Trades played key role in coalition winning energy bill

SAINT PAUL — Labor unions and environmental groups joined with Minnesota Governor Tim Walz and legislative leaders February 7 for a bill-signing ceremony at the Saint Paul Labor Center to celebrate historic clean energy legislation. The bill, Senate File 4, puts Minnesota on a path to 100 percent carbon-free electricity by 2040 — while creating new clean energy jobs. See page 5 for full story.

Photo above: Kevin Pranis of the Laborers union (at microphone) addresses the crowd at the bill-signing ceremony. Left to right: Speaker of the House Melissa Hartman; Senator Nick A. Frentz, chief Senate author; Representative Jamie Long, chief House author; Pranis; Governor Tim Walz.

Minneapolis DFL Party plans precinct caucuses March 14

MINNEAPOLIS — The entire Minneapolis City Council will be up for election November 7, 2023.

The election comes only two years after the last City Council election, thanks to redistricting following the 2020 U.S. Census.

Minneapolis voters will get an important opportunity to shape the City Council races next month by participating in the Minneapolis Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party’s precinct caucus process.

Delegates selected through the precinct caucus process will go on to ward conventions.

This year, the DFL precinct caucuses in Wards 3, 12, and 13 will be in-person events planned Tuesday evening, March 14. Registration will begin at 6:30 p.m. and the caucuses will convene at 7:00 p.m.

For all other wards, no in-person caucuses will take place. Instead, people can participate in the caucus process and vote for ward convention delegates by completing and submitting a “non-attendee form” available from the Minneapolis DFL’s website.

The non-attendee forms can be returned by mail or dropped-off at locations in each ward on March 14 between 6:30-8:00 p.m.

The 13 DFL ward conventions, planned between April 1 and May 21, will determine the DFL endorsement for each City Council race.

Some wards will have in-person conventions while some wards will have virtual conventions.

In a city dominated by DFL-endorsed candidates, winning the DFL endorsement for City Council gives candidates a strong boost.

In recent years, actions by the Minneapolis City Council have brought important gains for workers and workers’ rights, including passing a local minimum wage ordinance, implementing a local sick and safe time policy, and creating a wage theft enforcement office that has recovered $1 million in stolen wages for Minneapolis workers.

All but two of the current City Council incumbents are running for re-election.

Incumbent Lisa Goodman is not seeking re-election for the Ward 7 city council seat.

Incumbent Andrew Johnson

MINNEAPOLIS DFL page 11
An injury to one is an injury to all

Editor’s Note: The Biden administration recently announced new protections for immigrant workers who are organizing or taking action to enforce labor laws. These new protections came about in response to union advocacy and the courage of immigrant workers. To help unions and organizers take full advantage of these new immigrant worker protections, the national AFL-CIO last month released the “Injury2All Campaign Toolkit: Building Power with Immigrant Workers.” The toolkit’s introductory message from AFL-CIO president Liz Shuler is reprinted below.

By Liz Shuler, President, AFL-CIO

The AFL-CIO is committed to building a bold, dynamic and inclusive labor movement that brings good jobs and a secure future to all workers, no matter where we were born. Real immigration reform is an essential part of the larger structural change we need to dismantle systemic racism and create an economy that protects working people and promotes democracy in our workplaces and communities.

Our unions will never accept policies that relegate millions of workers to an exploitable subclass with severely limited rights. That is why we remain steadfast in the fight to win a path to citizenship for every undocumented worker in our country, and why we have demanded concrete protections for immigrants who take collective action to make our workplaces safe and fair.

The sad reality is that employers routinely hire undocumented workers with a wink and a nod and then fire them when they seek to organize a union or complain about unpaid wages or unsafe working conditions. And when undocumented workers or guestworkers muster the courage to stand in a picket line, file a claim or negotiate for fair compensation, employers still are able to retaliate in ways that can set deportation proceedings in motion. This is just not right, and as we say in our movement, an injury to one is an injury to all.

When immigrant workers are scared into silence, violations go unchecked — and that makes us all less safe at work. In 2014, we launched the Injury2All campaign to ensure that immigration enforcement could no longer be used as a tool to crush worker organizing. The campaign helped secure the first successful case of deferred action for a union member in 2016, but was forced to go dormant during the dark years of the Trump administration. We have now renewed our demands and made clear since day one that we need President Biden to deliver on these essential protections.

Across the country, we are seeing a great resurgence in worker organizing. To keep this momentum going, we must continue to rise up and demand changes that will lift standards and rights for all workers, with no exclusions. All working people — regardless of immigration status — must have the right to organize for living wages, safe working conditions and dignity on the job. That is what the Injury2All campaign is all about.

I want to thank you for everything you do to help grow and strengthen our labor movement. When we fight, we win — so let’s roll up our sleeves and get to work!

MRLF names Alfreda Daniels Juasemai as the federation’s new executive campaigns manager

MINNEAPOLIS — Effective February 1, Alfreda Daniels Juasemai has been named to a new position as executive campaigns manager at the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation, AFL-CIO.

Alfreda Daniels Juasemai first joined the MRLF staff in June 2015 as a community organizer, working with union members in the northwest suburbs.

In choosing Juasemai as executive campaigns manager, MRLF president Chelsie Glaubitz Gabiou commented, “this is a new role that will coordinate and help lead our strategic initiatives, including the board’s recommendations. Alfreda will lead efforts to make sure our work is aligned together here internally and across our movement.”

“I look forward to working with all my colleagues, affiliates, board members and partner organizations as we continue to advocate for all working people,” Juasemai said.

