many of the issues that led up to the strikes are the same. Of course, both strikes were caused first and foremost by what we believed to be unfair labor practices at the bargaining table. But as far as bargaining issues, it all comes down to employers trying to divide our membership and turn them against one another. They often do this by proposing two-tier wage and benefit systems so new people coming in the door get less than existing employees. This has the effect of driving a wedge between employees

based on their seniority. Our members at both these companies said no to selling out future generations of Steelworkers and fought back against their employers’ concessionary proposals.

Picket lines were set up at ATI and Unifrax. We had support from other USW locals, other unions and community partners as well as pressure campaigns led by our Strategic Campaigns Department. But the most important thing in both these strikes is that our members stood strong together. I’ve been out on strike. I know how stressful and difficult it is to be on strike, and when I visited those strike lines, I saw no cracks. What I saw was United Steelworkers! Our members were determined to be out one day longer.

That unity and strength paid off. On June 18, our members at Unifrax ratified a new agreement that addressed the issues that had them on strike, and they returned to work on June 21. On July 13, our members at ATI also ratified a new agreement that didn’t include the concessionary proposals and ended their three-month strike.

Both of these are examples of what can be accomplished when we put aside our differences and stand united. In today’s world, there are a great many things that separate us. People are divided by politics, religion, race, economic status and a variety of other things. It’s so easy to find topics to disagree about.

I’m not trying to tell you that you shouldn’t feel as you do about those issues. I am only suggesting that regardless of our differences on other issues, we can put those aside and come together as a union on the things that

we have in common: things that affect our livelihoods and living standards like getting a good contract, maintaining and improving our benefits, tough health and safety standards and fighting for strong trade policies and labor laws that keep our jobs here. Whatever our other differences, we should be able to unite together over these labor issues that impact every one of us. The successful outcome of these two strikes shows what can be accomplished when we work together.

United we stand, divided we fall. If we as a union want to make progress and attain our goals, to improve our lives and those of our families and our communities, we must live up to our name and truly be United Steelworkers.



DEL VITALE
DISTRICT 4 DIRECTOR

BUFFALO JIM BRIGGS, SUB-DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Greetings! As you receive this newsletter we hope that you are enjoying the summer days and time with your families. The past few months have been filled with activity, supporting our members on strike at Unifrax (Local 2058) and at ATI (Local 9436). I would like to congratulate both memberships on the solidarity that has been demonstrated during the difficult times of these strikes. It was refreshing to see our members who on a day-to-day basis might often disagree on outside issues, cast aside their differences to stand together in solidarity as one in their battle against their respective companies. Many of the issues they were striking over would not have affected the current local union members, but would have certainly devastated the members coming in after them. As Sub-District Director, I was greatly impressed by their unity, and the entire staff of the Buffalo office were energized by their tenacity and strength.

The Unifrax strike has been settled! The attack by the company on the next generation of workers in Western N.Y. was defeated. All of our members were returned to work following an overwhelming ratification of a new agreement. I hope as the new members come in, the current members will share the story of their battle because the next generation will be faced with the next battle that this company wages against our members.

We are also happy to inform you that ATI's tentative agreement has been ratified, and members will also be return-

ing back to work. We hope that going forward ATI will realize that the members of the USW working at ATI will only accept a fair contract.

In closing, we have settled nicely into the new Buffalo Sub-District office and invite the Western New York locals to stop by at their convenience to visit our new location. Hopefully, we will soon announce an open house where we can get together and discuss our many successes including the two referenced above. We hope to see you all at our upcoming educational conference. Safe travels between now and then.



Left to right: Sub-District Director Jim Briggs, Jeff Capitumino, Steve Musilowski and Jim Thompson



International Vice-President David McCall (left) joins a recent Rally at Unifrax.

SYRACUSE JIM VALENTI, SUB-DISTRICT DIRECTOR

It looks like we're pretty much through the worst of the COVID pandemic, and we are all seeing a light at the end of the tunnel. By the time this sub-district update is published, you should have all received notifications of in-person training at the Syracuse Sub-District office. Beginning in August we will start conducting regular union training sessions every month until the end of the year. We will also be sending out our health and safety training schedule for in-person training at the Syracuse Sub-District training center in the next week or so. Again, this will be in-person training. Of course, we will have to comply with all CDC and state recommendations at the time of the training. The office staff will let you know what those requirements are prior to the start of each class.

