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Serving the Active and Retired Members of IAM District Lodge 190

Al Pension Fund rescue in the works

By July 6, the Automotive Industries (AI) Trust Fund will receive word that the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) will provide more than \$1 billion in needed funding to make the AI pension plan whole for at least the next 30 years. That means that members who have paid into that plan and were expecting a full pension will be able to count on receiving it.

There's no denying that the AI plan was in trouble. And it wasn't alone. As many as 114 multiemployer pension plans covering nearly 1.3 million workers were severely underfunded and headed toward failure within the next 20 years. The largest of these was the Teamsters' Central States plan, which had the most unfunded liabilities at nearly \$35 billion.

What precipitated this looming disaster for so many people who had worked all their careers, often taking lower wage increases to bolster their pension contributions? At the close of the 1990s, the majority of multiemployer plans reported assets exceeding 90 percent of total liabilities.

The back story of the Al plan

In fact, back in the 90s the AI plan was well over 100% funded, and the Trustees were forced to improve benefits nearly every year to preserve the plan's tax exempt status. "Older members will recall that in the mid-1990s, the big issue was IRS Section 415, which states that a retiree could not collect more in pension than the average of their three highest year's earnings. Several members were projected to have pensions that were hundreds, or even thousands of dollars per month higher than what they earned," says District 190 Directing Business Rep (DBR) and AI Trustee Don Crosatto. "In fact, the Individual Account



Those in the AI Pension Plan will be able to count on full payment at least through 2051.

"...It was a kick to sign an

application for more than

\$1 billion, especially know-

ing that it will support our

retirees for years to come."

Retirement Plan was created as a "spillover" account to give these members something for their extra contributions. In retrospect, it's crazy how solid the AI plan was in the 90s.

Since then, stock market declines—particularly the disastrous 2008-2010 financial crisis, coupled with low interest rates and poor economic conditions, reduced assets and increased liabilities for many plans. In addition, numerous employers themselves went bankrupt or pulled out of the plans, leaving far fewer working members to add assets to the plan.

Finding a solution

While unions and pension plan trustees had been seeking legislative solutions for over a de-

cade, it took the pandemic and the resulting American Rescue Plan introduced by the Biden administration, to finally solve the crisis.

Tucked inside the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan (ARP) that became law in March of 2021 was an \$86 billion package

designed to support troubled multi-employer pension plans for 30 years. Known as the "Special Financial Assistance Program for Financially Troubled Multiemployer Plans," the funding will enable plans like the AI plan to pay benefit obligations to their participants through 2051. "Actually, the 2051 date is based on very conservative earning assumptions," adds Crosatto. "If we hit even close to our long-term earnings rate, the plan will be strong for many years beyond that date."

As reported in an earlier edition of *The Spark-plug*, the AI Plan was qualified to apply for financial assistance but could not submit an application

until their "priority group" was opened by the PBGC. That opportunity opened on February 11, 2023, and the Trustees jumped on it. The Automotive Industries Pension Plan was submitted and accepted by the PBGC on March 8, 2023. The application requests approximately \$1.056 billion in assistance.

"Thinking about *The Sparkplug*, I was hoping to have a photo of me and some of the trustees signing the 1,000-page application. However, the submission is all done online, giving us no photo opportunities," says DBR and Trustee Don Crosatto. "But it was a kick to sign an application for more than \$1 billion, especially knowing that it will support our retirees for years to come."

The PBGC has 120 days from the date an ap-

plication is submitted to review the assumptions made under the application, the participant data, and all supporting documents. That magic date is July 6, 2023.

The Board of Trustees anticipates to hear back from the PBCG sometime in late May or early June

if there are questions regarding the application. If there are no questions from the PBGC and the application is accepted, the \$1.056 billion in funding assistance will be received in early August 2023.

The Board of Trustees will continue to monitor the progress of the application with the PBGC and will work diligently to support the financial stability and longevity of the plan.

For additional information on the Special Financial Assistance program or the application process with the PBGC, please visit their website at www.PBGC.gov/arp-sfa.

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Get your IAM news on the web! Visit the

District 190 website at: iamdistrict190.org

The International IAM website is at: **goiam.org**

Local Lodge websites:

Local 1101: www.iamlocal1101.org Local 1414: facebook.com/IAMLOCAL1414/

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Union Organizer: @union1484

Facebook pages:

Local 1101: facebook.com/

Search for IAMAW-Local 1101 Local 1546: facebook.com/iam1546

TIkTok

Local 1484: Search for Mercedes Benz San Diego



Retired and active members: Please write in if something in *The Sparkplug* makes you happy or mad or inspires you to action. All letters from members will be used, space permitting. They may be edited for length or grammar, but not for content. Letters may be submitted as follows:

e-mail: dchaplan@mindspring.com mail: IAM District 190

IAM District 190 8201 Capwell Drive Oakland, CA 94621

MOVING?

Or need to report a member recently deceased...

Send the mailing label on this newspaper to your local union office. Please note: If you send your notice to the Pension Fund or the Health and Welfare Trust, that won't change your address as the union has it. Be sure to contact your local union!

See calendar on Page 8 for your local union's address.

The IAM District 190 Spark plug

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Debra Chaplan, Managing Editor

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UNION PEOPLE

Local 1484 retirees re-convene post COVID



With the relaxation of COVID protocols in Los Angeles County, Local 1484 decided it was time to re-open the doors of the Local for the retirees. On a very rainy March 15, a good turnout of retirees attended their first meeting in three years. "We look forward to continuing to build on our retiree meetings and programs," said Area Director Kevin Kucera. "We have a great group showing up to meetings and addressing all the issues important to seniors."

