USW 11-63 steward Dennis Altobell, left, got support on his lonely picket last week against SMI from his brother, Greg, a retired AFSCME Local 454 member from the Iron Range.

USW on ULP strike at Specialty Minerals

(Cloquet, MN) – As he stood in the street in the worst subzero cold snap of the winter last week against Specialty Minerals Inc. (SMI), the five members of USW Local 11-63 voted unanimously to reject the company’s final offer and went out on an unfair labor practice strike at 12:01 a.m. on New Year’s Eve.

The USW filed unfair labor practice charges against SMI for failing to bargain in good faith with the union by failing to provide requested, relevant information necessary for collective bargaining.

Key unresolved issues are health insurance, pension funding and the definition of “workweek” along with no hourly pay increase in the first year of the agreement.

“The company pretty much wants to implement anything they want on our health care, our hours, and freeze our pension,” said Altobell. “They wanted to also implement changes on contributing to our 401(k) but they couldn’t do that because that’s covered under federal law.”

The five workers produce a clay slurry from precipitated calcium carbonate used in the paper making process for the Sappi mill in Cloquet. SMI on Sappi’s property and tied directly into their paper processing system as a vendor.

While Sappi has been retooled to move away from the paper industry and into cellulose for clothing and other uses, USW Local 11-63 vice president Tim Dahl said the plant is producing as much paper as ever. His job as a Sappi employee is to incorporate SMI’s product into Sappi’s paper making process.

“We’re running maybe 25 percent over projections and productivity is better than ever,” said Dahl, who was on the picketline lending support. “There’s multi-millions of dollars being made in profit.”

Altobell said there is usually only one union member working each shift for SMI. Since the strike began, there are nine people working on the Sappi grounds for SMI, which brought in strike breakers from Alabama and elsewhere.

See USW strikes...page 7

NLRB sued again by business groups over new union election rules passed in Dec.

By Mark Gruenberg
PM Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—Here we go again. Business groups are suing the National Labor Relations Board over the new union election rules it finalized in December.

The corporate interests, led by the Chamber of Commerce but also including the National Association of Manufacturers and the National Retail Federation, argue this time that the NLRB illegally imposed the rules because the new rules “impermissibly limit the right of all parties” — in other words, companies — “to engage in protected speech at precisely the time when their free speech rights are most important.”

Other corporate interests that sued the NLRB are the so-called Coalition for a Democratic Workplace, a business front group, and the lobby for personnel officers.

Unions strongly support the NLRB’s decision. When the board approved the final rule, by a 3-2 party-line vote in December, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, who has a law degree, hailed the move.

“The modest but important reforms to the representation election process” the board announced “will help reduce delay in the process and make it easier for workers to vote on forming a union in a timely manner,” he said then.

“Too often, lengthly and unnecessary litigation over minor issues bog down the election process and prevents workers from getting the vote they want. We commend the NLRB’s efforts to streamline the process and reduce unnecessary delay.

“Strengthening protections for workers seeking to come together and bargain collectively is critical to workers winning much-deserved wage gains and improving their lives.”

The business lobbies’ lawsuit is the latest act in a long-running war over the NLRB’s power to manage union recognition election procedures. Supported by the AFL-CIO and other unions, the board is trying — for a second time — to allow electronic filings of all demands by the employer, to consolidate all hearings about who has the right to vote in the elections into one session, and to have the elections held with fewer of the delays employers routinely use to deny workers their representation rights.

The business lobbies claimed elections are already quick. And they cloaked themselves in the garments of allegedly protecting their own workers’ rights.

This corporate interests, declared in their January 5 filing that “by rapidly and needlessly accelerating the election process, the (NLRB’s) final rule improperly shortens the time needed for employees to understand relevant issues, compelling them to ‘vote now, understand later.’

“In doing so, the final rule is contrary to common sense, contrary to the National Labor Relations Act and its legislative history, and contrary to other legal requirements directed to the preservation of employees’ free choice, all of which focus on guaranteeing enough time for making important decisions,” the business lobbies contend.

But what the lobbies, especially the personnel managers, are really scared of is buried deep in their court papers: That when unions do finally get to contest elections, unions win. They even admit it: A 70 percent win rate, the lobbies claim.