As we are all aware, we just completed our local union election cycle. There have been several newly-elected officers, as well as stewards and grievance committee people. Our upcoming training will focus on grievance handling,

leadership development and bargaining committee training, all designed to afford all newly-elected leaders, as well as re-elected officers, the opportunity to succeed in their leadership roles. It is not what you know that can hurt you; it's what you don't know that can have a lasting negative effect on your leadership and our members. Our jobs are too important to just leave to chance. It is our job to stay abreast of these ever-changing labor laws and to changes to our benefits, such as health insurance and pensions, as well as ERISA laws. Prior to the pandemic, the Syracuse Sub-District office led our district in training hours for our local union leaders and members generally. I am confident that after this long pause we will once again lead our district in demonstrating that the best leadership is the best trained leadership. I'm very excited and encouraged at the re-opening of our offices, future meetings and face-to-face training sessions. I look forward to seeing you all again in the very near future.

MILFORD STEVE FINNIGAN, SUB-DISTRICT DIRECTOR

In early 2021, the USW began bargaining with Allegheny Technologies Incorporated (ATI), for a new collective bargaining agreement. From the start, it was crystal clear that ATI was out to break our union. The company initially proposed that any increases in wages or lump sum payments be offset by savings generated through other contract changes. Simply put, concessions.

Among the concessions the company proposed was to the health care plan, in which the company would only pay up to a capped amount and our members would pay for any cost over that amount. Also, any new hire would only be allowed to participate in the company-provided health, prescription drug, vision and dental benefits, on the same terms as salaried and non-represented employees of the company. Such plans could be changed at any time, at its sole discretion. The company wanted to dictate, not bargain, over benefits for our newly-hired brothers and sisters.

The company wanted the right to contract out our work without notice to the union and without penalty. Clearly, the company wanted to eliminate our jobs. In addition, the company wanted to be able to put our members on 12-hour shifts without having to pay daily overtime.

The union's priorities were simple and straightforward. First, wage increases were long overdue. Our members had not received a wage increase in seven years (during which time top management salaries continued to grow). The second priority was to maintain a premium-free health care plan, preserve our work, and improve layoff and retirement benefits.

On Feb. 28, after nearly two months of bargaining, the parties were unable to reach agreement on a new contract. The parties agreed to an extension of the current terms and conditions of employment. As part of the extension agreement, if the union were to call for a strike, it would give the company

a 24-hour notice of its intent to do so. During this time the union filed numerous unfair labor practice charges against the company for bad faith bargaining, failure to provide information and other violations of the National Labor Relations Act.

After duly notifying the company, the USW-represented local unions commenced a strike against ATI on March 30, 2021, at 7:00 a.m.

After three and a half months on the picket line, thanks to the solidarity and strength of our union, on July 13, 2021, we ratified a new collective bargaining agreement. This was a new agreement in which the company did not achieve any of their proposed concessions related to contracting out, the benefit changes for future hires, or the unilateral right to impose 12-hour shifts on our members. The new agreement also preserves premium-free healthcare, stops the erosion of union jobs, and increases wages by 9 percent, as well as providing \$7,000 lump sum payments over the life of the four-year agreement.

We could not have prevailed in this 14-week strike without the support and financial assistance from the local unions in District 4. On behalf of the USW and the members of Local 1357, a big thank you to all who supported our efforts. Our members return to work on July 18.

RIGHT TO WORK DEFEATED ONCE AGAIN IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

District 4 is currently the only multi-state district in our union without a right to work state, which is something we should be proud of. This legislation now cannot be reintroduced for two years. This is the thirtieth time the bill has been introduced and defeated in New Hampshire.

This legislation was only defeated by the hard work and persistence of the local union activists and district staff who put in countless hours to stop this union busting legislation. We will need to be vigilant in all our District 4 states to keep this legislation where it belongs, right in the dumpster!

