Unions back Governor Dayton’s choice of Tina Smith to replace Al Franken in U.S. Senate

ST. PAUL — The state’s union leaders reacted positively to Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton’s announcement that he will appoint his Lieutenant Governor, Tina Smith, to fill the coming vacancy in Al Franken’s U.S. Senate seat.

Franken, beset by accusations of improper sexual conduct, announced December 7 that he intended to resign his Senate seat “in the coming weeks.”

In the U.S. Senate, Franken had earned a voting record as high as 99 percent or even 100 percent on working family issues tracked by the AFL-CIO.

With Dayton’s December 13 announcement tapping Smith to replace Franken, union leaders were quick to endorse the choice.

“Tina Smith in the United States Senate is good news for working Minnesotans,” said Bill McCarthy, Minnesota AFL-CIO president.

“For the last seven years, Tina Smith has been Governor Dayton’s partner in building a better Minnesota," McCarthy said. “Be it raising the minimum wage, strengthening our state’s infrastructure, or expanding working people’s freedom to decide the issues that matter most... SMITH page 8

Eastside Food Co-op workers ratify first contract

MINNEAPOLIS — Workers at Eastside Food Co-op voted December 14 to ratify their first contract with United Food and Commercial Workers Local 653. Workers counting the ballots included (left to right) Molly G. Puff, customer service representative; Jeffrey Skemp, grocery supervisor; Whitney Zimmerman, produce shift lead. “I’ve been part of this process from the beginning,” Zimmerman said. “I’ve been pushing hard for better pay and better rights for the employees.” See story page 11.

Union leaders condemn Republican tax bill

WASHINGTON — As the Labor Review went to press December 15, news came that the Republican leadership in the U.S. House and U.S. Senate had negotiated a final tax bill for both chambers to approve. President Donald Trump has called for a vote on the final bill before Christmas. A party line vote was expected.

In a December 15 media call, AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka, American Federation of Teachers president Randi Weingarten and Bricklayers president Jim Boland highlighted the devastating impact the Republican tax bill will have on working people.

AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka: “President Donald Trump and the GOP are hustling for a tax plan that would change American life in terrible ways by cutting services, killing American manufacturing, outsourcing jobs, weakening our economy and undermining our future. Instead of giving a gigantic tax cut to the rich, Congress should focus on funding our domestic priorities, not just defense. That means fixing at risk pensions, protecting Dreamers and TPS recipients, providing Puerto Rico relief and extending CHIP.”

American Federation of Teachers president Randi Weingarten: “I didn’t think it was possible, but the Republicans have managed to use their conference committee to make the tax bill even sweeter for the rich. And they’re going to pay for it by raising taxes on the middle class at the same time cutting their local services like public schools, police and fire.”

Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers president Jim Boland: “This bill was rolled out as tax reform but it is anything but. It is a transfer of wealth from working people to corporations. It will not create jobs or do anything to raise the standard of living of working people. We need policies that allow us to upgrade our failing infrastructure that doesn’t measure up to the rest of the world.”
Harassment: a workers’ rights issue

By Chelsie Glaubitz Gabiou, President, Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation

An astonishing number of reports of sexual harassment have dominated the news headlines and social media feeds over the last several months — from Hollywood and newsrooms to our state capital and the halls of Congress.

The powerful #metoo movement is bringing forth for the world to see what many of us already know to be true.

So many women have written very powerfully about what this movement means to them personally and what it means as a national cultural shift — particularly women who find themselves at the intersection of gender and race. As these stories and events unfold, it is clear the ground is shifting under us.

And that ground is shifting not just for Hollywood elites and elected officials — our own workplaces and our own unions are feeling it, too. No corner of our world is immune to this problem.

While it’s easy to say harassment and discrimination are wrong and to point out the obvious problems, it’s much more difficult to address the system that allows this to happen and to point out the not-so-obvious problems. Legal channels exist, but the data shows that they are generally woefully ineffective for a majority of victims of harassment and discrimination.

As a new leader in this movement, I quickly felt that my toolbox was far too small to handle the complaints that were being brought before me. We at the MRLF have had a long-standing harassment policy and procedures in place to deal with problems. Thankfully, we are the keepers of an institution designed to protect and promote dignity and respect for our members.

We can recognize that harassment of all types is a workers’ rights issue.

Changing the culture of our workplaces, unions and communities will go so much further than improving our systems for dealing with problems. Thankfully, we are the keepers of an institution designed to protect and promote dignity and respect for our members.

Top 10 things unions can do to address sexual harassment

1) Recognize that sexual harassment is a workers’ rights issue.
2) Make sure that the union’s constitution and collectively bargained agreements contain guarantees against sexual harassment and retaliation.
3) Address member-on-member harassment.
4) Create a union culture that connects union values and behavior.
5) Focus on prevention.
6) Encourage men — especially male leaders — to step up, speak out, and work to change the culture.
7) Create channels for members, union staff and others to report harassment quickly before it escalates.
8) Train stewards in trauma-informed practices on handling claims of harassment.
9) Protect victims who file charges of harassment against retaliation.
10) Give women a voice in the grievance process.


Labor Review sets 2018 publication schedule

MINNEAPOLIS — For 2018, the Minneapolis Labor Review will continue to publish monthly.

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

The 2018 publication dates will be: January 26 (January 10 deadline); February 23 (February 7 deadline); March 23 (March 7 deadline); April 27 (April 11 deadline); May 25 (May 9 deadline); June 29 (June 13 deadline); July 27 (July 11 deadline); August 24 (August 8 deadline).
Events

Opens December 23: MN History Center’s ‘1968’ exhibit returns for year-plus run

ST. PAUL — Anyone who lived through the year 1968 remembers a year of social, cultural and political upheaval, including the tragic assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy. 1968 also was the year that Minnesota’s Hubert Humphrey, a labor and civil rights champion, narrowly lost the presidential election to Richard Nixon.

The year 2018 will mark 50 years since 1968 and brings the return home of “1968,” an exhibit produced by the Minnesota History Center which has toured nationwide.

The exhibit will run at the Minnesota History Center from December 23, 2017 to January 21, 2019.

The exhibit features not just the politics of 1968, but also music, art and other aspects of popular culture.

