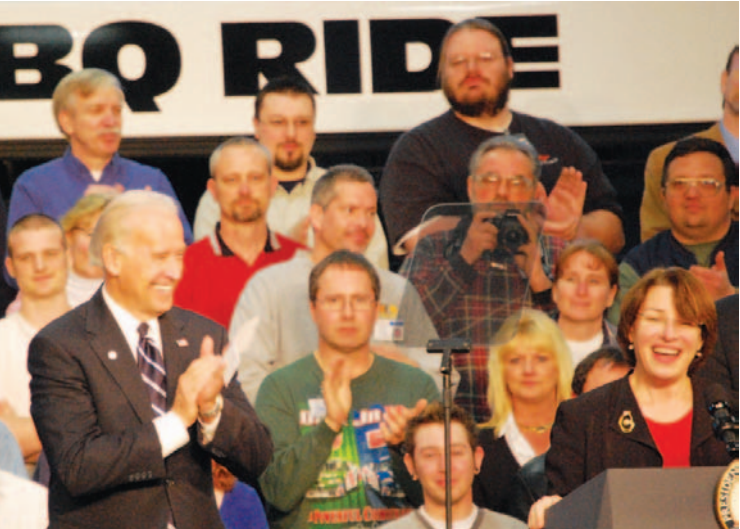


# LABOR WORLD

*An Injury to One is an Injury to All!*  
 WEDNESDAY VOL. 114  
 APRIL 1, 2009 NO. 19



U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar thanked Vice President Joe Biden for bringing the Obama administration's Middle Class Task Force to Minnesota. In these troubled economic times, the focus should be on creating good jobs that raise the standard of living and strengthen communities, she said. "Behind all the statistics and all the numbers, there are real families." (Barb Kucera, Workday Minnesota photo)

## Vice President Joe Biden, Middle Class Task Force, welcomed by CWA in St. Cloud

By Barb Kucera, editor, www.workdayminnesota.org  
 ST. CLOUD, MN. – Communications Workers of America Local 7304 welcomed Vice President Joe Biden and members of the administration's "Middle Class Task Force" for a town hall meeting March 19th at their workplace – the New Flyer Bus Co. plant.

New Flyer manufactures buses for some of the largest transit agencies and cities in the U.S. and Canada and is a leader in the production of hybrid and low-emission vehicles.

The meeting was held in a section of the plant where buses are inspected before being shipped.

Biden and four Cabinet secretaries – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, Education Secretary Arne Duncan, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan, and Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood – sat on chairs surrounded by workers, community members and 4 large buses, one bearing the words, "Clean Air Hybrid Bus."

"This company is an example of the future," Biden said, praising the firm's ability to

prosper by developing buses using new, energy-efficient technologies. He and the other members of the Middle Class Task Force listed several ways the federal Reinvestment and Recovery Act, the stimulus bill, will aid families, businesses and communities.

They also answered questions from the audience, with many focusing on education, health care and the economy.

New Flyer President and CEO Paul Soubry introduced Biden and credited the quality of the company's workforce and management's partnership with the CWA as major factors behind its success. New Flyer employs 650 people at its St. Cloud plant, about 70 miles northwest of the Twin Cities, and another 300 people at its Crookston plant – also a unionized operation – in northern Minnesota.

Thanks in part to the federal stimulus package – which provides funds for cities to invest in transit – New Flyer has a two-year, \$4.1 billion backlog of orders, Soubry said. "We plan to add more jobs in America."

Local 7304 President Dave Rock, who works in the Crookston plant, joined company executives in welcoming Biden before the start of the meeting. He said the workers in St. Cloud were a little stunned by the sudden celebrity, but enjoyed the attention.

"We're very proud to be a leader in the production of fuel-efficient buses," Rock said.

Workers, who enjoy good wages and benefits through their union contract, show

pride through a large, yellow and purple CWA Local 7304 banner hanging in the shop.

"We got that in our last contract negotiations," Rock said. A similar banner hangs in the Crookston plant, he said.

Workers at the St. Cloud plant chose union representation through majority sign-up, the method that would become an option for all workers if Congress passes the Employee Free Choice Act. President Obama said passage of this law, which would make it easier for workers to join unions, is a priority for his presidency.

Over a two-week period, the CWA collected cards from workers who said they wanted to join the union. When more than 50 percent of the workforce had signed cards, they were presented to management, which voluntarily recognized the union.

While the Middle Class Task Force members said the Reinvestment and Recovery Act is a key to maintaining and creating good jobs, Biden also cited the importance of the labor movement.

History relates how the Industrial Revolution spurred the construction of factories and the advent of many kinds of new jobs, he said. "But it wasn't until we had unions that they became good jobs."

The St. Cloud event was the second for the Middle Class Task Force, which plans several more town meetings around the country, Biden said.

For more information visit the website of the Middle Class Task Force, www.whitehouse.gov/strongmiddleclass.

## Specter caves, Eau Claire co. blackmails

Labor has been worried this year about a lack of support for the Employee Free Choice Act from Democrats who have been proponents of labor's number one agenda item in the past. It was easy to support legislation that was going nowhere with George W. Bush in the White House. Now with President Obama supporting EFCA, some Democrats don't want to be linked too closely to a bill that offends business.

Republican Senator Arlen Specter of blue-collar Pennsylvania is the first senator to actually jump ship, however.

On March 24, Specter, who is in a tough 2010 re-election campaign already, says he will vote in a favor of a filibuster to keep EFCA from reaching the floor of the senate. Specter was

a sponsor of the original EFCA bill in 2003, again in 2005, and actually voted against his Republican party filibuster against the bill in 2007.