NOTE: The Retiree Club is holding nominations for a new club president at the May 17 meeting.

Recognizing excellent work

At Local 2182's April General Membership meeting held on April 11, Executive Board member Paul Govoni was surprised to receive a plaque for 30 years of service to UPS. The plaque was presented to him by UPS area manager Jon Larson.

Govoni started at UPS in 1993 and that's when he joined the IAM. He retired in 2021 and continues to serve as a trustee on the Local's executive board.

His old friend and coworker Robert Gately surprised Paul by showing up with Jon.



(From left) Paul Govoni, Robert Gately, and UPS's Jon Larson celebrate Paul's 30 years of service.

Renovations at Local 1546

If you've been to Local 1546's building in East Oakland over the last 10-15 years, you've seen that it needs a refresh—the old linoleum and acoustic tiles were tired and worn, and the bathrooms were, well, dated.

Local 1546 built the building from the ground up in 1961 after moving out of the Oakland Labor Temple. "They built the building at that location because the Peterbilt plant, the Local's biggest employer, was two blocks away. Sadly, Peterbilt moved to Newark in 1963 and closed in 1986," says DBR Don Crosatto.

Additional offices were added in 1972, and the building got some new carpet in the late 1990s. "We hope to continue to renovate the rest of the building, as it's structurally sound and centrally located."

The building currently houses not only Local 1546, but also Local 1584 and the District 190 Apprenticeship Program.

After nearly two years of developing plans and getting numerous bids, phase one of the \$430,000+ project was launched on March 9, under the management of Business Rep Robbie Pintos. Marvin Collins Construction is the primary contractor, and they and all of their subcontractors are union-affiliated. Phase two is slated to begin at the end of May, and the project should be completed in early July.

The whole project includes installation of new flooring, ceilings, and glass windows in the corridor that leads from the entry to the kitchen. In addition, the men's and women's bathrooms will be updated and an ADA-compliant bathroom will be created. The two phases of work were created so that some bathrooms are always available for use while the project is in process.





Work on Local 1546's Oakland offices is moving ahead on schedule.



NEWS FROM THE TRUST FUND

COVID-19 national public health emergency to end

The National Public Health Emergency for COVID-19 is set to expire on May 11, 2023. This will impact some of the provisions of the medical plan that were implemented when the pandemic began in March 2020.

The Trustees of the Welfare Plan are currently working with our healthcare consultant regarding the expiration of the National Public Health Emergency and will communicate any changes that will be made to the benefits due to the expiration.

Your rights and protections against surprise medical bills

Effective January 1, 2022, the No Surprises Act went into effect that prohibits medical providers from levying "surprise bills" (officially called balance-billing) when you get emergency care or get treated by an out-of-network provider at an in-network hospital or ambulatory surgical center.

Getting an unexpected or "surprise" balance bill can happen when you can't control who is involved in your care—like when you have an emergency or when you schedule a visit at an in-network facility but are unexpectedly treated by an out-of-network provider.

You are protected from balance billing for:

Emergency services: If you have an emergency medical condition and get emergency services from an out-of-network provider or facility, the maximum that the provider or facility may bill you is your plan's in-network cost-sharing amount (such as copayments and coinsurance). You can't at 800-635-3105, by email at AlSupport@hsba.com, be balance-billed for these emergency services. This includes services you may get after you're in stable condition, unless you give written consent and give up your protections not to be balanced billed for



these post-stabilization services.

Certain services at an in-network hospital or ambulatory surgical center: When you get services from an in-network hospital or ambulatory surgical center, certain providers there may be out-ofnetwork. In these cases, the most those providers may bill you is your plan's in-network cost-sharing amount. This applies to emergency medicine, anesthesia, pathology, radiology, laboratory, neonatology, assistant surgeon, hospitalist, or intensivist services. These providers can't balance-bill you and may not ask you to give up your protections not to be balance-billed.

You're never required to give up your protections from balance-billing. You also are not required to get care out-of-network. You can choose a provider or facility in your plan's network.

If you believe you've been wrongly billed, you may contact the Automotive Industries Welfare Plan

or by visiting www.aitrustfunds.org for assistance. Visit www.cms.gov/nosurprises for more information about your rights under federal law.

Update your life insurance beneficiary

You can name anyone to be the beneficiary of your life insurance benefit under the Welfare Plan. Over time, your choice of beneficiary may have changed. The Plan recommends that you review your beneficiaries on a regular basis to make sure you named the correct person to receive the benefit.

You can review your beneficiary online through the Trust Funds website at www.aitrustfunds.org. Enrollment forms are also available on the site if you need to update your beneficiary.

Reminder: Pension plan searching for former participants

The Automotive Industries Pension Plan currently has approximately 2,000 participants who are entitled to receive a pension payment under the Plan but have not made application for their money. If you know someone who used to work in the industry during the 1970's or 1980's, is over age 65 and is not receiving a pension payment from the Trust Fund, they could be missing out a monthly payment from the Plan. Have them contact the Trust Fund Office at 800-635-3105 for a review of their work history to see if they are eligible.

Second Annual Car & Motorcycle Show a big success for GW Auto Shop Club











Saturday, April 22, was the day of the Second Annual Car/Motorcycle Show to benefit the George Washington High School Auto Shop Club in San Francisco.

