POWER TO THE POLLS

Unions have rolled out a historic push to elect pro-worker candidates Nov. 3, and it’s powered by local volunteers

By Michael Moore
Union Advocate editor

Don Slaten has been volunteering in support of his union’s political program for years. Never has he seen a campaign season like this one, marked by social distance, early voting and a highly polarized voting public.

“It’s just unreal,” said Slaten, a retired member of Machinists Local Lodge 459 who became active in local politics in the mid-1980s. “I’ve never seen anything like this before.”

In an election cycle with no playbook, Minnesota’s unions have adjusted their approach to politics.

Physical distance is now baked into the Labor 2020 campaign strategy, with phone and text banks taking the place of most door-to-door canvassing. And because so many voters are looking to cast their ballots early, unions have sped up their campaign timetable.

Still, the objective of labor’s

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For some local union members, Trump’s attacks hit close to home

By Michael Moore
Union Advocate editor

David Hallas was watching TV on an early-September night when one of President Trump’s campaign ads caught his eye.

“It was popping on the screen every 5 minutes,” Hallas remembered. “All of a sudden I’m like, wait a minute!”

That was the moment Hallas glimpsed footage from Vice President Mike Pence’s visit to the Gerdau Ameristeel plant in St. Paul last year. Across the screen scrolled a big, bold tagline: “JOBS.”

Hallas, a member of United Steelworkers Local 7263, has put in 18 years at the Gerdau plant, and he was in the crowd for Pence’s event. But the company has since announced plans to shutter the St. Paul facility, making the tagline a gut punch to the 222 union members who lost their jobs June 30.

“It just shows that they’re so disconnected from working people,” said Hallas, one of 40 people still working at the plant through March. “They have no idea what’s going on, and they’re willing to use workers as props.”

For Hallas, voting Trump out of office this year is an opportunity to hold the president

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Labor endorsed, backing it up

U.S. Rep. Angie Craig speaks to striking members of SEIU Healthcare Minnesota on the picket line outside St. Francis Hospital in Shakopee last month. Craig is the labor-endorsed candidate in Minnesota’s 2nd Congressional District, which includes Dakota and parts of Washington counties. Read more about SEIU members’ strike on Page 14.

By Michael Moore
Union Advocate editor

Members of labor unions make the best labor-endorsed candidates. Fortunately for working families, several union members are running for office in 2020 with the Labor 2020 endorsement.

“We know that when union members hold public office, they champion our values and work hard to shift the balance of power for working people,” said Bill McCarthy, president of the state’s largest labor federation, the Minnesota AFL-CIO.

A power shift is exactly what Josiah Hill, an English teacher in the Stillwater school system, has in mind with his campaign to represent Senate District 39, which straddles the St. Croix River in Washington County.

Republicans hold a narrow, three-seat majority in the Senate, and they have used

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Well Said!

“You can be sure you will be hearing that word ‘union’ plenty of times if I’m in the White House. If I have the honor of becoming your president, I’m going to be the strongest labor president you’ve ever had... If I’m in the oval office, guess who’s gonna be there with me? Unions. Labor. You.”

– Former Vice President Joe Biden, labor-endorsed candidate for president, in a speech delivered on Labor Day.

Labor Voices: Kera Peterson

Your work is essential, and so is your vote

The St. Paul Regional Labor Federation brings together more than 100 local unions representing over 50,000 union members who live and work in Ramsey, Washington, Dakota and Chisago Counties, and I am proud to serve as the federation’s president. I took office in January, eager to meet with union voters about the upcoming election.

“We need elected officials who prioritize working people’s health and safety over corporate profits.”

– Kera Peterson

leaders who are serious about changing policy so that our nation’s persistent racial inequality can begin to be addressed in meaningful ways. Stopping racial inequality, ensuring the health and economic security of working people, putting our country on a path to prosperity for all – these are our goals as a labor movement. They are goals we share with Joe Biden, our labor-endorsed candidate for President, and with the other labor-endorsed candidates on the Nov. 3 ballot.

This moment demands both urgency and clarity. And for union members, who have been casting their ballots since early voting began in our state, the choice could not be clearer. Addressing the challenges we face as a nation – beginning with COVID-19 response and recovery – is not a priority for this president or his Republican allies like Mitch McConnell. If it were their priority, they would be moving the HEROES Act, which House Democrats passed in May, instead of packing the Supreme Court with another anti-worker judge. Make no mistake, COVID-19 relief is an election issue. The only way to save lives and livelihoods is to beat President Trump and elect labor-endorsed majority in Congress and our state Legislature.

I am confident we will do just that Nov. 3. Our movement is about people power, and I have felt the energy our union volunteers are bringing to the Labor 2020 campaign. We are talking to union members on the phones, by text message and in the workplace about the importance of being a voter, and about the opportunity to build a better state and nation. We’re essential workers. We’re essential voters. And we’re making a difference.

– Kera Peterson is a member of Machinists Local Lodge 459. Learn more about the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation and its work at www.stpaulunions.org.
Be a voter! Here's how

U.S. citizens who are at least 18 years old on Nov. 3, who have been Minnesota residents for at least 20 days and who have finished all parts of any felony sentence are eligible to vote in the state.

Where to vote. Polling places will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day, Nov. 3. Anyone in line to vote by 8 p.m. must be allowed to vote. Find your polling place online at pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us, or call 1-877-600-VOTE.

Register to vote. Early registration is closed, but voters can still register in person at their polling place on Election Day.

To show proof of residence, bring a driver's license or another ID showing your current name and address. Or bring an old photo ID and a document showing your current address, like a utility or other bill. You can also register to vote if a registered voter from your precinct vouches for you by signing an oath confirming your address.

To check your registration status, go to mnvotes.sos.state.mn.us.

Vote early. Skip the lines and help reduce crowding at the polls by voting early in person at your county election office through Nov. 2. If you are not registered, you can do so by showing proof of residence at the county election office.

If you've requested an absentee ballot and want to return it by mail, it must be postmarked on or before Nov 3 and received by your county by Nov. 10. Letter carriers recommend mailing ballots a week in advance to make sure they count on Election Day.

You can also return your ballot in person no later than 3 p.m. on Election Day to the election office that sent your ballot. You can drop off ballots for up to three other voters. You will need to show identification with name and signature when returning a ballot for someone else. You may not drop your ballot off at your polling place, however.

Track the status of your ballot online at www.sos.state.mn.us.

Who's on the ballot? View a sample ballot online before you vote at myballot.mn.sos.state.mn.us.

Who's labor endorsed? For a look at who's labor endorsed in the east metro, go to the back cover of this issue. View and share the list online at stpaulunion.org. Find a statewide list of endorsed candidates at mnalcfio.org.

Victory expected at MSP, as workers eye $15 minimum wage

The working people who keep Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport running, who keep it clean and who have made it safe for travelers during the COVID-19 crisis are about to get a well-deserved raise.

Members of the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) have indicated they will put the airport on track to a $15 minimum wage, with an official vote expected Oct. 19. The wage increase would start on Jan. 1, 2021, and be phased in over the next two years.

Airport workers, including members of UNITE HERE Local 17, Teamsters Local 120 and SEIU Local 26, have been pushing for a wage increase for years. Many currently make just $11 per hour, the current airport minimum wage.

The wage hike will keep the workforce, predominantly immigrants and people of color, on equal footing with workers in Minneapolis and St. Paul, where $15 minimum wage ordinances are on the books.