In his announcement Specter acknowledged shortcomings in U.S. labor law--failures that require legislation like EFCA, he admitted--but in the end was an echo chamber for the lies being spread by business interests. "My vote on this bill is very difficult for many reasons," he said in a floor speech. "It is very hard to disappoint many friends... who are urging me to vote their way."

Specter faces a 2010 Republican primary against his 2004 challenger Pat Toomey who leads Specter in a recent poll 41 to 27 percent with Republicans. A new Quinnipiac poll says any Democrat leads Specter by 33 to 31 percent.

Curiously Specter still has a 52 percent approval rating to 33 percent disapproval rating among Democrats, but among Republicans his numbers are just about the opposite.

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said Specter's cave-in to corporate lobbyists is disappointing, but won't blunt the momentum behind this critical bill to protect worker's freedom to form unions and bar-

gain for a better life.

EFCA has large majorities in the House of Representatives (House File 1409) and the Senate (Senate File 560). It was re-introduced March 10 by Rep. George Miller (D-CA) and Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA).

"A firestorm bordering on Armageddon," and "The end of civilization as we know it," are actual quotes from mega-rich CEOs about the Employee Free Choice Act. One billionaire called the Employee Free Choice Act one of "two fundamental threats to society" (along with "radical Islam").

Yet in some of the corporate rhetoric and advertising against EFCA corporate lobbyists have tried to portray themselves as advocates for workers' rights in erroneous arguments in defense of secret ballots for union elections.

In Eau Claire, Wisconsin it has become evident just how far corporate interests are willing to go to battle EFCA.

Tula Connell of the AFL-CIO reported March 27 that they have shown they are not interested in the welfare of their employees or any of the pseudo-lofty ideals they cite while fighting the Employee Free Choice Act.

## Obama names UTUer to FRA

WASHINGTON (PAI)--President Barack Obama nominated Joseph Szabo, Illinois Legislative Director for the United Transportation Union, as Federal Railroad Agency (FRA) administrator. If confirmed by the Senate, Szabo, 51, would be the first rail unionist to run FRA since it was put into the Transportation Dept. in 1967, said UTU President Mike Futhey. FRA enforces federal rail safety laws and writes and enforces safety rules.

"It is a validation that this Obama administration is a friend of organized labor," in the FRA post, Futhey added.

A 5th-generation railroader, Szabo-- like Obama a Chicagoan -- started in 1976 with the Illinois Central as a yard switchman, road trainman and commuter passenger conductor. In 1987, he went to Chicago Metra when IC sold its rail commuter division. He was elected Secretary-Treasurer of UTU Local 1290 and rose in union offices to become state legislative director in 1996.

"Joe has provided vision and direction to rail safety and regulatory issues and worked with business and civic leaders in the advancement of freight and passenger rail service," Obama said.

He also noted Szabo has administrative experience as ex-mayor of the Chicago suburb of Riverdale, which has 100+ workers and a \$9 million budget.

Minnesota's State Legislative Director for the UTU, Phil Qualy, said about Szabo's nomination, "He is a good friend, a pragmatist, and will do well for railroad safety in America."

# T.E.A.M.Day@The Temple Thurs., April 16

It may be that you've lost your job, are financially stressed, or just got your taxes in April 15th under the deadline. Whatever the reason may be, like many in this economic climate you probably need a little stress management.

Help is coming April 16 as "T.E.A.M.Day@The Temple."

T.E.A.M. is Total Employee Assistance Management and they're opening offices in the Duluth Labor Temple April 16 in Room 99, next to Judge Gerald Heaney's Chambers.

"We've got a lot of fun, informative, and stress releasing activities planned for our opening day," says Karen J. Hagen, CEO of T.E.A.M.-

Minnesota. "We'll have massages available, stress dots, newsletters, trainings, and gift certificates for free legal and financial consultations to our members."

Hagen has been in employee assistance services since the 1980s, when times were similar to how things are now for working families.

"We're seeing a lot of people out of work with few family-supporting jobs available," Hagen said. "Stress on families is running the gamut from loss of income, to displaced workers, workplace violence and strategies to respond to it, home foreclosures, loss of health care coverage, and other

stressors that tear at the fabric of families. That's why we're establishing an office in the Duluth Labor Temple."

Another of the events planned for T.E.A.M.'s Duluth opening is drug and alcohol "Reasonable Suspicion" training to be done in conjunction with LSALMA (Lake Superior Area Labor Management Association) in Wellstone Hall from 10 a.m. to 11:30.

"Reasonable suspicion is a safety certification that will be required for contractor's who want to get work under the federal stimulus and transportation bill," said Hagen. "Our training for union and company representatives will allow them to gain that needed accreditation."

T.E.A.M., Inc. is an independent employee assistance program (EAP), serving companies and unions throughout Minnesota and across the country. To find out how to become a member of T.E.A.M. visit [www.team-mn.com](http://www.team-mn.com) or call toll-free 1.800.634.7710.

# Labor merit badge for Scouts

The AFL-CIO Community Services Program along with the Lake Superior Area Labor Management Association (LSALMA) will conduct the American Labor Merit Badge training for Boy Scouts in April. The training will also allow Girl Scouts to participate so they can work on their Career Badge by attending.



The training will take place Saturday, April 18 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Duluth Labor Temple's Freeman Hall (lower level, enter building by doors that face Lake Superior on South Street).

Community Services Director Yvonne Harvey says, "We teach Scouts about the Labor Movement and have a panel of workers from various jobs, like fire fighting to talk about their work." Cost of the training is \$10 (make checks out to LSALMA). Call Yvonne Harvey at 728-1779.

## Photos of KIA/MIA sought

Duluth-based Veterans' Memorial Hall is seeking photos from St. Louis County residents of family members who have fallen or are missing while serving in the U.S. military. An exhibit, Generations of Service, will open this summer on county veterans who have served in any war, from 1861 to the present.