EDISON MICHAEL L. FISHER, SUB-DISTRICT DIRECTOR

A long and drawn-out struggle over union recognition was recently resolved and is a great victory. Over two years ago, a majority of employees at Cascades Container signed cards requesting USW representation. The union won the ensuing card count, conducted by an outside third party, but Cascades refused to bargain with the union. After two years of National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) charges and COVID-19 related delays, a hearing was held before an NLRB Administrative Law Judge via Zoom. His decision upholding the results of the card count was received in June, and shortly before this was written we received word that Cascades would honor that decision, and not appeal it. We look forward to the start of negotiations with Cascades soon. Thanks to all who played an important role in this long struggle.

We had another very notable victory, which was achieved in Ponce, Puerto Rico, where a court case involving the payment of Paid Sick Leave (2016-2017) was finally won. See the "Letter from Puerto Rico" (in this insert) for details. It was a long fight with a very satisfactory ending.

With the easing of state restrictions on in-person meetings we've been holding training sessions throughout the Sub-District. Recently there was a Building Power training held in Puerto Rico attended by two dozen members from nine

units of USW Locals 6135, 6588, 6871 and 8198. The Edison Sub-District had stewards training at the Sub-District office, in which stewards from Locals 318, 4-417, and 637 were present, which was facilitated by Luke Gordon, Staff Rep and Education Coordinator for District 4.

With the ongoing concerns of COVID-19 within the health care industry, there's always an opportunity for continued support of our USW Health Care Workers. Recently, officers of Local 318 delivered personal protective equipment, in the form of gowns, to the Visiting Nurses Association, where members of Local 318 are employed in providing in-home health care.

In closing, I would like to thank all the members of our Sub-District for the work that they do!



Left: Building Power training in Puerto Rico. Right: Local 318 President John Seckrettar and Vice President Brian Callow making the delivery of PPE to the Visiting Nurses Association of Central NJ.

Saludos y Solidaridad desde Puerto Rico a todos los del Distrito 4. Dicen que la justicia tardía no es justicia. Pero los fundadores de nuestra Unión dijeron que “la justicia es el pan del pueblo; siempre tenemos hambre de ella”. Durante siete largos años luchamos contra lo que al principio fue una reducción en nuestras horas de trabajo, dejando aquí a cientos de miembros de la USW con la mitad de su salario. Varias docenas recibieron un cheque de pago de cero dólares, y cuando pensamos que no podríamos recibir más ataques de un empleador anti-trabajador en 2016, regresaron a la refriega.

La Administración Municipal dijo que por no contar con los fondos, el

pago de la licencia por enfermedad no utilizada no se pagaría antes del 31 de marzo como dicta la ley.

Conociendo las prácticas anti-obreras de la administración y del alcalde, iniciamos la primera acción legal para reclamar lo que nos correspondía por ley. Fue una batalla que ganamos en todos los foros judiciales. Tuvimos que presentar una segunda acción legal para reclamar el pago correspondiente al 2017, los dos primeros foros judiciales nos dieron la razón, sin embargo, la Corte Suprema de Puerto Rico tardó casi tres años en emitir su fallo.

En 2020, se les pagó a dos tercios de los demandantes del caso de 2016, dejando a seis jefes de familia

sin justicia y sin respuesta alguna para el caso de 2017. Se dice que la justicia retrasada es justicia denegada. En enero de 2021 tuvimos un nuevo alcalde y una nueva administración. Hizo campaña con el compromiso de hacernos justicia. El nuevo Alcalde, Luis M. Irizarry Pabón, se reunió en abril con representantes de la USW y la Presidenta de la Unión Local poniendo acción detrás de sus palabras. El Alcalde nombró un comité integrado por representantes de su administración y de la Junta Ejecutiva de la Local (Mayra Rivera, Presidenta y Palmira Torres, Vicepresidenta) para que antes del 30 de junio todos recibieran los pagos a los que tenían derecho.

El 22 de junio de 2021 llegó ese

momento después de más de 6 años para más de 87 hermanos y hermanas que esperaron, sin perder nunca la fe en que seguiríamos luchando por ellos. Ese día frente a nuestro Representante de la USW en Puerto Rico, Yaphet Torres y miembros de la Junta Ejecutiva de nuestra local, todos recibieron su tan esperado pago del Alcalde. Junto a ello, un compromiso de que bajo su administración, los empleados municipales no son un gasto, sino una inversión, porque somos el rostro de la ciudad.

