

LABOR WORLD

An Injury to One is an Injury to All!
WEDNESDAY JANUARY 25, 2012 VOL. 118 NO. 14



Ann Lockwood, second from right, feared she'd lose her home, but the work of a new area coalition, Project Save Our Homes, got a new arrangement with her bank that was announced on her East Hillside porch Monday.

Labor cheers IM Walker recall petitions

On January 17 Wisconsin recall petitions of Governor Scott Walker, Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch, and four state senators, all Republicans, reached the needed number of signatures. Boxes of petitions were dropped off at the Government Accountability Board in Madison by a joyous crowd. Now the painstaking process of validating them will begin.



A joyous crowd delivers signed recall petitions to the Government Accountability Board in Madison on Jan. 17. (Photo courtesy of Wisconsin State AFL-CIO)

Over a million signatures were collected to recall Walker in the 60 days since the process began, with 508,240 needed. The number of signatures represents 23 percent of the state's eligible voters and is just short of the number of votes Walker garnered in winning in 2010.

The other recalls were: Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch - 845,000 (508,240 needed); Sen. Terry Moulton, Chippewa Falls - 21,000 (14,958 needed) Sen. Pam Galloway of Wausau - 21,000 (15,647 needed) Sen. Van Wanggaard of Racine - 24,000 (15,353 needed) Sen. Scott Fitzgerald - 20,600 (16,742 needed).

Last year two Republican senators were defeated in recalls leaving the state senate with 17 Republicans and 16 Democrats.

The recalls were preceded by mass protests against

Walker's law killing collective bargaining rights for 200,000 state and local government workers, the first big battle in the national radical right war on workers. But the state's eligible voters found many other reasons to oust the governor and his cronies, including huge cuts in state aid to schools, eviction of thousands of residents from health care programs, and millions in corporate tax breaks.

"There is no question about it. Wisconsinites want to recall Walker in order to put an end to his disastrous agenda and stop his attacks on working families" Wisconsin State AFL-CIO President Phil Neuenfeldt said. "Putting corporate allies above the people of Wisconsin has led

to months of job loss and a compromised economy. Destroying collective bargaining rights for public employees has hurt thousands of families and small businesses across the state. The ripple affects of Walker's union-busting bill are estimated to cost Wisconsin 18,000 private-sector jobs a year."

"For 60 days union and community members have organized at union halls, grocery stores and bowling allies around the state to recall Walker and those who walk in lock-step with his extreme and dangerous agenda," said fed Secretary-Treasurer Stephanie Bloomingdale. "Last February, when Walker announced his plan to bust public sector unions and the middle class, a spark was lit and the people of Wisconsin began to take notice of Walker's real agenda. This is a governor who crippled the rights of workers, raised taxes on the poor, compromised our children's education and made it harder for Wisconsinites to vote. His agenda is not working and the people of Wisconsin won't stand for two more years of Walker."

By law the Government Accountability Board has only 31 days to validate enough signatures for a recall election. GAB officials will seek to extend that to 60 days because of the large number of petitions in the six recalls. It's unlikely that enough petitions would be invalid to stop any recall.

The recall election will probably occur in June, after the state's Democrats find a nominee to oppose Walker. The governor has already raised more than \$5 million for his effort to beat the recall, with more than half of it from corporate interests outside Wisconsin. He also says he does not care who the Democrats nominate. He'll run against, in his words, "Union bosses in Washington."

PAI contributed to this report

Ann Lockwood rescued by Project Save Our Homes

Foreclosure forum set for Feb. 1 in Duluth

Local efforts by Project Save Our Homes, a grassroots housing rights coalition that was launched in December, appear to have turned the tide in a foreclosure case of East Hillside homeowner Ann Lockwood, a former member of USW Local 9460.

An 18-year resident of East 8th Street, Lockwood was facing the loss of her home after a major medical crisis caused her to fall behind on mortgage payments. A thousand area residents signed paper petitions, 400 more signed online, many made phone calls and marched

on the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Jan. 16 on her behalf. A rally was held in front of her home that day.

Within a week Project Save Our Homes was at Lockwood's home again to announce details of an agreement reached with State Farm Bank of Bloomington, Illinois. The bank had scheduled a sheriff's sale of Lockwood's home on January 19 but it was moved to June after attorney Pete Greeley, working pro-bono, got an extension. Project Save Our Homes got a new agreement.