If you have materials that you would like in the exhibit contact Daniel Hartman, (218) 733-7500, [dhartman@vets-hall.org](mailto:dhartman@vets-hall.org), 506 West Michigan Street, Duluth, MN 55802.

**I.U.O.E. Local 70**  
**Monthly Arrowhead Regional Meeting**  
**Tuesday, April 14, 2009, 5:00 P.M.**  
**Duluth Labor Center, Hall B**  
**Dick Lally, Business Manager (651) 646-4566**

**Sheet Metal Workers' Local 10**  
**Retirees' Luncheon**  
**Tuesday, April 7, 1:00 p.m.**  
**China Inn-Belknap**

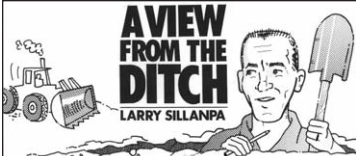
**SHEET METAL WORKERS**  
**Special Order of Business**  
**"Allocation of Funds"** will be conducted at the regular April meeting of the **Iron Range** area of Sheet Metal Workers Local 10.  
 The **Iron Range** area **SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS** will be at the Hibbing Park Hotel, 1402 East Howard Street, Hibbing, MN on Tuesday, April 14, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.  
**All members are encouraged to attend.**  
 ~Dennis J. Marchetti, *Business Representative*

**Thank You!**  
 On behalf of our membership, we would like to thank our 75 stewards and the many speakers who made our March 19 and 20 IBEW Local 31 Steward Seminar such a success. Thanks to speakers Mayor Don Ness, Jim Dahlberg, Tim Andrew, Keith Norton, Mary Theurer, Alan Netland, Bill Heaney, Jerry Frederick, Chad McKenna, Rick McDonald, Tim Ryan, Dan Leslie, Dick Sackett, Cynde Johnson, and Nancy Carlson, along with the Radisson staff, for making this educational effort to improve our members' lives so rewarding.  
 ~Mark Glazier  
*Business Manager/Financial Secretary*  
**IBEW LOCAL 31** Northern MN & Northwest WI

**Superior Federation of Labor Endorsed Candidates**  
**WI Supreme Court Chief Justice**  
**Shirley Abrahamson**  
**WI Dept. Public Instruction Supt.**  
**Tony Evers**  
**Douglas County Circuit Court Judge**  
**Dan Blank**  
**Superior School Board**  
**Len Albrecht**  
**Bonnie Baker**  
**Josh Christie**  
**City Council District 4**  
**Greg Mertzig**  
**District 8**  
**Mike Herrick**  
**District 10**  
**Justin Blisted**  
**Vote Tues. April 7**

**Mr. Environment**  
**The Willard Munger Story**  
  
**Mark Munger**  
**A Celebration of the Earth, Rep. Willard Munger's Life and Minnesota Workers!**  
**Thursday, April 23rd**  
**7:00 p.m. Wellstone Hall**  
**Duluth Labor Temple**  
**2002 London Road, Duluth**  
 Featuring Folk Music by Sara Thomsen and Readings from the New Book, *Mr. Environment: The Willard Munger Story* by Author Mark Munger  
*This free event will include light refreshments and is being sponsored by Cloquet River Press*  
 Books and CDs available for purchase at the event or at [www.cloquetriverpress.com](http://www.cloquetriverpress.com) and [www.sarathomsen.com](http://www.sarathomsen.com)

**LSALMA Educational Opportunities**  
**Tony Orman, April 7, 8 a.m.-noon, Committee Effectiveness**  
**Bob Baldwin, April 9, 9 a.m.-noon, Future Issues of Race in the Work Place, HRCI Applied For**  
**Karen Hagen, April 16, 9 a.m.-noon, Support services in a declining economic environment, HRCI Applied For**  
**Randy Seifert, April 23, 9 a.m.-noon, Know your Pharmaceutical Benefits, HRCI Applied For**  
**Larry Casey, April 22, 9 a.m.-noon, Creative Initiatives in the Work Place through Optimism, HRCI Approved**  
**Tony Orman, April 30, 8 a.m.-noon, Labor Management Co-Chair Training**  
**Jo Romer, May 13, 9 a.m.-noon, Motivational Factors in an Age Diverse Work Force, HRCI Approved**  
**Deborah Perlman-Peterson, May 18, 9 a.m.-noon, Women in the New American Work Place, HRCI Approved**  
**Bill Hembree, May 20, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., The Future of Healthcare, HRCI Approved**  
  
 For more details visit [www.lsalma.org](http://www.lsalma.org)  
**2009 Educational Opportunities**  
**Executive Director Tony Orman**  
[tonyorman@lsalma.org](mailto:tonyorman@lsalma.org)



You probably got a good laugh if you saw Monday's Business Section of the *Duluth News-Tribune* (DNT) with me in it as an "economic expert." I wasn't trying to fool anyone, I was a stand-in for Al Netland. We do appreciate that labor was invited to the table.

I was upfront with the really smart people I was able to listen to about who I was. Told them immediately I "was there from the neck down." My grasp of economics is to look in my wallet and say, "Hey, let's go have a beer and sandwich."

They were nice folks in putting up with my questions. I didn't have any answers. I bemoaned the fact that unemployment is at a 25-year high in Minnesota and working families that never had to before are going to food shelves.

Companies lay off workers then find someone outside to do that work. Employees that remain at the company too often have to work mandatory overtime, harming family life.

Let me give you an example

## ~NOTICE~

**2009 issues of Labor World:**  
**April 22** Workers Memorial Day;  
**May 6, 20;** **June 3, 24;**  
**July 8, 22;** **Aug. 5, 19;**  
**Sept. 2, 16;** **Oct. 7, 28;**  
**Nov. 11, 24;** **Dec. 16.**

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THE "YES WE" CAN

of how that world works:

If you read the byline for the story, it said "Patrick Garmoe, For the News Tribune."