Labor Review wins three labor media awards

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■ Second place for “Best Photo Essay or Photo Gallery,” for a photo spread from the May 29, 2021 issue featuring the annual Workers Memorial Day event organized by the Minneapolis and St. Paul Building and Construction Trades Councils (photos and layout by Steve Share).

■ Second place for “Best Photo” for a page 1 photo from the September 25, 2021 issue depicting a march by striking SEIU Local 26 window cleaners (photo by Brad Sigal).


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

ILCA AWARDS page 11

Welcome, new Minneapolis Labor Review readers!

As a member of a union affiliated with the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, you now are receiving a subscription to the monthly Minneapolis Labor Review. Several affiliates recently have updated their mailing lists. For subscriber service, see page 11.

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ILCA AWARDS page 11
March 1-4: Photo exhibit at State Capitol will highlight women in union construction trades

SAINT PAUL — Women in the construction trades will be showcased in a photo exhibit which will be on display March 1-4 at the Minnesota State Capitol.

The “Women Building Success” photo exhibit is a project of the organization of the same name, Women Building Success, which says, “the exhibit will recognize, celebrate, and promote the success of women in the union construction trades.”

The exhibit hours will be Wednesday through Friday, March 1-3, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Saturday, March 4, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The exhibit will be located in the State Capitol’s North Corridor, which is on the same level as the Capitol Rotunda, to the north of the Rotunda.

Photos featured in the exhibit have been submitted over the years to Women Building Success as part of the organization’s annual photo contest.

Winners of this year’s Women Building Success photo contest will be announced at an event planned March 8 (see below).

The photo exhibit at the State Capitol will be a lead-in to Women In Construction Week, coming March 5-11.

Visit womenbuildingsuccess.org for more information.

March 8: Event will pick winners of annual photo contest sponsored by Women Building Success

BROOKLYN PARK — The winners of the annual Women Building Success photo contest will be voted on at an event planned Wednesday, March 8, from 4:30-6:30 p.m.

This year’s event will take place at the IBEW Local 292 union hall, 6700 W. Broadway Ave. in Brooklyn Park.

Union tradeswomen and tradesmen are invited to attend.

Admission is free, but an RSVP is requested so event-planners can get a head-count for food and beverage. To RSVP, e-mail events@womenbuildingsuccess.org.

With voting by the audience, winners will be picked in three categories:
- photo of the individual working
- photo of jobsite or building
- photo of tools or craftsmanship

The deadline to submit photos for the contest was February 17.

March 8: Labor historian will discuss activist Pearl McGill’s work for inclusive unionism

SAINT PAUL — Iowa button factory worker and labor activist Pearl McGill (1894-1924) became an orator and leader in the many labor struggles of her time, championing the “big fight for justice.”

McGill’s life and her work advocating for inclusive unionism will be the topic of a Wednesday, March 8 program on Zoom hosted by the East Side Freedom Library. The program is free and will run from 7:00-8:30 p.m.

The program will feature labor historian Janet Weaver, curator of the Iowa Women’s Archives, where the papers of Pearl McGill are preserved.

Visit eastsidefreedomlibrary.org for more information or to register.

March 15: Laborers Training Center will host career fair with 25 union contractors

LINO LAKES — The Laborers Training Center will host a career fair Wednesday, March 15 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The address is 2350 Main Street in Lino Lakes.

The event welcomes workers who would be new to the construction industry as well as experienced laborers.

The event will include tours of the training center, networking with contractors, information on LIUNA apprenticeship for new workers, information on LIUNA training for all attendees, lunch and refreshments.

More than 25 contractors will be present, offering information about work in every market segment, including energy, utilities, infrastructure, roads and bridges, environmental, industrial, commercial buildings, transportation and more.

Visit ltcmn.org for more information or call 651-653-6710.

Saint Paul — For unions and union members
Still owned and controlled by the same unions
March 23: William Green shares new history recounting 1970 Minneapolis teachers strike

SAINT PAUL — The East Side Freedom Library will host a Zoom discussion with William Green, author of “Strike! Twenty Days in 1970 When Minneapolis Teachers Broke the Law” (University of Minnesota Press, 2022, 224 pages).

The free event will be Thursday, March 23, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

The historic 1970 strike helped lead to Minnesota’s Public Employees Labor Relations Act, protecting collective bargaining rights.

Green is professor of history at Augsburg University and, from 2006-2010, served as superintendent of the Minneapolis Public Schools.

Visit eastsidefreedomlibrary.org for more information or to register.

April 13: Fundraising dinner to benefit Union Sportsmen’s Alliance’s conservation projects

SAINT PAUL — The Minnesota State Building and Construction Trades Council will host a fundraising dinner to benefit the local conservation projects of the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance. The event will be Thursday, April 13 from 5:30-9:30 p.m. at IBEW Local 110, 1330 Conway St., Suite 110, in St. Paul.

Individual tickets are $75 per person and include a one-year membership in the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance.

Table sponsorships and other underwriting opportunities are available.