Auto shop instructor and Local 1414 retiree Rich Del Rosso (pictured above) organized a sold-out and very successful show, held in the high school's parking lot. Numerous sponsors, including IAM Local 1414, supported the show and many members brought heir cars and mingled.

"We thank the many members and retirees who helped Rich make this show a success," says former IAM Business Rep and Local 1414 active retiree Art Gonzalez. "We also acknowledge the GW principal and staff who support the auto shop program every day."

Local 1414 was instrumental in rebuilding the auto shop program 10 years ago. Gonzalez spearheaded the project and DelRosso was one of its first instructors.

Currently, 101 students are registered in the program. Over the years, many auto shop graduates became apprentices, and have since turned out as journeymen and become active members of the Local.











Scenes from the 2023 Second Annual Car and Motorcycle Show at GW High School in San Francisco. (Top Center) Instructor and event organizer Rich Del Rosso prepares to call out the winners. (Bottom Right) Art Gonzalez in the auto shop. Page 4 April/May/June 2023

AROUND 7

Local 1101

Big raises

The 49 members at **Burke Industries** in San Jose create "a diverse portfolio of elastomeric solutions"—from roofing materials, to linings for reservoirs and ponds and more.

In March, the members ratified a three-year contract that includes hourly raises of \$1.50 in year one, and \$1.00 in the following two years, and an increase in the attendance bonus from 4 to 6% (which will start being received once the entire group signs up for direct deposit.)

"This was their best, most lucrative contract yet," says Business Rep Pedro Gonzalez.

Local 1173

Best contract ever

The 42 members at **MGM Brake** in Cloverdale finished their new three-year contract in April. "It was tough," says Area Director Steve Older.

"Even though they got wage increases of 15.5% over three years, with 7.6% of that in year one plus a \$250 signing bonus, which is huge, a large proportion of these members had never been through negotiations before and didn't really understand how the process works," explains Older.

"In addition to the wage increases, we also got these members small improvements in the health care cost-sharing and vacation accrual. While we have to acknowledge that some members were ready to strike and others were disappointed that they didn't get a larger signing bonus. Overall, the group got a very good deal."

Good pre-talks news

Negotiations at **Bill Brandt Ford** are slated to open in late April, which is why Business Rep Brian Fealy was surprised to get a call from management asking for an informal meeting prior to opening the contract.

"Without going too deep into the weeds, it was a very positive conversation," Fealy reports. "Business is

doing well and running smoothly and everyone would like it to stay that way. I'm looking forward to productive negotiations."

Without our members...

The eight members who work for **Fred's Body Shop** in Eureka are proud to set the standard for quality repair and customer service in that far north coast area. While negotiations are never easy, the talks always go more smoothly when the employer recognizes that it's the members who make the business successful.

To that end, the members at Fred's ratified a new contract in early April that includes wage increases of 6.45%, 4.55%, and 4.35% over the three-year term. Additionally, the employer agreed to increase the contribution to the medical plan by \$75 per month in year one, and by \$50 in the second and third years of the agreement, bringing some much-needed relief. The members will also gain an additional sick day and will finally have dues check-off.

Talks open

The contract at **Soscol Auto Body** in Napa is open for negotiations, Fealy reports. At press time, the union and management will have their second meeting.

Local 1414

Contracts in the works

Area Director Steve Older reports that he's starting negotiations with the Fresno, Livermore, and Salinas locations of **Toyota Material Handling**.

Why are these members of Local 1414, the local that mostly represents members in San Francisco and San Mateo counties? Apparently, the company started in Burlingame and has moved east ever since.

Other Toyota talks

Speaking of the peninsula, Older is in ongoing talks with Magnussen Toyota in Palo Alto. "This contract is coming along," he says.

Moving along

DBR Don Crosatto reports that he and Jerry Guttierez have started negotiations with **Morgan Ceram**- ics in Hayward. "The talks are going well," he says. "We're meeting regularly and have just gotten into the big issues of wages and health benefits." Crosatto adds that the use of Zoom has allowed the HR director to participate in the talks from her office in Windsor, England.

Terminal talks

The **SSA Terminals** contracts are now open. "At this point, we only know that the talks will be impacted by the ongoing ILWU negotiations. The Hawaii ILWU got a 10% first-year raise," says DBR Don Crosatto, "so that's a good starting place."

Local 1484

Ongoing strike at Mercedes Benz San Diego

The techs at Mercedes Benz of San Diego have been on strike since June 16, 2022. "The goal of the union and these members is, and has always been, to get back to the table and put Humpty Dumpty back on the wall," says Area Director Kevin Kucera.

"We were gaining traction with organizing the Mercedes Benz brand," Kucera adds. "We're working to turn this around so we can keep organizing."

The Labor Board recently ruled against the employer in all but one charge for the unfair labor practices that they had filed against the union. In the early days of the strike, the members had heard rumors that their tool boxes had been opened and 20 of them went inside the shop to secure them. The company claimed that the techs had illegally trespassed on company property.

Video taken by shop steward Pedro Gomez shows that the techs conducted themselves in an orderly fashion. The company had contacted law enforcement but no charges of illegal trespassing were even filed. The only charge still pending with the labor board is illegal egress/ingress and the union is hopeful that this charge will also be denied when the Board finds that this is an "Unfair Labor Practices" strike.

Hopefully, this will kickstart negotiations or a settlement of sorts.