"There were 206 foreclosures in Duluth in 2011, and we hope for better this year," said PSOH spokesperson Donna Howard. "Our first (effort) was Ann's home, and she gave us a chance to test out direct pressure on a bank. We're so excited to announce her brand new, long term, low interest, low monthly payment agreement that will allow Ann to stay in her home. We hope for the same for others."

An emotional Lockwood was feeling so much better than she did a week earlier when she told of her fears of foreclosure. "I hope this good news

encourages others," Lockwood said. "I'm so excited State Farm proved to be a good neighbor and lived up to their motto. I can't wait to help others and do whatever I can do to help make the foreclosure numbers go downhill. I can't believe the support. I can stay in my home of 18 years. I'm very grateful."

Lockwood was a surgical technologist at Essentia making good money. She developed an infection that required 28 surgeries and resulted in her losing a leg four years ago and making her wheelchair bound for a long time.

A mother of three, including a blind daughter, Lockwood had saved to be able to pay her mortgage. Her medical procedures and worries caused her to forget a balloon payment on her mortgage and foreclosure proceedings followed. She can work again but now makes only minimum wage.

On Jan. 16 Lockwood had addressed about 40 people that had gathered at her home for a rally and march.

"I'm overwhelmed and intimidated by the support," Lockwood told them then. "I

thought I'd have to go through this by myself. Thank you so much, I don't feel alone anymore." And it got better for her in a week.

Lockwood lives in city councilor Sharla Gardner's district who was on her porch Monday.

"I can't get over the number of foreclosures of people with good credit," Gardner said. She said President Obama is working on the issue now (see page 5 statement from AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka). Gardner urged everyone to contact their state attorney general and ask them to not rush to an agreement that favors banks.

"Banks get enough breaks, give homeowners a break," said Gardner.

St. Louis County Commissioner Steve O'Neil praised the effort of PSOH, Lutheran Social Services and everyone involved in the effort to save Lockwood's home. "The last thing this neighborhood, our city, or county needs is another abandoned, perfectly good home," said O'Neil.

Project Save Our Homes in See Foreclosure...page 5

Labor trainings for Feb. 7's precinct caucuses set for Eveleth, Duluth

Tuesday, February 7 will kick off this important presidential election year as Minnesota's major political parties will conduct precinct caucuses to find out what direction their activists would like to go on the issues and in endorsing candidates.

Loyalists for seven Minnesota political parties (Democratic-Farmer-Labor, Republican, Green, Grassroots, Constitution, Independence, and Libertarian) can meet at 7:00 p.m. that night in public locations in their neighborhoods and politics will start out at its best point – the grassroots. Not all parties will necessarily have caucuses but the DFL and GOP will in most locations.

This is an important year nationally because it is a presidential election year, all members of the U.S. House of Representatives are up, some

U.S. Senators, all members of the Minnesota House of Representatives are up, and some state senators.

In Minnesota it also is important because voters will be asked on Tuesday, Nov. 6's General Election to also vote on some important ballot questions. They may include a ban on same sex marriage, voter photo identification, anti-union right-to-work, and a requirement for super majorities of legislators to set spending and taxing limits.

Precinct caucuses are considered such an important part of determining how the state will be governed that state law does not allow any other government meetings, or school activities, to be held after 6:00 p.m. on precinct caucus night. The legislature actually recesses from Feb. 2 to Feb. 7 for the caucuses.

Now all that's needed is for

citizens to decide that attending a precinct caucus of the political party whose platform they agree with is important.

The North East Area Labor Council is going to make attending your caucus easy by conducting two training sessions so you can attend yours and enter at full speed.

In Duluth a training will be held Wednesday, Feb. 1, 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., at the Labor Temple's Suite 99, 2002 London Road (enter via doors facing 20th Ave. East and go to left of stairs).

A training will be held in Eveleth Saturday, Feb. 4 from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at USW District 11, 415 Jones St. Contact Jason Metsa at jason@nealc.org for more.

Food will be provided at both events. Get fired up to be a labor delegate at your precinct caucus and get elected out as a delegate through the process that will end with national party conventions.