In a virtual press conference to celebrate the victory, Local 120 member Michael Bardenpratt, who has worked at Swissport Fueling for 22 years, gave credit to workers who had the courage to to tell their stories at MAC meetings and public demonstrations, putting a public face on poverty wages at the airport.

"Anybody that works 40 hours a week should not have to live in poverty," Bardenpratt said. "This increase could help working people get off of government assistance, lower their dependence on food shelves, reduce the stress of wondering whether or not they're going to have enough money for rent, food, a vehicle. It's going to give families better lives."

Other workers, while relieved to see $15 move forward, pledged to continue fighting for more.

Glen Brown, a wheelchair attendant at MSP for the last five years and member of Local 26, said he found it hard to celebrate the wage increase in light of the risks he and other airport workers continue to face during the pandemic.

"I'm glad this is finally happening; I'm proud of everyone who's been fighting for this change for so long," Brown said.

"But when this ordinance passes and we get a higher wage, it still doesn't match the risk. We're still in the middle of a pandemic. To overlook that, it just isn't fair."

– Michael Moore, UA editor

Seeking hazard pay, Metro Transit workers authorize strike

Depositing ballots in a ballot box outside the United Labor Centre, members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1005 voted overwhelmingly Sept. 22 to reject a contract offer from Metro Transit and to authorize a strike. The vote, recommended by the Local 1005 executive board, had the support of 94% of members who voted.

"It was a strong turnout by the membership," Ryan Timlin, Local 1005 president, said.

Although the two sides were far apart in negotiations before the strike vote, Timlin said the union is eager to get back to the bargaining table.

"They want a one-year deal but we can't reach agreement," he said. Because of that stalemate, he added, "we want to open up a full-blowed negotiation" for a normal two or three year agreement. Metro Transit, so far, refused to do that.

Instead of offering a pay increase in the proposed one-year deal, Metro Transit offered a one-time payment. "They didn't want to put anything in the base wages," Timlin said.

Metro Transit workers continue to face health risks on the job because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. But Metro Transit's proposal offered hazard pay for only a limited period of eight weeks, from March 21 through May 15. The union is seeking hazard pay of $3 per hour for every hour worked since March 21.

So far, Timlin reported, 88 of the approximately 2,350 Local 1005 members have contracted COVID-19. The union reports no deaths, but several members experienced serious symptoms.

While Metro Transit has outlined safety protocols, "there's not enough consistency throughout the whole company," Timlin said. The biggest problem: bus riders and light rail riders not wearing masks.

Nationally, Timlin said, ATU is exploring a safety solution that looks at the air circulation flow in buses, which normally moves from the back of the bus past all the passengers and then up to the operator at the front of the bus.

Local 1005's current agreement expired Aug. 1. The two sides have been working with a mediator since August.

– Minneapolis Labor Review

MSP Airport workers march outside Terminal 1 during a 2018 demonstration in support of a $15 airport-wide minimum wage. The rally was organized by three unions that represent airport workers and have worked together to advance the campaign: UNITE HERE Local 17, Teamsters Local 120 and SEIU Local 26.
A $1.88 billion package of infrastructure investments that will create thousands of jobs for union trades-people across Minnesota won approval in both legislative chambers during a special session last month, as did a long-sought emergency rate increase for the state’s home care workers.

Both measures drew bipartisan support during the Legislature’s regular session earlier this year but fell by the wayside as lawmakers navigated the COVID-19 pandemic response.

Since the regular session adjourned in May, Gov. Tim Walz has called lawmakers into special session each month. But until October members of the House Republican caucus withheld their support for the jobs-creating infrastructure bill, hoping to pressure Walz into giving up his emergency powers during the pandemic.

After the bonding bill finally passed the House, leaders of the state’s Building and Construction Trades unions expressed relief. Bonding bills are traditionally a priority in even-numbered years, and they sustain jobs in the construction industry.

Jason George, business manager of Operating Engineers Local 49, said the measure – the largest bonding bill in state history – was a victory for the public good over politics.

“We needed this bill,” George said. “The global pandemic has created economic uncertainty for next year, and this bill eliminates a lot of that uncertainty for our work in Minnesota.”

“This bonding investment is necessary for our communities, workers and our economy,” added Jessica Looman, executive director of the Minnesota Building Trades Council. “Construction workers across the state are breathing a little easier today, knowing that there will be jobs coming so they can keep working to provide for themselves and their families.”

The emergency rate increase for home care, meanwhile, came after home care clients and workers, members of SEIU Healthcare Minnesota, staged rallies in the streets outside the Capitol in the days leading up to the special session.

The rate increase rewards workers on the front lines of the pandemic response, providing care that helps tens of thousands of Minnesota seniors and people with disabilities live safely in their homes. The home health industry suffers from a critical shortage of workers, and SEIU members and their clients have been campaigning for years to improve pay and benefits to make the job more attractive.

Robin Pikala, a home care worker and SEIU member from Fridley, called the bipartisan vote “an important step,” toward the respect workers and clients deserve.

“But this temporary support during the peacetime emergency is just a stopgap,” Pikala added. “We have so much work left to do.”

The special session wrapped up Oct. 15, less than a month before Election Day. Every seat in the Legislature is up for election in 2020.
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plaguing our country and as a reminder of what the junior senator from Minnesota tries to prioritize in Washington, D.C.

“It was so motivating to me,” Smith said. “Here are people who did everything they were supposed to do. They paid into the pension, and their employers did, too. And yet there were members of Congress ... trying to shirk the responsibility we have to protect people’s pensions.”

Smith has been working people’s side throughout her career in politics, and working people are on her side as she seeks re-election – with the labor endorsement – to her first full term in the Senate.

Minnesota AFL-CIO President Bill McCarthy said Smith shares union values, like “dignity, justice and freedom for working people.” Jessica Looman, executive director of the Minnesota Building and Construction Trades Council, called Smith an ally of union tradespeople and all working people.

“As the former lieutenant governor of Minnesota, she understands what the workers in our state need, and has been an effective voice for Minnesota workers,” Looman added.

Being on labor’s side is “everything to me,” Smith said.

**Sticking up for workers**

Growing up in a politically active family, Smith said, she developed an early respect for the powerful role unions play in advocating for all working people. And after graduating from high school, she learned firsthand the benefits of carrying a union card.

“Certainly, labor unions stick up for their members, as well they should. But they stick up for regular folks doing jobs that are not organized,” Smith said. “It’s that advocacy for a higher minimum wage, for paid family leave, for health care people can count on.”

**A record of trust**

Union leaders are quick to point out highlights of Smith’s work since Minnesotans voted to keep her in office two years ago.

- *Weeks after that election, the federal government shut down. When it reopened in January 2019, following the longest shutdown in history, lawmakers agreed to repay federal employees for their lost wages. But they left out federal contract workers, including many people in low-wage jobs like food service, custo-

*(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)*
dial and security work. Smith authored a bill to make those forgotten workers whole, but the Republican majority refused to take it up.

• Later in 2019, Smith introduced the 21st Century Workforce Partnerships Act, which would encourage relationships between businesses and high schools to provide students the skills they need to find good-paying jobs and careers, including work in the union construction trades.

• This summer, when members of postal unions approached Smith with concerns that President Trump’s new postmaster general was making drastic changes that slowed down mail delivery, Smith used her position to sound the alarm. She and other elected officials questioned the postmaster about the impact his moves would have on election integrity. And it helped generate enough public outcry to get the administration to back off on further reforms for now.

More challenges await

But Smith wants to see Congress do more for working families, particularly with no end to the COVID-19 pandemic in sight. “We still have work to do,” she said, to keep workers, businesses, schools and local governments afloat.