While most of the techs have other work to support themselves and their families, they are standing strong and continuing their regular pickets.

Raises but no union

Responding to the successful union drive at Mercedes Benz, the techs at Lexus San Diego also voted to unionize. But the company aggressively avoided negotiating in good faith. Once the first year passed without a contract secured, the employer launched a "divide and conquer" campaign, offering

large increases to a specific group of workers. As a result, the group voted to decertify the union.

Even after the decert, however, the company was not keeping its promises. Armed with their union skills, the techs confronted the General Manager to pay up. That concerted action worked as they got substantial wage increases the following week.

Bigger unit

The 84 members at **Con Global**, a company that maintains and stores containers for the Southern California ports, ratified a new four-year agreement in March.

In the first year, wages will be increased three times what they've historically gotten, that historic number will be doubled the second year, and members will see respectable increases in years three and four.

In addition to the main group in Wilmington, the company agreed to expand the bargaining unit to include the 12 employees who work at a new yard in Colton.

"The negotiating committee (Stewards Jose Curiel and Adrian Reyes) worked really hard and the talks were tough. In the end, the committee didn't recommend the agreement," says Kevin Kucera. "However, in a close vote, the membership voted to ratify it."

Local 1528

Gearing up

For the 271 members who work at Applied Aerospace in Stockton, negotiations are coming soon.

Business Rep Paul Abarca reports that members should watch for and complete the union survey to set their priorities for what should be in the contract. He will also be out at the plant to meet members and answer questions during two lunch periods.

Abarca also asks members to just say YES if human resources asks if you would like union representation. And then inform James Nesbit (your Chief Shop Steward), or Shop Stewards Larry Johnson, Richard Perez, or Ivan Webb, John Swing, that HR talked to you.

Local 1546

McKevitt pays up

The 10 members at McKevitt Volvo in San Leandro and the 8 members at McKevitt Dodge/Jeep/Ram/Alfa/Fiat in Berkeley each ratified their respective new three-year agreement(s) on February 3.

Business Rep Brian Fealy reports that the members were most concerned about two issues from the previous contract: one is that the employer wouldn't agree to retroactive pay, and two is, when they finally did, they took too long to cut the checks.



HE LOCALS

Organizing Wins



Urbaser employees at the Waste Management facility in San Leandro voted for union representation. Depending on their job, they'll become members of either the IAM, Teamsters, or the Longshore Workers (ILWU) union.

This contract was also not completed on time and the employer was again adamant that they wouldn't pay retro wages, but the delay was substantially shorter. "Because the bargaining units were strong and I had an excellent negotiating partner in Don Alcantara (steward at the Berkeley store), we made it clear that some kind of retro pay had to be part of the deal or there was likely to be a problem," Fealy explains. "While the employer was still not willing to give retro pay, we called it a signing bonus. In the end, we didn't get everything we were owed, but we got pretty close."

Additionally, the contract includes wage increases of 5.5%, 4.5%, and 3.0% over the three years for each classification; we shortened the years of experience required to be a Master Technician, Journeyman Technician, and a Line Technician by two years, two years, and one year respectively, we got more time for funeral leave, and improved the cost-sharing of the medical premium increases. Each ASE certificate will earn the techs another \$0.05 per hour. Those at the Berkeley store will gain an additional \$10.00/month contribution to their Machinists 401K plan. (The San Leandro members have a pension instead.)

Still ongoing

Older reports that the 20 members at Safeway in Tracy are working on a contract extension, as talks continue. Watch these pages for more news.

Big changes at Honda of El Cerrito

Nobody knows what will happen in the talks with Honda of El Cerrito, but big changes are afoot.

After 30 years of ownership as a union shop, Hendrick's sold El Cerrito Honda to Ken Harvey (who owns non-union Honda dealerships in Dublin, Tracy, and Hayward). "We know Ken Harvey. Thirty years ago, when the Dublin store was surrounded by union shops, Ken Harvey paid at or above scale and offered a fairly good health care plan," says DBR Don Crosatto. "Sadly, the rise of non-union stores has enabled them to reduce the quality of benefits without worrying that the techs would organize."

Talks to come

Talks at Aramark Uniform are slated to start in early May.

Coming this summer: Richmond Sanitary; ACI (the garbage company for San Leandro and Alameda); Albany Subaru; California Waste Solutions; Preferred Truck & Equipment (the subcontractor for Pleasanton & Dublin (ABI) garbage; and MV Transportation in Pinole (which services WestCAT). Ryder in Hayward will open later in the year.

Local 1584

Chemtrade talks started

Chemtrade Logistics provides industrial chemicals and services to customers in the oil & gas, water treatment, pulp & paper, and food & beverage industries. Located in Richmond, Chemtrade employs about 20 union members who work as operators and plant maintenance mechanics.

"The contract is open and we have negotiations scheduled for three days at the end of April," says Business Rep Brian Fealy. "Unfortunately the relationship has been contentious over the last year and I don't expect that to be any different in negotiations."

Contracts opening

The George M. Martin Company in Emeryville is the world's numberone provider of converting equipment and bundle line systems for the corrugated industry. The Ashlock **Company** in San Leandro makes small stone fruit pitting machines for olives and cherries.

The products of both companies are sold around the world. And both contracts open up this summer.

Local 2182

2x minimum wage

The 16 members at California Tank Lines in Stockton finally ratified a new contract in March. According to Business Rep Paul Abarca, their previous contract expired in September of 2022. The biggest issue for these members was wages, and here, they had a complete win.