Seguimos avanzando, de manera constante y con más fuerza porque #JuntosSomosMásFuertes.

UNIDAD Y FUERZA

Trabajadores Siderúrgicos Unidos. Unidad y Fuerza para los trabajadores. Este es el nombre de nuestra unión y las palabras en nuestro logotipo de la USW. Muchos de nosotros usamos con orgullo camisas, chaquetas y sombreros que tienen el logotipo azul y dorado de la USW con estas palabras estampadas, pero ¿alguna vez nos detenemos a pensar en lo que realmente significan estas palabras y cómo se relacionan con nosotros todos los días? ¿Pensamos en lo que significa estar “Unidos” y en la fuerza que proviene de la unidad? Si no lo hacemos, deberíamos.

El 30 de marzo de este año, nuestros miembros en nueve instalaciones de Allegheny Technologies Inc. (ATI) comenzaron una huelga por prácticas laborales injustas. Hay dos ubicaciones de ATI en el Distrito 4. Tenemos 45 miembros en la Local 9436 en Lockport, Nueva York y 64 miembros en la Local 1357 en New Bedford, Massachusetts. Había una tercera planta de ATI en Connecticut, pero la Compañía cerró esa ubicación antes de la huelga.

El 17 de mayo, 190 miembros de la Local 4-2058 de Unifrax LLC en Tonawanda, Nueva York, también se declararon en huelga por prácticas laborales injustas.

Estos son empleadores diferentes, pero muchos de los problemas que llevaron a las huelgas son los mismos. Por supuesto, ambas huelgas fueron causadas principalmente por lo que creíamos que eran prácticas laborales injustas en la mesa de negociaciones. Pero en lo que respecta a las cuestiones de negociación, todo se reduce a que los empleadores intentan dividir a nuestra membresía y ponerlos unos contra otros. A menudo lo hacen proponiendo sistemas de beneficios y salarios de dos niveles, de modo que las personas nuevas que entran por la puerta obtengan menos que los empleados existentes. Esto tiene el efecto de abrir una brecha entre los empleados en función de su antigüedad. Nuestros miembros en ambas compañías dijeron no a vender a las futuras generaciones de trabajadores siderúrgicos y lucharon contra las propuestas concesionales de sus empleadores.

Se establecieron piquetes en ATI y Unifrax. Contamos con el apoyo de otras locales de la USW, otras uniones y socios comunitarios, así como campañas de presión dirigidas por nuestro Departamento de

Campañas Estratégicas. Pero lo más importante en ambas huelgas es que nuestros miembros se mantuvieron firmes juntos. He estado en huelga. Sé lo estresante y difícil que es estar en huelga y cuando visité esas líneas de huelga, no vi grietas. ¡Lo que vi fue a la United Steelworkers! Nuestros miembros estaban decididos a estar fuera un día más.

Esa unidad y fuerza dieron sus frutos. El 18 de junio, nuestros miembros de Unifrax ratificaron un nuevo acuerdo que abordó los problemas que los tenían en huelga y regresaron a trabajar el 21 de junio. El 13 de julio, nuestros miembros de ATI también ratificaron un nuevo acuerdo que no incluía las propuestas concesionales y puso fin a su huelga de tres meses.

Ambos son ejemplos de lo que se puede lograr cuando dejamos de lado nuestras diferencias y nos mantenemos unidos. En el mundo de hoy, hay muchas cosas que nos separan. La gente está dividida por política, religión, raza, estatus económico y una variedad de otras cosas. Es muy fácil encontrar temas en los que no estar de acuerdo.

No estoy tratando de decirte que no debes sentirte como te sientes por esos problemas. Solo estoy sugiriendo que, independientemente de nuestras diferencias en otros temas, podemos dejarlos de lado y unirnos como una unión en las cosas que tenemos en común. Cosas que afectan nuestros medios de subsistencia y estándares de vida como conseguir un buen contrato, mantener y mejorar nuestros beneficios, estrictos estándares de salud y seguridad y luchar por políticas comerciales y leyes laborales sólidas que mantengan nuestros trabajos aquí. Cualesquiera que sean nuestras otras diferencias, deberíamos poder unirnos sobre estos problemas laborales que nos afectan a cada uno de nosotros. El resultado exitoso de estas dos huelgas muestra lo que se puede lograr cuando trabajamos juntos.