When Netland asked if I could stand-in for him he said to call Garmoe to let him know. A few weeks later I called Garmoe's number at the *DNT* and got a message that he no longer worked for the paper. The morning of the meeting I called a few numbers at the paper to inquire, but only got the circulation department. I figured I'd just swing by *DNT*'s offices and see what I could find out. The receptionist said the meeting was on and showed me to the conference room. The first person I found was Patrick Garmoe.

"Your phone message said you no longer work here," I said, shaking his hand.

"I don't, I got laid off two weeks ago but I'm doing contract work for them," he said.

I think I can rest my case, Your Honor. The *DNT* no longer has to pay him fringe benefits, and can probably get him to work for less than they were paying him. Companies love high unemployment.

I did learn a lot of interesting things at the summit even though a lot of the statistics and trends stuff flew over my head.

One guy didn't like the "Buy American, Buy Local" idea that has resurfaced during hard economic times. He thought it kept America from having things to export. We do export some grain and other things out of our world port, but I think mostly America has been exporting jobs, and recyclables like cardboard and plastic from the things we consume so Third World countries can pack and send us some more stuff to buy.

The federal stimulus bill has a token "Buy America" provision. Whether it is effective

remains to be seen.

You may call it pork if you live high on a hill, but we should buy an American made river icebreaker and send it north on the Red River to save those victimized again by the flooding out there. Instead we use the Coast Guard to bust Great Lakes ice so huge corporations can get their shipping done earlier, and later, than Mother Nature sees fit. It does help jobs, too, of course.

Meanwhile volunteers, you can find many now, fill sand bags and build walls to save their homes and cities because rivers are full of ice and won't flow. Call in the River Guard.

With an attitude like that you can see why I don't expect to make any more economic summits. It's a big picture failing that I've had to live with.

## This Day In History

from

[www.workdayminnesota.org](http://www.workdayminnesota.org)

**April 1, 1946** - A strike by 400,000 mine workers began. In the months after the end of World War II, many workers went on strike to boost wages and benefits. The government responded by taking over a number of industries to stop the walkouts. U.S. troops seized railroads and coal mines in May 1946 and oil refineries later that year.

**April 1, 1963** - One of the longest newspaper strikes in U.S. history ended. The nine major newspapers in New York City had ceased publication for more than 100 days.

**April 1, 1990** - The United Mine Workers of America dedicated the John L. Lewis Mining and Labor Museum at Lewis' boyhood home in Lucas, Iowa. The museum commemorates both the union leader and the movement he helped to mold.

# Where have you gone, Floyd B.?

By Barb Kucera, *Workday editor*

As I walked past the portrait of Floyd B. Olson in the Capitol Friday, I could swear I saw the state's first Farmer-Labor governor cover his face with his hands. The Senate Business, Industry and Jobs Committee had just tabled a measure to reduce the minimum wage for some workers, but not before several DFL members extinguished what remained of Olson's legacy.

For years, Republicans have proffered legislation to allow employers to pay below minimum wage for workers who receive tips – mostly waiters and waitresses. The labor movement has fought these efforts to penalize workers who smile and hustle in the hopes of earning a few dollars from grateful customers.

Advocates of the legislation refer to it as "tip credit." Unions and workers call it by its rightful name – a "tip penalty" on those folks who happen to work in the hospitality industry.

Republicans were most often out front on the legislation, so it came as a surprise to many in the labor movement when this year's version was sponsored by a DFLer, Senator Kathy Saltzman of Woodbury. She appeared to have the backing of several other DFLers on the committee.

Saltzman explained that last legislative session, she wouldn't have supported the legislation. But times are different, she said, and the state needs to intervene to help employers survive.

Workers in restaurants and bars across the state are keenly aware that times are different. They've seen restaurants and bars struggle to pay higher food and fuel costs and deal with the devastating effects of the national economic crisis. They've experienced layoffs, reduced hours and cuts in wages and benefits.

Those earning the minimum wage or near the minimum wage stave off catastrophe every day when they must decide whether to pay the rent or the grocery bill, whether buying medication means they won't be able to afford the bus fare to go to work.

And they are aware that while it wasn't their fault, they must deal with the mess left by the Wall Street powerbrokers and the political ideologues who stood by and even cheered the high rollers' reckless behavior.

So the working people who did their jobs all these years – while others lived high on the hog – might expect a little help from their government when times get tough. At the very least, they wouldn't expect to get cut off at the knees by members of the very party that claims to advocate for them.

Unfortunately, too few people know Minnesota's working class history, so they don't realize that today's DFL Party has branched far from its roots in the Farmer-Labor tradition, one of the most successful third-party movements in U.S. history. Its most famous leader, Floyd B. Olson, swept into office in 1930 on a platform built by union workers and progressive farmers and pursued a campaign toward a "Cooperative Commonwealth." Minnesota's commitment to worker rights, its support for the family farmer – even its system of state forests – can be traced to the work done by Olson, his successor, Elmer Benson, and their compatriots. At the time, many in the media and the business community condemned the notion that workers and farmers had rights and they labeled Olson a radical.

The governor famously said, "I do not mind being called a red . . . I would prefer it to the term 'yellow.'"

Perhaps it was the light in Room 123 on a recent Friday in the state Capitol, but many of the DFL senators took on a perceptible shade of lemon.

## Jackson deserves award for picnic Cornography work

Editor:

No one was happier for Robert Jackson than me when I found out he was to be recognized for his service to the Labor Day picnic (see page 5). As a former apprentice on the picnic's Cornography Committee, I can tell you Mr. Jackson was the best boss I ever had--tough but fair. Even though I lost my apprenticeship because of a problem with Committee Secretary Butters, I always appreciated learning the trade from Mr. Jackson.