According to state law, if a worker supplies their own tools, as do most

Voting Union Yes!

On March 30, 16 workers at Zero Waste Energy (Urbaser Project) who work at the Waste Management facility in San Leandro voted to become union members.

"It was a multi-union petition," says Area Director for Organizing Jesse Juarez. "These folks create compost from customers' green bin waste. The operators and cleaners will join Teamsters Local 70 and IILWU Local 6, and we'll represent the five maintenance workers.

Juarez says that the organizing campaign was fairly mellow. "The rest of that facility is all union, so the company is used to us."

At press time, the Labor Board is set to certify the election and then bargaining for the combined contract can commence.

And still waiting...

While the union won elections at Audi of Concord and Tracy Toyota early in the pandemic days, there are still no contracts at either. "We've got lots of charges filed at the Labor Board. These dealerships are using every legal avenue to NOT bargain, and at this point, labor law is not working well on behalf of the workers," Juarez says.

mechanics, they must be paid two times the minimum wage, at a minimum. "The company has repeatedly attempted to purchase tools for the utility mechanics who work on the trailers so they can bypass paying the state-mandated wage," Abarca says.

"In the end, we were able to convince the company to not provide tools, so that the wage stands. Plus we got them a 9% average increase over the two-year contract period." Abarca adds that the union also resolved a shift differential dispute, reduced the mechanics' cost share for their health and welfare benefits, and added a boot allowance that provides a new pair of boots every 12 months.

Catching up

Eight members work as Utility Technician 1s and 2s at A&A Ready Mixed Concrete at the Port of Sacramento. Paul Abarca explains that their contract expired January 31 and the negotiations resulted in a two-year contract that they ratified on March 9.

The agreement adds two paid holidays for a total of 10, increases the boot allowance from \$125 a year to \$200, and most important, increases wages. The Utility Technician 1s will get an 11% increase and the Utility Technician 2s will see a 20% rise over the two years, catching them up to industry standards.

Two years, big increases

Getting wages increased was a big priority for the 50 members at Riverview International in West Sacramento, and Paul Abarca reports that they succeeded.

Over the two-year agreement, the members in the body shop will see a 9% increase, the parts counter member will see 9.25%, the Parts warehouse members will get 12.77%, the parts driver will be up 17%, and the highest trained technicians will get 16.87%. "Their wages will go from \$40 to \$47 per hour," Abarca says. The contract was ratified in February.

Fighting for our work

Area Director Mark Martin reports that the Local has some jurisdictional issues with the Operating Engineers at Teichert Construction regarding articulating dump trucks.

"Our members have repaired

these trucks for more than 20 years," Martin says. "We have a grievance on file and are working to get this issue resolved. Remember, work jurisdiction is job security."

Record-setting

The members who work at **Waste** Management in Lodi organized and got their first union agreement back in 2015, achieving a record-setting contract settlement. "Some classifications reached an 18% increase in year one alone," says Mark Martin.

In February, the group of 35 drivers, lodaders and shop personnel ratified a new three-year contract that Martin says "provides for some of the largest increases in this local's history, with many improvements in other contract language as well." He credits the "outstanding negotiating committee—Jay Macanas, Jordan Brown, John Sauseda, and Erick Pilger—who were huge contributors to the contract's success. Their efforts are very much appreciated."

Locals 2182 and 801

Bimbo contract

The six truck mechanics at **Bimbo** Baking, out of Reno and Sacramento, overwhelmingly ratified a new three-year contract in March..

"The agreement provides for \$3.55 wage increases over the contract term, with significant protection for benefit increases, a new severance package, and language improvements," says Area Director Mark Martin.

Locals 2182, 1528, 653

Nor Cal contract

The IAM represents 75 members at JM Equipment who work out of Manteca, Merced, Patterson, Sacramento, and Fresno in three different locals—and, in March, they ratified a new three-year contract.

In all, wages will increase 7.9% for the parts department members and 10.96% for the mechanics, reports Business Agent Paul Abarca, who was also able to secure better progression language for mechanics working towards journeyman status.

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IN THE NEWS

The Supreme Court may severely hinder unions' right to strike

When concrete workers went on strike in Seattle, they returned their trucks to the company yard and left them running to prevent the concrete from becoming unusable and to avoid damaging the vehicles. Because of these precautions, the trucks were fine. But since the workers weren't making deliveries, some of the concrete became unusable.

As a result, Glacier Northwest, Inc., the company, sued the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local Union 174 for the economic loss of the concrete. When they lost their initial case in the Washington Supreme Court, Glacier took the case to the top, and the Supreme Court heard arguments in January. By the end of June, the Supreme Court will decide whether employers can sue unions for economic harm, including that caused by loss of perishable products, that result from workers going on strike.

Strikes, or the threat of strikes, are one of the most powerful tools workers have for securing better pay, benefits, and working conditions. This case could potentially open the doors to lawsuits against unions anytime they strike, severely weakening this crucial and federally-protected right. The case has drawn attention as a broad attack on the labor movement just when workers nationwide are voicing their desire for unions, organizing, and striking at levels not seen for decades.