Unidos estamos, divididos caemos. Si nosotros, como unión, queremos progresar y alcanzar nuestras metas, para mejorar nuestras vidas y las de nuestras familias y comunidades, debemos estar a la altura de nuestro nombre y ser verdaderamente United Steelworkers.



DIRECTOR'S REPORT
EN ESPAÑOL

EN ESPAÑOL

A LETTER FROM PUERTO RICO

From:

Mayra Rivera,
President, Local 8198, WOS Representative,
and Rapid Response Coordinator, Puerto Rico
and
Mariel Cruz Martínez,
President, Local 6871 and Women of Steel
Council Chair, Puerto Rico

L-R: Doris Cabrera, Local 8198 delegate, Ponce Mayor Luis M. Irizarry Pabón, Mayra Rivera, President of Local Union 8198 and Staff Representative Yaphet Torres, with the payments for the 87 Union Sisters and Brothers

IN ENGLISH

Greetings and Solidarity from Puerto Rico to all of District 4. They say late justice is not justice. But the founders of our union said that “justice is the bread of the people; we are always hungry for it.” For seven long years, we fought against what at first was a reduction in our working hours, leaving hundreds of USW members who work for the municipality of Ponce, Puerto Rico with half their salary. Several dozen received a zero dollars paycheck, and when we thought we could not receive more attacks from an anti-worker employer in 2016, they returned to the fray.

The municipal administration said that due to not having the funds, the

payment for unused sick leave would not be paid before March 31 as dictated by law.

Knowing the anti-worker practices of the administration and the mayor, we filed the first legal action to claim what was due to us by law. It was a battle that we won in all judicial forums. We had to file a second legal action to claim the payment that corresponded to 2017. The first two judicial forums proved us right; however, it took almost three years for the Puerto Rican Supreme Court to rule.

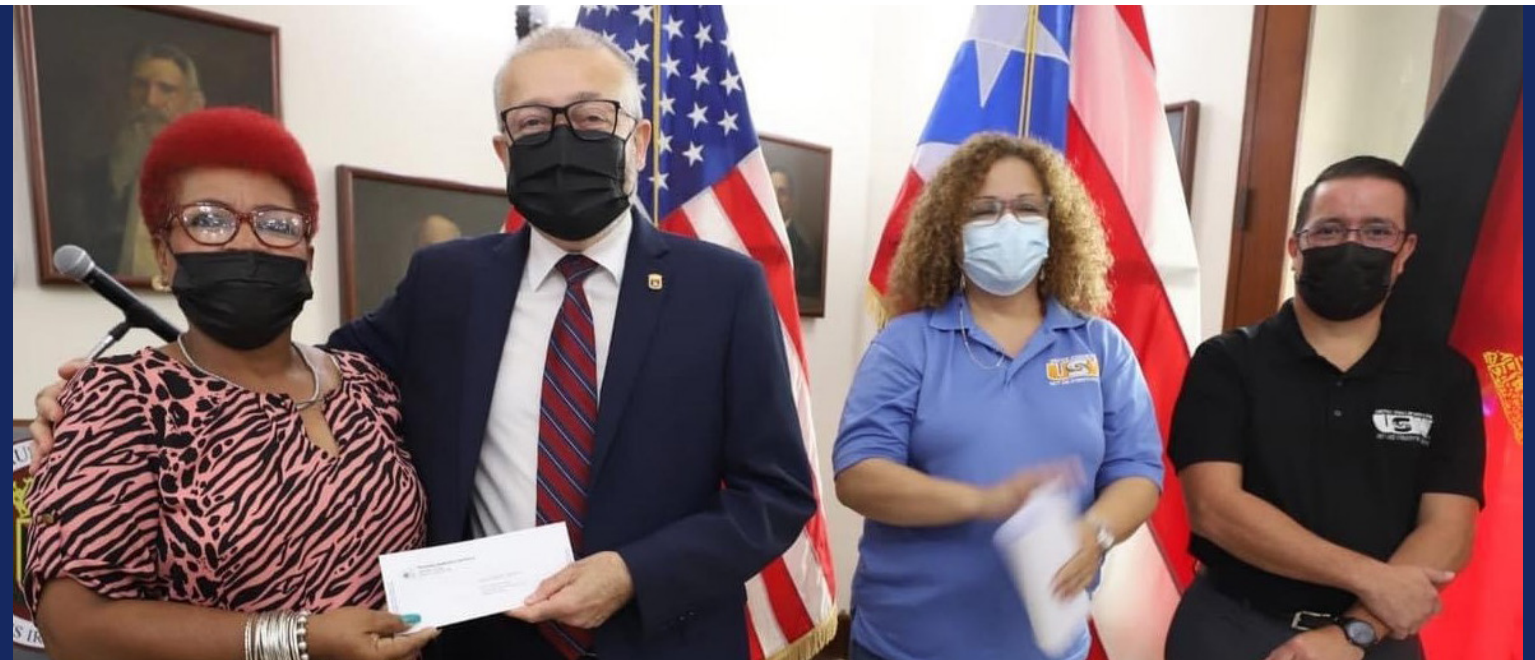
In 2020 two-thirds of the plaintiffs in the 2016 case were paid, leaving six heads of families without justice, and without an answer for the 2017 case. It is said that justice delayed is justice