It is also gratifying to know that Mr. Jackson stated to the press that he may consider my departure from his committee a seasonal lay-off, rather than a firing. I hope to be re-instated and so be able to use the agricultural extension, adult learner, credits I received in my visit to Mitchell, S.D.'s unbelievable Corn Palace. Congratulations, Mr. Jackson, you're the best!

Jim Brown, Ex-Apprentice, Cornography Committee

# Wal-Mart forced to bargain with Texas meat cutters is EFCOA evidence

By Mark Gruenberg  
PAI Staff Writer

JACKSONVILLE, Texas -- It took almost nine years, a National Labor Relations Board ruling and several court orders, but Wal-Mart was finally forced to bargain with its unionized meat cutters in Texas. Talks opened in Jacksonville on March 12, the United Food and Commercial Workers report. Now we'll see if they get anywhere.

The saga began when the meat cutters in the Wal-Mart store in Jacksonville voted to have UFCW Local 540 represent them. They were the first Wal-Mart workers in the U.S. to vote to unionize.

Wal-Mart, the nation's largest private employer, is notorious for its labor law-breaking and vitriolic anti-union attitudes. But to beat the meat cutters in Tyler, it outdid

even itself. To prevent other meat cutters nationwide from thinking that joining UFCW, which represents thousands of unionized meat cutters at other grocery chains, might be a good idea, Wal-Mart not only shut down the Texan meat cutting department, it closed all its meat-cutting departments across the U.S. It switched to pre-packaged meat.

And of course the Texas closure led to a National Labor Relations Board ruling that Wal-Mart illegally retaliated against the workers for joining the union, followed by repeated long trips to court. Those finally ended late last year when the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans ruled for the meat cutters, against Wal-Mart, and upheld the NLRB's order to the firm to bargain with the union.

"In one of the company's

most audacious displays of hubris, Wal-Mart first ignored the workers, refusing to bargain with them or provide information to their union. Only after the NLRB issued a complaint against Wal-Mart did the company try to move the goalposts by claiming workers in the meat department lost their right to representation because the skilled meat-cutting jobs had been replaced by a prepackaged meat program," UFCW said.

The appellate ruling tossed out all of Wal-Mart's excuses, UFCW added. But it said the whole saga proves the need for congressional passage of the Employee Free Choice Act. The bill, labor's #1 legislative priority, would help level the playing field between workers and bosses in organizing by giving workers -- the Wal-Mart meat cutters in this case -- the automatic right to unionize when authorization cards, if that's the route to unionization they want.

Under the Employee Free Choice Act, the meat-cutters, not Wal-Mart, would decide between recognizing the union via that majority sign-up and recognizing it via the NLRB-run election (which UFCW won).

And the Employee Free Choice Act would deprive Wal-Mart and other firms of the chance to run vicious, often illegal anti-union campaigns, because workers can opt for recognition through majority sign-up before the company's campaign even begins.

"National and international law protect the right of workers to join an union of their choosing. When the outcome of an election is uncertain for this

long in other countries, we call it a coup. When it happens here, it's just another day on the job for the millions of American workers for whom a voice on the job is being unjustly denied. The story in Jacksonville, while particularly alarming, is far from the only one of its kind," UFCW said.

"A multi-billion dollar war chest and a team of corporate lobbyists shouldn't be prerequisites to the free exercise of federally protected workplace rights. Without legislation like the Employee Free Choice Act, workers will continue to fight drawn-out, expensive and -- all too often -- losing battles against multi-national corporate empires that see them as a liability to be minimized.

"If ever there was a case that demonstrated how utterly bankrupt the current system is, the Jacksonville Wal-Mart case is it," the UFCW concluded.

But the saga is not over. The union noted that "even after clearing every hurdle Wal-Mart could throw in their path, these workers are still faced with a company across the table that has little legal incentive to deal with them fairly," because current labor

law does not force companies to bargain in good faith with unions.

If Wal-Mart stalls again in Jacksonville, Local 540 has no choice under current labor law but to go back to the NLRB with another complaint -- which Wal-Mart can then appeal in the courts should the agency rule against it.

The Employee Free Choice Act would short-circuit that delay, too. It mandates that when the two sides cannot agree on a contract within 120 days of starting bargaining, the issues would be submitted for binding arbitration.



Duluth Days was another huge success in St. Paul for labor, government, and business leaders in February. Craig Olson, second from left, said one of the important things that happens is people from this region who may have had differences in the past get a chance to get together and realize how much they have in common. That happened with Building Trades leaders and Two Harbors Mayor Randy Bolen, second from right. At left is Brent Pykkonen of Operating Engineers Local 49, at right is Dan Olson of Laborers Local 1091.

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# Many honored at annual Wiesinger Community Service Award Banquet

It was a full house again for the 24th Annual AFL-CIO Community Services Joe Wiesinger Award banquet at the Holiday Inn last Thursday. Among those in attendance were many award winners from the past, and family and co-workers of this year's recipients.

Tony Orman, director of the Lake Superior Area Labor Management Association and a former Wiesinger winner, was the evening's speaker.

"I met Joe Wiesinger when I was about 27 years old in the 1970s," Orman told the gathering. "He looked old as I do now to 27-year olds. He was a smart guy who planted the seeds of community service because he knew he couldn't do it alone, and he asked people to help. Thirty years later we see the fruition of the seeds he sowed. I was one of those seeds, but I'm still reaching for the bar he set for community service, and I hope you all keep reaching for that bar too."

Lee Popovich, United Steelworkers of America Local 1028, in receiving the individual Wiesinger award, said his service is something that was instilled in him from his family and it doesn't seem like a big deal.