But this case is also important for American democracy. A ruling in the employer's favor would undermine democracy by harming the ability of working people throughout the economy to exercise collective power to counter the influence of wealthy corporations, with dire implications for the health of our economy and government.

from Terry Gerstein & Jenny Hunter Slate Magazine

Amazon loses bid to overturn historic union win at Staten Island warehouse

In the spring of 2022, the upstart Amazon Labor Union won the right to represent some 8,000 workers at the massive New York warehouse. This past January, the National Labor Relations Board's Region 28 director, Cornele Overstreet, ruled that Amazon should recognize its first unionized warehouse in the U.S., rejecting the company's bid to unravel a breakthrough union win on Staten Island. Overstreet dismissed Amazon's allegations that labor-board officers and union organizers improperly influenced the union vote.

This decision requires Amazon to begin bargaining "in good faith" with the union. However, the company is expected to appeal the ruling before the full labor board in Washington, D.C. Labor experts say members of the board are likely to side with their regional colleagues in confirming the union's win. The case could make its way into the courts.

"I think that's going to take a long time to play out," Amazon CEO Andy Jassy said at a conference in September, claiming "disturbing



irregularities" in the vote.

At stake is the future of labor organizing at Amazon, where unions have struggled for a foothold as the company's web of warehouses has ballooned, making it the U.S.'s second-largest private employer after Walmart.

Amazon Labor Union won the first union election by more than 500 votes in April 2022. Under U.S. labor law, employers are obligated to begin negotiating in good faith with a union after it wins an election and the results are certified.

But the process can be beset with delays, as the employer may seek to avoid signing a first contract. According to an analysis by Bloomberg Law, it takes an average of 465 days for collective bargaining agreements to be signed between employers and their newly unionized workers.

Alina Selyukh & Giulia Heyward, NPR

If your job title is something like 'carpet shampoo manager,' it's a red flag for wage theft

Managerial workers earning more than \$455 a week are exempt from overtime pay if they work more than 40 hours a week. A new study shows how employers are going to great lengths to exploit that fact by giving people what researchers call "fake-sounding" managerial titles, along with salaries just a tiny bit over \$455 a week, and saying they don't qualify for overtime.

How fake-sounding? You're not a front desk clerk, you're a "director of first impressions." You're not a barber, you're a "grooming manager." You're not a carpet cleaner, you're a "carpet shampoo manager."

There are supposed to be multiple factors that determine whether someone is exempt from overtime pay. They

not only have to make more than that \$455 a week, but they also have to be doing legitimately managerial work. But what qualifies as managerial work can be hard to define, and employers seem to be using these inflated titles to prevent workers or regulators from looking at actual, detailed job duties. In a National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) working paper using data from 2010 to 2018, Lauren Cohen, Umit Gurun, and N. Bugra Ozel offer strong evidence that this isn't just title inflation for its own sake.

The overall effect of "managers" making just over \$455 isn't a small one. There's "a 485% increase in the usage of managerial titles for sala-



Endeavor Air

UNION-MADE

Flying the union way



When you fly, you want to know that you're going to arrive safely to your destination. You also might want to know that your crew, both in the plane and on the ground, are treated with respect on the job, have good benefits, and a voice at work.

Here is a list of airlines that have partial or completely unionized crews. This includes the pilots, the flight attendants, the ground crew, and customer service.

United Airlines

Air Wisconsin Airlines **Envoy Air** Mesa Air Group Alaska Airlines Express Jet Miami Air International Aloha Airlines **Frontier Airlines** Norwegian U.S. **GoJet Airlines** Omni Air International **America West Airlines** Hawaiian Airlines **American Airlines Piedmont Airlines** American Eagle Airlines Horizon Air Silver Airways **Atlantic Coast Airlines** Southwest Airlines Iberia **Continental Airlines** Island Air Spirit Air **JetBlue Delta Airlines** Sun Country Airliines

Mesa Air



IN THE NEWS

ried employees just above the salary threshold set in the Federal Labor Standards Act (\$455/week)— allowing the firms to avoid paying overtime compensation to these workers," and it's costing workers around \$4 billion in overtime every year.

Here's how it goes, and how we can be pretty sure this is a real effect: The authors found that the share of workers with managerial titles spikes among those being paid just over \$455 a week. People making \$455 to \$480 a week are more likely to have managerial titles than those making \$480 to \$530.

Not only that, there are five states where the overtime threshold is higher. In those states, the researchers didn't see the same spike of managerial titles right at \$455. Similarly, jobs with hourly or daily pay rather than salaries don't show a jump in managerial titles at that significant pay level. And it also happens more in states where employers have more power and workers have less.

In other words, these authors have assembled very strong evidence that companies are cheating their workers out of overtime pay by giving them fancy, if fake-sounding, titles but the lowest possible pay. Workers should be able to challenge this, showing that their duties aren't really managerial, and so, even at a \$455-a-week salary, they should be eligible for overtime. But that relies on workers knowing the exact standards their duties do or don't meet and knowing which oversight agency to contact. Employers can make a pretty good bet that they're not going to be called on it.

As president, Barack Obama tried to double the overtime eligibility threshold from \$23,660 to \$47,476, but his move was predictably blocked by a right-wing judge late in 2016. The Biden administration has indicated it plans some action on this front in 2023, but the details aren't yet public. In the meantime, this is one of several major forms of wage theft that add up to employers stealing more from their workers every year than all robberies put together.

by Laura Clawson, Daily Kos Labor

In a harebrained response to labor shortages, some lawmakers want more child labor

At a time of widespread labor shortages, one might expect policymakers to welcome asylum seekers and economic migrants eager for an opportunity to make a living in the United States. Instead, as the *Washington Post* reports, legislators in some states have come up with a harebrained proposal for filling those jobs: loosening the restrictions on child labor.