The NLRB’s rules, by speeding up the process — or so the business lobbies say — would make union wins more likely.

“The vast majority of employees” of the businesses the lobbies represent “are not currently represented by a union. There are, however, active union organizing campaigns involving employees of many of the businesses the lobbies speak for, the personnel managers in particular admitted.

Those businesses expect the workers — and the unions that want to represent them — “will file election petitions soon after the final rule becomes effective on April 14, 2015, and all subsequent elections will be governed by the final rule’s expedited procedures.”

The elections, the lobbies say, will “injure” the businesses because they’ll have less, to consolidate all demands over a half century of successful elections to put the demands of politically powerful heads of employees’ rights to make informed choices and employers’ rights to due process and free speech. the business lobbies claimed in a statement by Josh Ullman, lawyer for the board.

“The business groups beat the board on the new rules the first time, several years ago, because the board then did not have a proper quorum to pass the measures.

The NLRB had no immediate comment on the business lobbies’ suit. No court date has been set for it.
Five days of events will celebrate Dr. King

Many events in the Twin Ports will honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., this weekend and on the holiday in his honor Monday, Jan. 19. This year his life and legacy need to be remembered even more as America again loses the weak grip it has held on civil rights and race relations.

**Mayor’s MLK Reception Thursday, Jan. 15, 6:30 p.m.**

Mayor Don Ness will host a reception at The Underground, 506 W. Michigan St. (Depot Lower Level) giving the community an opportunity to come together in unity.

**Duluth’s Got Talent Friday, Jan. 16, 6:30 p.m.**

A talent show will be held at Denfeld High School Auditorium, 44th Ave. W. and 4th St., Fri., Jan. 16, 6:30 p.m.

**JAM’N with MLK Saturday, Jan. 17, 7:00 PM**

Peace United Church of Christ, 11th Ave. E. & 11 St., will host a nigh of song celebrating the contributions of African-Americans. There will also be some brief stories of local individuals who have contributed significantly to Duluth’s history.

**MLK Ecumenical Service Sunday, Jan. 18, 5:00 pm**

Gather at the Washington Center, 330 N. 59th Ave. West, recognizing that Dr. King was a man of God, invites the community to share in an ecumenical worship service honoring his legacy. Featured speaker is Christopher Little, minister of music at New Life Church in Garden City, Michigan. He is a graduate of Duluth’s Marshall School.

Individuals interested in singing in the Ecumenical Service Choir must attend a rehearsal Sat., Jan. 17 from 2 to 5 p.m. Contact Pastor Vernon Green at 218-348-1560.

**MLK Free Breakfast Monday, Jan. 19, 7 a.m.**

Coppertop Church, 230 East Skyline Parkway, will host a free breakfast beginning at 7 a.m. At 8:00 a.m. a large screen broadcast of Vernon Jordan Jr.’s speech from Minneapolis will be shown.

Jordan is a Senior Managing Director of Lazard Freres & Co. LLC in New York. He works with a diverse group of clients across a broad range of industries.

A free will offering will be taken to support community programs.

**MLK Holiday March Mon., Jan. 19, 10:45 a.m.**

Gather at the Washington Center, Lake Avenue and 4th St. to march to the DECC in honor of Dr. King. In case of extreme cold, the march will be shortened and go through the downtown Skywalk to the DECC.

Join in and share your commitment to fulfill the dream of Dr. King and all those others who have struggled for civil and human rights.

**MLK Holiday Rally Monday, Jan. 19, 11:45 a.m.**

The rally at the DECC auditorium features a series of local speakers who will highlight activities that are working toward racial justice in the community. Additionally, the Justice for Peace award will be announced. This award goes to both an individual and an organization whose work contributes to fulfilling the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. There are six individual and four group nominees this year.

**MLK Film Monday, Jan. 19, 7:00 p.m.**

The North Area Labor Council’s Labor Movie Night will feature a free showing of the 1993 documentary “At the River I Stand” in the Duluth Labor Temple’s Wellstone Hall, 2002 London Road (enter via South St. entrance facing Lake Superior). Free refreshments will be available. A free will offering is appreciated.