Artifacts featured in the exhibit include: a Bell UH-1 “Huey” helicopter from the Vietnam War; the torch from the 1968 Olympics; landmark TV, film, and news clips; vintage fashions, household items and toys; a full-size replica of the Apollo 8 capsule.

The exhibit also features oral histories from civil rights activists and Vietnam veterans.

The Minnesota History Center is located at 345 W. Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul.

For more information, including special events planned in conjunction with “1968,” visit minnesotahistorycenter.org.

January 12: Save on grocery packages at new ‘Fare for All’ location in northeast Minneapolis

MINNEAPOLIS — Beginning in 2018, the Fare for All site sponsored by Working Partnerships will be moving to a new location: the Laborers Local 563 union hall at 901 14th Ave. NE, Minneapolis (one-half block west of Central Ave. on 14th Ave. NE).

The Laborers Local 563 hall is located right next to the previous Fare For All location, the Sprinkler Fitters Local 417 union hall at 1404 Central Ave. NE. (Local 417 has sold its building and will be moving to new quarters in Shoreview. See page 22).

The first Fare for All distribution date at the Laborers Local 563 hall will be Friday, January 12, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Other coming dates in 2018 include February 9, March 9, April 13, May 11, June 22.

Fare For All sells packages of fresh produce and frozen meat with prices ranging from $10 to $30 per package. Everyone can save up to 40 percent on their food purchases. The program has no income requirements and is open to everyone who is looking to save money.

Working Partnerships, the AFL-CIO community services program, hosts the Fare for All site at the Laborers Local 563 hall.

Fare For All has thirty locations in the greater Twin Cities metro area where food packages are sold once a month.

“We really want to thank the Sprinkler Fitters for hosting Fare for All for so many years,” said Doug Flateau, director of Working Partnerships.

“We also thank Laborers Local 563 for opening their hall to Fare for All so that people who were used to coming to this northeast Minneapolis location won’t experience any disruption,” added Ashley Novak, Working Partnerships’ community services liaison.

For more information, call 612-379-8130 ext. 112 or visit fareforall.org.

January 14: ‘Hope and Healing Cabaret’ will celebrate Dr. King through music, theatre

MINNEAPOLIS — Coretta Scott King wrote that the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday “celebrates the life and legacy of a man who brought hope and healing to America.”

Join in celebrating Dr. King’s life and legacy through theatrical and musical performances at a “Hope and Healing Cabaret” Sunday, January 14 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. at Mill City Museum, 704 S. 2nd St., Minneapolis.

Light refreshments and a cash bar will be available.

This program is a collaboration between the Minnesota Historical Society and the African American Interpretive Center.

The cost is $20 per person, with a 20 percent discount for MNHS members.

For more information, or to purchase a ticket online, visit www.mnhs.org/event/5200.
January 15: Annual MLK holiday breakfast features actor David Oyelowo, star of ‘Selma’

MINNEAPOLIS — Actor David Oyelowo will be the keynote speaker at the 28th annual MLK Holiday Breakfast, planned Monday, January 15.

The event honors the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and runs from 7:00-9:00 a.m. at the Minneapolis Armory, 500 South 6th St, Minneapolis.

Proceeds will benefit the Minneapolis Chapter of the United Negro College Fund, helping provide four-year college scholarships to deserving low-income students.

Individual ticket prices are $50 and include a free voucher for the Minnesota Historical Society’s “1968” exhibit (see page 3).

Keynote speaker David Oyelowo played the role of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the Oscar-nominated film “Selma” (2014), for which he was nominated for a Golden Globe and won an NAACP Image Award.

The event also features Michael L. Lomax, president and CEO of the UNCF and a performance by Grammy award-winning Sounds of Blackness.

For more information, or to order a ticket, visit mlkbreakfast.com.

Watch the MLK Breakfast live on TPT – Twin Cities PBS at 8:00 a.m. on January 15 or stream it online at TPT.org.

January 15: East Side Freedom Library will screen documentary, ‘At the River I Stand’

ST. PAUL — The East Side Freedom Library will commemorate Martin Luther King Day with a screening and discussion of “At the River I Stand,” the award-winning documentary about the 1968 Memphis sanitation workers’ strike, during which Dr. King was assassinated.

The free event will be Monday, January 15 at 7:00 p.m. at the East Side Freedom Library, 1105 Greenbrier Street, St. Paul. The public is welcome.

“At the River I Stand” (USA, 1993, 56 minutes) recounts the two months leading to King’s death in 1968, coinciding with the 65-day strike of 1,300 Memphis sanitation workers.

The sanitation workers — paid so poorly that they qualified for welfare — went on strike to seek better wages and union recognition as an AFSCME local. AFSCME’s national leadership gave the strike their full support while Dr. King became involved as part of his move to expand the civil rights cause to include union rights and economic issues.

The film includes King delivering his foreboding “I have been to the mountaintop” speech in Memphis April 3, 1968. He was shot and killed the next day.

A few days later, thousands from Memphis and around the country rallied for a non-violent march King was to have led.

The Memphis city council yielded and granted most of the strikers’ demands.

Now, 50 years later, the story of what happened in Memphis continues to be relevant as public employees’ right to organize comes under attack and racial economic disparities persist.

February 15-16: Registration now open for Minnesota AFL-CIO’s ‘Campaigns Conference’

ST. PAUL — Registration is now open for the 2018 Minnesota AFL-CIO Campaigns Conference, planned February 15-16. The conference will be the official kick-off to Labor 2018, the labor movement’s political effort for the 2018 elections.

Workshops will focus on organizing, legislative advocacy and political action and how these three priorities can advance together to benefit working families.

As the election of a labor-endorsed Minnesota governor will be the chief focus of Labor 2018, the conference will include a gubernatorial candidate forum Friday morning, February 16.

The conference will take place at the InterContinental Saint Paul Riverfront hotel, 11 East Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul.

The registration fee for the conference is $75. Register by February 1.

For more information, or to register for the conference, visit www.mnafclcio.org/events.