denied. In January 2021 we had a new mayor and a new administration. He campaigned on a commitment to do us justice. The new mayor, Luis M. Irizarry Pabón, met with representatives of the USW and the local union president in April, putting action behind his words. The mayor appointed a committee made up of representatives of his administration and our Local Union Executive Board (Mayra Rivera, President and Palmira Torres, Vice President), so that before June 30, everyone would receive the payments that they were entitled to.

On June 22, 2021, that moment came after more than 6 years for over 87 brothers and sisters who waited,

without ever losing faith that we would continue the fight for them. On that day in front of our USW staff representative in Puerto Rico, Yaphet Torres and members of the Executive Board of our local all received their long-awaited payment from the mayor. Along with it came a commitment that under his administration, the municipal employees are not an expense, but rather an investment, because we are the face of the city.

We continue to move forward, steadily and with more force because #JuntosSomosMasFuertes.



HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT

IN-PERSON HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING RESUMES

The District 4 Health & Safety program had our first in-person training since the pandemic closed down all these important educational sessions. The class at Republic Steel in Blasdell, N.Y., was attended by ten members from Local 2603. We had great feedback from the company who said attendees received excellent information about crane safety. Republic Steel is now interested in having our Health and Safety trainers present six more trainings on forklift, lock-out/tag-out, fall protection, confined space, powered platforms, and hot work safety. If your Local is interested in health and safety training, please contact your Staff Representative or Ed Moran, the District 4 Health and Safety Coordinator, at (315) 481-4118.



Ed Moran (l) and Mike Johnson, District 4 Health & Safety trainers, with Local 2603 members.

RAPID RESPONSE

We recently defeated Right-to-Work (for less) legislation in New Hampshire by a bipartisan vote of 199 to 175 in the House. All of the Democrats and 20 Republicans voted to kill the legislation. The State Senate in February passed it by a margin of only 2 votes.

One USW member who played a key role was Dave Dellsola from Local 12012, who worked with the USW bat light and local union activists for weeks. Thank you to all the staff that came out for the rally, including our District 4 SOAR Coordinator Al Polk. This was a big victory for labor and our District. We appreciate all who helped by getting their local unions involved during the pandemic shutdown. Dealing with COVID meant that this fight was not our normal Rapid Response action plan.

Thank you for all the work that staff from Pittsburgh did. Lori Bookwood from New Media did virtual twitter training which was a great tool, and of course Amber Miller and Randie Pearson from Rapid Response. We also want to thank Rebecca Newberry from BlueGreen Alliance with her help passing on our actions to all her connections in New Hampshire.

Thank you to all for the tremendous work to make this a great victory.