The film chronicles the AFSCME Memphis Sanitation workers strike in 1968, where Dr. King gave his famous “I have been to the mountaintop” speech. He was assassinated the following day.

Duluth’s Martin Luther King Holiday committee welcomes anyone to join them in the work of building community and fulfilling his dream.

If you would like to part of planning the events call Claudia Washington at 590-824-0093, or emailed to deblabor@qwestoffice.net. Call (218) 724-4469 if you need further information.

There will be an open election for five seats on the Board of Directors. Candidates must be credentialed delegates to the annual meeting from their local union. Board positions are for two years. The Board meets four times a year prior to Duluth AFL-CIO Central Labor Body meetings on the second Thursdays in February, June, September, and December.

The Labor World’s 2014 financial report, as well as a discussion of the operations of the paper, will be included in the agenda of the annual meeting.

This quarter’s meeting will immediately follow the annual meeting and will include an election of officers.

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**Citizens in Action Jan. 31**

The 17th annual Citizens In Action training Saturday, Jan. 31 is a great way to get educated on how to make democracy and government work better for people. You can start being part of the solution at the Copper Top Church, Skyline Blvd/Mesabi Ave. 9 a.m. (to 3 p.m.). A free lunch and snacks are served.

This year’s theme of “Strengthening Community through Relationships” will include Rep. Erin Murphy, (DFL-St. Paul). She was House DFL majority leader in the last session. Murphy directed the Minnesota Nurses Association’s political action committee in the mid-1990s and was MNA’s executive director from 2001 until the end of 2007.

Workshops will address steps for involvement, strategies for racial equality, building coalitions, and serving on non-profit boards. North East Area Labor Council’s Zach Stias will lead the coalition building workshop.

A coffee and conversation session allows participants to speak with elected officials in attendance.

RSVPs are appreciated by Monday, Jan. 26. You can call the Citizen’s Federation at 727-0207 to register or find out more.

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**Website features St. Louis River Estuary stories, science**

The St. Louis River, which forms a far northwest border between Minnesota and Wisconsin, is a favorite spot for fishing, bird watching, and enjoying nature. A new website, stlouisriverestuary.org, reveals stories from citizens and information and examples of scientific work going on in its estuary. The “Stories and Science of the St. Louis River Estuary” site was created by faculty and staff from the University of Minnesota Duluth and University of Wisconsin-Madison with help from many partners, and funding by the Wisconsin and Minnesota Sea Grant programs and Minnesota’s Pollution Control Agency.

Featured topics include wild rice, fishing, recreation, community and restoration projects. Site visitors can challenge themselves with “GeoQuests” – iPhone-based games and geocaches that highlight key places and issues in the estuary, or they can use the “deep map” to explore the ecology and history of this special place.

Thousands of people shared postings about the site and visited it when it was announced through social media channels in December. The site will be featured during the upcoming St. Louis River Estuary Summit on March 31-April 1, 2015. In the meantime, stlouisriverestuary.org to learn more. Explore the stories of the estuary through the eyes of people that live and work there, and delve into the science of the interplay between humans and ecosystems.

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**Citizens’ Fed will talk to your group about Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid**

The Citizen’s Federation, a great community partner of the Duluth AFL-CIO Central Labor Body, is embarking on a new special project to help Baby Boomers and retirees understand the social security system. The project is made possible through funding from the Northland Foundation’s Rural Aging Initiative.

While the media has many scary stories about the programs failing from people who would like to see their demise, the Citizen’s Federation has the facts about their health and viability in the future.

If your group would like to learn more about the Citizen’s Fed’s project contact them at 727-0207, admin@citizenfed.org.
I wish we had a windmill harnessing energy and running our home. Got a good spot for one. Wish our roof was covered with solar panels lighting our lights, heating water, running other appliances, and charging a battery cluster. I wish we didn’t have a mortgage.

I wish there was a chicken in every pot." a slogan from Herbert Hoover’s 1928 presidential campaign about the prosperity America would see if he were elected. The rest of it was “and a car in every garage” and there’s the rub it seems for many folks. We didn’t do so well under Hoover did we?