Individuals should RSVP by April 10 to Jennifer Hathaway, 651-287-9999, or jhathaway@mntrades.org.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Here is the schedule for March for Fare For All’s sites in the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation’s seven-county region, listed alphabetically by city:

- Anoka, Thursday, March 23, 4:00–6:00 p.m., Zion Lutheran Church, 1601 S. 4th Ave.
- Blaine, Thursday, March 16, 3:00–5:00 p.m., Christ Lutheran Church, 641 89th Ave. NE.
- Bloomington, Friday, March 17, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Creekside Community Center, 9801 Penn Ave. So.
- Buffalo, Tuesday, March 7, 4:00–6:00 p.m., Zion Lutheran Church, 1200 Highway 25 South.
- Chaska, Thursday, March 23, 4:00–6:00 p.m., Crown of Glory Lutheran Church, 1141 Cardinal St.
- Fridley, Friday, March 24, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon, Fridley Community Center, 6085 7th Street NE.
- Golden Valley, Friday, March 24, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Animal Humane Society, 845 Meadow Lane N.
- Hutchinson, Thursday, March 9, 3:30–5:30 p.m., Oak Heights Church, 1398 South Grade Road SW.
- Minneapolis, Friday, March 10, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Laborers Local 563 union hall, 901 14th Ave. NE. (one-half block west of Central Ave. on 14th Ave. NE).
- New Hope, Wednesday, March 15, 3:00–5:00 p.m., St. Joseph Parish Center, 8701 36th Ave. N.
- Richfield, Tuesday, March 21, 1:00–3:00 p.m., Richfield Community Center, 7000 Nicollet Ave. So.
- St. Louis Park, Wednesday, March 15, 4:00–6:00 p.m., Vista Lutheran Church, 4003 Wooddale Ave. So.

The Fare For All sale at the Laborers Hall in northeast Minneapolis is hosted by Working Partnerships, the community services arm of the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation, AFL-CIO.

Individuals should RSVP by April 10 to Jennifer Hathaway, 651-287-9999, or jhathaway@mntrades.org.

Note: For 2023, Fare for All no longer will be available in Minneapolis at Open Arms of Minnesota, 2500 Bloomington Ave. So.

See www.fareforall.org for more information and dates for all 30-plus locations and for COVID safety protocols.
SAINT PAUL — Labor unions and environmental groups joined with Minnesota Governor Tim Walz and legislative leaders February 7 for a bill-signing ceremony at the Saint Paul Labor Center to celebrate historic clean energy legislation.

The bill, Senate File 4, puts Minnesota on a path to 100 percent carbon-free electricity by 2040 — while creating new clean energy jobs.

“Our children are counting on us to get this right,” said Governor Walz, addressing the packed meeting room at the Labor Center. “We can’t move too fast when it comes to addressing climate change.”

“It’s our skilled trades who are going to be building this future,” Walz emphasized.

Speaker of the House Melissa Hortman, in her remarks, noted that “a very strong coalition” worked to pass the bill, including labor, environmentalists, and young people.

“We have a climate crisis and we need to take action to address it,” she said.

“Today’s action is the strongest action Minnesota has taken on climate change. Full stop,” declared Representative Jamie Long (DFL-Minneapolis), who was the chief author of the bill in the Minnesota House.

“I want to thank in particular our labor partners,” Long stressed. No other state’s energy legislation has as strong labor standards as the Minnesota bill “to ensure jobs [created] will be good jobs,” Long said. “The bill we’re going to sign today can stand up to any clean energy bill in the country… “Minnesota’s energy leadership is back and here to stay.”

The bill’s chief Senate author, Senator Nick A. Frentz (DFL-Mankato), highlighted the work of labor and the state’s utilities as partners in developing the bill.

LIUNA Minnesota and North Dakota, representing five local Laborers unions, was an important backer of the bill.

“Our members recognize the world is changing and the time to act is now,” said Kevin Pranis, LIUNA Minnesota marketing director. “Our members are ready to put our skills and our world-class apprentice programs to work.”

In crafting the legislation, Pranis reported, “there was listening to workers… it was also listening to the workers who make the system run.”

“This is a lights-on bill,” Pranis maintained. “It’s going to accelerate plans to go build.”

The legislation will give the state’s Public Utilities Commission authority to fast-track wind energy and solar energy construction projects, Pranis said.

The bill also authorizes the PUC to require that workers who will construct those wind and solar projects will earn the state’s prevailing wage, and further directs the PUC to consider local job impacts when evaluating proposals.

Also under the bill, Pranis added, the state’s two nuclear power plants will apply to have their licenses extended, which will create construction work to get the plants ready for federal approval.

With labor standards included in the legislation, “we made sure jobs in clean energy will be just as good as conventional energy,” Pranis said. “We believe...
WASHINGTON (PAI) — Led by the AFL-CIO, union leaders praised President Joe Biden’s February 7 State of the Union address, with some citing specific proposals important to their members and all lauding his pointed demand that Congress pass the Protect The Right To Organize (PRO) Act, labor’s #1 legislative priority.

That demand, however, got a cool reception from the right-wing Republicans who now control the U.S. House. They sat on their hands as Democrats cheered, though at least the Republicans didn’t boo, as they did in other testy exchanges with the president.

AFL-CIO president Liz Shuler led the way in the praise of Biden’s speech. The PRO Act, which would be the most pro-worker rewrite of the nation’s labor law since the original 1935 National Labor Relations Act, was high on her agenda.

“President Biden delivered a bold blueprint for an economy that, at long last, puts working people first,” Shuler’s prepared statement said. “Instead of catering to the wealthy and well-connected, the President declared workers are America’s backbone and good union jobs are the keystone of an economy that works for all.”

“The President made clear his focus is reshaping the economy so working people have a fair shot of getting ahead through a good union job. He understands workers’ ability to organize is inextricably tied to a future in which we rise together,” Shuler said.