Members of USW Locals, joined by Brothers and Sisters from the Labor Movement in New Hampshire, rally outside the arena during the House vote on Right to Work.



Brian Callow, Laura Jones, Josh Hall, Gregory Jones, Bradley Kolb, Israel Torres, and (on Zoom from Puerto Rico) Keishla Carbo

NEXT GENERATION

District 4 NextGen held a Regional Coordinators meeting on June 10 at the Desmond Hotel in Albany, N.Y. In attendance was Staff Representative Brigitte Womer, District Co-coordinators Brian Callow and Laura Jones, Western N.Y. regional coordinator Josh Hall, Southern Tier N.Y. coordinator Gregory Jones, Delaware/New Jersey/ NYC coordinator Bradley Kolb, New England coordinator Israel Torres, and Puerto Rico coordinator Keishla Carbo, who joined via Zoom.

The meeting included introductions, understanding the District structure, turf assignments, and regional coordinator responsibilities. Each Regional Coordinator was required to develop a training plan for use at their quarterly meetings. The coordinators then presented their plans. The District Co-Coordinators and Staff Representative provided feedback and suggestions on how to make improvements to these training plans.

The meeting was very productive. By developing and sharing individual plans, the coordinators left armed with training materials for the next 14 months in preparation for returning to holding quarterly meetings again with the downturn in the COVID-19 pandemic, which had halted the program in 2020. These training materials will assist us in the continued growth and strengthening of the District's NextGen Program. We are extremely proud of our Regional Coordinators and look forward to the growth of the program in 2021.

ORGANIZING

District 4 is excited to announce the addition of our newest members in Greenwich, N.Y. The hourly employees at this Essity facility are not strangers to the organizing process. In fact, they had two previously failed attempts at forming a union at the Greenwich facility.

Kathy Hockenberry, who called the USW to organize her workplace, said "I was actually against the union in the past. I thought the company was ok. I thought they would do the right thing. I honestly thought things would get better here, but they just didn't. Its only gotten worse over the years. Now I have to step up and do something about it because we do need a union, and I can see that now."

This time things were different than in the previous campaigns. The organizing committee came out of the gate swinging, ready and eager to attend meetings and organize their coworkers. They were strong, united, educated, and unstoppable. The rank-and-file employees were just as eager and ready to form their union as their committee.

Within days, the majority of employees signed union cards and headed to an election to vote on unionizing. Over a two-day period, each hourly employee was given the opportunity to cast a ballot in the facilities' lunch room through a secret ballot election conducted by the National Labor Relations Board. At the conclusion of the second day the ballots were counted - the overwhelming majority had voted in favor of joining the United Steelworkers! The Greenwich Essity facility is a paper converting facility that coverts paper rolls into napkins for McDonalds and Dunkin Donuts along with other paper products. The paper product that is converted is made by members of USW Local 1478 at Essity in South Glen Falls, N.Y.

On behalf of District 4, we congratulate all of the hourly workers at Essity in Greenwich, N.Y., the organizing committee and organizer, Danny Irons, on a job well done!



Tom Walsh and Kathy Hockenberry



VETERANS COUNCIL

The District 4 Veterans Council held its First Annual District-wide Veterans Council Meeting on July 14, 2021, at the Crown Plaza – Desmond Hotel in Albany, N.Y. District 4 Director Del Vitale and other distinguished guests joined members from across the District from Boston to Buffalo, and all parts in-between attended.

We were honored to have as our special guest Doctor Keita Franklin, who spoke very eloquently on veteran suicide prevention – specifically, ways we can help support our veterans and their families. Dr. Franklin was accompanied by Professor Adam Lessor. Dr. Franklin and Professor Lessor are co-founders of the Columbia Lighthouse Project which developed a program that identifies risks and prevents suicide.

In the afternoon, more than 35 members and guests participated in a very productive and interactive round-table discussion on the future of the Veterans Council in District 4. We selected local coordinators and area coordinators to provide information and assistance to all our members across the District. The area coordinators are Nathan Zonas, LU 14323-A (Connecticut), Mike Uhrich, LU 135L (Buffalo, NY), Mike Lowe, LU 4-898 (Delaware), Tara Bentley, LU 9265 (Albany, NY), Steve Mattison, LU 1000 (Corning, NY), and John Bousquet, LU 2285 (Massachusetts).