After hearing from working parents and employers in Minnesota that a shortage of child care has only gotten worse during the pandemic, Smith teamed up with Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts to write a bill that would invest $50 billion in expanding access nationwide.

“Child care is like the infrastructure we need in our communities for families to really be able to function,” Smith said, noting that the measure would also boost pay for child-care providers.

“These are predominantly women, often women of color, and they often are making barely $20,000 a year. That’s not even enough to take care of their own families.”

Smith also believes Congress should craft an “industrial and manufacturing strategy” that puts the nation in a position to address the climate crisis – and, in the process, create jobs that are “clean and green and strong.”

And to make sure those jobs guarantee workers the right to join together, Smith supports the union-backed PRO Act, which would add teeth to nation’s outdated labor laws.

In It for the Long Haul

That’s a long to-do list, but union members who have worked closely with Smith don’t see her backing down.

Just ask members of Teamsters Local 120 who worked at Lakeville Motor Express. When the local trucking company closed abruptly in 2016, stiffing workers out of two weeks’ worth of wages, Smith, lieutenant governor at the time, blasted the company publicly and helped launch an official investigation.

“In my experience if Tina Smith does not say, ‘This is just like stealing from these workers, and I am paying attention to what is happening here,’ then Lakeville may have succeeded,” Local 120’s Paul Slattery said.

It took two and a half years, but Lakeville Motor Express agreed last year to a $1.25 million settlement that provided lost compensation to its former workers.

“Sometimes you have to be in the fight for a long time,” Smith said. “You don’t get immediate gratification, but you have to keep on fighting.”

And Smith said she is still fighting for that pensioner she met three years ago in Duluth, doing it the only way she knows how.

“I put my head down, I get the work done and I get results,” she said.
Labor-endorsed Biden talks union during campaign swing through Duluth

By Catherine Conlan
Duluth Labor World editor

Joe Biden, former vice president and current labor-endorsed candidate for president, made a fast, busy stop in Duluth Sept. 18, anchored by a trip to the Carpenters Training Institute and highlighted by quick stops in Canal Park and at the Duluth fire hall.

Biden toured the institute and then made remarks to the crowd, kept small because of coronavirus concerns. Outside, separate groups of people waved signs for Trump or Biden.

Biden and Trump were in northern Minnesota on the same day, highlighting the role the state will play in the election — or so many in the national media seem to think. According to several big-name polls, Biden is leading Trump in Minnesota.

During his remarks at the Carpenters building, Biden drew comparisons, as he saw them, between Duluth and Scranton, Pa., towns full of hardworking people who want to help fulfill the promise of America.

“My entire campaign is built on a simple concept: Reward hard work, not wealth,” Biden said.

He hastened to add that wealth will not be “penalized,” but he made it clear that households that make more than $400,000 total would see their taxes go up in an effort to get the top 1% of people to pay a percentage of income earners to pay their fair share.

Biden also said essential workers should be paid in a way that acknowledges they’re essential, that the minimum wage should be $15 an hour, and childcare must be more affordable and widely available.

Much of the speech touched on familiar themes, although he did reference the visit. He described how during the tour of the Training Institute, he had been shown plans and blueprints that incorporate environmentally friendly building technologies.

“My Buy American/Build American plan calls for retrofitting 4 million buildings in America, creating 4 million jobs for skilled labor, all done with prevailing wage and union labor,” he said. “That’s not hyperbole; that’s a fact.”

Delivering what would have been a huge applause line in a pandemic-free campaign in front of a large crowd, Biden said, “When the government spends taxpayer money, we should spend it to buy American products made by American workers using American supply chains to generate American growth and opportunity.”

This included touting jobs that would be created by updating infrastructure (such as investing $2 trillion in roads and bridges), installing broadband networks to serve every home and updating buildings to take advantage of new energy efficiencies.

Biden also offered a four-point plan for fighting for workers and unions: protecting prevailing wage, prioritizing Project Labor Agreements, protecting apprenticeship standards and passing the PRO Act, which would rework some decades-old labor laws to give workers much more power on the job and boost penalties for employers who try to disrupt collective bargaining efforts.

District 8 Congressman Pete Stauber, a Republican, voted against the PRO Act when it came up earlier this year in the U.S. House.

Several Union leaders met with Biden during the visit. Beth McCuskey, president of the Duluth Central Labor Body, said Biden’s speech “hit the mark” and it was a pleasure to see the former vice president in person. As an aside, she said it was also great to have some time to talk to U.S. Sen. Tina Smith.

“She looks you in the eye, and it’s really quality time with her,” McCuskey said.

Dan Olson, business manager for Laborers Local 1091, and Joel Smith, district council president, met with Biden at the airport just before the candidate left town.

“It was a surprise to me,” Olson said. “I thought we were going to a sit-down, town-hall type meeting, but each of us were shuttled into a room with him and got to talk with him one-on-one for a few minutes.”

Olson said he brought up the Line 3 and mining issues, both of which are deeply important to his membership.

“He knew what he was talking about,” Olson said.

The Laborers had a strong relationship with the Obama administration. Olson said Biden told him the Laborers were one of the only groups that followed up on what they say they’ll do when it comes to working with an administration, and that the visit was comfortable and relaxed.

“I had a blast,” Olson said. “It was more like a conversation, just like I was talking to another guy. I was glad to be a part of it.”

Matt Preble, organizer for IBEW Local 242, said he was struck by Biden’s warmth when he had a chance to talk to him.

“His mannerisms make you feel like what you’re saying is the most important thing that’s going on right now,” Preble said. “It’s powerful.

“He brought up that the IBEW has had his back for a long time,” Preble said. The IBEW endorsed Biden back in February.

Janet Nelson, an AFSCME retiree, said it was exciting to see Biden in Canal Park. She had a chance to talk with him briefly and introduced herself.

“I said, ‘Hi, I was one of your national delegates,’ and he said ‘Janet Nelson, thank you,’” Nelson said.

She had seen him at political events in the past but hadn’t had a chance to meet him.

“There was great energy in the crowd — there were a couple of hecklers, so we drowned them out,” Nelson said. “Everyone was excited for a chance to see him or even get a picture of him walking by.”

Nelson has been working to access Biden yard signs for those in the area and said that whenever she gets a shipment, “they go like hotcakes.”
Union members have plenty of reasons to vote Trump out, but some hit close to home

(Continued from Page 1) accountable for his failed promises. He’s one of many local union members who have seen firsthand the failures of Trump’s reckless, divisive and often-inept approach to the highest office in the land.

For many union members, this election feels personal.

Students living in fear

Since Trump took office in January 2017, Camila Carroll has seen an increase in anxiety and trauma among her students at Highland Park Middle School. A member of the St. Paul Federation of Educators, Carroll teaches English language learners. Many of her students come from immigrant and refugee communities.

“They don’t know if there’s a day when mom or dad or another family member will be taken away,” Carroll said. “I know because they tell me how scared they are.”

At his campaign rallies Trump regularly degrades refugees and their impact on local communities, drawing wild cheers from his supporters. The hateful rhetoric creates “hard conversations” with emotionally vulnerable students, Carroll said. “No one should have to go through that,” she added.

Some of her students’ family members have been swept up in the administration’s immigration raids. “More of our students have had family members separated” since Trump took office, Carroll said.

“I listen to the stories of when they watched their dad get deported,” she said. “And we don’t have the resources we need as a school to give them the mental-health supports they need to deal with such a traumatic event.

“It’s happening right here in our own backyard.”