Hotel rooms may be reserved at the rate of $149 plus tax per night. Reserve by January 29. To reserve a room, visit link above or call either 651-292-1900 or toll free 1-866-686-2867. Indicate you are with “Minnesota AFL-CIO.”
By Steve Share, Labor Review editor

MINNEAPOLIS — The historic National Guard Armory in downtown Minneapolis, built in 1935, will be re-opening soon as an entertainment venue — just in time to host major events during Super Bowl week.

But, unlike the city’s other major entertainment venues — where union stagehands erect the sets, rig the lighting, and operate sound and video — developer Ned Abdul of Swervo Development is attempting to launch the Armory as a non-union facility.

Abdul is even bragging that he can offer lower labor costs, reported Matt Rice, business manager of Local 13 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees.

“They had a hard-hat opening a few months ago and they advertised it as a non-union venue,” Rice reported. “We’re asking him to pay employees a decent wage and negotiate with the union.”

“This is a major venue in the Twin Cities and we should be recognized,” Rice maintained.

Rice reported that several vendors who work with Local 13 expressed concerns that “somebody else would bid with non-union wages.”

“If he’s just trying to market a building to have the cheapest labor rates, everybody should be concerned,” Rice said.

Not just wages — but also safety — were concerns expressed by IATSE Local 13 members walking an informational picket line at the Armory December 15.

“We need fair wages; the work we do is not easy,” said Cassandra Schuster, St. Paul, a three-year member of Local 13. “Sometimes we put our lives at risk. Sometimes we put our bodies at risk.”

“They’re trying to outsource to companies that don’t offer the safety precautions that we offer here at the union,” she said.

“We’re the best in the business,” said Wayne Kinsey, Minneapolis, a 17-year member of Local 13. “They’re going to use labor with no skills... When you’re rigging those heavy lights when a big performance comes through, if something dropped, it would be a travesty.”

Schuster and Kinsey were among some two dozen members of IATSE Local 13 walking the picket line.

The picketers also included Joseph Solinsky, Plymouth, who is new on the IATSE Local 13 call list and eager for a first assignment. “What stands out for me is safety,” he said. “I took a class from the union. I’ve watched people walking in the stage door [at the Armory]. I know I wouldn’t be safe if I started working here, without the union, the training and the mentorship.”

“I’m here to educate people about the importance to have skilled labor for the task at hand,” said Tonka Crow, St. Paul, a four-year member of Local 13.

IATSE Local 13 members handed out a small flyer to the public. It read, in part, “Ned [Abdul] is advertising that he has the lowest labor rates in town... STOP selling your venue off the backs of working families.”

The flyer urged e-mails to Ned Abdul at ned@swervo.com with the message “to be fair to working people.”

A passerby who talked with some of the IATSE Local 13 picketers summed up the situation: “I’m glad they’re finally doing something with this facility — but do it right.”

‘When you’re rigging those heavy lights when a big performance comes through, if something dropped, it would be a travesty.’

— Wayne Kinsey, IATSE member
THANKS TO LABOR for supporting Homeless Veterans in Anoka. Dozens of Building Trades members, retirees and business reps made abandoned Cottage 2 at the old Anoka State Hospital habitable in only 57 days. Nobody thought it possible. The Trades made it happen, as volunteers, donating more than $150,000 in labor. Now 32 vets will be warm and safe this winter because these people cared, and worked to make it so.

These amazing locals and union contractors made it happen:
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- Coon Rapids Firefighters Local 1935
- IBEW Local 292
- Pipefitters Local 539
- Plumbers Local 15
- Sprinkler Fitters Local 417
- Building Controls Group
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- Horwitz Mechanical
- Goodin Company
- Mayer Electric
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- Water Heaters Only

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Happy Holidays, Union Brothers and Sisters!

John Hoffman
STATE SENATOR • DISTRICT 36
Brooklyn Park, Champlin, Coon Rapids

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Happy Holidays, Union Brothers and Sisters!

John Hoffman
STATE SENATOR • DISTRICT 36
Brooklyn Park, Champlin, Coon Rapids

Thanks for your support!

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Minnesota, Education Service at the University of
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ing great use of the technology. The idea
for workers to tell their stories.
site was launched in August 2000. And it
or to have done this work since this web-
been an hon-
ning Minnesota.
Editor’s note: Barb Kucera, the
founding editor of the Workday Minneso-
ta labor news website, left her position
December 1 after 17 years. She worked
previously for 14 years as editor of the St.
Paul Union Advocate. Her byline also
appeared regularly in the Minneapolis Labor
Review. Here are her parting words published December 1 on Work-
day Minnesota.
By Barb Kucera, editor,
www.workdayminnesota.org

Today marks my last day as editor of
Workday Minnesota. It has been an hon-
or to have done this work since this website
was launched in August 2000. And it
has been a privilege to provide a platform
for workers to tell their stories.

Seventeen years ago, the Internet was
much younger and unions were not mak-
ing great use of the technology. The idea
of a website that would focus on labor
news seemed radical to some. But Work-
day happened because of the vision of
Bernard Brommer, president of the Min-
nesota AFL-CIO at the time, and the in-
volvement of Howard Kling of the Labor
Education Service at the University of

As the editor of the Union Advocate, the
newspaper of what was then called the St.
Paul Trades & Labor Assembly, I was
viewed as someone who could be trusted to
take the reins of this new venture.

From the beginning, our goal was to
provide a place for workers’ voices to be
heard. And that need still exists. Despite
the avalanche of information available
through the Internet, workers’ stories are
still scarce. So are news and resources
that support workers’ rights.

In the ensuing years, drawing on the
experienced Labor Education Service
telecommunications staff, we added video
as a frequent feature of our coverage. The
Workday project expanded beyond a
website to utilize Facebook and Twitter.
We now cover not only union activities,
but also the actions of organizations such
as worker centers and any efforts — like
the campaign for a $15 minimum wage —
that advance better conditions for
working people.

Through the years, I have met people
from all walks of life and have learned
that leadership comes in many forms. It
can be the officer elected to head her
union or the organizer who goes door to
door talking to potential members. It can
be the activist — of any age — who
demonstrates in the streets. It can be the
person who makes the phone calls or
does the mundane tasks necessary to
build a strong organization. It can be as
complicated as a multi-pronged cam-
paign and as simple as one worker talking
to another.