One of the important initiatives discussed led to each local union committing to enact by-laws changes to make the Veterans Committee one of the local union mandatory committees. Another was to develop a program to prevent workplace discrimination against our members currently serving in the National Guard and Reserves. It was also agreed that each region of the District will develop a list of resources for veterans and their families which could be distributed or posted at each Local's workplace.

The next District Veterans Council meeting has been set for July 14, 2022 – hope to see you there!

The USW District 4 Veterans Council is also pleased to announce our Fourth Annual Golf Tournament at the Pompey Club, on September 13, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.. The Club is located at 7200 Hamilton Road, Pompey, N.Y., 13138.

We hope you can join us for a wonderful day of golf, food, fun and prizes. In addition to golfer packages, there are also a variety of different levels of sponsorship available to make this fundraising event successful. All proceeds will benefit veterans throughout the District. The Veterans Committee appreciates your support and we hope to see you on September 13! For more information, please contact Cary Eldridge or Heather Claver at 315-468-1623.

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WOMEN OF STEEL

WOMEN OF STEEL/RAPID RESPONSE WE SUPPLY AMERICA PROJECT

Several District 4 sisters were asked to be a part of a joint Rapid Response/Women of Steel Zoom training event recently. This Zoom training was held in anticipation of a serious effort to pass an infrastructure plan in the United States, as well as additional policy decisions regarding infrastructure.

In this effort the USW is looking to partner with our employers who should, like our members, be a part of this conversation. Rebuilding our nation's infrastructure is a significant opportunity to strengthen domestic manufacturing and supply chains. Rebuilding our infrastructure for the modern era will require millions of workers—not only in construction, but also in engineering and clean tech manufacturing.

District 4 WOS have been aggressively working on this project by working on a letter writing campaign encouraging Congress to act quickly to make it a reality.

USW Local 134L Women of Steel worked diligently to get 160 letters to Brian Deese, Director of the National Economic Council and Shalonda Young, Deputy Director, Office of Management and Budget. These letters were cc'd to all Connecticut members of Congress.



NEW JERSEY WOMEN OF STEEL

We have not returned to in person meetings, but we have a member who is doing great work in her community.

USW Women of Steel sister Susan Esposito, who is a shop steward for Local 4-397, has done a great deal of volunteer work throughout the entire pandemic. She volunteers at the Crest Community Church (CCC) Soup Kitchen and More Than Enough Food Pantry in Wildwood Crest, N.J. Every Monday night, food is prepared for anyone in need of a meal, and pantry items given to anyone in need of food. The pandemic exposed food insecurity in her community.

Susan also volunteered at a fundraiser for the Living Waters Veterans Memorial Chapel (LWVMC) in Wildwood, N.J. The American Legion and MudHen Brewery named Deb Moore Ministries - LWVMC the benefactor of a fundraiser to help raise funds for steeple repairs and chimes. The chimes play each branch of the military's theme song and other patriotic songs that can be heard all the way down the boardwalk!

Susan works for the New Jersey Work Environment Council and is the percussionist with the CCC Worship Team, which plays uplifting music for patrons to enjoy!



NEW ENGLAND WOMEN OF STEEL

The New England Council of the District 4 Women of Steel recently had our first in-person meeting since the onset of COVID-19 last year. Everyone was happy and excited to be back together again. We held a short meeting where the council members heard how our sisters got through the pandemic and what activities they and their locals did for the communities they live and work in. After that, we went as a group to support our union sisters on strike at St. Vincent's Hospital in Worcester. The nurses there, members of the Massachusetts Nursing Association, have been on strike for over three months! The issues that sent them to the street include staffing levels and the effects on patient safety and quality care. It was an extremely hot and humid day but our WOS's discomfort paled in comparison to what these nurses and their families have been enduring every day of this strike. Our council members also donated \$300.00 in grocery gift cards to the nurses. We only hope that we were able to lift their spirits for a little while and that they will remember they are not alone in this fight. Unions stick together. The New England Council will hold our next meeting in September.

GET INVOLVED

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