“That’s why he called for the passage of the Protecting the Right to Organize Act, so all workers have the freedom to stand together in a union to negotiate for good pay, affordable health care and safe working conditions,” Shuler said.

Shuler cited the “transformational opportunities” Biden’s first two years of legislation present to workers and the economy in infrastructure, clean energy manufacturing and technology — such as union-built plants whose workers will make microchips.

“To this President, ‘Made in America’ isn’t a slogan. It’s a clarion call for us to rebuild American manufacturing and bring supply chains home,” she said. That line, in Biden’s speech, drew a big — if not necessarily a bipartisan — cheer.

“And we applaud his call to ensure billionaires will no longer get a free pass to exploit loopholes that allow them to get out of paying their fair share, siphoning funds from schools, public safety and other vital social services,” Shuler said.

Individual unions agreed with the overall praise, with some singing out specific issues to extol and others warning of Republican threats to disassemble everything, including Social Security and Medicare.

“The Biden administration is delivering for working men and women through historic investments that are creating good, family-supporting jobs, measures reducing inflation reduction, and record-setting job growth, and wage growth,” Laborers president Terry O’Sullivan said.

“The strong, proud, and united men, and women of the Laborers... could not be more grateful to the President for his commitment to labor rights, good jobs, and protecting our hard-won wages and benefits,” O’Sullivan said.

American Federation of Teachers president Randi Weingarten led her acclaim by praising Biden for promising to aid “those left behind” as factory jobs fled overseas and the gap between the rich and the rest of us became a chasm.

Biden made “those left behind or who feel invisible” — his words — “his North Star,” the New York City civics teacher said. Biden wants to better people’s lives “in an economy that works for all, in communities that are safe for everyone and in a world where sustainable democracies can thrive over autocracies and war. Most of all, Biden challenged us to hope and dream, and to stay united.”

Like others, Weingarten enumerated the President’s long list of achievements, including education aid during the coronavirus pandemic. But it’s “still unfinished,” she said, which was one theme of Biden’s speech.

The laws Biden and Congress crafted, with labor’s help and backing, “made a clear difference in the lives of families, regardless of where they live and who they voted for. And whether he is middle-class Joe or working-class Joe, the President stayed true to the basic value that all Americans — not just the wealthy and powerful — should feel benefit from our country’s success,” Weingarten said.

SEIU president Mary Kay Henry also lauded Biden’s achievements, while touching on a topic polls reveal: The people aren’t paying attention, or giving him credit.

“Working people should feel tremendous pride in the progress we’ve made together under the leadership of President Biden,” Henry said. The key word there is “should.” The latest polls show 62 percent of the public doesn’t and Biden’s positive rating is stuck in the low 40s.

“In the space of just two years, we’ve gone from the depths of the pandemic in which essential workers were forced to fend for themselves in unsafe workplaces to making vaccines widely available and creating 12 million new jobs, many of them good union jobs,” Henry continued. “We’ve passed major legislation to address climate change, lower prescription drug costs and protect pregnant and postpartum workers, and even confirmed the first Black woman to the U.S. Supreme Court,” Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, author of prior pro-worker rulings.

“We’re not going to stand by as congressional Republicans put all this progress at risk by refusing to raise the debt ceiling, threatening Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security,” Henry warned.

“When President Biden first took office, he pledged to be the ‘most pro-union president in history.’ He is living up to his promise,” said AFSCME president Lee Saunders.

After noting the nation’s lowest jobless rate since 1969 under the Biden Administration, Saunders also celebrated “the most labor-friendly environment at the federal level in decades. As workers join together to form unions in record numbers, the NLRB is holding employers accountable and defending workers’ rights,” Saunders said.

“Biden clearly understands a strong economy depends on a strong labor movement. But the job isn’t done. We still need to overhaul labor law in this country so workers who want to form a union can finally do so. That means passing the PRO Act and the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act.”

“To keep our economy moving in the right direction. Congress must pursue a clean vote to raise the debt ceiling and continue to ensure that the wealthy pay their fair share in taxes. Finally, the federal government must continue to make critical investments in the public services our communities depend on like child care and health care,” Saunders concluded.
SAINT PAUL — Home care workers and clients with SEIU Healthcare Minnesota and Iowa reached a tentative agreement with the State of Minnesota January 6.

The agreement, which covers more than 20,000 care workers across the state, came after months of bargaining for home care workers’ fifth union contract, and at the end of a 20-hour final day of negotiations.

The agreement includes a historic wage increase, raising wages for new workers from $15.25 to $20 for all home care workers by 2025. The agreement also takes important steps towards professionalizing home care in Minnesota, establishing a wage scale to provide higher pay based on experience in the field for the first time and ensuring that all new caregivers entering the workforce receive a high-quality orientation.

Tavona Johnson, a home care worker on the bargaining team from Austin, shared her feelings about the tentative agreement as someone who has done this critical work for many different clients over 20 years:

“Winning a wage scale makes me feel recognized, seen, heard, and shown some respect and appreciation for my chosen profession as a home care worker by compensating me for my dedication in a way that is meaningful and can actually cause positive change in my life. I feel that together with the big wage floor increase, this new wage scale means that home care workers will be able to protect our own dignity and integrity by having the option to work our way out of poverty and maybe not having to work multiple jobs any more to make ends meet. Governor Walz deserves a huge amount of credit for this change. Ever since he spent a day doing home care work a couple years ago, he has shown how much he cares about and values the services home care workers provide. These changes mean we will have more quality time to spend with loved ones and more ability to support our families financially in a dignified way.”

