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**NEWSLETTER**

Week ending September 16, 2022

**From the Desk of President Martin**

This week I attended the contract negotiation rally for the State of Nebraska workers, Nebraska Association of Public Employees/American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 61 (NAPE/AFSCME 61). They begin contract negotiations September 14, 2022. Justin Hubly, Executive Director of NAPE/AFSCME spoke on the importance of union and reiterated that the union is a group of people coming together to support each other, stating: "YOU ARE THE UNION." The State of Nebraska has over 8,000 employees. When Justin started at NAPE a few years ago, the number of employees in the union was just over 900. Four years later, they have increased membership 100% and the number of employees signing cards is increasing daily. As Melissa Haynes, President of NAPE/AFSCME stated "Our members worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic, and now is the time to invest in them." Many State Employees are underpaid compared to their private sector counterparts. Many still making low wages and having to work two jobs to make ends meet. Worker shortage is a rampant issue in many of the State agencies and with Nebraska's

low unemployment rate, the State of Nebraska must take steps to attract and retain workers. During negotiations, the union will seek increased pay, access to remote work options, parental leave, bilingual pay and increase sick leave payout upon retirement.

The union organizing and activism has been



transitional for State employees. The administration across the street at the capitol pays attention to the numbers. Again, issues do matter – organizing and joining a union can and will make a difference.

**STATEMENT ON RAILWAY NEGOTIATIONS:** *"Rail employees play an essential part in our everyday lives, delivering goods and services that we all rely on. During the pandemic, they showed up to work to ensure rail service continued to operate, even with fewer employees. The rail employers were not hurt and continue to see huge profits. The commitment and sacrifices these workers made are now on the table. What they are asking for is nothing less than what all workers deserve – a fair and family sustaining wage, affordable healthcare and a work/life balance that allows them the flexibility to take care of themselves and their family. The rail unions know what they need and we must let the contract negotiations play out without interference from Congress. We stand in support of all rail workers and ask that you stand with us"*  
Nebraska State AFL-CIO President Sue Martin

**MISSION:** The Raise the Wage Nebraska's ballot initiative aims to gradually increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2026 and continue to adjust each after that for inflation.

**An increase in the minimum wage benefits about 20% of Nebraska workers or 150,000 Nebraskans.**

Raising the minimum wage will help close the gender pay gap. 60% of Nebraskans who will benefit from an increase in the minimum wage are women.

Raising the minimum wage will help close the racial pay gap. 32% of Nebraskans who will benefit from an increase in the minimum wage are people of color.



## **Messages from AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler**

I see a lightbulb go off when working people realize we have a voice on the job. Instead of quitting jobs in frustration, we can stand together as part of a union and have the power to demand change. No worker should have to stand alone in the face of the power and ruthlessness of billionaire CEOs. That's why there is unprecedented organizing momentum across the country to level the playing field for workers who are simply fighting for a better, more secure life. The Center for Transformational Organizing represents the labor movement's deep commitment to leave nothing on the table when it comes to growing the power of working people through our unions.

Standing together, working people are tackling the big issues that we're facing right now and rebalancing the scales to create a fairer economy for the future.

**AMERICA**

**NEEDS**

**UNIONS**

AFL-CIO

We have the wind at our back. We are not only seeing a huge surge in organizing, but the most recent Gallup poll found that 71% of people support unions! We have to make the most of that momentum and that support as we

head into the midterm elections.

We're seeing that there are going to be a lot of close elections across the country. And close elections are won and lost by the ground game. The good news is, there's no one better at talking to voters and getting them excited to vote for candidates who share our values than union members. I don't think there's any question that the

past 2.5 years have been incredibly challenging for working people in every industry. We've all been operating in uncharted territory. And that's led a lot of people to rethink what we want out of work. The more organizing people see, the more the momentum builds, from sheet metal workers in Alaska to REI workers in the San Francisco Bay Area to museum workers at the Milwaukee Art Museum to nurses in Coral Gables, Florida, from tech workers at The New York Times to workers in the cannabis industry—even workers on Capitol Hill.