Hunger is still a terrible problem 86 years later even though a lot of folks don’t even eat chicken now. And we got hooked on our personal vehicles just a couple decades later as Eisenhower’s highway system was connecting the nation and ruining chances for a great public transportation system.

Unfortunately most of us don’t have the means at home to harness the wind or sun to help wean ourselves off fossil fuels even if we want to. That’s an expensive undertaking that doesn’t fit well into most family budgets. It’s going to be that way for a long time yet and fossil fuels will have to continue to be a big part of our package to keep our homes and lives running, especially at this latitude. If you’re able to move beyond fossil fuels we applaud you and thank you for minimizing your carbon footprint and making the world better for the rest of us. We’ll try.

In our home we try hard to minimize our carbon feet – always have. Back as far as the late 1970s I was paying Howard Water by the pound to take my sorted recyclables. Had to drive them to 59th West below Raleigh St. to do it. We recycle more than ever. I’m so mad/good at it I don’t throw hardly anything away. Yup, a hoarder I guess, but Dad taught me to be a “haywire man” from his Depression-era upbringing because there wasn’t a chicken in every pot. He taught me to find utility in just about anything – drives The Wife nuts. I save shoelaces.

We have three compost piles, one being worked, one waiting for spring planting, one percolating for a few years down the road. We don’t use chemicals on gardens or lawn, not salt on a sidewalk. Our well at 38 feet is too shallow for bad ideas – wouldn’t use it if it was 338 feet, like many.

I believe there’s global warming. I believe there’s a climate change occurring.

I’m a tree hugger with a split air conditioning unit on our tiny house that I scooped at buying for ten years. I’ve appreciated it for that long now and the fact that it’s not too expensive to run off a 220 foot service panel. We can afford that and the air exchanger we had to put in because I built the house too tight in an energy efficiency move. Had to create our own environmental indoors.

I’m worried where the Earth is going to end up with the direction we seem to be headed but for now I’ll take those oil pipelines as our best way to keep our world working, our homes habitable, and our commute possible. And safe as possible.

For you committed folks that are worried we’re going down quicker than I do, again, we thank you and applaud your efforts. Many of you are friends. But there seems to be a big difference between ideologies depending upon whether you’re an urban dweller or someone trying to make it in a more rural setting. Perhaps if we were off the electrical grid I would do a better job of making do and saving Mother Earth. And if I didn’t have to go to work in the city.

See ya’ at the gas pumps, but as little as possible I hope. We have a white, 1998 Bonneville, runs good, look for us. But I guess you might not be there if you plug your car in. But, hey, have a good day any way as we look for solutions.

**Labor World**

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**Notice**

Labor World 2015 issues:
Jan. 28, Feb. 11, 25;
March 11, 25, April 22;
May 6, 20, June 17;
July 1, 22, Aug. 5, 26;
Sept. 16, 30, Oct. 14, 28;
Nov. 11, 24, Dec. 16;

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**Labor World News, Wednesday, January 14, 2015 Page 3**
No labor fed endorsement in Superior’s mayoral primary election Feb. 17

A January 7 screening of the five mayoral candidates by the Superior Federation of Labor resulted in none of them being endorsed for the Tuesday, Feb. 17 primary election.

All five candidates attended the screening. They came before the group individually to be screened and answered a series of a dozen questions from over two dozen delegates at Ace’s on 29th. Following the screenings delegates held a long discussion about the candidates and the pros and cons of endorsing before the primary. There was a wide difference of opinion on how to proceed and a majority opted for no endorsement.

One delegate said Paine is not serious, perhaps being groomed as a Demo- crat and a progressive. Active in many community efforts the former Marine is a UW graduate with another degree from UMD’s Masters of Advocacy and Political Leadership.

One delegate said Paine is “aggressive in battle, steadfast in support, and doesn’t get lost in policy.”

A number of delegates were ready to endorse Paine, but the majority opted for no endorse- ment prior to the primary.

Other than Hermanson, candidates had good answers on questions about unions, right to work (for less), UWS outsourcing, Carlson/Dettman study, and project labor agreements in construction.

Most had similar opinions on Superior’s problems, needs, and good points.

