

Reach out, speak out; a little information can go a long way

By **DAVID A. COOK**
President



COOK

I've talked a lot in this column about the importance of being engaged in your Union, and the new efforts we've made to communicate with you, but this week I'd like to talk about how you can be a part of the outreach that this Union continues to strive for in order to strengthen this family.

As you probably know, our Union Representatives are now signing up all new hires in-person. This is part of our effort to not only streamline and digitize our information, but it's an important way of making sure that Local 655's first interaction with new hires is not when they see Union dues come out of their paycheck.

We will use these signings to talk about the benefits of Union partnership, the highlights of their contract and the help we can provide them.

But more important than our Union Representatives speaking to every new hire, more important than our increased digital presence and our focus on better communication, more important than all those new steps—is you.

Like the old saying goes: If a tree falls in the forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?

A few years ago, I wrote a column titled "Visions of the Future" where I discussed the importance of talking about the value of being a Union partner. But that conversation has to happen with both our co-workers and with the general public.

If you're reading this column, you're likely an engaged, long-term partner of Local 655. You probably know a lot about the organization and know how to find help or basic information if you need it, but there's also a good chance you work alongside newer or less engaged partners that don't have the same knowledge that you do.

That's where you come in. We rely on you to help this Union by directing your co-workers to it.

Do the people you work next to know what is in their contract? Do they know they can find it online? If not, tell them! Have they met their Union Representative? Do they know how to contact the Union Hall with a problem? Give them some guidance.

Ask yourself: Do you tell your friends and family about the value of being a Union partner? When you share work stories with those close to you, do you talk about the benefits of being in our Union?

There are two kinds of people who are supporters of the Labor Movement on a sincere personal level: current and former Union partners, and the friends and families of current or former partners that have heard about the good things we do.

My challenge to our most engaged partners is this: Spend a few minutes each time you're at work by challenging your co-workers to engage as well. It only takes a few minutes to pull up our website or our Facebook page and look for any new information. Tell your parents, your children and your neighbors that your Union stands up for you, supports you and gets you benefits you'd otherwise go without.

It takes only a minute or two to sign up for our texting program or to show someone the free college tuition website. If you regularly read any of these or if there's some other program of ours you love, tell your co-workers about it.

At the end of the day, no one will be as effective an advocate as you. You work alongside your co-workers, not in our Union Hall in Ballwin that they may never visit. They see you often and know your face.

A few minutes during every shift might bring a new, strongly engaged partner in this Union, and soon those new folks will add up. We must think about the future of UFCW Local 655. That future is likely working alongside you right now, even if they don't know it.

AN EXCLUSIVE TWICE MONTHLY REPORT FOR

UFCW 655 MEMBERS & THEIR FAMILIES

www.ufcw655.org

Labor Communications at the Crossroads

CONVENTION

OCT. 19-21, 2017

MARRIOTT ST. LOUIS GRAND HOTEL / ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Cook to address ILCA convention on so-called "right-to-work"

We are proud to announce that UFCW Local 655 President David Cook has been asked to address the International Labor Communications Association Annual Convention being held in St. Louis this week, on the topic of so-called "right-to-work."

President Cook was part of a small group of labor leaders who led the petition campaign to stop the phony right-to-work bill signed by Missouri Governor Eric Greitens. The petition drive prevented the law from going into effect this past August, and will allow a vote of the people in 2018, a process that made history.

For the first time ever in Missouri, all eight Congressional Districts submitted enough signatures to enable the ballot initiative. The law only required that six of eight districts qualify, but because of President Cook and others who led the charge, petitions to repeal "right-to-work-for less" were submitted in

historic numbers to the Missouri Secretary of State.

More than 310,000 signatures, more than three times those required, were submitted following a rally in Jefferson City that drew thousands of middle-class workers from around the state in one of the largest demonstrations ever held there.

President Cook has been asked to speak about Missouri's fight against "right-to-work-for-less" to an assembled group of labor communicators and AFL-CIO delegates.

"Missouri did something that many people thought was impossible," Cook said. "And now folks are going to look to us, to see what we did right and how we were able to achieve something like this."

President Cook will be addressing the convention on Saturday, Oct. 21. The convention continues through Sunday.

Local 655 Free College Benefit program gaining steam

Just a few months after its rollout, nearly 200 UFCW Local 655 partners or their family members have inquired about taking advantage of our new Free College Benefit program.

The program provides up to two years of completely free, accredited college education online through a partnership with Eastern Gateway Community College in Ohio. Not only can any Local 655 partner take advantage of the program, the program is also available to spouses, children, grandchildren, parents

and grandparents of Local 655 partners.

Registration for the second eight-week program closed on October 13, but it's never too early to start looking at the next block of classes beginning in January. Those classes begin on January 16, and registration for these classes closes on January 12.

Any Local 655 partner or family member of a Local 655 partner should visit ufcwfreecollege.org for all the information they need about registering for classes.

Get vital information about your workplace, your contract and more.

Text 'Join' to 738-674 to get signed up for our text program!



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