Veterans deserve better

Tom Edwards served in the U.S. Navy for 15 years before taking a job at the post office and joining the American Postal Workers Union. Now retired and living in West St. Paul, Edwards relies on the VA for his health care, which he described as “second to none.”

When local members of the American Federation of Government Employees who work at the VA began sounding the alarm about efforts to undermine the VA, including understaffing and attacks on workers’ rights, Edwards took notice.

To the former postal worker, the story sounded all too familiar.

“The VA is just like the post office to them,” Edwards said. “The money that goes into the VA, the private sector wants it. They want all those billions of dollars that could be made with privatization of both of those facilities.”

Connie Beissel feels the same way. She retired in March after a long career as a member of Branch 9 of the National Association of Letter Carriers, and was so upset with the administration’s attacks on the post office that she committed to volunteering at Labor 2020 phone banks twice a week.

“This election became personal to me when the current administration said that he didn’t trust the Postal Service and Letter Carriers in particular,” Beissel said. “Although I am now retired, I still consider myself a Letter Carrier, and I still have a loyalty to ensure that the U.S. Postal Service survives for another 250 years.”

Failure by any measure

By any policy measure, Trump’s first term in office has been a disaster for working people. But it has been a windfall for corporations and the richest 1% of Americans.

The $2 trillion tax cut passed in 2017 slashed corporate tax rates, prompted a surge of stock buybacks and delivered huge benefits to offshore investors and CEOs. But there’s no evidence to support the president’s claim those corporate profits would trickle down into workers’ paychecks.

The Trump administration renegotiated NAFTA, and has claimed the era of corporations’ “offshoring” U.S. manufacturing jobs was “over.” In fact, the opposite is true. A report issued in August by the Economic Policy Institute found nearly 1,800 factories shuttered between 2016 and 2018. And St. Paul’s Gerdau facility will soon be added to the list.

And then there’s Trump’s failure to lead a competent, nationwide response to the pandemic. Enhanced unemployment benefits for millions of Americans have run out, while America’s essential workers have been left to fend for their own health and safety by Trump’s Department of Labor. All the while, U.S. billionaires have watched their wealth grow by $845 billion, and Wall Street has hardly missed a beat.

There are plenty of reasons to vote Trump out of office, but for union members like Edwards and Carroll, it’s just as important to see Trump – and all that he stands for – defeated.

“Many of the students I’ve had, who I’ve connected with around these issues, they’re going to use their voice and they’re going to vote,” Carroll said. “It gives me hope they are seeing the difference they can make in the world.”

Edwards recalled Trump’s quip at a campaign rally in Minnesota that if he loses the state, he’s never coming back. “When I heard that,” Edwards said, “I decided I’ll be darned if I’m not doing everything in my power to make it happen.”
Labor values are lived, not learned for union members on the 2020 ballot

Josiah Hill, Senate District 39

Erin Preese, House District 58A

Sara Wolf, House District 58B

(Continued from Page 1)

to thwart progress on “environmental protection, public-school funding and expanding access to affordable health care coverage,” Hill said. Unseating his incumbent opponent would be a step toward a labor majority in the chamber.

Hill has served six terms as president of his union, the St. Croix Education Association. It’s an experience he considers the “perfect training exercise” for the Legislature because it involved reaching compromise, not scoring political points.

“I’m solutions focused,” Hill said. “I’m not interested in short-term wins. The work I’ve had to engage in makes it necessary to listen deeply to all parties and to find solutions that allow us to move forward with the resources available.”

Like Hill, Erin Preese is a union educator vying to unseat an incumbent. Preese’s work teaching English-language learners in the Lakeville schools has informed the type of legislator she hopes to be for the residents of House District 58A.

In fact, it’s why she’s running in the first place. Two years ago, as a member of the Lakeville Education Association’s committee on government relations, Preese paid a visit to her House representative – now her opponent – to advocate for fair funding of public schools.

“It was frustrating,” Preese remembered. “Our current representative, he has two daughters in private school, and sometimes it’s hard to understand life experiences that are not your own.”

Preese said she plans to continue teaching in Lakeville if she wins Nov. 3, with a leave of absence during the legislative session.

“The decisions made at the Capitol have real effects on people here at our school, on their everyday lives,” she said. “Working will help me stay grounded. I think maybe if you’re at the Capitol too much you can get caught up in the politics.”

Jim Swenson makes a point of keeping politics out of the City of North Branch’s business. A member of Local 110 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Swenson is seeking reelection this fall to a second two-year term as the Chisago County community’s mayor.

North Branch is growing, and Swenson’s focus has been on making that growth sustainable for everyone. Building permits are up over 250% this year, and the city has seen 96 new homes built already in 2020. A 48-unit, income-based housing development has opened, and last year the city added a 20-unit apartment complex for people struggling with mental-health issues and homelessness.

In August, Gov. Tim Walz visited North Branch to present the city with a “Telecommuter Forward!” award for its efforts to expand broadband internet access citywide – something of critical importance to workers during the pandemic. During the ceremony, Swenson said, he pulled Walz aside and touted the nonpartisan, community effort that led to North Branch’s success.

“This is the way government needs to work, with two people from totally separate parties working together,” Swenson told Walz. “Can you believe that? It’s the way government should work – for the people.”

Bringing people together is, of course, what unions do. So it should come as no surprise Swenson and other candidates with union backgrounds are good at it. As a member of the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE) for the last six years, House District 58B candidate Sara Wolf has seen firsthand the power of collective voice.

“It’s telling that when the topic of health insurance comes up and some-

(Continued on Page 11)
one says, ‘I’m union,’ everybody knows that it means they have good insurance!” Wolf laughed.

Kaela Berg, a flight attendant seeking office in House District 56B, remembered how she felt upon joining her union, the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, 17 years ago. It was “a spark that was ignited that became a fire in my belly for fighting for working families,” she said.

Since signing that union card, Berg has taken an active role in local movements for economic and environmental justice, serving a stint as director of the Minnesota Fair Trade Coalition. Now she’s ready to go to work in the Legislature, fighting to advance the priorities she and all labor-endorsed candidates share, like accessible health care, fully funded schools and economic opportunity for everyone.

“They aren’t just legislative talking points to me,” Berg said. “They are my lived experience. I’m passionate about a Minnesota that works for working families.”

(Continued from Page 10)

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Union work – turning out union voters in support of labor-endorsed candidates, from the local level to the highest office in the land – is as urgent as it’s ever been.

“We’re treating every day between now and Nov. 3 like Election Day,” said Kera Peterson, president of the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation, which coordinates Labor 2020 volunteer work in the east-metro area. “The stakes really couldn’t be higher.”

In thousands of phone, text and worksite conversations, union volunteers are countering the divisive rhetoric of President Trump and his Republican allies with a vision that reflects the very heart of the labor movement. Unity, Minnesota AFL-CIO President Bill McCarthy told volunteers before a virtual phone bank last month, will carry the day Nov. 3.

“This is our moment, brothers and sisters, to show Donald Trump and politicians like him that we refuse to be divided by race, religion and where we come from,” said McCarthy, the state’s highest-ranking labor leader. “We must deliver a decisive win Nov. 3 because everything is on the line.”

Unions aren’t just talking about unity, either. They’re backing it up with action, working in coalition this year with like-minded organizations to boost all Minnesotans’ participation in the election.

The state AFL-CIO, Education Minnesota and SEIU Minnesota State Council are part of a broad coalition of faith, community and advocacy groups that staged a voter registration fair Sept. 23 in St. Paul, followed by a march to the Capitol.