Remember if you can't attend your precinct caucus you can submit a proxy letter to that meeting asking that you be

made a delegate to your senate district or county unit convention. You'll need to have someone deliver the letter for you to the caucus. If you know your precinct convener also send them a copy.

If you go to <http://www.sos.state.mn.us>, Secretary of State Mark Ritchie's website, the top line will get you started to being a precinct caucus activist and even find your caucus for you.

Labor World Annual Meeting

Labor World Inc. will hold its Annual Shareholders Meeting at 5:30 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 9 in the Duluth Labor Temple's Freeman Hall (B). Shareholders in the paper are asked to send the names of their delegates to the meeting to Labor World, Room 110, 2002 London Road, Duluth, MN 55812.

Delegate credentials can be faxed to 218-724-1413, or emailed to laborworld@qwestoffice.net. Call 728-4469 if you need further information.

There will be an open election for four seats on the 9-person Board of Directors. The Labor World's 2011 financial report, as well as a discussion of the operations of the paper, will be part of the business of the annual meeting.

Nellie Stone Johnson Scholarship deadline May 1

For 25 years there has been a labor and education partnership in Minnesota to award Nellie Stone Johnson Scholarships to minority students. Applications for the 2012-2013 academic year are now being accepted. The scholarships are available to minority students from union families attending or planning to attend a college or university in the Minnesota State Colleges and University's system.

To be eligible an applicant must be a racial minority and a union member or the child, grandchild, or spouse of a union member. The scholarships are for first time applicants who will be attending a MNSCU college or university. They may also be renewed by current recipients who will remain a MNSCU student for the 2012-13 academic year.

Applications and additional information about the scholarship are available on line at <http://www.nelliestone.org> or by calling toll free to 1-866-738-5238

Applications must be postmarked no later than May 1, 2012 to be considered.

Superior Federation to screen

The Superior Federation of Labor has set its schedule for candidate screenings and forums for city council, school board, and county board elections this spring.

On Wednesday, February 1 screening of city council and school board candidates will take place.

On Wednesday, March 7 Douglas County Board of Supervisors candidate screenings will take place.

"All the candidates have agreed to participate," said SFL corresponding secretary Warren Bender.

Those screenings will begin starting at 5:45 p.m. both nights at the Superior Public Library. The SFL meets following the screenings.

Bender asks that members of the Superior Federation of Labor send him any questions they'd like asked of candidates as soon as possible. They can be emailed to sf11246@gmail.com

"Union and labor questions are fine, but avoid state and federal issues that are not pertinent," he asks. He will compile and prioritize questions and have candidate bios on hand.

The federation's popular public candidate forum will be held Saturday, March 17 at the library. The tentative schedule is city council 11:00-11:45 am, school board 11:45-12:30 pm, county board 12:30-2:00 pm.

The general election is Tuesday, April 3.

Sheet Metal Workers' Local 10 Retirees' Luncheon
Tuesday, Feb. 7, 1:00 p.m.
Gannucci's 301 N. Central Ave., Duluth

Heat & Frost Insulators Local 49 Notice of Officer Nominations

At our next regular union meeting, Friday, Feb. 10, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. we will accept nominations for the following officers: Business Manager, President, Vice President, Financial Secretary, Recording Secretary. The election will take place at our Friday, March 9, 2012 meeting at 7:00 p.m.

~Dick Webber, Business Manager

IBEW 31 & 242 Retirees' Luncheon
Tues., Jan. 31
1:00 p.m.
Aces' on 29th
2827 Oakes, Superior
Members & Their Guests Welcome!

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Sunrise Memorial Cemetery Funeral Home & Cremation
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I.U.O.E. Local 70

Monthly Arrowhead Regional Meeting

Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2012, 5:00 P.M.

Duluth Labor Center, Hall B

Dave Monsour, Business Manager, (651) 646-4566

Labor World Advertising Works!

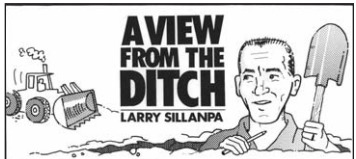
When Lisa Richards held a 1-day special for Full Circle Massage last fall, she only advertised the promotion in the Labor World. By the afternoon of the event she had sold over two dozen gift certificates. Ask Lisa, Labor World ads work! You can find her new ad on page 8.