The Workday Minnesota project has
provided the opportunity for me to get to
know many of you — and hopefully sup-
port your efforts. Workday provides a
window on your world, but it is you who
create the message.

I owe a special thanks to the many la-
bor communicators and other journalists,
interns and freelance writers who have
played a role over these many years in
helping Workday succeed. It has been a
joy to work with all of you.

The Labor Education Service is in the
process of hiring a new editor, someone
whom I know will take Workday to the
next level. As for me, I will be moving into
a different kind of job — but one that still
has ties to labor — in administrative sup-
port at the Cummins & Cummins law firm.
I am excited about this new opportunity.
And despite the many challenges we face
today, I remain hopeful. I guess it has
something to do with the many amazing
people I have had the privilege to meet.

As the late, great Paul Wellstone said,
“The future will not belong to those who
sit on the sidelines. The future will not
belong to the cynics. The future belongs
to those who believe in the beauty of
their dreams.”

From the Members of Local 1005

Holiday Greetings!

www.minneapolisunions.org
Smith: Dayton’s choice to replace Franken says she will run for Senate seat in 2018
continued from page 1

join together in union, Lieutenant Governor Smith has been there to help get key legislation across the finish line. She’s has been a leader on reducing healthcare costs and combating Minnesota’s opioid crisis; expertise that she will carry to the Senate.

“Minnesota’s labor movement offers our congratulations to Lieutenant Governor Smith and stands ready to assist her as she transitions to her new role representing Minnesotans in Washington,” McCarthy said.

Craig Olson, secretary-treasurer Minnesota State Building and Construction Trades Council, also praised Dayton’s choice of Smith: “Minnesotans will be well-served when Lieutenant Governor Tina Smith moves into her new role as our U.S. Senator. Tina has been a champion for the Building Trades community here in our state, and will continue as that message is delivered to a larger national audience. Thumbs up to Governor Dayton; a great pick.”

AFSCME Council 5 also strongly supported Smith’s appointment.

“There is no one more qualified or capable than Tina Smith to represent all Minnesotans in the United States Senate,” says Judy Wahlberg, president of AFSCME Council 5. “Tina’s entire career has prepared her for this job at a time when all of us need more strong women in the halls of power.”

“Tina is a proven champion for women and working families,” Wahlberg said. “She has worked tirelessly for paid parental leave and pay equity. Thanks to Tina, parents can bond with their newborns and women are treated as equals in state service. We need her voice in Washington.”

Smith joined Dayton as his running-mate in 2014 when he was elected to a second term.

She had served Dayton in his first term as governor as his chief of staff. She previously had served as chief of staff to Minneapolis mayor R.T. Rybak.

Smith will serve until a special election in November 2018 when voters will choose who fills out the remaining two years of Franken’s term.

In accepting Dayton’s appointment to the U.S. Senate, Smith declared, “though I never anticipated this moment, I am resolved to do everything I can to move Minnesota forward. I will be a fierce advocate in the United States Senate for economic opportunity and fairness.”

Smith also announced that she will run next year in the special election for the two years that remain in Franken’s term.

“I will run in that election, and I will do my best to earn Minnesotans’ support,” Smith said. “I believe the way to do that is by being the best Senator I can be.”

“This Senate seat has a strong, abiding legacy of service and social justice that runs back to Paul Wellstone, Walter Mondale, Gene McCarthy and Hubert Humphrey. As I take on this new position, in this extraordinary time we are in, I will do my best to move this legacy forward, toward a better, more inclusive and more just future for all of us.”
HHAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Moving forward with the labor movement

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Holiday Greetings!

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Merry Christmas & Happy New Year
Roofers & Waterproofers Local 96
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Happy Holidays!
Randy Maluchnik
Carver County Commissioner

Happy Holidays!
Randy Maluchnik
Carver County Commissioner

Best Wishes To Our Members and AFL-CIO Friends For A Great Holiday Season.
Minneapolis Area Local
AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION, AFL-CIO
Office: 1234 4TH ST., N.E., Minneapolis, MN 55413

Season’s greetings from all of us at Education Minnesota
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Happy Holidays!
Randy Maluchnik
Carver County Commissioner

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MINNEAPOLIS — Eastside Food Co-op workers voted December 14 to ratify their first three-year contract as members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 653.

The contract goes into effect January 1, 2018 and includes raises for all employees as well as establishes a just-cause discipline procedure.

More than 70 percent of Eastside Food Co-op employees voted to join UFCW Local 653 in April.

For the in-store contract vote, 92 percent of the workers who cast ballots voted in favor.

“With this agreement, we won a stronger voice in the everyday conditions that impact our work environment and our experience working at Eastside—more equitable wages, adequate staffing and training, and timely [action] addressing labor and safety concerns,” said Seth Kuhl-Stennes, a front end worker with four years at the co-op.

With the strong votes of support for the union and the new contract, “I feel we have a united voice,” he added.

“They’ve been part of this process from the beginning,” said Whitney Zimmerman, produce shift lead and a seven-year Eastside employee. “I’ve been pushing hard for better pay and better rights for the employees.”

Community support for Eastside Food Co-op workers was steady throughout the bargaining process.

“It’s going to strengthen the store as a business, make it a stronger cornerstone of the community,” said Jeffrey Skemp, grocery supervisor and nine-year co-op employee.

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Community support for Eastside Food Co-op workers was steady throughout the bargaining process.
By Steve Share, Labor Review editor

NEW BRIGHTON — As a driver backed a semi-trailer into the loading dock at the Finish Line Express freight terminal, a crowd of about 100 Teamsters Local 120 members and supporters had just wrapped up a protest rally outside the terminal on the other side of a chain-link fence.

“He won’t even look over here,” said Jim “JC” Crisham, who once counted the driver as friend.

Crisham was one of 95 Teamsters Local 120 members who lost their jobs — and two weeks of pay — when Lakeville Motor Express abruptly closed November 27, 2016 and the trucking company shifted management personnel, equipment and customers to a new non-union firm, Finish Line Express.

The workers, who say they are owed $524,000, charge Lakeville with siphoning assets to two other operations — LME and Finish Line — “with actual fraudulent intent” to avoid paying employees’ wages.

Teamsters Local 120 planned the rally November 27, 2017 at FLE to mark the one-year anniversary of the abrupt shutdown of Lakeville Motor Express — which left workers owed two weeks’ pay.