“We pull through by pulling together,” Imam Asad Zaman said during a rally on the Capitol grounds. “Together, we represent the beauty and fabric of this state. Black or white, Asian or Latino, Indigenous or newcomer, we make Minnesota.”

Zaman and other speakers offered a vision of their state in which all Minnesotans enjoy access to fully funded health care, child care and education, as well as a clean environment, safe communities, livable wages, paid time to care for one another and freedom from police brutality.

“We have the ability to transform our state and build a new normal,” AFSCME Council 5 Executive Director Julie Bleyhl told volunteers at a virtual phone bank with St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter last month. “And the work you are all doing this morning is essential to not just improving the lives of union members, but all Minnesotans.”

In the phones, volunteers like Connie Beissel, a recently retired member of the National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 9, said it’s rare to reach anyone who hasn’t already made up their mind about the election.

“They are just totally for or totally against,” Beissel said. “They know which way they’re going, and they don’t mind saying. And more times than not, the people I talk to have already voted.”

Even so, given everything that’s on the line this year, it’s critical to leave no stone unturned. Slaten, the retired Machinist, recounted a conversation with one woman who had requested a ballot by mail for herself and her children, but was unsure about whether to send it back.

“I told her, ‘You know you can go vote early by going to city hall, right?’” Slaten said. “And she said, ‘I can?’ She hadn’t a clue.

“There’s so much disinformation out there, no matter how much good information we put out, it still isn’t getting through to a lot of people. So that conversation made the whole day worthwhile.”
Mourn the dead, fight for the living

Lydia Boerboom, an organizer with the faith-based group ISAIAH, places a rose on the Workers Memorial in St. Paul to mourn workers lost to COVID-19 – and remind leaders to do more to keep workers safe. Members of several unions representing essential workers participated in the ceremony, including ATU Local 1005, the Minnesota Nurses, SEIU and the Steelworkers.

submitted photo

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Erin Murphy, Senate District 64
Athena Hollins, House District 66B
John Thompson, House District 67A
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Local 563
Techs at two Allina hospitals strike for health and safety protections

The "eyes of the hospital" went on strike at Allina Health facilities in Minneapolis and Shakopee last month, as radiology and other technicians stepped up their fight for the same benefits and protections from COVID-19 as other hospital employees.

The 48-hour strike began at 6 a.m. Oct. 5 at Abbott Northwestern and St. Francis hospitals.

At a rally outside Abbott Northwestern on Day 1 of the strike, hospital employees rallied to the technicians' cause.

"We all take care of patients. That makes us one and the same," Minnesota Nurses Association President Mary Turner told striking techs, members of SEIU Healthcare Minnesota. "But we're also union members, and that makes us family."

About 120 technicians at Abbott Northwestern and 80 in related jobs at St. Francis Hospital in Shakopee have been in negotiations with Allina since May. Several issues are on the bargaining table, but workers say equitable treatment is their top priority, particularly during the pandemic.

Judy Grack, a CT tech at Abbott Northwestern, has missed two stretches of work this year due to COVID-19 exposure. But the second time she entered quarantine, Allina told her she would have to dip into her paid time off to cover her wages and benefits.

"Allina needs to take care of all of its employees," technician Molly Wrobleski said. "Our community deserves better."

The double-standard didn't sit well with elected officials at the rally either. State Sen. John Hoffman (D-Champlin) said he's growing tired of large, not-for-profit health care systems like Allina treating its employees like numbers, not people.

"This is getting old, isn't it, folks?" Hoffman asked. "Allina, you need to get back to the bargaining table and listen to the workers. And that means when they're in quarantine, you pick up the cost."

– Michael Moore, Union Advocate editor
UNIONS QUESTION HOSPITAL CUTS
With hundreds of jobs at stake, union nurses and health care workers are sounding the alarm on M Health Fairview’s plan to slash services at two St. Paul hospitals and close 16 clinics across the region.

The health system announced plans last month to close Bethesda Hospital, the only COVID-19 specialty hospital in St. Paul, and reduce services at St. Joseph’s. Workers accused management of using the COVID-19 crisis as cover to justify eliminating services on which St. Paul community members rely.

“It is unthinkable that an urban center like St. Paul stands to lose so many patient services at once,” said Rose Roach, executive director of the Minnesota Nurses Association.

The announcement came just two weeks after Children’s Hospital announced plans to limit services on its St. Paul campus. Roach noted that, combined, the announcements threaten patients’ access to “operating rooms, pediatric ICUs, cardiac, epilepsy, chemical dependency, and diabetic services.”

“The loss of resources will again force patients, especially among communities of color, to have to travel to health care, instead of finding it available to them,” she added. “This is not health equity. This is tragic.”

Jamie Gulley, president of SEIU Healthcare Minnesota, with 200 members at Bethesda and St. Joseph’s, called the likely damage to health care access in St. Paul “insurmountable.”

“This move is incredibly shortsighted, and we know it will have long-lasting effects to both health-care workers and patients,” he said. “Our state cannot afford to have this plan move forward without a much deeper analysis on the impact to our community.”

The unions planned to lobby state and local lawmakers, including Gov. Tim Walz, to put the rapidly approaching closures on ice until community members have an opportunity to provide feedback.

M Health Fairview has said it is exploring the possibility of leasing Bethesda to Ramsey County as a transitional shelter for homeless people. But unions urged county officials to push for transparency and accountability in any agreement with the health care system.

“We support any real effort to provide housing for the homeless,” MNA member Melissa Kadrmas, a registered nurse at St. Joseph’s, said. “However, we don’t trust M Health Fairview, and we worry that their ill-thought-out plan is to provide them cover for closing a facility, laying-off nurses and eliminating key services. We are interested in seeing long-term results, not just a bandage.”

SURLY UNION VOTE FAILS BY ONE
Workers trying to join together in a union at Surly Brewing’s beer hall and restaurant in Minneapolis came up one vote short in balloting Oct. 7.

UNITE HERE Local 17, which has supported successful union organizing efforts at Fair State Brewing, Tattersall Distillery and other craft venues this year, said the majority of workers who participated in the vote supported the union.

“Sadly, our election agreement specified that to win we would need the majority of ALL workers not just those who voted,” Local 17 tweeted. “We fell short of that goal by 1 vote.”

Surly plans to close the beer hall to the public this month, but workers pledged to continue their fight for a voice on the job.

“Local 17 is forever proud of the Surly workers for standing up against (mighty) odds,” the union tweeted. “Standing up in a country whose laws are stacked against the workers. Standing up against capital who views them as expendable.”

BDC TAKES AIM AT LABOR ABUSES
Labor, political and community leaders gathered online last month to celebrate the launch of an organization dedicated to setting and monitoring workplace standards in the Twin Cities’ non-union construction industry, which has seen several high-profile cases of wage theft, misclassification of workers and other abuses in recent years.

The Building Dignity and Respect Standards Council (BDC) intends to hold developers and general contractors responsible for working conditions on their projects using the Worker-driven Social Responsibility model, which establishes basic standards for worker treatment and independent monitoring systems to enforce them.

The approach has led to significant gains for workers across the world fighting labor trafficking and other human rights abuses, most notably in the tomato fields of Florida.

The Worker-driven Social Responsibility model has the potential to bring lasting change to the Twin Cities’ non-union construction industry, said Rev. Doug Mork, executive director of the BDC.

“This is a critical time of rebuilding in the Twin Cities, after the uprising that followed the killing of George Floyd,” Mork said. “We need community-driven solutions like BDC to ensure we reconstitute our physical infrastructure in a way that responds to the voices and needs of those who have been historically excluded from the development of our neighborhoods, including the non-union workers on these jobs.”