Problems that are in need of solutions are cuts in state aid, infrastructure needs, housing shortages, and street drugs.

The city’s landfill problems was brought up by most candid- dates. It costs the city $1.7 million to the state Dept. of Natural Resources to dump garbage there and it’s not cost effective. Many feel it is the next government service being readied for privatization.

Positives in the city’s out- look include reconstruction of Belknap Avenue, possible Kestrel aircraft manufacturing, UWS and WITC, a new animal shelter, the possibility of taconite bricks being manu- factured there, its position as a ship and rail terminal, and its natural environment.

One question had to do with trying to retrieve a James J. Hill statute from the BN rail yard and putting it back on high school property. Most were in agreement but Mertzig knew Hill as the Empire Builder and probably no friend of labor. “Maybe we could melt it down if its copper,” he said.

Good answer.

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**MESOTHELIOMA and LUNG CANCER**

**DID YOU KNOW**

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**Thanks for your support, and have a great 2015!**

**Frank JEWELL**

St. Louis County Commissioner
District 1

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Paid for by Frank Jewell for County Commissioner, Bill Burns, Treasurer.
Free trade, fast track, and pipelines making for odd alliances, battles

As labor and environmentalists come together to fight Congressional fast track authority for President Obama on more bad free trade deals, it harkens back to 1999 and the “Turtles and Teamsters” slogan of protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle.

That coalition is struggling when it comes to oil pipelines on U.S. soil, however.

In Congress Republicans are siding with Obama’s wishes to allow fast track authority for job killing free trade deals like the Trans-Pacific Partnership, one with Europe and another that would cover services, letting governments outsource and export vital functions, costing more jobs. Democrats say “not so fast.”

Fast track allows a president to make trade deals without any amendments for workers’ rights or environmental concerns. The U.S. House of Representatives has a 246 to 188 business-friendly Republican advantage. But 141 Democrats have let Obama know they are against fast track authority for President Obama’s wish to see happen. National Nurses United has been very vocal in their opposition to allowing the pipeline to carry tar sands oil from Canada to Texas ports.

“From the extraction, transport and production of tar sands oil to the compelling evidence that the pipeline will accelerate the harmful effects of the climate crisis, the Keystone XL pipeline remains a significant danger to public health and safety,” said NNU Co-President Karen Higgins.

The pipeline has been vetted for six years through environmental impact statements and appears to be ready for passage in the House and Senate.

Obama has said he would veto the measure in part because of problems with its route, and opposition, in Nebraska. But that state Supreme Court has now approved a route through the state. Democrats are struggling with the issue and do not appear to have enough votes, 67 in the Senate, to override a veto.

Republicans continue to work Democrats with amendments to the bill to try to muster more supporters.

Part of the 1,179 mile Keystone XL pipeline has already been built in the southern U.S. It would move 830,000 barrels a day. Meanwhile construction unions and business allies are united in seeking a 300 mile Sandpiper pipeline through Minnesota to Wisconsin. Last week five hearings by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission found about 500 people at each meeting.

Administrative Law Judge Eric Lipman, his court reporters, and PUC staff listened and recorded almost five hours of testimony at each hearing. He will determine the pros and cons of a “certificate of need” for the pipeline, make a recommendation about mid-April to the PUC, which will make their decision in June. If approved work wouldn’t begin until probably 2016.

The pipeline is over 600 miles long in total from North Dakota’s Bakken oil fields to Superior, Wisconsin. The exact route for Minnesota’s 300 miles is yet to be determined. The pipeline would send 375,000 barrels a day from Clearbrook, MN to Superior through a 30 inch pipeline.

“We’ve had plenty of information that shows pipelines are the safest way to transport oil,” said Laborers International Representative Dan Olson. “Trucks and trains can’t move hundreds of thousands of barrels every day as safely as pipelines can. We know we need to be as energy efficient as possible, and our members have the skills to build these pipelines as safely as possible, with as little effect as possible on the environment. These are the types of jobs we should be creating to help our energy needs, our economy, and our laid off members.”