As we see this momentum building around the labor movement, we must double down on creating more organizing opportunities for more young people, people of color, more women and immigrants. And to bring people from the margins to the center of our movement, because we know the difference that union training and union jobs can make.

## Workers Ratify new Contract With Contitech

Summer 2022

Members of three local unions who work at ContiTech facilities voted in June to ratify a new three-year contract with the rubber and plastics manufacturer.

The new agreement, which runs through September 2025, covers a total of 600 members of Local 266L in Lincoln, NE, Local 843L in Marysville, Ohio, and Local 904L in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. Those workers make products including conveyor belting, track, power transmission products, and automotive hoses for a variety of markets.

“We entered these negotiations during a challenging time for the work force and the rubber industry – from the ongoing effects of the pandemic, to inflation to supply chain problems,”



said District 11 Director Emil Ramirez, who chaired the USW bargaining committee. “The fact that we achieved an agreement that moves the membership forward in so many areas is a testament to the strength and solidarity that exists throughout these local

union.”

The new ContiTech contract provides a signing bonus, increases retirement plan payments, and maintains cost-of-living wage increases and quality health care coverage. The agreement also includes provisions to attract and retain new workers, including higher wage rates, faster wage progression, more vacation time, and a shorter wait time for health insurance eligibility.

## Biden Administration Presses Unions, Railroads to Avoid Shutdown

REUTERS BY David Shepardson and Lisa Baertlein

September 12 (Reuters) The Biden administration urged railroads and unions to reach a deal to avoid a railroad work stoppage, saying on Monday it would pose “an unacceptable outcome” to the U.S. economy that could cost \$2 billion a day. Railroads, including Union Pacific, Berkshire Hathaway’s BNSF, CSX, and Norfolk Southern,

have until a minute after midnight on Friday to reach tentative deals with hold out unions representing about 60,000 workers. Failing to do so opens the door to union strikes, employer lockouts and congressional intervention.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

## UNION LEADERS WANT ‘QUALITY OF LIFE’ ADDRESSED IN CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

The North Platte Telegraph By: Job Vigil September 10, 2022



The Midwest Nebraska Central Labor Council brought union representatives to North Platte for its annual picnic at the Lincoln County Ag Society building on Saturday.

A number of local railroad union members filtered in to the event and heard from various speakers

who addressed the ongoing negotiations with the Association of American Railroads.

Luke V. Edington, general chairman of SMART (Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, Transportation) said the two

groups exchanged proposals, but no agreements have been reached with the Sept. 16 deadline looming.

He said “quality of life” issues are at the top of the list in terms of what the workers are concerned about.

“Quality of life is something that the Presidential Emergency Board did not really address,” Edington said. “They remanded that to arbitration between the parties. The agreements vary so much and we do understand what the PED board’s recommendation that, yeah, it’s all very complicated, but they just altogether dismissed and said the parties have to go back (to the negotiating table).”

Edington said the unions just want the carriers to sit down and try to work toward a resolution.

“Quality of life is not being addressed and we need that addressed.” Edington said.

Edington said along with quality-of-life issues, wages need to be addressed due to inflation. “We don’t feel like (wages) were quite up to par with our proposal that we had on the national level,” Edington said. “We did a lot of in-depth analysis and comparison and we feel it is very justified.”



John Kretzschmar, retired director of the University of Nebraska Omaha’s William Brennan Institute for Labor Studies took strong shots at the railroad corporations. “Corporations focus 24/7 on maximizing short-term profits for investors,” Kretzschmar said. “That is a greed-

driven model of how the economy works. Because those large publicly-traded companies account for two-thirds of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product), they’re the big dogs who really dictate what happens and that’s really worth pressing.” He said the corporations continually ask the workers to do more with less while the stockholders rake in the profits. Edington said inflation and the difficulty of finding workers is another big issue. “My committee covers from Chicago to Seattle and they’re trying to hire at every location under my jurisdiction,” Edington said. “They put applications out on the internet everywhere they can and they have five people in a classroom. Back in the day, we used to have 30 to 45 people in a classroom; they would have to turn people away.”