Laborers Local 1091 Business Mgr. Dan Olson took Lisa up on her promotion.

This issue of Labor World was mailed to 17,283 union homes, offices, and paid subscribers.

Call the Labor World at (218) 728-4469 or email laborworld@qwestoffice.net



How much fun is it to watch the Republican presidential candidates piss on each other's wingtips? That's rare territory for that party.

This has been going on for so long we've almost forgotten about Michele Bachmann's high heels. But she couldn't even get out of the first contest in Iowa where she was born for all the attention she was given. She did surface Sunday for the first time since Iowa to let us know that November's elections will end abortion, which will make all of us happy. I'm not a good enough journalist to have dug deep enough to know how much she went into contraceptive devices, but she must have mentioned them. Not sure how that end will work since many feel they get screwed by elections.

But don't be too hard on Bachmann for losing Iowa. Al

~NOTICE~
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I'm a corporate raider.
 I made millions\$ destroying jobs.
 I'm the BAIN of your existence.
 Nobody creates...

Mayhem Like Mitt.

Gore lost his home state of Tennessee to George W. Bush in 2000's presidential race and he was their U.S. Senator. Maybe Thomas Wolfe's book title should have been *You'd Better Not Go Home Again*.

But these Republicans are nasty and are making each other look like immoral crooks. Hello, who woulda thunk it?

Generally Republican king makers pick their guy, get everyone else out of the way, and watch as 10 Democrats try to tell their faithful why they're the best choice. But the king makers have lost contact with their base, which revolted. Where is the Bush family anyway? I never thought they'd disappear. It doesn't really matter though because now the huge money people can just go ahead and control elections because of the Citizen's United case. They can influence votes but we still count votes, as best we can, on the way to picking winners in our elections. Let that be a lesson to all of us.

Just wait until the last man is standing, or Sarah Palin is resurrected, for Democrats to bring out all the good stuff they've learned and know about the Republicans. Both Gloves Off Romney and Nuclear Gingrich have a lot of baggage that shouldn't appeal to independent voters as they go about trying to out conservative each other. Scamming on taxes, hiding money off shore, firing workers, infidelity, hated by your caucus as

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Speaker of the House? No one's been accused of kicking a dog, or slapping a baby yet, but don't be in such a hurry. Who needs movies?

It's comical to look back on all the "bad" things Republicans were trying to throw at Barack Obama. His birth certificate? His pastor? His dad? Are you kidding me? The guy's a choir boy no matter what church he attends, and not the kind of choir boy stealing the communion wine or smoking cigs behind the chapel. He's clean and has an all-American family to stand behind him.

This Guardians of Privilege dog fight for the prez nomination still has a long way to go so no one should be required to keep score yet. How can you follow it every day as many of you are? It's like knowing a baseball game will go 30 extra innings before it starts and being upset that the first batter was walked. You can't keep up that pace? I'm hoping for something good to happen before Nov. 6, but this is fun to watch, and I'm not drawn to car accidents or train wrecks.

This Day In History
www.workdayminnesota.org
January 25, 1890 - The United Mine Workers Union was founded in Columbus, Ohio, and adopted a constitution prohibiting racial, religious and ethnic discrimination. R.F. Warren of Ohio became the first African-American elected to the union's Executive Board.
January 25, 1915 - The U.S. Supreme Court upheld "yellow dog" contracts, which forbid membership in labor unions. Yellow dog contracts remained legal until passage of the Norris-LaGuardia Act in 1932. At the turn of the century, the term "yellow dog" meant an inferior or worthless person or thing.

Repeal corporate personhood fraud

By Jim Hightower
 WASHINGTON - The Powers That Be constantly try to pull the wool over people's eyes, but sometimes the wool blinders are so itchy that people rip them off and clearly see the scam. One of the itchiest ever is the Kafkaesque fiction, put forth by America's right-wing power establishment, that corporations are "persons" with the Constitutional right to control our elections with their bottomless troves of corporate cash. This is an absurd perversion of nature itself. A person, after all, has a navel. Where's the corporate navel - or its heart, brain, or soul? Also, if a corporation is a person, shouldn't it be subject to front-line military duty, to jail for its criminal violations, and even to the death penalty? As a reader pointed out to me in a recent email, many states do not allow persons under 18 years of age to marry (or, in corporate terminology, to merge). Plus, such young persons are subject to curfews and cannot legally be served alcohol. If you see a young corporation violating any of these teen laws - call the cops on them!