Laborers International Rep. Dan Olson (white shirt) goes over his remarks for the Sandpiper oil pipeline public hearing in Duluth Jan. 6. About 2,500 people showed up at five hearings in Minnesota that week. You can make comments until 4:30 p.m., Friday Jan. 23 (no attachments) at mn.gov/puc using PUC Docket number 13-473 and OAH Docket Number 8-2500-31260.

Meanwhile construction
Move MN coalition proposes balanced plan to fix urgent transportation needs

~Workday Minnesota

Saying that transportation needs can’t wait, a coalition that includes organized labor announced a 10-year plan last Thursday for fixing Minnesota’s roads and bridges, expanding access to transit and improving safety.

“Everyone agrees that an efficient, reliable transportation system is essential to Minnesota’s economic competitiveness,” said Margaret Donahoe, executive director of the Minnesota Transportation Alliance and Move MN co-chair. “But by 2025, Minnesota’s entire transportation system will be on life support. Compounding the problem, freight semi-truck traffic is projected to increase by 30 percent and the state will have 430,000 additional residents. Move MN supporters said state leaders need a 10-year plan with new long-term funding to address these challenges.

In order to ensure Minnesota is well positioned for future economic and population growth, Move MN proposed modest increases in several fees and taxes that currently fund the state’s transportation system. Move MN’s proposal generates at least $856 million annually for statewide transportation projects. State officials estimate Minnesota faces a funding gap of well over $1.5 billion annually.

Move MN called for greater efficiency and transparency with transportation projects, in addition to finding new funding sources that meet long-term obligations for all modes. Move MN supporters stated efficiency includes finding cost savings; minimizing construction impact on traffic, businesses and customers; using 21st century materials and practices; and prioritizing projects with the greatest community benefit.

Move MN proposed adding the state’s 6.5 percent sales tax to the price of fuel, generating $422 million annually. A sales tax on fuel is based on the price of fuel—the higher the price of fuel, the more tax revenue is generated. A sales tax on fuel is similar to what 13 other states and numerous local governments do. Minnesota consumers pay at a retailer—the higher the cost of the product, the more you will pay in a sales tax.

One difference between a retail sales tax and the proposed sales tax on fuel is that the sales tax on fuel is calculated into a cent-per-gallon tax and adjusted annually to reflect the changing price of fuel. When applied at the gas pump, the state’s gas tax would increase by approximately 1.2 cents per gallon. This revenue is constitutionally dedicated and can only be spent on roads and bridges.

Move MN proposes increasing the current sales tax by three-quarters of a cent, applying the sales tax in all seven counties and using a small portion (10 percent) of the proceeds to fund fix-it and local streets. In addition to increases in the state’s Highway Trust Fund, local option tools would help cities struggling to fix potholes.

Also citing the need to improve bike and pedestrian connections, Move MN proposed reallocating $16 million in current flexible federal transportation funds to helping Greater Minnesota communities develop safer routes to school and work. Transportation funding supporters said the proposal would cost the average driver approximately $1.60 per week and less than $0.90 per year for semi-truck businesses. Twin Cities residents would pay an extra $1.30 per week as a result of the metro sales tax, with businesses incurring approximately 40 percent of the tax burden.

Governor Dayton and legislative leaders have said transportation will be a top priority during the 2015 legislative session. Move MN’s plan will be one of several proposals considered.

Move MN is a statewide coalition of more than 200 businesses, labor and other organizations and local governments committing to fixing Minnesota’s long-term transportation problems by securing a comprehensive transportation funding solution.

According to MnDOT, more than 65 percent of the state’s roads and 40 percent of bridges will be more than 50 years old by 2025, long surpassing their lifespan. Compounding the problem, freight semi-truck traffic is projected to increase by 30 percent and the state will have 430,000 additional residents. Move MN supporters said state leaders need a 10-year plan with new long-term funding to address these challenges.

IN MEMORY of

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"I'M NOT A RACIST, BUT...."

We’ve all heard this line before, maybe even used it ourselves. What usually follows is a racist remark—either a derogatory comment or a sweeping generalization—about someone’s racial or ethnic background.

Racist remarks divide us, and make us focus on differences instead of the things that bring us together—like shared concerns about our families, decent wages, safe working conditions and fairness at work.