About 100 Teamsters Local 120 members and supporters rallied November 27 outside Finish Line Express in New Brighton, marking the one-year anniversary of the abrupt shutdown of Lakeville Motor Express — which left workers owed two weeks’ pay.

The workers, who say they are owed $524,000, charge Lakeville with siphoning assets to two other operations — LME and Finish Line — “with actual fraudulent intent” to avoid paying employees’ wages.

Teamsters Local 120 planned the rally November 27, 2017 at FLE to mark the one-year anniversary of the LME shutdown — and to bring attention to the workers’ unresolved claims of wage theft.

“We’ve had no justice,” said Teamsters Local 120 president Tom Erickson. “We believe labor law needs to be changed… Not one dime has been paid out; we’re still waiting for justice.”

“Companies don’t have a right to run away from a union contract,” Erickson said. Teamsters Local 120 has maintained pickets daily at FLE for the past year. Erickson pointed out a dirt path where picketers’ footsteps had worn away the grass. “We are not going away until they’re out of business or they recognize the contract and adhere to what they’re supposed to adhere to.”

“What these people did to us was completely wrong. They’re crooks and thieves,” said former LME employee Jim Sperling, Forest Lake, who worked 13-1/2 years at the company. He said the shift from LME to FLE “was all a scam, a scheme, a shell game.”

“They put 95 people out on the street right before Thanksgiving and refused to pay us our last two weeks of wages,” Sperling said. The workers also lost earned vacation time and employer pension contributions that were owed.

“Wage theft is an epidemic all over the country,” Sperling noted. “If you work hard for your money, you should be paid.”

Sperling went to the state capitol earlier this year to share his story and testify on behalf of proposed legislation to strengthen the state’s ability to crack down on wage theft and increase enforcement and fines. The legislation stalled in committee.

“People need to stand up and fight for what’s right… That’s what drives me to come out here each day,” said Sperling, who has been a presence on the Teamsters’ FLE picket line nearly every day for the past year. “I’m retired now; I come up here pretty much every day to help on the picket line — because it has to be done.”

With Local 120’s giant semi-trailer as a backdrop, and a floodlight illuminating the night-time rally, Local 120 president Erickson introduced several speakers including Sperling; State Representative Erin Murphy, DFL-St. Paul; St. Paul Regional Labor Federation president Bobby Kasper and New Brighton City Council member-elect Graeme Allen.

“When I look at you, I see the front line in the fight for Minnesota’s working families,” said Murphy, who is a member and former staff rep of the Minnesota Nurses Association. “When you stand together, you make gains.”

Kasper urged the crowd: “Never give up, never!”

“It’s going to take time but we’re going to win because we’re right and the company is wrong,” said Allen, who also is a Teamsters Local 120 member and an organizer for the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation.

The microphone then passed from one former LME worker to another.

“I hope to hell, when all of this comes to an end, all of them who were involved in this… go straight to jail and spend a lot of time thinking about it,” said Will Wintle, who had worked for 25 years for LME when the company shut down. FLE trucks drove in and out of the gate while the rally progressed and workers could be viewed inside the facility moving freight around on forklifts.

Local 120 president Erickson wrapped up the rally: “For the FLE people who are listening — because I know you are — from Local 120, we are not going anywhere!”

After the rally, people lingered and continued talking. The event was a chance for former LME workers who had worked together for years to catch up with their former co-workers, who in the past year have found other jobs, retired, or moved out of state.

Several former LME workers shared their stories with a reporter.

Jim “JC” Crisham, a 42-year Teamsters member who had worked five years as a driver at LME, summed up the past year in one word: “Hell.”

After LME’s sudden closing, Crisham said, “at first, it was what are we going to do? What are we going to do?” Like many of his co-workers, he received help from Working Partnerships — the community services arm of the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation. Working Partnerships administered an emergency...
NEW BRIGHTON — For the ninth year in a row, Cement Masons Local 633 apprentices have practiced their skills — and tapped into their creativity — to create “Concrete Christmas” at the union’s training facility in New Brighton.

The apprentices conceive and design a holiday-themed display from scratch, one that allows them to practice traditional work like curb and gutter but also to experiment with color and texture — and risk trying something that might not work.

At first, instructor Brian Farmer says, the apprentices need a little prodding to “think outside the box.”

But, once they’re engaged in the project, their creativity really gets going and the project takes off.

This year’s display included Santa’s chair, a hockey rink, a giant snowman, towering candy canes, and a water feature.

And just as the joy of the season may be fleeting, the day after the Cement Masons’ holiday party the backhoe comes in and the holiday display is reduced to rubble — only to magically reappear, with some thought and hard work, the next year.

![Photo above: This year’s display created by Cement Masons Local 633 apprentices made full use of the space available.](facebook.com/minneapolisunions)

![Photo above: Santa’s chair, featuring candy canes and a water feature.](facebook.com/minneapolisunions)

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Will Wintle had worked 25 years for LME when the company shut down. “I hope to hell, when all of this comes to an end, all of them who were involved in this… go straight to jail and spend a lot of time thinking about it.”

Alex Wintle (left), who had worked six years at LME as a dockworker, and fiancé Rylee Stewart-Carlson (right). Alex Wintle, with father Will Wintle, was one of several father-son pairs who had worked at LME and lost their jobs at the same time.

Alex Wintle, who had worked six years at LME as a dockworker, said he and fiancé Rylee Stewart-Carlson learned about the LME shut-down on the way home from a hunting trip. Only two weeks earlier, the young couple had just closed on buying their first home.

“The trauma of it was the worst part — all of a sudden you don’t have a job,” said Stewart-Carlson. “We were young, 24 and 27,” she added. “We were excited to get a life going.”

“I was able to find work; it took me two to three months,” Alex Wintle said. He’s now working at a non-union company, he said, and “making a significant amount less.”

How much did the LME shutdown cost him in lost wages and earned vacation? “When I added it all up, it was roughly $2,000,” he said.

“All these guys are just great guys,” Stewart-Carlson said. “We’re close with a lot of people who worked at LME... Teamsters, they’re a family. It was tough to know that everyone was hurting.” She added, “I just hope that justice comes to those who deserve it.”

A Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry spokesperson said November 28: “The case is still open so there is no public information available. DLI is working to negotiate a possible settlement with the bankrupt Lakeville Motor Express that would include satisfying employees’ wage theft claims. We hope to know by the end of the year whether a good settlement for employees is possible or if litigation before an administrative law judge needs to move forward.”

Wage theft: ‘If you work hard for your money, you should be paid’ continued from page 12

fund set up to help the workers with pressing financial needs and also directed them to other community resources.

Crisham said he collected unemployment benefits for a few weeks and then found a new job — but at a non-union company — where he earns less, pays more for health insurance, and now works “12-hour days, no wife time, no time with the grandchildren.”

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Happy Holidays and Best Wishes for 2018!

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Wishing our members and all working families a safe and Happy New Year

The Officers and Executive Board of GCC/IBT Local 1-M

“Strong, responsible unions are essential to industrial fair play. Without them, the labor bargain is wholly one-sided. Workers must be organized and their organizations must be recognized by employers as a condition precedent to industrial peace.”

–Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis

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December 22, 2017 • Minneapolis Labor Review • Page 15
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Teamsters rally behind new bill to get troubled pension funds back on track

By Michael Moore, editor, St. Paul Union Advocate

SOUTH ST. PAUL — Federal legislation introduced last month would lend cash to ailing pension funds so they can meet their obligations to current retirees and grow enough to serve people still working toward retirement.

The Butch Lewis Act, authored by U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio, received a full-throated endorsement from retirees, union leaders and lawmakers at a rally organized December 2 by Save Our Pensions-Minnesota.

More than 100 people, mostly retired and active Teamsters in the beleaguered Central States Pension Fund, packed the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1189 hall in South St. Paul to learn more about the new bill, which has bipartisan support.

“This is not a bailout,” Save Our Pensions co-chair Jeff Brooks told fellow retirees. “This is essentially a refinancing plan.”

The bill is named after the deceased Central States pensioner who led efforts to stop the fund from cutting benefits last year for 273,000 retirees. The U.S. Treasury Department rejected that so-called “rescue strategy” in May 2016, after Save Our Pensions-Minnesota and other grassroots organizations mobilized retirees in opposition to the plan.

Still, the fund claims it will run out of money sometime in the next 10 years, and it’s not the only U.S. multi-employer pension fund in trouble. An analysis by two actuarial consulting firms released earlier this year found 114 funds — covering nearly 1.5 million workers — in critical condition or worse.

The Butch Lewis Act would create a new federal office, funded by the sale of U.S. Treasury bonds, empowered to lend troubled pensions the money they need to remain solvent.

Pension funds would pay back the low-interest loans over 30 years. In exchange, they would be barred from making risky investments and would be required to deliver regular progress reports to federal administrators showing their progress in getting back on track.

For those plans needing additional help, the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation would be available to make up the difference.

U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, in a previously-recorded video address to the December 2 rally, called the bill a “win-win” for retirees and pension plans alike. “No more stalling,” she said. “No more false promises. We need to act now.”

Minnesota’s Eighth District U.S. Representative Rick Nolan and First District U.S. Representative Tim Walz attended the rally and pledged their support as well.

“If this country can’t provide a decent retirement to its people, then what do we stand for?” Walz asked.

Happy Holidays to you and yours!

Wishing you and your family a Joyous Holiday Season and a Prosperous New Year

The Officers and Staff of Sheet Metal Workers Local #10

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Holiday Greetings — 2017 —
May the Joys of the Season be Yours

Iron Workers

Local 512

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www.minneapolisunions.org
By Steve Share, Labor Review editor

MINNEAPOLIS — “Thanks for being here. This is how we win,” said Michelle Weise, president of Minneapolis Federation of Teachers Local 59. And with that, she led a stream of Minneapolis teachers and education support professionals down the hall to fill the meeting room for the December 12 Minneapolis School Board meeting.

“See this — this whole room is union,” remarked Jason Morzenti, as he surveyed the standing-room-only crowd clad in blue MFT t-shirts and carrying banners. “We’re here in support of our contract and in solidarity with our union,” Morzenti told a reporter. “This is our contract. This is how we take care of our kids,” said Morzenti, a ninth grade geography teacher for 3-1/2 years at Washburn High School.

The group came to district headquarters to back MFT representatives who planned to advocate for “the schools our students deserve” at the public comment period at the beginning of the school board meeting.

“The teachers are here to advocate on behalf of the students,” said Ken Shain, a 7-year Minneapolis teacher nominated for Teacher of the Year.

The teachers this year are using contract negotiations to advocate for student needs under a concept that’s become known as “bargaining for the common good.”

The teachers’ contract, Shain explained, “is the document that describes the conditions of classroom life for students in the district.”

The teachers envision a contract that includes obvious issues like classroom size, but also includes concerns like ensuring clean and healthy buildings, introducing restorative practices as a new approach to student discipline, giving all students 30 minutes of daily recess, and providing supportive services for students and their families.

In fact, MFT worked over the summer with teachers, parents and community members to develop a 10-point platform, “Common Sense Bargaining for the Public Good” elaborating on the issues above and more.

As part of that effort, MFT conducted a survey of teachers’ ideas — and received 1,500 responses.

“In this contract campaign, we’re putting forward a student-centered narrative… We’re bargaining for the good of the community,” explained MFT president Weise. “All of our proposals fall under one of the 10 points.”

Unfortunately, Weise reported, “the district has come back and said ‘no’ to every single proposal.”

MFT’s contract expired June 30, 2017 and negotiations for a new two-year contract with the district have not progressed after five negotiating sessions. One more planned negotiating session remains. After that, the school district has asked for mediation, which is likely to begin mid-January.

The teachers’ show of force December 12 won’t be the last. “We are going to do a monthly school board action,” Weise said, “not to be disruptive,” but to highlight the issues in the 10-point platform.

“As educators, our students are always at the center of the work we do,” South High English teacher Mary Manor told the school board December 12.

“We will be there every month until we have a tentative agreement or a contract,” Weise told the Labor Review.
Happy Holidays!