He said maybe two of the five people might stick around. “They see the quality of life and they don’t want that,” Edington said. “They want time off.” Retention is becoming more and more of a problem as well, he said.

“My committee has a former officer who started his own consulting company for railroad retirement and health care that is free to our members when they are ready to retire,” Edington said. “He gives me reports daily of the amount of members that are calling him saying I’m done, I’m not of age, I don’t care, I’m leaving the railroad.” That number averages 13 to 19 employees every week, Edington said. “They are 20-plus year employees and they’re willing to let that go,” Edington said. “It’s just crazy.” He said that has never been seen before in the railroad industry.

“If you want to bring stability to this industry again,” Edington said. “You’ve got to pay people to make these jobs attractive so we can get our supply chain stabilized again.” Also speaking to the crowd were two gubernatorial candidates Dave Wright (Independent) and Carol Blood, (Democrat) with both stating their support for the workers in the ongoing negotiations.



## **Railroad unions gather in North Platte, strike looms**

North Platte Bulletin By George Lauby

September 12, 2022 With the possibility of a railroad workers strike looming September 16<sup>th</sup>, union members at North Platte’s Bailey Yard rallied Saturday, saying they want better working conditions. The possibility of a railroad strike has been building all summer. Workers are operating under a seven-year-old agreement that they say has been modified in management’s favor. Technically, union-management agreements are supposed to be updated every five years. But if the two sides cannot agree, the existing agreement is extended until they can reach an agreement. They continue to fail to reach an agreement. [READ MORE HERE](#)



## SMART Local 200 Sister Amanda Snide Receives Midwest Nebraska Central Labor Council 'Solidarity Star' Award



September 10, 2022 ~ North Platte, NE  
 During the Midwest Nebraska Central Labor Council's Union Unity Gathering at the Lincoln County Fairgrounds in North Platte, Amanda Snide, SMART Local 200 was the Inaugural Recipient of their Labor Council's "Solidarity Star" Award. Sister Snide was recognized for her tireless and dedicated efforts for the good of the union and for always being the first one to be there when needed. Congratulations Sister Snide on this much deserved recognition!

Pictured in the photos:  
 (Top right) Luke Edington, General Chairman of SMART TD 953, Jeff Cooley, President of the Midwest Nebraska Central Labor Council, and Amanda Snide, SMART Local 200  
 (Bottom left) Luke Edington, General Chairman of SMART TD 953, Mike Gage, Secretary/Treasurer of the Midwest Nebraska Central Labor Council, and Amanda Snide, SMART Local 200

## NEBRASKA STATE AFL-CIO Endorsed Candidates for the 2022 General Election – November 8th

<p><b>Governor:</b> _____ <u>Carol Blood</u></p> <p><b>U. S. House:</b>                  1st District _____ <u>Patty Pansing Brooks</u>                  2nd District _____ <u>Tony Vargas</u></p> <p><b>State Board of Education:</b>                  District 5 _____ <u>Helen Raikes</u>                  District 6 _____ <u>Danielle Helzer</u>                  District 7 _____ <u>Robin Stevens</u>                  District 8 _____ <u>Deborah Neary</u></p> <p><b>Nebraska Board of Regents:</b>                  District 7 _____ <u>Matt Williams</u></p> <p><b>Public Service Commission:</b>                  District 5 _____ <u>Kevin Stocker</u></p> <p><b>Nebraska Public Power:</b>                  Subdivision 3 _____ <u>Melissa Freeland</u></p> <p><b>Omaha Public Power District:</b>                  Subdivision 4 _____ <u>Matt Core</u>                  Subdivision 5 _____ <u>Kevin Ryan</u></p>	<p><b>Metropolitan Utilities District of Omaha:</b>                  Subdivision 7 _____ <u>Bob Sidzyk</u></p> <p><b>Metropolitan Community College:</b>                  District 4 _____ <u>Ron Hug</u>                  At Large _____ <u>Kristen DuPree</u></p> <p><b>Lancaster County Commissioner:</b>                  District 1 _____ <u>Sean Flowerday</u>                  District 5 _____ <u>Rick Vest</u></p> <p><b>Nebraska Legislature:</b>                  District 2 _____ <u>Sarah Slattery</u>                  District 6 _____ <u>Machaela Cavanaugh</u>                  District 8 _____ <u>Megan Hunt</u>                  District 10 _____ <u>Wendy DeBoer</u>                  District 18 _____ <u>Michael Young</u>                  District 20 _____ <u>John Fredrickson</u>                  District 26 _____ <u>George Dungan</u>                  District 31 _____ <u>Tim Royers</u>                  District 32 _____ <u>Tom Brandt</u>                  District 36 _____ <u>Angie Lauritsen</u>                  District 46 - Co-Endorsement:                  _____ <u>James Michael Bowers</u>                  _____ <u>Danielle Conrad</u></p>
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Vote FOR 433 to Raise the Minimum Wage