Unions and racism don’t mix. Racism seeks to degrade people and insult their dignity. Unionism, however, seeks equality and justice for everyone—in the workplace and in the community.

So, the next time you hear a racist remark, explain that racism is anti-union.

We remember Martin Luther King, Jr. was the civil rights leader who led the Montgomery bus boycott. We remember that 100 years after the Emancipation Proclamation, in 1963 he delivered his “I Have A Dream” speech which defined civil rights for all. As public employees, we remember he was standing with striking AFSCME sanitation workers in Memphis on the day he was slain.

REMEMBERING MEMPHIS: "You are demanding that this city will respect the dignity of labor. So often we overlook the work and the significance of those who are not in professional jobs, of those who are not in the so-called big jobs. But let me say to you tonight that whenever you are engaged in work that serves humanity and is for the building of humanity, it has dignity and it has worth."

-- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the AFSCME Memphis Sanitation Strike on April 3, 1968. Visit www.afscme.org and put “Dr. King” on the search engine for more.

Don’t know where to turn? Dial 218-726-4775

AFSCME Local 66
AFSCME Council 5
in the public service

AFSCME Council 5

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Say NO to racism!

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AFSCME Local 66
AFSCME Council 5
in the public service

January 15, 1929
April 4, 1968

Get connected to resources throughout Minnesota!
For services provided by the Community Services Program sponsored by the Duluth AFL-CIO Central Labor Body and the United Way of Greater Duluth... Call 218-726-4775

Community Services Program
Lynette Swanberg, Director
424 West Superior Street
Suite 402, Duluth, MN 55802
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AFL-CIO announces raising wages campaign and summits across nation

(Washington, D.C.—The first National Summit on Raising Wages definitively set the tone for political and economic action in the New Year. It generated an in-depth, diverse conversation and developed concrete steps for an expanded campaign to raise wages for working people. But above all, the summit proved America is beginning to rise up, come together and reject the idea that nothing can be done about falling wages.

The AFL-CIO’s national summit is just the beginning of the 2015 Raising Wages campaign. From Jan. 7’s success, the campaign expands with two initial projects:

1) State federations of labor will hold Raising Wages summits in the first four presidential primary states—Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire and South Carolina—beginning in Iowa this spring. These summits will bring together political leaders, unions, community groups and business leaders to lay out the entire Raising Wages platform and establish state-based standards of accountability.

2) The AFL-CIO will take the Raising Wages campaign to seven cities around the country: Atlanta, Columbus, DC (Metro), St. Louis, Philadelphia, Minneapolis and San Diego. In each city, the labor movement will stand together with those already at work and bring important energy, ideas and resources to critical battles. These cities will be the starting points of a long-term effort to concentrate work where it can have the most impact.

In major speeches highlighting the summit, Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and Secretary of Labor Tom Perez outlined the defining economic fact of the past generation: productivity has gone way up and wages have stayed flat. Concluding the summit, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka highlighted the enormous progress, remaining challenges and real steps the labor movement plans to undertake in order to create an economy based on raising wages.

The AFL-CIO also released a series of policy prescriptions that take on many of the challenges discussed. These bold policies provide a comprehensive road map to grow our nation’s economy in a way that works for everyone.

The core of the summit’s success was built on a panel discussion of workers, academics, business owners and progressive and political leaders. Through this conversation, panelists detailed how the raising wages agenda made great strides and confronted great challenges in 2014, including major organizing wins at American Airlines, multiple state legislative victories on the minimum wage and innovative campaigns conducted by car-wash workers. The panelists also recognized, however, that right-wing billionaires’ extremist politics, a ravenous Wall Street and insufficient advocacy from political leaders thwarted further progress.

The AFL-CIO National Summit on Raising Wages was attended by more than 300 progressive activists and union leaders, and was seen by thousands more through online live-stream video.

This summit is how the work begins. At its end, the challenges—but more importantly, the opportunities—are clear. Allies united behind the idea of a Raising Wages Agenda have come together in a collective voice, and are ready to go to work.
Education, transportation, and the switch to a Republican minority in the House will clearly mean conflicts over issues such as the two-year state budget and transportation funding. At the forum, neither lawmaker spoke at length on any particular issue, but they did offer some clues to their stances.