Highlights of the tentative agreement include:

- A $3.75 (25 percent) wage increase to $19 per hour for all workers in 2024;
- An additional increase to $20 per hour (a 31 percent increase over the current wage floor) in 2025;
- The establishment for the first time of a wage scale rewarding home care workers for their years of experience, bringing long-time caregivers up to as much as $22.50 per hour (a 48 percent increase over the current wage floor) in 2025;
- A one-time $1,000 retention bonus for any worker who has provided home care for six months or longer, beginning in July 2023;
- A long overdue professionalization of the home care workforce through the establishment of an orientation program for new caregivers;

Lauren Thompson, a home care client who was on the bargaining team, shared the importance of this contract for people who rely on home care services to live their lives: “As someone who receives home care services, I am relieved and hopeful with this deal. I have been part of previous bargaining teams and the wage increases are at a level we have never seen before. That speaks to the great progress in understanding the value of this work and what it means to disabled people and our communities that we’ve been able to make over the last few years.

You can see that more than ever in the progress we’ve made in this contract and the investments the state is choosing to make in this critical work that supports families in every Minnesota town and community.”

If the tentative agreement is ratified by Union members, it will then go to the legislature for their approval and funding. The final step would be having an appropriations bill signed by Governor Walz and go into effect July 1, 2023. Legislators now have the opportunity to review the terms of the proposed agreement and vote on whether to ratify it.

The bargaining team — made up of home care workers, clients and family caregivers elected by their peers — negotiated with the state over three months to reach this agreement. Even before COVID, thousands of families across Minnesota were struggling with a care crisis causing seniors and people with disabilities to be unable to find workers to provide the care they need to stay safely in their homes.

Governor Walz has included the home care contract agreement in his 2023-2024 budget proposal.

The Minnesota AFL-CIO released the following legislative priorities for the 2023 session of the Minnesota legislature January 20. For more information, visit mnaflcio.org.

Following nearly a decade of divided government, Labor-endorsed Governor Tim Walz and pro-Labor majorities in both the House and Senate are now leading state government, presenting a historic opportunity for working Minnesotans. The Minnesota AFL-CIO is ready to lead with bold legislative priorities to create a more just and equitable state for working people, no matter what we look like, where we work, or where we live.

Paid Family & Medical Leave

We believe that all workers should have the freedom to care for themselves and the people they love without having to sacrifice a paycheck. Too often workers, especially people of color and workers in Greater Minnesota, are forced to immediately go back to work following the birth or adoption of a child, go into debt during a long-term illness, or not be there when a sick loved one needs care. The time for a state-administered universal Paid Family & Medical Leave Program has come. With a broad statewide pool covering all workers, and a modest shared premium, we can level the playing field for both workers and small businesses, while addressing our state’s racial and geographic economic disparities.

Increase & Expand Workers’ Compensation

In 2013, the Minnesota AFL-CIO successfully led the effort to include Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the state’s Workers’ Compensation program. While first responders now qualify for PTSD-related claims, healthcare workers like nurses do not. Given the challenges that healthcare workers face, both during and after the pandemic, it’s time for nurses to qualify for PTSD-related workers’ compensation. It’s also time to update our workers’ compensation system. Far too many workers experience out of pocket costs and delays for important procedures due to antiquated rules.

Strengthen Worker Protections & Freedoms

In less than three years, Minnesota and the rest of the nation experienced a global pandemic, racial reckoning, and threats to democracy. In that wake, workers are standing up and fighting for rights and a voice in the workplace in ways not seen in more than a generation. These workers are fighting back against economic injustice and energizing the labor movement with unparalleled enthusiasm and commitment. All workers should have the right to organize and collectively bargain for better wages, benefits, and working conditions, but all too often, employers find ways within and around our labor laws to block workers from exercising those rights. We will work to remove barriers to organizing and to strengthen workers’ rights to collectively bargain.

Supporting our Affiliates and Community Allies

We support our affiliated unions and community allies in moving their legislative priorities:

- Abortion & Reproductive Rights
- Apprenticeship Readiness
- Drivers’ Licenses for All
- Earned Sick & Safe Time
- Education Funding
- Expand Prevailing Wage Coverage & Enforcement
- Federal IIJA State Funding Share
- Film Production Tax Credit
- Equal Rights Amendment
- Housing Investments
- Infrastructure Investment
- Keep the Nurses at the Bedside
- Labor Standards Boards
- Meatpacking Health and Safety
- MinnesotaCare Buy-In
- Pensions
- Progressive Taxation
- Public Employee Relations Board
- Funding
- Railroad Workplace Safety
- Refinery Safety
- Restore the Vote
- Safe Communities
- Safe Staffing in Healthcare
- Transportation Funding
- Unemployment Insurance for Hourly
- School Workers
- Warehouse Worker Safety

SEIU home care workers win historic wage increases in tentative MN agreement
Dan McConnell named as president of MN State Building Trades

By Steve Share, Labor Review editor

SAINT PAUL — The Minnesota State Building and Construction Trades Council’s executive board has elected IBEW Local 292 member Dan McConnell as president. Since 2011, McConnell has served as business manager of the Minneapolis Building and Construction Trades Council. He now will serve in both positions.

McConnell succeeded Joe Fowler as president of the Minnesota Building Trades, effective February 14, following Fowler’s resignation.

Fowler, who remains business manager of Laborers Local 563, had been elected to a four-year term to lead the Minnesota Building Trades as president in July 2021. McConnell will serve out the remainder of Fowler’s term.