Unions, community groups and workers have been documenting unsafe conditions, wage theft, harassment and even labor trafficking in the Twin Cities’ non-union construction sector in recent years.

Local worker center CTUL issued troubling results of a survey in November 2019. It found nearly half of participating workers reported being cheated out of wages they were owed, and 44% reported not getting proper safety equipment from an employer. A third of workers said they wouldn’t voice their concerns about safety, wage theft or other abuses to supervisors for fear of retaliation, whether it be losing their job or being blacklisted, deported or kicked out of employer-provided housing.

ROOFRERS MOVE TO HAM LAKE
Roofers Local 96 has moved all union business to the local’s new Ham Lake offices as of Oct. 8. The new address is 17226 Lincoln St. N.E., Ham Lake, MN 55304.

Local 96 has sold its old building at 9174 Isanti St. NE in Blaine, its home for the past 13 years. Oct. 7 was the last meeting there. The Ham Lake facility is about 2-1/2 times larger than the Blaine location and sits on 4-1/2 acres.

– Labor News in Review includes reporting by The Union Advocate, Minneapolis Labor Review and local unions. For more labor news, follow @unionadvocate on Twitter. Have a news tip or story idea? Call us at 651-222-3787, ext.112, or email mmoore@stpaulunions.org.

CARPENTERS CALL OUT WILF DEVELOPMENT
In Eagan, members of the Carpenters union put up a banner near the construction site being developed by the Wilf family, owners of the Minnesota Vikings. The North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters planned the banner in late September to warn the public that MV Eagan Ventures, owned by the Wilfs, is doing business with contractors that do not meet area labor standards. The council singled out two subcontractors in particular: J.L. Schwieters and Absolute Drywall. In September 2017, J.L. Schwieters settled a lawsuit with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission alleging a supervisor with the company made a noose out of electrical wire and threatened to hang two black employees. Absolute Drywall, meanwhile, has been the subject of U.S. Department of Labor investigations into wage theft and child labor violations. One former carpenter with the company, according to the union, said he worked for $7 per hour, 10 hours per day, 6 days per week in violation of the state’s minimum-wage laws.

In November, members of the Carpenters union put up a banner near the construction site being developed by the Wilf family, owners of the Minnesota Vikings. The North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters planned the banner in late September to warn the public that MV Eagan Ventures, owned by the Wilfs, is doing business with contractors that do not meet area labor standards. The council singled out two subcontractors in particular: J.L. Schwieters and Absolute Drywall. In September 2017, J.L. Schwieters settled a lawsuit with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission alleging a supervisor with the company made a noose out of electrical wire and threatened to hang two black employees. Absolute Drywall, meanwhile, has been the subject of U.S. Department of Labor investigations into wage theft and child labor violations. One former carpenter with the company, according to the union, said he worked for $7 per hour, 10 hours per day, 6 days per week in violation of the state’s minimum-wage laws.
By Michael Moore
Union Advocate editor

In-person, online or with a hybrid approach, classes have resumed at public schools across Minnesota. While models differ from district to district, a new survey finds that educators are having similar experiences marked by stress, anxiety and overwhelming workloads.

Applications for retirement benefits, meanwhile, are on the rise – a troubling sign for a profession already facing worker shortages.

In light of the findings, Education Minnesota President Denise Specht, the highest-ranking officer of the statewide educators union, urged district leaders to recalibrate their models and bargain in good faith with local unions over the terms of pandemic learning.

“Our public schools won’t function if thousands of educators burn out and leave,” Specht said. “It’s time to adjust.”

The survey, conducted in September, asked members of Education Minnesota the question, “How are you currently feeling about your work as an educator?”

Among the nearly 9,500 members who responded, 79% reported feeling stressed, 73% felt overwhelmed and 51% said they worried about their mental health.

Teachers working in different education modes at the same time – both in-person and online, for example – reported the highest levels of stress and anxiety in Education Minnesota’s survey, suggesting the hybrid approach may not be sustainable over the full school year.

That’s a message Kaia Hirt, an English teacher from the Anoka-Hennepin school district, brought to a public gathering of educators Sept. 30 in Minneapolis. Hybrid learning has been a “circus” in her district, Hirt said. She pointed to constantly shifting expectations, murky health protocols and impossible workloads.

Hirt had a warning for educators from the Minneapolis and St. Paul districts, where remote learning remains the primary mode: “Don’t let them take you to the circus.”

In the metro, representatives of the school districts and educators unions have been discussing a potential hybrid return to classrooms for most students.

Both sides say in-person learning is the ultimate goal, but union members say the process has not adequately engaged educators or taken into consideration the needs of communities of color and multilingual families, who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

“We need to stop talking about equity, and start being about equity,” Lindsey West, a teacher at Barton Open School in Minneapolis, said.

Making St. Paul’s school buildings safe for in-person learning, SPFE member Linda Jones said, would require large-scale investments, particularly in a district that serves communities hit hardest by COVID-19. Funding for that work has been held up by gridlock at the federal level.

“I give our national leaders an ‘F’ because their extremely irresponsible response to Covid has failed our people,” Jones said. “It is our duty and our obligation to not fuel the fires of the virus, but rather work to slow its spread. This means we do not open our schools to in-person learning until the virus is contained.”

In addition to pumping the brakes on in-person learning, educators want their districts to reconsider expectations for remote learning that have too many staff members burning out. “It is the fourth week of school, and we are already trying to figure out how we can keep this up,” St. Paul education assistant Yasmin Muridi said.

Widespread burnout could be disastrous for the state’s education system in the long run.

Education Minnesota’s survey found nearly three in 10 respondents were thinking about quitting or retiring, a trend backed up by the Teachers Retirement Association of Minnesota, which reported to the union that applications for retirement benefits increased by 35% in August and September 2020, compared to the same period last year.

“The goal remains to safely reopen school buildings and resume in-person learning, but this pandemic has taught everyone to be flexible,” Specht said. “This isn’t the time for finger pointing, but it is time to adapt.”
Health care is on the ballot this November

By Buddy Robinson

Health care remains a top priority of voters. The cost continues to increase, while restrictions on what's covered and which doctors you can see keep tightening. The COVID pandemic has made the problems in health care access and cost all the more alarming.

If President Trump is re-elected, he and the Republicans in Congress won't reduce these trends – they'll accelerate them. Here's what they seek, for the various forms of health coverage we have.

Medicare

This is the federal program for people 65 and older and many disabled Americans. The Republicans want to put Medicare in the hands of older and many disabled Americans. The Medicare voucher won't rise with medical inflation, and so it will pay for less and less each year. The average senior will pay $12,000 out of pocket annually, instead of $6,000, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

If they don't win their voucher system, their Plan B is to greatly increase the use of the Medicare Advantage program, in which insurance companies already control the Medicare of those who choose it. It's a voucher system on training wheels, and Trump is trying to expand it.

Medicaid

This is the federal system for low-income people of all ages. Much of Medicaid goes for health care for non-seniors, but two-thirds of it pays for long term care, especially nursing homes. It is critical for all the seniors who end up in nursing homes. It's paid for by roughly half federal money and half state money.

The Republicans want to turn it into a flat grant system. That means the federal government gives each state a total set amount per year, or per enrollee. It will rise according to overall inflation, but not fast enough to cover medical inflation.

Therefore, over time, the federal share covers an increasingly smaller portion of the overall cost. That forces states to either jack up taxes to cover the shortfall, or start reducing Medicaid benefits and/or eligibility.