**Royers for Legislature** 8h · 🌐

It's official now! Earlier this evening, the Secretary of State's office notified us that they certified the receipt of 2,372 valid signatures. We can now say we are OFFICIALLY on the ballot! The work never slowed down since we turned our signatures in, but it will certainly speed up now as we head into these final weeks before the election. Thank you to all for your support, let's carry this on to victory in November!

**IT'S OFFICIAL!  
WE'RE ON THE BALLOT!**

**ROYERS** ✓  
FOR LEGISLATURE

## GREAT NEWS!

**On Monday, Tim Royers, Candidate for the Legislative District 31 race was officially notified by the Nebraska Secretary of State that his name will be on the ballot.**

**Tim Royers ran for the office in 2020 and was narrowly defeated (231 votes) by Rich Pahls.**

**The seat became vacant after the death of Rich Pahls on April 27, 2022. The Governor appointed Kathleen Kauth to replace Pahls.**

**Kathleen Kauth is also seeking election to this seat.**

**Tim was endorsed by the delegates at the Nebraska State AFL-CIO COPE Convention earlier this year.**

Please join us for a fundraiser in support of

**Commissioner Rick Vest**  
for Lancaster County Board

Hosted by Hon. Don Wesely

**Co-Hosts**

Hon. Marian Price	Roger Eschliman
Hon. Patsy Koch Johns	Dayle Williamson
Hon. Doug Emery	Jane Egan
Hon. Coleen Seng	Deanne and Gerry Finnegan
Hon. Kathy Danek	Mary and Roger Bruning
John and Beatty Brasch	Vic Covalt
Wayne Boles	W. Don Nelson

**Wednesday, September 14th, 2022**  
5:30 - 7:00 PM

**Don Wesely's Home**  
6825 Platte Ave.  
Lincoln, NE 68507

**Suggested Contribution \$100.00**

If you can't join us and wish to contribute,  
donate online at [VoteVest.com](http://VoteVest.com)