Sitting with four generations of his family at the banquet, Popovich said when his union was on strike at the MEI foundry in Gary, they held meetings below the fire hall in that community.

"My grandfather's picture was on the wall for the community service work he had done," Popovich said.

Lee Popovich was recognized for his work in Scouting and the Special Olympics and helping those organizations gives him a lot of satisfaction he said.

"I'm just a guy doing things I believe in," he said.

The employer Wiesinger award was presented to the Falsani, Balmer, Peterson, Quinn & Beyer law firm,

which had no less than eight attorneys and staff members in attendance.

The banquet's program went into detail about the volunteer efforts of all the recipients and the Falsani, Balmer firm had a long list. Partner James Peterson said in accepting their award that the firm was honored to be recognized and will strive to do even more community service.

Robert Jackson was presented with the Helen Horral Award, which honors a retiree. Jackson, Sheet Metal Workers Local 10, is one of the people that has held the Labor Day Picnic together by volunteering every year from the holiday's morning start to evening's finish.

In accepting her Director's Award, AFSCME Local 3801's Beth Peterson said she felt the need to give back to the community after the help her local union had received.

"Our little union was on strike twice in four years at UMD and we received so much support from the community that I decided I needed to give back for all the support we had received," Peterson said. She then called to the podium six of her clerical and technical co-workers and union sisters to share in her award as they have realized the need to give back also.

AFSCME Local 2829's George Miller also received a

Director's Award for his volunteer work with the Boy Scouts. He took the opportunity to thank everyone at the banquet for all they do to help their communities.

Community Services Director Yvonne Harvey started to choke up when she spoke about the six recipient's of her Appreciation Awards--Wendi Mattinen (Laborers Local 1091), Pam Fairchild (Operating Engineers Local 49), Deborah Skoglund (UFCW Local 1116 and Labor World Newspaper), Dana Marciniak (Painters Local 106), Shirley Hanson (Zenith Administrators) and Nancy Carlson (IBEW Local 31)

"Every year they step forward with money and moral support to help with all Community Service Program activities, and especially at Christmas," Harvey said. "They want to know as early as possible of families that need adopting for the holidays."

Also recognized at the banquet were ten union members who graduated earlier this year from Harvey's Union Community Activist Network training. They included Beth Peterson, Helen Wisneski, Lorraine Reinke, Jayme McKenna, Scott Dulas, Jean Hansen, Shirley Nelson, Dawn Hiller, Cheryl Watzak, and Shirley Karo.



Sean Quinn, James Peterson, and Alan Netland



George Miller



Lee Popovich



Robert Jackson



Beth Peterson



Wendi Mattinen, Pam Fairchild, Deborah Skoglund, Dana Marciniak, Shirley Hanson, and Nancy Carlson.



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# Mental health study: Income inequality, no respect, justice drives us nuts

By Sam Pizzigati  
Editor, Too Much

WASHINGTON--Many Americans, says new polling from the Pew Charitable Trusts, don't see inequality as a particular problem so long as a society offers everyone an "opportunity" to get ahead. These Americans just might feel a bit differently if they had a chance to chat with the analysts behind a stunning new survey of the latest global research on mental health.

*Mental Health, Resilience and Inequalities*, prepared for the World Health Organization European Office by Dr. Lynne Friedli, in conjunction with the Mental Health Foundation, London, reports that income inequality may be driving people nuts.

Back in the 19th century, amid choking levels of infectious disease, scientists and eventually political leaders came to realize sewers and clean water could actually keep people healthy far better than any medical potion. Now here in the 21st century, amid the scourge of heart disease and other degenerative conditions, we may once again be poised for another great conceptual leap. We still, of course, need those sewers and that clean water. But we need something else, suggests this new report. We need respect and justice.

That's not a message we normally expect to hear from mental health professionals. We tend to think about mental health, after all, as a matter of individual pathology — and we

tend to separate mental from physical health.

The distinguished mental health professionals behind this report don't make that separation. They link mental health to the diseases that ravage our physical health — and tie both mental and physical health to levels of social and economic injustice.

Our "individual and collective mental health and well-being," as Mental Health, Resilience and Inequalities pronounces, "depends on reducing the gap between rich and poor." Read that sentence again, and think about its implications.

The British Mental Health Foundation backs this pronouncement up by walking us through a wide-ranging array of recent international medical research. "People with mental health problems," research tells us, "have much higher rates of physical illness."

Smoking, most of us understand, increases the risk of suffering cardiovascular disease. But researchers have documented that "the absence of positive mental health" will put you at greater risk for cardiovascular disease than smoking.

Mind over matter? Stress over immune system might be a better formulation. Chronic stress beats down our body's defenses, upsets our physiological balances, leaves us open to disease.

What stresses us? Living in poverty, for starters. Coping with deprivation and disadvantage, day in and day out, wears

us out. But stress doesn't just come from deprivation, trying to make do without the material basics of life. Stress comes, perhaps even more powerfully, from inequality, from the constant pressures that come with life in deeply divided societies, the foundation-backed report says.

"The adverse impact of stress is greater in societies where greater inequalities exist, and where some people feel worse off than others, it adds." This stress impacts everyone, not just the poor. Deep-seated inequality heightens status competition and status insecurity across all income groups and among both adults and children."

The reverse also holds. The smaller a society's economic divides, the less stress, the more health.

"Both high and low income populations," points out Mental Health, Resilience and Inequalities, "benefit in more equal societies."

This Mental Health Foundation analysis goes on to detail how the dynamics of unequal societies play out, with a level of medical specificity readers outside the health professions may sometimes have trouble digesting. But if your eyes don't glaze over when the discussion turns to "C-reactive proteins," you'll have no trouble navigating your way.