On transportation, Daudt said the Republican “priority will be on roads and bridges. I won’t say we won’t consider other things [but] we’ve got to focus on the basics.”

Bakk said DFLers want to see a comprehensive plan for roads, bridges and transit but he is “concerned” about proposals to fund it through an increase in the gas tax. Earlier in the day, the MoveMN coalition made such a proposal (see story page 7).

The Senate majority leader said he is cautioning Minnesotans against high expectations because passing a state budget will not be easy, despite a projected $1 billion surplus. The amount sounds like a lot, Bakk said, but is probably only enough to cover inflationary increases on the $40 billion budget.

On education, Daudt repeated his call for “reform” of teacher tenure and noted it was the topic of one of the first bills the GOP has introduced. He also said, “We want to put the best teachers in front of students,” adding “it may mean we have to look at paying teachers more.”

Bakk lauded the work done in the past four years to create a teacher evaluation program that began last fall. He said lawmakers should give the evaluation program time to work before proposing changes.

Denise Specht, president of the 70,000-member Education Minnesota union, issued a statement Jan. 8 praising the Senate for its education agenda and expressing disappointment in the House plans.

“The Senate is addressing some of the most pressing needs of Minnesota students and their families by expanding access to pre-kindergarten programs, vocational and technical education and mental health services in rural areas,” Specht said.

“In contrast, the House education agenda apparently consists of new layoff regulations for teachers and a package of policies around the licensing of educators that may make it easier for less-qualified teachers to get into Minnesota classrooms,” Specht said. “There’s a huge gap between these policies and the challenges educators and parents see in their schools every day. I hope House leaders will work with educators this session and aim a little higher.”

Republicans just don’t work

A surprise delegate at the Jan. 8 Duluth Central Labor Body meeting was Painters & Allied Trades Local 106’s Mike Sundin. He is Rep. Mike Sundin (DFL-Esko) and he wasn’t pleased that he was able to attend the meeting. He felt he should be in St. Paul at the legislature, which had just convened Jan. 6. Republicans took control of the House in November’s elections and are setting the agenda, which apparently doesn’t include working.

“We had a reception, then 20 minutes of floor session, and that was it,” an irate Rep. Sundin told delegates. “It was a first week of absolute embarrassment of wasting our time and not doing the people’s work.” To top it off he said there is talk of doing bonding this year and bypassing the 2016 session.

How do you do all that by May 18 without a special session?

By Barb Kucera

Workday Minnesota

DFL and Republican legislators sought a tone of cooperation as the 2015 session opened last week – and also tried to dampen expectations.

“A lot of people are going to be disappointed” at the end of the session, Senate Majority Leader Tom Bakk, a DFLer from Cook, predicted at a forum Jan. 8 sponsored by the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. The event was moderated by former state Republican House Speaker Steve Sviggum and Humphrey School Professor Larry Jacobs.

Bakk and Speaker of the House Kurt Daudt, a Republican from Crown, set a cordial tone in their remarks that echoed comments they had made earlier in the day at separate news conferences at the state Capitol.

“I’m very optimistic about our ability to work together,” Daudt said.

Bakk noted the two planned to have lunch together after the forum and share information on bills being introduced.

However, after two years of DFL lawmakers controlling both houses of the Legislature and holding the governorship, the switch to a Republican majority in the House will clearly mean conflicts over issues such as the two-year state budget and transportation funding. At the forum, neither lawmaker spoke at length on any particular issue, but they did offer some clues to their stances.

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Be Ready for the Unexpected

“A few years ago in a motorcycle accident case, I represented a real tough guy, who had suffered a horrible fracture of his lower leg, which resulted in terrible scarring.

After he took the stand, I planned to conclude his testimony with a dramatic flourish, so I asked, 'Now, Sir, will you show your scar to the jury?'

The tough guy said, 'NO!' I had to quickly change my strategy and argue that he refused because he found it too embarrassing.

The jury understood.

I've been doing this for forty years. The surprises never end.”

Bob Falsani ATTORNEY AT LAW

Falsani, Balmer, Peterson, Quinn & Beyer

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