or mail checks to  
P.O. Box 29132, Lincoln, NE 68529

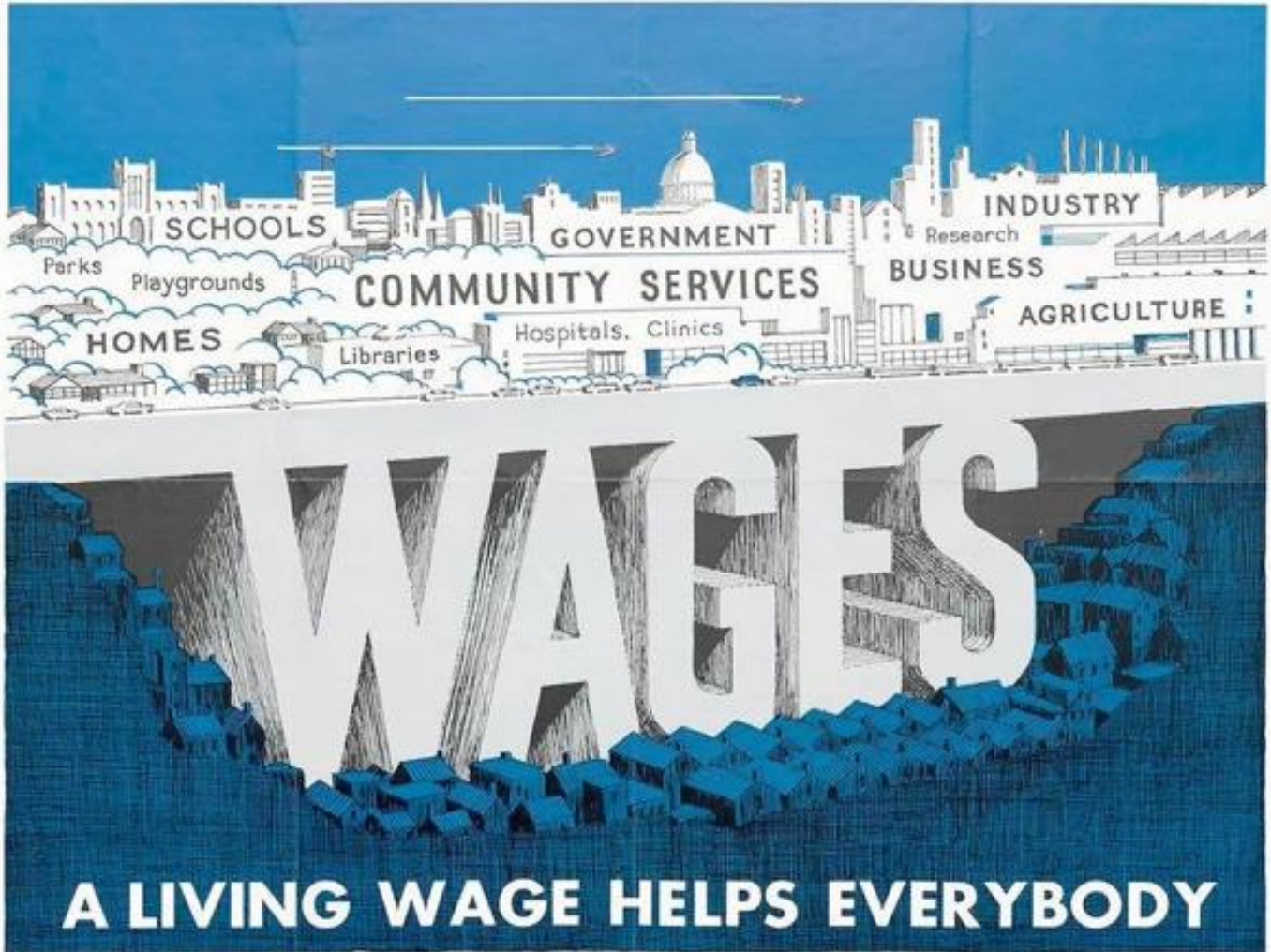
Paid for by Vote Vest | 1740 N 80th Street, Lincoln, NE 68505

## **CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS!**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>City</b>
9/17/2022	Omaha Bldg & Construction Trades	22 <sup>nd</sup> Annual DAD's Day 4 Person Scramble Golf Event	9:00am	Tara Hills Golf Course	Papillion
9/21/2022	NALC Branch 5	MDA Golf Tournament	8:00am	Tregaron Golf Course	Bellevue
9/28/2022	Central NE CLC	Annual Picnic	5:30pm	Stolley Park 2103 W Stolley Park Rd	Grand Island
11/8/2022	General Election	Elections Across the State	8am-8pm CDT	The State of Nebraska	Nebraska

*Please share your Local's event highlights with us!*

*If your Local Union or Central Body had an event or upcoming events that you want shared on in our Newsletter and Calendar of Events, please send them to Lori Meyers, Communications Director/Mobization Coordinator at: [comms@neaf-cio.org](mailto:comms@neaf-cio.org) or call 402-310-1952*



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