McConnell told the Labor Review that he went into a January 25 meeting not knowing that he would leave as president-elect of the Minnesota Building Trades. “I’m really grateful for the support from the business managers,” he said.

Moving forward in his new leadership role at the Minnesota Building Trades Council, “I’m excited about the opportunity to think about things differently and to operate more efficiently and be more effective,” McConnell said.

McConnell said he wants to see the Minnesota Building Trades “not just do things because we’ve done them that way — but do things because they make sense.”

The Minnesota State Building and Construction Trades Council represents 15 affiliated unions and their 70,000 members.

The Council advocates at the local, state and federal level to support infrastructure investments and policies favorable to the interests of building trades workers, including measures to protect worker health and safety, to safeguard collective bargaining rights and prevailing wage laws, and to advance apprenticeship programs.

McConnell, 52, grew up in Minneapolis and is a third-generation graduate of the city’s Roosevelt High School. He later graduated from the electrical construction program at Dunwoody.

McConnell joined IBEW Local 292 in 1998 and completed its four-year apprentice program.

He worked in the field for four years as an apprentice and three years as a journeyman before becoming IBEW Local 292’s political director in 2005.

In 2011, McConnell became the full-time business manager of the Minneapolis Building and Construction trades Council.

McConnell also currently serves as the financial secretary-treasurer of the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation, AFL-CIO.

He has an extensive record of involvement with community groups and local economic development boards.

McConnell also is a past chair of the Minneapolis DFL Party.

Growing up in his family, McConnell related, “I grew up in the trades,” surrounded by building trades workers.

His father, John McConnell, was a member of Carpenters Local 851 and a 37-year building inspector for the City of Minneapolis.

His father’s friends were union trades workers.

“I grew up helping my dad do different construction projects, building my mom’s house, remodeling grandma’s kitchen, building a cabin... We were always doing some project,” McConnell said.

McConnell lives in Minneapolis with his wife Becky Boland and teen-aged daughter.

McConnell’s new position as president of the Minnesota State Building Trades Council will be part-time.

Tom Dicklich is the full-time executive director of the State Building Trades Council.

This story includes reporting from the August 26, 2011 issue of the Labor Review.

Nicole Blissenbach wins confirmation as Minnesota’s new labor commissioner

SAINT PAUL — The Minnesota Senate voted February 13 to confirm Governor Tim Walz’s appointment of Nicole Blissenbach as commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry.

“I am thrilled that Nicole Blissenbach will continue to head the Department of Labor and Industry,” said Governor Walz. “Whether it’s successfully managing the Frontline Worker Pay program or improving workplace safety for Minnesotans around the state, I know she has the experience necessary to advocate for Minnesota’s workers.”

“I am grateful for the Minnesota Senate’s confirmation and excited for the opportunity to continue to serve and lead the department through the second term of the Walz-Flanagan administration,” said Commissioner Blissenbach. “I will work diligently to ensure workers remain safe and healthy while earning a living, increase stakeholder education and outreach so more workers and employers understand their rights and responsibilities, advance our strategic compliance initiatives, and be creative and responsive to meet the needs of our customers and stakeholders.”

Blissenbach joined the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) in June 2019 and has served as DLI’s temporary commissioner since August 2022. She previously served as DLI’s deputy commissioner and assistant commissioner for enforcement and compliance strategies and partnerships.

Before starting at DLI, she worked for nearly 10 years in the legal department at Education Minnesota, the statewide teachers union. Prior to working for Education Minnesota, Blissenbach worked in a private law firm, where she practiced labor and employment law. She earned her law degree at the University of Minnesota.

Marty Walsh will resign as US Secretary of Labor to lead NHL Player’s Association

WASHINGTON — U.S. Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh will resign his cabinet position in the Biden administration in March, the Labor Department announced February 16.

The very same day as the Labor Department announcement, the National Hockey League Player’s Association announced that Walsh will become the union’s executive director.

Walsh, 55, is the former head of Boston’s Building and Construction Trades Council and former president of Laborers Local 223 in Boston, which he joined at age 21.

Walsh served as mayor of Boston from 2014-2021, resigning to accept President Joe Biden’s nomination as Secretary of Labor.

Walsh called Biden “the most pro-worker and pro-union president” in U.S. history.

“As someone who grew up in an active union family and is a card-carrying union member, serving as Secretary of Labor and being given this unique opportunity to help working people is itself a privilege,” Walsh commented in a letter released by the Labor Department.

“I am honored to have been selected as the executive director of the NHLPA. In accepting this offer I am committing to do all that I can to advocate on players’ behalf,” Walsh said. “My years of experience in the labor movement and in public life has taught me that the job is never about me. It’s about us. It’s about the people we serve. So I look forward to working with players and the NHLPA staff to make the NHLPA the best and most effective team we can be to advance and protect the interests of our players and their families.”

Although the labor movement largely celebrated Walsh’s work as Secretary of Labor, his attempts to negotiate a deal to avert a nationwide rail strike last year met rank-and-file opposition from railroad workers.
Women workers leading push for statewide paid family leave

By Michael Moore, editor, Saint Paul Union Advocate

SAINT PAUL — Research shows women suffer most from the widespread lack of paid family leave benefits, so it’s no surprise that women workers — and lawmakers — are leading the push to pass a family leave law at the Minnesota State Capitol this year.

The measure, which is among organized labor’s top priorities this legislative session, would create a statewide insurance pool to cover the cost of replacement wages for workers who take time off for the birth or adoption of a child, or to care for an ailing family member.

Only 13 percent of Minnesota workers currently have access to paid family leave through their employers.