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Minneapolis Labor Review • December 22, 2017
**Local Union News**

**AFSCME Local 34:** Local 34 president Jean Diedrich wins political activism award

AFSCME Council 5 has presented its Rick Scott Political Activism Award to AFSCME Local 34 president Jean Diedrich. Diedrich was honored at the AFSCME Council 5 convention in Duluth in early October.

The award was established in 1997 to be given annually to a member who performs outstanding service to AFSCME in the area of political action on behalf of working families.

The award honors Rick Scott, the first political action director for AFSCME in Minnesota.

**Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1005:** Another vote planned for contract approval or strike authorization

As the Labor Review went to press December 15, members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1005 were scheduled to vote December 17-18 on Metro Transit’s “best and final” contract offer.

For the latest updates on this story, visit workdayminnesota.org.

ATU Local 1005 members voted November 12-13 in an overwhelming margin to reject Metro Transit’s previous contract offer and authorize a strike during Super Bowl week.

Negotiations continued and produced a new contract offer December 13 which union leadership recommended members should vote to approve.

Local 1005 president Mark Lawson told the Star Tribune: “This is, I feel, a true compromise and a good compromise...And the nature of compromise is we didn’t get everything we wanted, they didn’t get everything they wanted.”

The proposed three-year agreement included wage increases of 2.5 percent each year, no change in workers’ health plans, and increases mechanics’ reimbursement for tools.

The latest offer also withdrew a Metro Transit proposal to increase the number of hours which a part-time driver could work.

Local 1005 raised bus operator safety as major issue in the contract campaign.

In the week leading-up to Metro Transit’s latest contract offer, ATU Local 1005 members filled the rooms at Metropolitan Council meetings to express their concerns about settling a fair contract.

ATU Local 1005 represents about 2,500 Metro Transit bus operators, light rail operators, mechanics and other workers.

**Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1005:** Run-off election winner announced

Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1005’s 2017 elections included a December 6 run-off election for recording secretary.

John McConnell defeated Mark Lawson to win the office of recording secretary.

Lawson has been serving as Local 1005 president since October 2013 but did not seek re-election to that position and instead ran for recording secretary.

In the first round of the Local 1005 election, Ryan Timlin won the office of president, Dorothy Maki-Green won re-election as vice president and Tommy Bellfield won re-election as treasurer.

**CWA Local 7200:**

Mike Nguyen elected president

Mike Nguyen has been elected president of Communications Workers of America Local 7200, effective January 1. Incumbent president David Barthel, who served one three-year term, chose not to run for re-election.

Nguyen ran unopposed.

Other newly-elected officers from Local 7200’s November 1 elections include: Lisa Markgeard, vice president; Nick Feist, area vice president, AT&T; and Brian Gnerer, area vice president, AT&T Mobility.

Re-elected officers include: Bryan Crane, Secretary/Treasurer; and Linda Smart, Vance Schwartz, Tom Laabs, and Jeff Jensen, area vice presidents, CenturyLink.

Newly-elected president Mike Nguyen, Brooklyn Center, is a 17-year member of Local 7200 and has served the past three years as the local’s vice president.

He also has served as political organizer for Local 7200.

Nguyen works as a broadband technician for CenturyLink.

As Local 7200 president, Nguyen said, the main challenge will be “trying to get our younger members involved — that’s my goal.”

CWA runs a “Next Generation” program nationwide to boost involvement by members ages 35 and younger.

“We are organizing to get more younger members involved — hopefully someday they will be in my seat,” said Nguyen, 42.

CWA Local 7200 represents about 1,100 members.

**Education Minnesota:** Next ‘Race Equity Ed Camp’ planned January 13

Registration is now open for the next “Race Equity EdCamp” hosted by Education Minnesota.

“EdCamps” are organic, participant-driven professional learning experiences for educators across the country and worldwide.

During an EdCamp, organizers set the schedule for the day but all sessions are determined by participants on the day of the event. Everyone is welcome to propose and lead a session where conversation and collaboration are paramount.

The focus of the Saturday, January 13 EdCamp will be “race and equity.” The event will run from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Fridley High School, 6000 W. Moore Lake Drive NE, Fridley.

This event is free and open to the public.

For more information, or to register, visit educationminnesota.org or e-mail Jen Kohan at jkohan@edmn.org.

**NALC Branch 9:** Ice fishing outing coming January 14-15

The annual ice fishing outing for members of Branch 9 National Association of Letter Carriers will be January 14-15 at Twin Pines Resort and Motel on Lake Mille Lacs.

The event runs from noon Sunday to January 15.

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noon Monday.

The cost is $41 per adult and $36 for children under age 14 and includes a chicken and rib buffet dinner January 14.

The registration deadline is January 11.

A registration form is available online at branch3nalc.com...

Sprinkler Fitters Local 417: Training center and office will move from Minneapolis to Shoreview

Sprinkler Fitters Local 417 has sold the building housing its training center and offices in northeast Minneapolis at 1404 Central Avenue NE.

Local 417 will move February 1, 2018 to a newly-purchased building in Shoreview. The new address will be 529 County Road E West, Shoreview, Minnesota 55126.

“We’re moving to a bigger space — twice the size — 28,000 square feet,” reported Trinidad J. Uribe, Local 417 business manager.

“Our training just kind of outgrew the existing space we have now,” Uribe said, adding the additional space will make possible “an even greater emphasis on training than ever before.”

SEIU Local 284: Nominations due January 2 for ‘Member of the Year’ award

SEIU Local 284 seeks nominations for its annual “Member of the Year” award.

The “Member of the Year” award is open to all SEIU Local 284 members. Candidates must be nominated by a member or members or one can nominate oneself.

Candidates must provide an outstanding contribution to the education of students and be involved in their union and community.

The 2018 Member of the Year will be recognized at the SEIU Local 284 Leadership Assembly in February 2018.

Nominations are due by Monday, January 2, 2018.

Nomination forms can be obtained by calling Terri 651-256-9110 at the union office or may be downloaded at www.seiu284.org.

Twin Cities Musicians Union: Longtime secretary-treasurer

Tom Baskerville retires

Tom Baskerville is retiring effective December 31 after serving 15 years as secretary-treasurer for Twin Cities Musicians Union Local 30-73. He previously served six years as business agent.