Obamacare (aka, the Affordable Care Act)

Many people understand that the Republicans want to repeal Obamacare, and that Trump is trying to eliminate it in court. If that were to happen, tens of millions of people would be hurt. A new Supreme Court justice to replace Ruth Bader Ginsburg will likely be rammed through quickly, and she could tip the balance against Obamacare.

The Affordable Care Act increased the income eligibility for Medicaid, which most states took advantage of. These newer Medicaid enrollees would lose their coverage if the ACA is repealed. The other major Obamacare program are subsidies to help many people afford to buy insurance. If those subsidies disappear, another set of millions won't be able to afford good coverage.

The Affordable Care Act stopped insurance companies' ability to deny coverage for pre-existing conditions, and closed up the Part D “Donut Hole.” These would be reversed, too. Although Trump and the Republicans say they’ll protect pre-existing conditions, they actually intend to let insurance companies decide.

Biden and the Democrats, in contrast, would push for an improvement of Obamacare in the form of a “public option,” which would allow all Americans to buy coverage at a more affordable price.

Employer Coverage

What about the majority of Americans, who get employer health coverage? For most of them, that coverage is the best deal around. However, that deal slowly deteriorates every year: Higher premiums, deductibles and co-pays. Greater restrictions on which doctors you can see.

Their health care will continue to get less affordable every year. The only fix for that is a very big one – a universal public health care system, which everyone would get regardless of their work status.

That won't be enacted anytime soon. Our immediate need is to block Trump and the Republicans' intention of making everyone's health care much worse.

Buddy Robinson is former staff director of the Minnesota Citizens Federation Northeast. In recent years, he has worked with the Minnesota State Council of Retirees, AFL-CIO, on Social Security and other issues.
The Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation (RLF) announced two new hiring last month. Jasmine Kitto began work as a political organizer Oct. 1, and Erica Dalager Reed began work as an AFL-CIO Community Services Liaison with the RLF’s nonprofit, the St. Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center, Oct. 12.

The St. Paul RLF brings together local unions representing over 50,000 working people in Ramsey, Dakota, Washington and Chisago counties. The RLF is part of the nation’s largest and strongest labor federation, the AFL-CIO.

As a political organizer, Kitto will work in collaboration with the federation’s 100-plus affiliate unions, engaging union members to help advance labor’s political initiatives and advocate for worker-friendly policies at all levels of government.

“I look forward to meeting and building relationships with the working people who make up the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation’s broad coalition of unions,” Kitto said. “Helping our affiliated unions continue to be the space where members achieve political power and shape the ways in which their workspaces run is something I’m really excited to do.”

As a home care worker for the past 15 years, Kitto has seen firsthand the power of joining together in a union. She joined SEIU Healthcare Minnesota three years ago, after a dispute with her employer over paid time off. Kitto filed a grievance, won back her PTO and made the decision to get more involved in her union.

Since then, she has volunteered to help get union members to the polls, lobbied at the Capitol and served on her union’s bargaining committee, which negotiated better wages and working conditions for more than 25,000 home care workers statewide. And as a home care organizer for the last two and a half years, Kitto has helped enlist more home care workers to make their union stronger.

“Coming out of one of the lowest-paying jobs in the state of Minnesota, I am drawn to this work because everyone deserves to be able to make a living wage and have the best working conditions,” Kitto said. “And I feel it is all of our responsibility as a society to make sure everyone is given the tools and respect they need to be successful.”

St. Paul RLF President Kera Peterson said Kitto’s hiring strengthens labor’s position heading into the Nov. 3 election. The Regional Labor Federation carries out Labor 2020 campaign work in the east metro.

“Jasmine brings energy, perspective and a wealth of experience to our political program at a critical moment in our work,” Peterson said. “We feel fortunate to have her on our team.”

Dalager Reed: a longtime volunteer

After devoting countless hours of volunteer service to the nonprofit Labor Studies and Resource Center (LSRC), Dalager Reed now works for the organization as an AFL-CIO Community Services liaison.

“I look forward to working with labor and our community at large to create coalitions and foster a culture of growth, giving and contribution,” said Dalager Reed, a member of Local 277 of the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) for the last 20 years.

The AFL-CIO Community Services Program represents a 70-year partnership between organized labor and Greater Twin Cities United Way. Community Services volunteers and staff improve the lives of working families by working with broad and diverse coalitions to promote dignity and economic justice for workers. They also empower workers and their unions to make their communities better, more responsive places to live, work, raise a family and retire.

As a Community Services liaison, Dalager Reed’s work will focus on union member outreach and assistance, utilizing Greater Twin Cities United Way’s wide range of services and resources, as well as program expansion, fundraising and other initiatives set forth by the St. Paul RLF.

“Coretta Scott King said, ‘The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.’” Dalager Reed said, “Labor unions and our fellow union members have been pivotal in creating and contributing to the prosperity of our communities, and I want to assist in any way I can to ensure that narrative continues.”

Dalager Reed, a resident of Lakeland, has represented OPEIU Local 277 as a delegate to the RFL for over 10 years, during which time she has also served as a Labor Community Action Committee member. Prior to accepting a position with the LSRC, she worked as a public relations consultant. She has been active in east metro as a disability advocate and as executive director of a Lutheran congregation in St. Paul.

“Erica’s roots in the east metro run deep, and she brings a vast network of connections inside and outside the labor community that will serve our movement well,” President Peterson said. “With Erica on staff, I am confident the St. Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center will continue to play a critical role in making our communities livable, welcoming places for all people.”

St. Paul unions, Red Cross plan blood drive to meet ‘constant need’

Donating blood is its own reward, as each pint of donated blood can save up to three lives. But this year, donating blood comes with an added benefit to the community.

The American Red Cross is testing all blood, platelet and plasma donations for COVID-19 antibodies. Plasma donations that test positive for the antibodies may help current coronavirus patients in need of convalescent plasma transplants.

The need for blood is constant, but with so much uncertainty during the pandemic, blood banks are having difficulty meeting the need.

Healthy union members are encouraged to donate blood during a labor blood drive Dec. 1, from noon to 6 p.m. at the St. Paul Labor Center, 353 7th St. The drive is co-sponsored by the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation’s nonprofit Labor Studies and Resource Center, Greater Twin Cities United Way and the American Red Cross.

The Red Cross follows the highest standards of safety and infection control, including temperature checks, mask requirements and social distancing. No walk-in donations are allowed, so please schedule an appointment in advance by calling Erica Dalager Reed at 651-222-3787, ext. 120.
Minutes of the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation

Stocked up on school supplies, thanks to delegate donations

The Jean Jones Initiative, an annual fundraising drive for school supplies coordinated by the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation's Labor Community Action Committee, this year collected $790. The money was used to purchase pens, notebooks, glue sticks, crayons, scissors, pencils, colored pencils, water colors, washable markers and hand sanitizer. The supplies will go to students whose families are participating in the Title I Program of St. Paul Public Schools. Thanks to everyone who donated.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES
OCTOBER 14, 2020

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

Items to come before this board included:

- PRESIDENT'S REPORT
  President Peterson updated everyone on continuing virtual meetings, involvement in political campaigns, supporting UNITE HERE, SEIU Healthcare Minnesota, Teamsters Local 320 and local unions at Bethesda East and South and Joseph's hospitals.
  She also announced the new hires: Jasmine Kitto, Political Organizer, and Erica Dalager Reed, AFL-CIO Community Services Liaison for St. Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center. Due to COVID-19 and the ongoing concerns of keeping everyone safe and healthy our annual Holiday Party has been cancelled.
  - ORGANIZING UPDATES/CAMPAIGNS:
    - AFSCME, APWU, ATU Local 1005, IAMAW, the Minnesota Nurses Association, NALC, Saint Paul Building and Construction Trades Council, Saint Paul Federation of Educators Local 291, St. Paul Local 284, Teamsters Local 120, UNITE HERE Local 17, USW Local 11-418 and White Bear Lake Educators gave an update to the organizing activities.
    - REQUESTS:
      - M/S/C FOR THE SAINT PAUL REGIONAL LABOR FEDERATION TO MAKE A DISTRIBUTION SITE FOR FARMERS TO FAMILIES FOOD PROGRAM.
      - M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A $50,000 DONATION TO THE CTUL'S VIRTUAL GALA ON NOVEMBER 19, 2020 FROM 7:00 – 8:00 PM.
    - THANK YOU NOTES
      Received on behalf of Teamsters Local 120 for the RLF's $500 contribution to Homes For Our Troops and the Saint Paul Building and Construction Trades Council for the RLF's $200 contribution to their annual golf tournament.
  - STAFF/LABOR LIAISON REPORTS
    - President Peterson called for a floor vote on the COPE Committee recommendations for granting labor endorsement.
    - M/S/C TO RECOMMEND GRANTING LABOR ENDORSEMENT OF JEFF LINDEMAN, CHISAGO LAKES SCHOOL BOARD; CAREL STILP, CHISAGO LAKES SCHOOL BOARD; BEN BAGLIO, APPLE VALLEY CITY COUNCIL; CHRISTIAN MCCLEARY, APPLE VALLEY CITY COUNCIL; JUSTIN OLSN, COTTAGE GROVE CITY COUNCIL; ABDULLAH ABDULLE, NEW BRIGHTON CITY COUNCIL; STEVE HUNT, NORTH ST. PAUL, MAPLEWOOD-OAKDALE SCHOOL BOARD; NANCY LIVINGTON, NORTH ST. PAUL, MAPLEWOOD-OAKDALE SCHOOL BOARD; CHARLOTTE NITARDY, NORTH ST. PAUL, MAPLEWOOD-OAKDALE SCHOOL BOARD; JAMILLA MAME, SAINT PAUL SCHOOL BOARD SPECIAL ELECTION.

Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays in October from 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. or 3:00 to 8:00 p.m. or on Saturdays in October from 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. You can also sign up to volunteer at www.mnaficio.org/volunteer. Indicate in the drop-down menu that you were recruited by the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation.

- M/S/C TO GRANT LABOR ENDORSEMENT OF JEFF LINDEMAN, CHISAGO LAKES SCHOOL BOARD; CAREL STILP, CHISAGO LAKES SCHOOL BOARD; BEN BAGLIO, APPLE VALLEY CITY COUNCIL; CHRISTIAN MCCLEARY, APPLE VALLEY CITY COUNCIL; JUSTIN OLSN, COTTAGE GROVE CITY COUNCIL; ABDULLAH ABDULLE, NEW BRIGHTON CITY COUNCIL; STEVE HUNT, NORTH ST. PAUL, MAPLEWOOD-OAKDALE SCHOOL BOARD; NANCY LIVINGTON, NORTH ST. PAUL, MAPLEWOOD-OAKDALE SCHOOL BOARD; CHARLOTTE NITARDY, NORTH ST. PAUL, MAPLEWOOD-OAKDALE SCHOOL BOARD; JAMILLA MAME, SAINT PAUL SCHOOL BOARD SPECIAL ELECTION.

- M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A $5,000 DONATION TO THE DFL HOUSE CAUCUS.

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

Submitted by, BERNADINE ENGELDORF
Secretary-Treasurer

NEW BUSINESS

- President Peterson called for a floor vote on the COPE Committee recommendations for granting labor endorsement.

- M/S/C TO RECOMMEND GRANTING LABOR ENDORSEMENT OF JEFF LINDEMAN, CHISAGO LAKES SCHOOL BOARD; CAREL STILP, CHISAGO LAKES SCHOOL BOARD; BEN BAGLIO, APPLE VALLEY CITY COUNCIL; CHRISTIAN MCCLEARY, APPLE VALLEY CITY COUNCIL; JUSTIN OLSN, COTTAGE GROVE CITY COUNCIL; ABDULLAH ABDULLE, NEW BRIGHTON CITY COUNCIL; STEVE HUNT, NORTH ST. PAUL, MAPLEWOOD-OAKDALE SCHOOL BOARD; NANCY LIVINGTON, NORTH ST. PAUL, MAPLEWOOD-OAKDALE SCHOOL BOARD; CHARLOTTE NITARDY, NORTH ST. PAUL, MAPLEWOOD-OAKDALE SCHOOL BOARD; JAMILLA MAME, SAINT PAUL SCHOOL BOARD SPECIAL ELECTION.

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

Submitted by, BERNADINE ENGELDORF
Secretary-Treasurer
LABOR ENDORSED

GENERAL ELECTION
NOVEMBER 3, 2020

U.S. Senate
Tina Smith

U.S. House of Representatives
Angie Craig (District 2)
Betty McCollum (District 4)
Tawnja Zahradka (District 6)

MINNESOTA SENATE
32: Joshua Fike
38: Justin Stofferahn
39: Josiah Hill
41: Mary Kunesh-Podein
42: Jason Isaacson
43: Charles Wiger
51: Jim Carlson
52: Matt Klein
53: Susan Kent
54: Karla Bigham
56: Lindsey Port
57: Greg Clausen
58: Matt Little
64: Erin Murphy
65: Sandy Pappas
66: John Marty
67: Foung Hawj

MINNESOTA HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES
32A: Renae Berg
32B: Katie Malchow
38A: Kris Fredrick
38B: Ami Wazlawik
39B: Shelly Christensen
41A: Connie Bernardy
41B: Sandra Feist
42A: Kelly Moller
42B: Jamie Becker-Finn
43A: Peter Fischer
51A: Sandra Masin
51B: Liz Reyer
52A: Rick Hansen
52B: Ruth Richardson
53A: Tou Xiong
53B: Steve Sandell
54A: Anne Claflin
54B: Kelsey Waits
56A: Jessica Hanson
56B: Kaela Berg
57A: Robert Bierman
57B: John Huot
58A: Erin Preese
58B: Sara Wolf
64A: Kaohly Her
64B: Dave Pinto
65A: Rena Moran
65B: Carlos Mariani
66A: Alice Hausman
66B: Athena Hollins
67A: John Thompson
67B: Jay Xiong

Ramsey County Commissioner
1: Nicole Frethem ● 2: Mary Jo McGuire
7: Victoria Reinhardt

Chisago County Commissioner
2: Rick Greene ● 3: Katie Werman Roche
5: Mike Robinson

Dakota County Commissioner
3: Laurie Halverson ● 4: Joe Atkins
7: Mary Hamann-Roland

Saint Paul School Board (Special Election)
Jamilia Mamie

North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale School Board
Steve Hunt ● Nancy Livingston
Charlotte Nitardy ● Cariottia Ruff

Chisago Lakes School Board
Jeff Lindeman ● Caleb Stilp

Apple Valley City Council
Ben Baglio ● Christian McCleary

Cottage Grove City Council: Justin Olsen

New Brighton City Council: Abdullahi Abdulle

North Branch Mayor: Jim Swenson

North Branch City Council: Amanda Darwin
West Saint Paul City Council: Robyn Gulley