When a corporate and governmental cabal makes such a power play that the very idea of it becomes a national joke, both the idea and the cabal are in trouble. That's the case with the comical claim of "personhood" for corporations.

All across the country, beneath the radar of American's clueless elites, a savvy and scrappy grassroots coalition is mobilizing to overturn the anti-democratic effort by the Supreme Court, corporate front groups, and political sell-outs to enthrone corporate money over the people.

To join the rebellion, visit www.United4ThePeople.org. This commentary is reprinted from <http://www.jimhightower.com>

Bayshore doesn't empower, honor

(An open letter to Bayshore Health Center on Park Point)

To Whom It May Concern:

Workers United Local 150 members working at Ecumen Bayshore began health & welfare contract negotiations on 10/1/11. Ecumen Bayshore's proposal dished out to its workers is evidenced by the following statements:

- 1) We don't like or want your Union sponsored insurance - you are the last Ecumen facility with it;
- 2) We want you to take this Ecumen Health Insurance - it's 2014 compliant; all of our other facilities have it;
- 3) We are willing to put money into a health insurance plan; but we are willing to put more money towards the health insurance but only IF it is our Ecumen Health Insurance;
- 4) We have to charge you \$102 per pay period but yet at our sister facilities, they only need to pay about \$30 per pay period
- 5) We are willing to let our workers go a month without medical insurance; yet, if they want to pay the full premium, \$597, the Union workers can do so to get coverage for themselves for February 2012; oh, and you also have to pay the full retroactive amount back to 10/1/11 - so all in all, the grand total is \$1,200!!!
- 6) We don't offer sick pay to our employees and now, we are asking our employees to pay for their short term disability also
- 7) We also have hired an attorney by the name of John Bowen whose website boasts him as a Union Avoidance Attorney

Local 150 Union workers took a vote to this proposal on 1/14/12 and it was overwhelmingly rejected. Since the vote, Ecumen Bayshore has rescinded their proposal and has not offered any other options. Ecumen Bayshore has also declined the options that Local 150 has offered up.

Ecumen, the parent company of Bayshore Health Center, has this statement of what they do (or the Ecumen way):
 "We promise to: Innovate. Empower. Honor."

Do any of you out there see these 3 attributes present in the proposal and/or actions of Ecumen Bayshore? Its employees/Union members sure don't! (Especially since we are set to lose our health insurance on February 1st, 2012) If anyone out there feels the same, please call Ecumen Director of Human Resources, Lorie Humphrey, at 1-800-221-1507 and/or Shawna Jokinen, Administrator of Bayshore Health Center at 218-727-8651 and demand that Ecumen provides affordable health insurance for our members.

Dawn Hiller, Representative from Workers United Local 150 - a 12 year employee at Ecumen Bayshore

Cheri Stewart is appointed first female business rep. of IBEW Local 31

Cheri Stewart has always taken her work life seriously. She's worked ten years for Minnesota Power at their Laskin and Herbert centers, and lately at Thompson Hydro. A programming, computer, and control systems electrician, the 100-year old Thompson facility also required her to be a mainte-

nance electrician and be able to fix things that went wrong. For good measure she also has a two-year degree in welding.

The daughter of a MinnTac United Steelworker, she also learned that being involved in her union is an important part of a worker's life. She got involved in her union, the International Brotherhood of

Electrical Workers Local 31, and now it is her work life.

She started on the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday as a business representative for IBEW 31, the first woman to hold that job in the local as far as anyone knows.

Stewart can't believe her good fortune. She will be taking all the skills she has

learned so far, get more education, and have a chance to improve the work lives of her union sisters and brothers.

"I didn't think the opportunity would arise for me to work in the union office," Stewart said. "I'm really excited to be here."