And even those of us who stumble over "neuro-endocrine" pathways and "bio markers" will find plenty of value — and even inspiration

— in these pages. We can become more healthy, the Mental Health Foundation reminds us, because we can become more equal.

"This is not about utopian visions," the foundation sums up. "The comparison between Sweden and the United Kingdom shows that relatively small differences in levels of inequality can have very significant effects on health."

## UNITE HERE dissidents vote to affiliate with SEIU

PHILADELPHIA (PAI)--Delegates representing some 150,000 members of UNITE HERE voted March 21 to secede from the larger union and affiliate with -- though not actually merge into -- the Service Employees. At a convention here the 450 delegates elected Edgar Romney, UNITE HERE's executive vice president, as their president. They then voted to affiliate with SEIU in order to take advantage of its lower dues, larger resources and organizing capabilities, news reports said.

The delegates represented UNITE HERE joint boards "scattered around the U.S. and Canada," said spokeswoman Sharon White. They also named themselves Workers United. "It was like a divorce," from UNITE HERE, White added.

UNITE HERE Locals 99 and 150 in Duluth, affiliates of the Midwest Joint Board in Chicago, are among those who will probably become Workers United affiliates.

Ironically, the leader of the secession movement, UNITE HERE International President Bruce Raynor, remains in that post until its convention in June. UNITE HERE's board has a majority from HERE -- the old Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees -- which was and is the larger of the two unions. That UNITE HERE board majority, in turn, voted to withdraw from Change To Win, where SEIU is the leading member, and open talks on rejoining the AFL-CIO. The UNITE HERE board also blasted SEIU, by name, for trying to split UNITE HERE.

SEIU President Andy Stern said "some mergers just don't work." SEIU says it now has 2.2 million members.

Though he could not leave UNITE HERE with them, Raynor heavily criticized his own union's present board majority and its leader, Hospitality Industries President John Wilhelm. Before the merger, Wilhelm headed HERE and Raynor led UNITE, itself a combination of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers and the International Ladies Garment Workers unions.

"...what Wilhelm and his small band of zealots is pursuing is not a merger at all, but a hostile takeover. They want to seize control of the union and UNITE's assets...so he can then redirect them to the failed programs of a few of his favorite locals. We will not let that happen," Raynor said.

Wilhelm called the Philadelphia meeting "a convention charade," and "a transparent ploy to justify Stern's hostile takeover of UNITE HERE jurisdiction." He said the union's constitution bars secession. The two sides have filed dueling lawsuits.

*Stat of the Week:* If Congress okays Obama's proposed budget, a Citizens for Tax Justice analysis says America's most affluent 1% -- households that average \$1,467,185 -- would pay \$1,780 more in 2011 taxes, the equivalent of 0.1% of their reported incomes. Middle-income taxpayers who take home \$41,875 would each pay \$740, 1.8% of their incomes, less.

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# Unemployment now rising in every state

By Heather Boushey and Nayla Kazzi

The Center for American Progress  
www.americanprogress.org

WASHINGTON, DC—New data released last month by the Bureau of Labor Statistics confirm that the recession has led to higher unemployment in every state across the nation.

Since the recession began, employers have laid off 4.4 million workers and a record 12.5 million workers are now unemployed. Every state and the District of Columbia have unemployment rates that are higher than a year ago.

All but one state—Louisiana—saw a month-over-month increase in unemployment in January.

Minnesota's unemployment

was at 7.6 percent in January. Wisconsin's was 6.9 percent.

Michigan continues to have the highest unemployment rate in the nation at 11.6 percent, followed by South Carolina (10.4 percent), Rhode Island (10.3 percent), and California (10.1 percent). January's unemployment rate was above 7 percent in 24 of 50 states as well as in the District of Columbia.

Twenty-nine states have lost at least 2 percent of their total jobs since their employment level peaked in 2007 or 2008, during the height of the economic recovery of the 2000s. In January, nonfarm payroll employment decreased in 42 states, increased in seven states as well as the District of Columbia, and was unchanged in one state (Vermont). The sharpest job losses in January occurred in Michigan, where employers laid off 1.5 percent of their employees over the past month, followed by Arizona and Ohio, which each lost 1.1 percent of their jobs, and Nevada, where employers shed 1.0 percent of their employees.

High unemployment has led to sustained high numbers of applicants for unemployment benefits nationwide. The four-week moving average—the weekly average number of new applicants for unemployment benefits over the previous four weeks—was 641,750 last week and continues to be at highs not

seen since the recession in the early 1980s. Many unemployed workers are finding that getting a new job is increasingly difficult. Nearly one in four unemployed workers (23.1 percent) have been out of work and searching for a job for at least six months, up from less than one in five (17.3 percent) a year ago. And 3.4 million workers over the past year ran out of unemployment benefits before they found a new job.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act included \$7 billion in incentive funding for states to modernize their unemployment insurance systems. Nearly every state is now debating how to change their systems to cover more unemployed workers. Researchers estimate that these reforms will increase the number of workers—especially low-wage workers—eligible for benefits by at least 500,000 of workers unemployed over the past 12 months have not received any unemployment benefits.

For more information on the percentage of workers not getting benefits now, and on the Unemployment Insurance Modernization Act, see the Center for American Progress Action Fund's Half in Ten report, "Helping the Jobless Helps Us All" (<http://halfintention.org/helping-the-jobless-2>).

\*View an interactive map at ([http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/03/unemployment\\_map.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/03/unemployment_map.html))



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# Job seekers outnumber jobs available 7 to 1 in region

By Kevin Ristau, JOBS NOW Coalition

The latest Job Vacancy Survey from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development shows that in Northeast Minnesota there are 12,600 unemployed workers competing for 1,700 unfilled jobs. This means that job seekers now outnumber job openings by 7-to-1.