“All workers experience illness or a family member’s illness at some point in their lives,” Representative Ruth Richardson (DFL-Mendota Heights), the lead House author, said during a committee hearing earlier this month. “Access to paid leave should not be dictated by your gender, the color of your skin, your zip code or whether you work for a large or small employer, nor should it be denied [based on] your job title.”

Richardson and the Senate’s lead author, Alice Mann (DFL-Edina), modeled their proposal on the state’s unemployment insurance system, with workers and employers paying into a similar fund for family leave “insurance.”

Their bill would tap into the state’s projected $17.6 billion budget surplus to expedite workers’ access to benefits.

Minnesota would be eligible for up to 12 weeks of leave, with benefits averaging two-thirds of their typical wages.

Multiple House and Senate committees already have approved the legislation, with more still to come before floor votes.

At each stop along the way, women workers have provided compelling, personal testimony about the legislation’s potential to improve working families’ lives.

Margaret Citta, a high school counselor and member of the West Saint Paul Federation of Teachers, appeared before the House State and Local Government Committee 37 weeks pregnant, telling lawmakers she is “living the experience of being a Minnesotan without paid family and medical leave protections.”

School districts in Minnesota do not offer paid family leave, and their lobbyists are working hard to keep it that way.

They warn that paying into the fund will strain school budgets, but Citta and other educators counter that paid family leave has been proven to increase staff retention — a major issue facing public schools.

“At its core, the argument that the greater good is for a teacher to be in the classroom suffering instead of taking the time they need to heal and care for their family members is inhumane,” Citta added.

Minneapolis Regional Retiree Council: Lobby Day planned March 16

All retired union members are encouraged to join the Minneapolis Regional Retiree Council for a Lobby Day at the State Capitol Thursday, March 16.

We will provide transportation from the United Labor Centre in Minneapolis to the Education Minnesota office building near the Capitol. There we will have lunch and update folks about what is happening at the Capitol. We also will have legislative leaders come and speak with the group. In the afternoon, we will help folks attend legislative visits with their Representative and Senator (schedule permitting).

If you are interested in attending or want to learn more, please contact Graeme Allen, community and political organizer for the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation, at 612-481-2144 or e-mail graeme@minneapolislunions.org.

ATU Local 1005 Retirees: Meet first Wednesday of the month

The Southside Retirees of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1005 are now meeting for breakfast the first Wednesday of the month at 8:00 a.m. at the Richfield VFW, 6715 Lake Shore Drive South, Richfield.

Retiree Meetings

State Retiree Council announces May 6 ‘Fun(d)raiser’

MAPLEWOOD — The annual all-ages “Fun(d)raiser” to benefit the political work of the Minnesota State Retiree Council will be Saturday, May 6, 2023 from 3:00-7:00 p.m. at the Sheet Metal Workers Local 10 union hall, 1681 Cape Avenue in Maplewood. The event will feature free food, music, hourly raffles for valuable prizes, a silent auction and other new ways to win prizes. Raffle tickets (three for $5) for a major cash prize now are available. For more information, contact 651-227-7647 ext. 121.

IBEW Local 292 Retirees: ‘Senior Sparkies’ will meet March 14

The IBEW Local 292 Retirees — “Senior Sparkies” — will meet Tuesday, March 14 at IBEW Local 292’s union hall, 6700 West Broadway Ave. in Brooklyn Park. A buffet lunch will be served at 12 noon. The meeting will begin at 12:30 p.m. We will have a guest speaker.

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

Minneapolis Retired Teachers, Chapter 59: Meet March 28 via Zoom

The Minneapolis Retired Teachers, Chapter 59 will meet via Zoom Tuesday, March 28 from 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon.

Future meeting dates for 2023: April 25, May 23.

For more information, contact: RTC59info@gmail.com

Pipefitters Local 539 Retirees: ‘Fazed Out Fitters’ meet third Wednesday

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

Plumbers Local 15 Retirees: Meet the third Tuesday of each month

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

Sheet Metal Workers Local 10 Retirees: ‘Rusty Tinners’ meet March 14

The Sheet Metal Workers Local 10 “Rusty Tinners” retirees club will meet Tuesday, March 14 at the Maplewood union hall, 1681 E. Cope Ave. A pizza lunch will be provided at 12:00 noon. You are welcome to bring salads and desserts to share. The meeting will begin at 1:00 p.m. If available, one of our business agents or someone from our benefits office will give an update on union activities and answer any questions.

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

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

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

If your union retiree group wishes to share your regular meeting information or special announcements, contact the editor at laboreview@minneapolislunions.org or 612-715-2667.
Pipefitters Local 539

PIPERS

Dues reminder

Please remember to pay your January-June 2023 Dues. You are able to pay online for your dues on the Pipefitters website. You do not need to log in to do so.

Condolences

Condolences to the families of Thomas Surma and Ruben Besonen.

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

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

Taking It to the Streets

Despite our Minnesota winter, workers have been taking to the streets to speak out for their cause for a voice on the job and for fair wages and benefits!

Here are just a couple of images from the streets of downtown Minneapolis the past several weeks.

Photo, right: About 20 workers at the Trader Joe’s grocery on Washington Ave. walked off the job December 31 for an Unfair Labor Practice strike. They were joined by about 80 community supporters to call on the employer to negotiate fairly. The workers intended to walk off the job at 3:00 p.m. for only 30 minutes. Management, however, chose to shut down the store two hours early for the rest of the day.