Baskerville, 66, chose not to run for re-election as secretary-treasurer and will be succeeded by David Graff, who won a contested election to replace him.

For TC MU, the secretary-treasurer’s position is the union’s only full-time officer’s position.

TCMU president Brad Eggen said of Baskerville, “I jokingly say that I set the fires and he douses them.” More seriously, Eggen commented, “he’s very organized in handling the budgeting.”

Baskerville recalled, “I first joined the St. Paul local in the early 1970s… playing rock and roll.” He was a college student at the University of Minnesota playing keyboard with “Marcia and the Conspirators” on weekends, performing at ballrooms across western Wisconsin.

He had stopped performing regularly and was working at Torp’s Music when he received a phone call “out of the blue” in 1996 and was asked to join TC MU’s staff as a business agent.

He ran unopposed for secretary-treasurer in 2002 and was re-elected without opposition since then.

Baskerville served first as a TCMU delegate to what is now the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation and then became a TCMU delegate to the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation.

“I’ve been pretty impressed with people I’ve met in Labor,” Baskerville said. “It’s been an interesting and worthwhile experience.”

Baskerville’s tenure as TCMU secretary-treasurer included the 15-month lock-out of Minnesota Orchestra musicians, which led to cancellation of the orchestra’s entire 2012-2013 season and severely strained the local’s finances.

“Our over the years, the changes in the recording industry and the way music has been distributed has been challenging for musicians,” Baskerville said. “It’s never been an easy profession… These days, you need to be pretty versatile to eke out a living.”

Baskerville’s wife Mary Baskerville, who has been a MAPE member working for the State of Minnesota, also retired this month. “My term was up at the end of the year; it seemed like things were aligning and it was a good time to step away,” Tom Baskerville said.

He concluded his final column for the TCMU newsletter with his standard closing admonition: “Keep Practicing!!”

UNITE HERE Local 17: New leadership calls for January 17 ‘Membership Planning Meeting’

The newly-elected leadership of UNITE HERE Local 17 is inviting all members to a “Membership Planning Meeting” scheduled for Wednesday, January 17 from 4:30-7:30 p.m. at the United Labor Centre, 312 Central Ave., Minneapolis. Refreshments will be served.

The longtime incumbent officers of Local 17 lost their re-election bids in October 25 elections to a slate of challengers led by Christa Mello, a Local 17 business agent who was elected president.

At the January 17 meeting, “we plan to present our outline of a plan for the next year and get member input,” said Sheigh Freeberg Local 17’s newly-elected secretary-treasurer. “It is the first part of our strategy to take away decision-making from the top and return it to the members.”

“From what the members tell us at this meeting, we will create a solid plan [and] strategy for moving forward,” Freeberg said.

A Local 17 Facebook post for the January 17 meeting read:

We want to hear from Local 17 members about the direction of their union. It is a new year, with new leadership so let’s move our union in the right direction!

Think about:

How can the union be doing better?

What do you like that the union does now?

What kind of training/education would you like to see offered?

And any other concerns or ideas you might have!
For Sale: Timeshare I can’t use anymore. Causeway on Gull, Nisswa-Brainerd area on Gull Lake. It is week 42, October 19-26. Maintenance fee is $750 per year. If interested, will put deed in your name, no charge. Call Ron 612-963-1076.

For Sale: I won the top gun prize at DU banquet. Selling for $1,500 or best offer. 763-464-0350.

Wanted: Guitars and amplifiers made in the USA pre-1980. Also spark plugs, tools, gas and oil engine-related items like old spark plugs, tools, gas and oil cans, etc. Tom, 763-785-4568.

Wanted: Old coins, collections, bullion, paper money, gold coins, proof sets, mint sets, etc. Anything from pennies to paper. Best of all, I’ll pay cash and come to you. Please call Dick at 612-986-2566.


For Sale: Misc. painting and wallpapering assorted supplies, including paint sprayer. 763-559-4276.


Wanted: Old and broken outboard motors, old gas engines and chainsaws, also engine-related items like old spark plugs, tools, gas and oil cans, etc. Tom, 763-785-4031.

Wanted: Guitars and amplifiers made in the USA pre-1980. Also interested in drums and some other instruments. Bob, 612-521-4596.

MINNEAPOLIS — Attendance soared at this year’s holiday party hosted by the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation for MRLF delegates and guests.

The December 13 event at the United Labor Centre, which followed a brief monthly delegate meeting, was catered by members of UNITE HERE Local 17 from Mac’s Industrial Sports Bar.

Cornbread Harris, member of Twin Cities Musicians Union Local 30-73, played a rollicking keyboard nonstop for the evening. A hubbub of conversation competed with the music as MRLF delegates spoke with each other and also with the many, many elected officials and candidates seeking local, state, and federal office.

For Corey Webster, president of City Employees Local 363, the high turnout from elected officials and candidates had a simple explanation: “I think they see the importance.”

The evening also was a fundraiser for Working Partnerships, the community services arm of the MRLF.

Photo above: Matt Sowell, Minneapolis, member of Carpenters Local 322 (left), spoke with Minneapolis mayor-elect Jacob Frey (right). “I was thankful that two hours after he won [last month] he was here to talk with union members,” Sowell said. “It really spoke volumes to me as to how important the labor movement is to our mayor-elect.”

Photo above: Playing solo on keyboard, Twin Cities legend James “Cornbread” Harris performed blues and jazz tunes all evening long. Cornbread is a member of Twin Cities Musicians Union Local 30-73 and, at age 90, still performs regularly. For booking information, visit cornbreadenterprises.com.

Photo above: The evening wasn’t just socializing and politics. Mike Fedor, member of IATSE Local 13 (left) buttonholed several elected officials, including Minneapolis Park Board member-elect Kale Severson (right), to share concerns about a new non-union entertainment venue now operating at the former Minneapolis Armory.

Photo above: Paul Strelbicki, Minneapolis, member of Minneapolis Federation of Teachers and Education Support Professionals Local 59 (left), and guest Michelle Wallin (right).

Photo above, left to right: Hennepin County Commissioner Marion Greene with Brenda Johnson and Shaun Laden. Johnson is a member of Minneapolis Federation of Teachers and Education Support Professionals Local 59. Laden is the ESP president.