The figures are derived from the fourth quarter of 2008 ([www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/publications/jobvacancy.htm](http://www.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/publications/jobvacancy.htm)).

In the Arrowhead region, which consists of Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake and St. Louis counties, job openings fell 56 percent in just six months.

Other major findings for Northeast Minnesota include:

- Of the five occupational groups with the most job openings, only one offers a median wage higher than \$11 per hour. A median is a midway point; half of the jobs are above it, half below.
- The median wage for all openings increased by 45 percent to \$12.00 per hour.

Unfortunately, the rise in the regional median wage was not caused by adding more good jobs but by losing more bad jobs. For example, the food preparation and serving occupational group has 90 percent fewer openings than it had six months ago.

One out of four openings in the region still pays less than \$9.00 per hour. JOBS NOW's updated Cost of Living research shows that in a Northeast Minnesota family of four with both parents working, each worker must earn at least \$12.07 per hour to meet basic needs.

To see the updated Cost of Living in Minnesota research by county, click the Family Wage and Budget Calculator link on JOBS NOW's web site at [www.jobsnowcoalition.org](http://www.jobsnowcoalition.org).

## Need Help? Dial 2-1-1

**Not sure where to turn? Dial United Way's 2-1-1 to get connected to resources throughout Minnesota.**

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Yvonne Harvey, Director



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# 2009 Union Made Vehicles

All these vehicles are made in the U.S. or Canada by United Auto Workers (UAW), Canadian Auto Workers (CAW), or International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE).

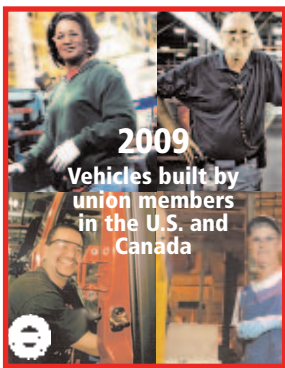
However, those marked with an asterisk (\*) are sourced from the U.S. and another country. When purchasing one of these models, check the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN).

A VIN beginning with "1" "4" or "5" identifies a U.S.-made vehicle; "2" identifies a Canadian-made vehicle.

Not all vehicles made in the U.S. or Canada are built by union-represented workers. The Toyota Corolla, for example, is made in the U.S. by UAW members, but the Canadian model is made in a non-union plant, and other models are imported from a third country.

\*Vehicles marked with an asterisk are produced in more than one country, but all models made in the U.S. are assembled by UAW members.

Go to <http://www.uaw.org/uawmade/auto/2009/index.cfm> to find Union Car Guides for the past five years as well.



## UAW CARS

- Buick Lucerne
- Cadillac CTS
- Cadillac DTS
- Cadillac STS
- Cadillac XLR
- Chevrolet Cobalt
- Chevrolet Corvette
- Chevrolet Malibu/ Malibu Hybrid
- Chrysler Sebring
- Dodge Avenger
- Dodge Caliber
- Dodge Viper
- Ford Focus
- Ford Mustang
- Ford Taurus
- Lincoln MKS
- Mazda 6
- Mercury Sable
- Mitsubishi Eclipse/Spyder
- Mitsubishi Galant
- Pontiac G5
- Pontiac G6
- Pontiac Solstice
- Pontiac Vibe
- Saturn Aura/Aura Hybrid
- Saturn Sky
- Toyota Corolla\*

- Ford Expedition
- Ford Explorer/Sport Trac
- Ford Taurus X
- GMC Acadia
- GMC Yukon\*/Hybrid
- Hummer H2/H3
- Jeep Commander
- Jeep Compass
- Jeep Grand Cherokee
- Jeep Liberty
- Jeep Patriot
- Jeep Wrangler
- Lincoln Navigator
- Mazda Tribute/Hybrid
- Mercury Mariner/Hybrid
- Mercury Mountaineer
- Mitsubishi Endeavor
- Saturn Outlook

## UAW VANS

- Chevrolet Express
- Ford Econoline
- GMC Savana

## CAW CARS

- Buick Lacrosse
- Chevrolet Camaro
- Chevrolet Impala
- Chrysler 300
- Dodge Challenger
- Dodge Charger
- Ford Crown Victoria
- Lincoln Town Car
- Mercury Grand Marquis

## CAW SUVs/CUVs

- Chevrolet Equinox
- Ford Edge
- Ford Flex
- Lincoln MKT
- Lincoln MKX
- Pontiac Torrent
- Suzuki XL7

## UAW/CAW PICKUPS

- Chevrolet Silverado\*/Hybrid
- GMC Sierra\*/Hybrid

## CAW Vans

- Chrysler Town & Country
- Dodge Grand Caravan
- Volkswagen Routan

## IUE SUVs/CUVs

- Chevrolet TrailBlazer
- GMC Envoy

(Continue to next column)

# Blackmail specter haunts EFCA...from page 1

An Eau Claire County official said an unnamed project was derailed because of EFCA. The project was to be a \$50 million investment and 800 full-time jobs in five years. Construction was expected to begin this year.

The official, Brian Doudna, complained about the federal bill hurting local economies, and Bob McCoy, president of

the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce, said the government essentially is stopping growth in the Chippewa Valley.

Connell says "the corporate threat screaming from Eau Claire is not just blackmail. It's anti-worker. Anti-you. Anti-me. Anti-American."

The AFL-CIO will launch a huge public advertising campaign this week in Washington

DC and home areas of "uncensored" lawmakers so they will see the faces of the people their decision on EFCA will affect. Entire buildings in Washington and billboard trucks roaming the streets of their home districts will hopefully counter the outrageous rhetoric of anti-union CEOs.

You can find out more at [www.employeechoice.org](http://www.employeechoice.org).



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