She was a union job steward, served on the negotiating committee, arbitration board, and was elected to IBEW 31's Executive Board last year. To continue her union education and network with young union members like herself, last year she attended the AFL-CIO's Next Up Young Workers Summit in Washington DC and a follow up summit in the Twin Cities. In November she attended a national IBEW membership development conference

"I always liked working for the union on my own time, serving on a lot of committees, creating our website, and things like that," Stewart said. "I'm looking forward to showing Mark and the members he made the right pick for the job."

Business Manager Mark Glazier had let it be known that the union's workload was too much for him and Dick Sackett, Assistant Business Mgr. Glazier knew Stewart was the person for the job.

"Cheri has been so consci-



Cheri Stewart

entious and diligent in her work for our local, I knew by putting her on I'd hear few if any complaints and I haven't heard any," Glazier said. "She was a logical choice. Most of the members know her, and she's well liked throughout Minnesota Power."

Her co-workers at Thompson Hydro urged their steward to take the union job when it was offered to Stewart.

IBEW 31 has 960 members working under 20 different contracts in northwest Wisconsin and across northern Minnesota. About 15 percent of those members are female.

Glazier said there will be a full sharing of duties between himself, Sackett, and Stewart.

"Cheri will administer contracts, organize, and be involved in political action and education," Glazier said.

Stewart said the more she learns about unions the more she realizes that union members and the general public need to be told about the benefits of unions in the workplace and in maintaining America's middle class. Now she's got the perfect job for doing just that, and her good work and commitment to her union ideals have paid off perfectly.

ACS rejects workers plan to end lockout

www.workdayminnesota.org

MOORHEAD- American Crystal Sugar has rejected a proposal by its workers, represented by the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco and Grain Millers (BCTGM) to end the firm's lockout of its 1,300 unionists. The lockout began Aug. 1.

The sugar cooperative's executives called the union's Jan. 16 proposal "a publicity stunt," which BCTGM leaders denied. Unionists also noted ending the lockout would be to the cooperative's financial advantage: Its latest quarterly financial report showed lower efficiency and smaller profits, compared to the same period in 2010.

"Our members are disappointed, but hardly surprised, the company has again rejected formal proposals to end the lockout put forward by our bargaining committee on Jan. 11,"

said John Risky, president of Local 167G and its lead negotiator. "Further, we have not received a response to our request to the federal mediator to resume formal negotiations," Risky said.

According to the firm's quarterly report, "Consolidated net proceeds, or profits, fell by 39% or \$73.6 million, primarily due to 29.8% fewer tons processed in the three months ended Nov. 30, 2011, compared to the three months ended Nov. 30, 2010."

"This report shows Crystal Sugar executives are hurting both their workers and growers by continuing this lockout," Risky said. "I hope the company agrees to return to the table soon before more damage is done."

American Crystal Sugar is the nation's largest processor of sugar from beets. The company has locked out workers at

seven facilities in Minnesota, North Dakota and Iowa. The workers are fighting for a contract that preserves job security.

Risky said the union "will continue to take our message — our demand for dignity and fairness — to the public, elected officials, to Crystal Sugar customers, and to the growers. This lockout is hurting workers and their families, but it's also hurting our communities and the reputation of the company."

American Crystal Sugar has processing plants in East Grand Forks, Crookston, and Moorhead, Minn.; Hillsboro and Drayton, N.D.; and packaging and transportation sites in Chaska, Minn. and Mason City, Iowa. Workers at these facilities are represented by BCTGM Locals 167G (Grand Forks, N.D.), 265G (Chaska), 267G (Crookston), 269G (Mason City) and 372G (Hillsboro, N.D.).

You Could Dig Up More Than You Bargained For

Underground electric, natural gas and phone lines need to be located at your work site before digging to avoid utility line accidents. If you're landscaping or gardening on your property or clearing land at a construction site, you must call Gopher State One Call at 1-800-252-1166 before you excavate.

They're a state-wide center that notifies utilities of your dig site. Utility personnel visit the site and mark underground lines, wire or pipe with paint or flags.

You need to call 48 hours prior to the start of digging. It's a **FREE SERVICE** that can save you time, trouble and perhaps your life.



