

Keeping up on the issues Your Union will help

By **DAVID COOK**
President



COOK

Our Union Family is facing a battle, as we do every single election cycle.

As millions of Missourians head to the polls in municipal, primary and general elections later this year, Labor Unions are tasked with keeping candidates honest and making sure they support hard-working families instead of catering to greedy special interests looking to make a quick buck.

It is not the job of UFCW Local 655 to serve merely as a tool of one party or another. I have said as your president — and I will continue to say — that we welcome allies from both sides of the aisle in the fight to get hard-working people the better life they've earned.

We've worked hard to forge relationships with Democrats and Republicans alike, and those friendships have helped us beat back so-called Right-to-Work laws, and other proposals aimed at giving the 1% even more by taking money from your pockets.

In the coming months, you're going to begin seeing communications from us about the issues that impact you on the job. We won't be telling you who to vote for because that decision is yours and yours alone. But we will work to ensure that you have all the information you need about candidates to make an informed decision for you and your family. I am committed to focusing on discussing the issues that affect you at work, and then stating clearly where various candidates stand on those very issues.

Whether it's raising the minimum wage or protecting worker's compensation laws, we are going to help educate you on the issues that impact our Union Family, and your life. With so much misinformation out there during campaign season, it's easy to become overwhelmed or confused by bumper-sticker rhetoric or the lies of self-serving elected officials who don't work for your interests.

So at your workplace, you'll begin to see flyers about the issues facing Missourians both locally and nationally in the coming election. We'll use our website, our social media presence and all the tools available to us so that no one can say that they didn't have a chance to get the information they needed to cast a ballot.

UFCW Partner couldn't afford much-needed surgery without his benefits

Joe Stamburski was faced with a dilemma too many Americans face.

For many years, Joe has suffered from a heart murmur. It became increasingly serious, and his doctors told the 20-year UFCW Local 655 partner that it could no longer be ignored. His prognosis without corrective surgery was not bright.

But Joe had a problem. Simply put, he was looking at his finances, and he felt crammed between a rock and a hard place. He needed the surgery. But could he afford it?

He began making calls. Specifically, Joe reached out to the UFCW Local 655 Health and Welfare Department. Soon, something relieving became clear: Because of his Union-negotiated benefits, he wouldn't have to choose between paying his bills and getting the surgery he desperately needed.

"Had it not been for the healthcare that our union has negotiated for us, I would not have been able to afford this surgery without question," Stamburski said.

"I was also out of work for about 14 weeks after the surgery, and I had access to the short-term disability that Local 655 negotiated as well. My wife works too, but without that money coming in, it would have been impossible to do this."

Stamburski was relieved. Because of the high-quality healthcare negotiated by Local

655, he could afford this surgery without "breaking the bank."

"You know you have these benefits, but until you really need them, you don't realize how good they are, and then the union makes it clear that they are going to cover this," Stamburski said. "I learned the specifics when I needed it the most."

Not long after returning to work, Joe's shop steward retired. Hoping he could step up and help, he reached out to his Union to fill the void and become a steward. A store Receiver who also trains news Receivers from other stores, Joe has been a steward for two years now, and is hoping to continue helping the union that helped him get the care he needed.

"I'm just very grateful, if I hadn't had a job with a good Union contract and these benefits, I really don't know what would have happened," Stamburski said.



STAMBURSKI

**AN EXCLUSIVE
TWICE MONTHLY
REPORT FOR**

**UFCW 655
MEMBERS &
THEIR FAMILIES**

www.ufcw655.com



LOCAL 655 President David Cook (right) addresses Shop Stewards at the recent conference as (from left) Local 655 Secretary-Treasurer Dave Politte and UFCW International President Marc Perrone look on. *Labor Tribune photo*

Annual Shop Steward Conference a rousing success, focuses on "telling our story"

UFCW Local 655 completed our annual Shop Steward's Conference in April, marking perhaps the best conference the local has ever put on.

With a theme of "Telling Our Story," UFCW Local 655's conference focused on communicating the good things that the Union Family does—not just for our partners, but for their local communities as well.

More than a dozen Missouri lawmakers filmed videos thanking Local 655 for their hard work at the Capitol as well as their charitable actions on things like leukemia and lymphoma research, sickle cell anemia, and more.

A diverse array of speakers addressed many issues. For the first time in years, the leadership of UFCW Local 88 also joined the conference. This is a signal of a reinvigorated partnership between our two Locals committed to forging a new and better path for their partners.

UFCW International President Marc Perrone spoke to shop stewards about the invaluable role they play in creating a posi-



tive atmosphere in the workplace, and urged stewards to continue to engage their partners, particularly part time and newer employees, about the good things that UFCW does every day for hard-working families. *(See additional story on Page 10)*

Chris Kofinis of Park Street Strategies, a PR and crisis management expert who works closely with Perrone and the UFCW International, spoke at length about the critical importance of messaging.

"You know what the most powerful weapon is?" Kofinis asked. "Words. Words are the most powerful weapon."

Michael Kelley of The Kelley Group, a consulting firm in St. Louis with a strong pro-Union ideology, talked about the importance of engaging in political fights to stop cynical and dangerous union-busting laws like so-called "Right-to-Work" and Paycheck Deception. Kelley presented with UFCW Local 655 President David Cook who discussed the efforts in Jefferson City to protect hard-working families against these attacks.

"There is no more relevant labor union in the state capitol than the Local 655," Kelley said.



Happy RETIREMENT

APRIL RETIREES

Janet Bell-Sweazea	Schnucks Grandview	4/1	Genevieve Bardgett	Schnucks Zumbahl	4/23
Maryrita Martinez	Schnucks Grandview	4/1	Jim Hibbeler	Schnucks Florissant	4/26
William Barlow	Schnucks Washington	4/1	Steve Sapp	Schnucks DesPeres	4/28
Lester McClain	Schnucks Washington	4/1	John Benenati	Schnucks Wentzville	4/28
Donna Scott	Schnucks Ladue	4/8	Joe (Roland) Rhodes	Schnucks Wentzville	4/28
Christine Badalamenti	Schnucks St. Peters	4/15	Mary Anderson	Schnucks Kirkwood	4/29
Joe Gremmelsbacher	Schnucks Butler Hill	4/15	Bob Galli	Schnucks Kirkwood	4/29
Sharon Russell	Shop N' Save Ellisville	4/16	Brenda Cooper	Schnucks Sierra Vista	4/29
Rick Mueller	Schnucks Butler Hill	4/22			

**UPCOMING
EVENTS**

CALENDAR

Komen Walk: June 11
Contact Karen at 636-736-2745 to sign up and join us!

Pride Parade: June 26
Contact Laura Kelley at 636-736-2760

Sickle Cell Fundraiser: July 23 • 11-5pm
Contact Theresa Hester at 636-736-2758

655 Annual Softball Tourney: August 1-4 and 8-9
Team Applications will be mailed out in May

"Light the Night": September 24 • 5pm
A charitable walk to benefit the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Contact your union rep ofr Jane Smith at 314-590-2236