Photo, left: Railroad workers staged an informational picket February 3 — a subzero day with bitterly cold wind chill temperatures — outside the offices of Canadian Pacific. The BMWED-IBT union reported that Canadian Pacific walked out of bargaining December 14. “That’s why we’re here; they’re bad actors,” said George Loveland, general chairman of BMWED’s Burlington Division, which includes Canadian Pacific workers. Loveland said Canadian Pacific has been so profitable that the company has bought the KCS railroad, while at the same time refusing to bargain a fair contract with Canadian Pacific workers.

Family leave

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Schlicsup said she also sees the emotional and psychological strain families face when workers are forced to choose between their jobs and caring for their loved ones.

“Their loved one’s hospitalization requires them to take unpaid time off, so they are stressed about catching up on bills, the impact on their employment and their financial stability,” she said. “It’s vital to ensure that people in our workforce can maintain their own health and wellness while also being able to balance the needs of their loved ones without worrying about losing their employment or having time off.”

When they can no longer maintain that balance, many Minnesota workers without paid family leave benefits – especially women, who lag men in workforce participation by 8% in the state – choose to leave their jobs, according to a report released last month by the National Partnership for Women and Families.

Anne Thayer, a reference associate at the Minnesota Historical Society and member of AFSCME Council 5, told lawmakers she is among those workers being pulled in opposite directions by their jobs and their responsibilities as caregivers.

Thayer has been her 95-year-old mother’s primary caregiver for the last four years, an arrangement that worked well when Thayer could work from home during the pandemic. But recently, her employer required workers to return to the office.

“My ability to continue caring for her has hit the wall,” Thayer said. “I manage for now, but it’s possible there will come a time when the best thing for my mother will be that I take a long break from working and be by her side.

“Without a program like paid family leave, there simply isn’t a way for me to accomplish that and remain employed.”

Clean energy

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we’ll be the first state to actually get there.”

Xcel Energy regional president Chris Clark commented, “we’re already going to be building the state’s largest solar plant right next to our closing coal plant.”

And, he added, “we’re going to find jobs for all our employees.”

Michael Noble, executive director of Fresh Energy, a group advocating for clean energy, offered tribute to organized labor for labor’s effort “to find common ground to make this bill happen.”
Minneapolis DFL: Precinct caucuses March 14

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is not seeking re-election for the Ward 12 City Council seat.

Minneapolis residents can learn their ward and precinct by visiting the Minne-
sota Secretary of State’s website: pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us

Visit minneapolisdfl.org to learn more about the Minneapolis DFL precinct cau-
cus process. There you can find caucus locations, download a non-attendee form, learn ward convention dates, and more. The website also includes information submitted by the candidates seeking DFL endorsement.

The Minneapolis DFL is seeking volunteers to help run the precinct caucuses. Precinct conveners trainings are scheduled for March 4 and March 11.

For more information, contact team@minneapolisdfl.org.

ILCA awards: Two second place awards for Labor Review

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Steve Share has served as Labor Review editor since 2003 and is a member of the Minnesota Newspaper Guild/CWA Local 37002. The St. Paul Union Advocate won two awards: First place for “Best Photo” and third place for “Best Analysis.”

Founded in 1897, the Union Advocate is published by the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation, AFL-CIO.

Michael Moore, Union Advocate editor since 2006, is a member of the Minnesota Newspaper Guild/CWA Local 37002.

ILCA’s annual labor media contest attracts thousands of entries. The awards are open to all ILCA member organizations and are given in two different classes: national/international unions, federations, councils, and allied organizations; and local/regional/state federations, central/area labor councils, and allied organizations.

ILCA award categories are in general excellence, visual communications, best multimedia campaign, writing, electronic media, best use of earned media, political action, and organizing.

The Labor Review and Union Advocate competed in a group with local unions as well as regional labor federations and state labor federations.

Visit minneapolisunions.org for links to the Labor Review award-winners.

For the full list of ILCA awards and winners, visit laborcommunicators.org.
Inauguration Day, January 2, 2023

SAINT PAUL — In a January 2 ceremony at the Fitzgerald Theater, Minnesota’s state constitutional officers took the oath of office for their new four-year terms. All five are DFLers who won re-election in November 2022 with AFL-CIO endorsement.

Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan, Attorney General Keith Ellison, Secretary of State Steve Simon and State Auditor Julie Blaha all spoke to accomplishments of the past four years — including the state’s response to the challenges of the COVID pandemic — and also highlighted their agendas for the coming four years.

They shared new possibilities that DFL majorities in both the Minnesota House and Minnesota Senate now have the power to enact, after years of divided government.

Governor Tim Walz emphasized the need to invest in education, clean energy, and jobs — “I’m not talking about any jobs… I’m talking about protecting the right to collectively bargain,” he said.

“We have a moment… this is an opportunity to make change,” said Governor Walz. “This is our opportunity to build One Minnesota, to make our state the best place in the country to live, to work, and to raise a family.”

“The era of gridlock in St. Paul is over,” Walz declared. “Minnesotans have chosen. They chose action over excuses.”

Walz said: “Our mandate and our mission: be bold and deliver for Minnesota.”

“We are here to improve lives,” Walz said.

“We have the opportunity to continue shaping a government that works across lines of difference to better address the needs of the people we serve,” said Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan. “We can build a government that invests in the things that matter most: education, economic opportunity, housing, caring for our earth and water, health and safety, and children and families.”

Governor Walz, re-elected for a second term. “My commitment is that I will invest in you and your family — no matter where you live in Minnesota.”

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