Lawmakers in Wisconsin lifted restrictions on working hours for youth during the school year, but the measure was vetoed by the governor. The

ATTN: LOCAL 1546 MEMBERS

Important vote coming up!

At the regularly-scheduled Local 1546 General Membership meeting on May 2, a proposal will be read about transferring money into the Local's building corporation to finish paying for the building renovation. The vote will take place at the Local's June 6 meeting.

Please attend and vote. Both meetings start at 5:30 p.m. and are held at 10260 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland, CA.

Ohio Senate passed a similar bill but it died in the House. Even worse are bills introduced in Iowa and Minnesota that would allow teens as young as 14 to work in dangerous occupations such as meatpacking and construction.

It is unclear whether these legislators are aware that labor activists and social reformers fought for many years in the 19th and early 20th centuries to restrict the exploitation of children in factories, mines, mills, and other workplaces. They eventually made progress at the state level, leading to the passage of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938.

That law barred young workers from some occupations and limited the hours they could work in others, both for safety reasons and to prevent adverse effects on educational attainment. Adoption of strong child labor laws came to be viewed as one of the hallmarks of a humane society.



Over the past two decades, employers have paid penalties for breaking current child labor protections more than 4,000 times.

While the Fair Labor Standards Act and state regulations eliminated the worst forms of child labor, they did not end abuses entirely. The Violation Tracker run by Good Jobs First documents more than 4,000 cases over the past two decades in which an employer paid a penalty for breaking the rules. The fines imposed in these cases amount to \$99 million, or an average of about \$24,000 per case — a reflection of the fact that penalty levels are far from harsh.

Most child labor violators are small firms, but some large corporations have also committed the offense. Chipotle Mexican Grill has the highest penalty total, mainly due to a \$7.75 million settlement the company reached in 2022 with the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development. An audit conducted by the agency of Chipotle outlets found over 30,000 violations across the state. Two years earlier, Chipotle reached a \$1.87 million settlement with the Massachusetts Attorney General over child labor and other wage and hour violations.

Among the other big companies with substantial child labor penalties from multiple cases are: CVS Health (\$464,099), Albertsons (\$337,790), and Walmart (\$317,378).

Most child labor violations are related to potential harm to young workers, but there are also cases in which the harm is real and even deadly. A 2018 report by the Government Accountability Office cited estimates that workers aged 17 and under sustain thousands of injuries each year. That same report included data showing that work-related fatalities for that same age group totaled 452 for the period from 2003 to 2016. The largest numbers of deaths were in agriculture, followed by construction and mining.

The sensible response to all these statistics

would be to tighten the rules regarding child labor, not to weaken them. There are better ways to address labor shortages.

by Phil Mattera, Dirt Diggers Digest

Restaurant lobby group has siphoned off \$25 million from workers to support its anti-worker efforts

Millions of restaurant workers have been forced without their knowledge to subsidize an organization that exists in part to keep their pay low, the *New York Times* reports.

The issue is that workers must take (and pay for) a food safety course, which for most is insultingly basic. Turns out, the company that dominates the market for such courses is owned by the National Restaurant Association (NRA), the industry group that has successfully kept the minimum wage for tipped workers set at \$2.13 an hour since 1991.

The company in question is ServSafe, which was taken over by the NRA in 2007. The NRA then lobbied several large states to make such trainings mandatory, not just for restaurant managers but for all restaurant workers, creating a huge built-in market. So far, "More than 3.6 million workers have taken this training, providing about \$25 million in revenue to the restaurant industry's lobbying arm since 2010," the *Times* reports. That's more than enough to cover all of the NRA's lobbying in that time. And the lobbying in question has included a lot of efforts to keep the minimum wage low.

The timing wasn't coincidental on the acquisition of ServSafe: It happened soon after Congress raised the minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour (where it remains stuck, thanks to industry lobby groups like the NRA), leaving the organization looking for ways to raise revenue without raising dues.

Here's some more context for how much money the restaurant lobby is extracting from workers to do work against their interests:

Consider that the next time you hear someone claiming that union dues—which are used to represent workers directly at their jobs and in policy advocacy—are too costly.

"I'm sitting up here working hard, paying this money so that I can work this job, so I can provide for my family," Mysheka Ronquillo, a line cook at a fast food restaurant and a private school cafeteria in California, told the *Times*. "And I'm giving y'all money so y'all can go against me?" Ronquillo has been required to take a food safety course every three years, with ServSafe being the standard option available.

The states that passed a requirement for all restaurant workers, not just managers, to take the food safety course (sample information offered by the Times: "Strawberries aren't supposed to be white and fuzzy, that's mold") did so in the name of reducing food-borne illness. But—completely unsurprisingly—the NRA, which lobbied for those laws, has also worked hard to squash paid sick leave legislation. They don't care about keeping customers healthy when it's a question of making cooks and waiters go to work sick.

There are alternatives to using ServSafe, although they're from much smaller companies. And, Restaurant Opportunities Centers head Saru Jayaraman told the Times, "We'll be telling [workers] to use any possible alternatives." That may make only a small dent in the profits flowing to the NRA to support its efforts to make the lives of restaurant workers worse, but it's a start in giving ServSafe more meaningful competition.

by Laura Clawson, Daily Kos Labor

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IAM LOCAL UNION MEETINGS

A note about meetings and COVID

Since the COVID shutdowns started, local unions have been holding general membership meetings over Zoom or other video conferencing programs. Some chose to tailgate—meeting six feet apart outdoors—to meet the guidelines for social distancing. Some locals are now meeting indoors again while others are holding "hybrid" meetings—both in-person and on Zoom.

If you wish to attend a union meeting, the first step is to contact your local and find out how they're holding it. Unless otherwise notified, they will continue with the current schedule (see below).

If your local is holding on-line meetings, you'll need to contact them in advance to ensure that you're registered to join them on-line.

\$42.37

How much the federal minimum wage would be if it grew at the same rate as Wall Street bonuses since 1985.

Instead, the federal minimum wage remains at \$7.25.

Economic Policy Institute analysis of NY Comptroller data



UNION MEETINGS

District Lodge 190

8201 Capwell Drive Oakland, CA 94621 510-632-3661 Meetings are the fourth Tuesday of each month April 25 • May 23 • June 27

Executive Board Meeting: 6:30 p.m. General Delegates' Meeting: 7:00 p.m.

Local I484

1261 Avalon Blvd. Wilmington, CA 90744 310-835-6688 **Executive Board Meeting:** 6:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month

April 20 • May 18 • June 15

General Membership Meeting: 6:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month

April 4 • May 2 • June 6

Retirees' Club: 1:00 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month: April 19 • May 17 • June 21

Local 93

Local 93 has merged into Local 1101. See Local 1101 box for meeting and contact information.

Local 653

5726 E. Shields Avenue Fresno, CA 93727 Meetings are the third Wednesday of the month April 19 • May 17 • June 21

Executive Board Meeting: 5:00 p.m. Membership Meeting: 5:30 p.m.

Local Lodge Meetings will be held both in person and on zoom. If you plan to attend in person, please RSVP so staff can ensure there's enough food. If you want to attend on zoom, you must send a personal email to iamaw653@comcast.net. Be sure to provide your first and last name and the shop you work at in the email. Once you do, you will receive an invite to the zoom meeting.

Local 1528

713 16th Street Modesto, CA 95354 209-529-9210 machinists2182@gmail.com Meetings are the first Wednesday of the month

April 5 • May 3 • June 7 **Executive Board Meeting:** 6:00 p.m. **General Membership Meeting:** 7:00 p.m. **Shop Steward Meeting:** 10 a.m. on the third Saturday

of each month
April 15 • May 20 • June 17

Narcotics Anonymous: 5:30-6:30 p.m. every Tuesday

Local 801

8201 Capwell Drive Oakland, CA 94621 800-655-2182 Meetings are the third Thursday of the month

April 20 • May 18 • June 15

Membership Meeting: 4:00 p.m. Meetings are held at the Carpenters' Hall, in Reno.

Local 1546

10260 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland, CA 94605 510-638-6705 Meetings are the first Tuesday of the month

April 4 • May 2 • June 6

General Membership Meeting & E Board

Meetings: 5:30 p.m.

Alcoholics Anonymous: 9 a.m. every Saturday

Local IIOI

2102 Almaden Rd., #105 San Jose, CA 95125 408-440-8716 Meetings are the second Tuesday of the month at 5:30 p.m.

April 11 • May 9 • June 13 Executive Board Meeting: 5:00 p.m. General Membership Meeting: 6:30 p.m.

Meetings will be held on the Bluejeans App for the foreseeable future. Email: aab1101@att.net to learn how to join in.

Meetings are now hybrid - in person and on zoom.
Email zr1zo6r@sbcglobal.net to learn how to join in on zoom.

Local II73

1900 Bates Ave., # H Concord, CA 94520 925-687-6421 LL1173@sbcglobal.net **Executive Board Meeting:** 6:00 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month

April 13 • May 11 • June 8

Membership/Shop Stewards' Meeting: 6:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month
April 13 • May 11 • June 8

Meetings will be held on zoom and in person at the Concord office. Contact Cindy at the Local at 925-687-6421 for zoom address and passcode.

Local 1584

10260 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland, CA 94605 510-632-3661 Meetings are the third Thursday of the month

April 20 • May 18 • June 15 Membership Meeting: 7:00 p.m.

Executive Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m.

Retirees' Club: 12:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month: April 4 • May 2 • June 6

Meetings will be hybrid (in person and on zoom) for the foreseeable future. Email Tom.Swanger@atlaspacific.com to learn how to join in on zoom.

Local 1414

150 South Boulevard San Mateo, CA 94402 650-341-2689 **Shop Stewards' Meeting:** 5:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month

April 20 • May 18 • June 15

Executive Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month

April 13 • May 11 • June 8

General Membership Meeting: 6:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month via Zoom. Please contact the office for the meeting link.

April 20 • May 18 • June 15

Retirees' Club: 11:00 a.m. on the first Wednesday of March, June, Sept., Dec. All are welcome!

June 7 • September 6 • December 6

Local 1596

Local 1596 has merged into Local 1173. See Local 1173 box for meeting and contact information.

Local 2182

967 Venture Court Sacramento, CA 95825 916-929-1040 For dues questions, call Debbie Bird: 559-269-6386 machinists2182@gmail.com Meetings are the second Tuesday of the month

April 11 • May 9 • June 13

Executive Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m.

General Membership Meeting: 7:00 p.m.

Retirees' VISTA CLUB: 11:00 a.m. on the third Wednesday of each month:

April 19 • May 17 • June 21