Greg Rindal
Minnesota Power Safety Manager



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Hold banks accountable

By AFL-CIO President Richard L. Trumka

We need to hold banks accountable for the fraudulent practices that brought about the worst economic crisis since the Depression. State Attorneys General have been investigating bank fraud, and these critical investigations must not be undermined by a premature and inadequate settlement. We call on the administration to reject any deal that insulates banks from full responsibility. It is critical that the Department of Justice lead a comprehensive investigation together with the state Attorney Generals to prevent banks from engaging in future unlawful and deceptive practices that could exploit homeowners and put the economy further at risk.

We commend state Attorneys Generals like New York's Eric Schneiderman and Delaware's Beau Biden for their leadership and courage in calling for a real investigation and relief on a scale that helps the millions of homeowners who face a new wave of foreclosures.

The economy is currently weighed down by \$750 billion in negative home equity, so relief on a massive scale is needed to lift home values and stimulate the economy by increasing consumer demand. A comprehensive settlement must force banks to write down underwater mortgages. A sum significantly larger than the rumored \$25 billion is needed for the economy to grow and create jobs.

Specifically, the administration must...insist on:

- 1) A full and thorough investigation into problems tied to the residential mortgage-backed securities (RMBS) market, and
- 2) A guaranteed minimum amount of money set aside for reducing the mortgage principal of "underwater" homeowners in key states impacted by the foreclosure crisis.

This is an opportunity for the administration to demonstrate leadership and show that it has the political will to do what's right for homeowners and right for our economy.



Duluth City Councilor Sharla Gardner told a Jan. 20 rally on the two year anniversary of the Citizen's United case that she's proud the council was the first in Minnesota to go on record against giving corporations the same rights as people in electoral politics.

Two years of Citizens United draws protests

Demonstrations took place in Duluth and in 70 cities across the U.S. last Friday, Jan 20 to protest the second anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission ruling, allowing corporations to spend unlimited, undisclosed funds to influence elections. The ruling undermines government of, by and for U.S. citizens by defining corporations as people and money as speech. The ruling opened floodgates of secretive and unlimited corporate political contributions and permitted

far-right special interests like billionaires David and Charles Koch to wield undue influence over U.S. politics.

Banks, oil companies and other big business interests, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and some say unions, have spent millions on lobbying, political contributions and misinformation campaigns that hurt 99% of Americans in order to benefit the richest 1%.

The Supreme Court's 2010 ruling in Citizens United opened the floodgates to unlimited, unaccountable corporate spending to influence elections. It allows those

spending the money to remain anonymous, so voters have no idea who is behind the television commercials and other messages. Lack of transparency also means foreign-based corporations could be undermining U.S. law prohibiting foreign influence in U.S. elections.

Since the Citizens United ruling, millions of dollars have been spent in races for Congress, breaking all previous records.

Organizations have joined the actions under the umbrella, "United 4 the People" www.united4thepeople.org.



The hundreds of people who attended the Jan. 16 Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday march and rally had many reasons for being there. AFSCME members remembered King joining their striking brothers in Memphis when he was killed in 1968. Civil rights, equal opportunity, and health care for all have been issues of the past that remembered King's work. This year housing needs and bank foreclosures were at the forefront.

Foreclosure forum 2/1...from page 1

the Twin Ports directed their efforts on behalf of Lockwood and Mary Ann Jones. Both live in fear of losing their homes to bank foreclosures following medical catastrophes. Medical bills are the number one reason for bankruptcies in the U.S. Banks have foreclosed on over 3 million homes since the housing bubble burst in 2006. That number may double this year.

Mary Ann Jones worked her whole life to make sure her family had a roof over their heads in Superior. She put her retirement on hold two years ago when her 46-year old daughter got colon cancer. After a three month hospital stay Jones took her daughter home and has cared for her. She has a son in Afghanistan and another daughter who is institutionalized.

"I made a balloon payment to Wells Fargo Bank, then they said I was a month behind, then they said I was two months behind," Jones said at Lockwood's home Jan. 16. "I asked them to give us a chance, that we had been open and honest with them." The bank reduced her mortgage from \$1500 a month to \$750 for a year but she still ended up depleting her savings.

"They broke my heart is what they did," Jones said. Bankruptcy rather retirement with a daughter whose condition has worsened is what Jones has faced. "I've tried everything—Lutheran Social Services— but I live in fear that the sheriff will knock on my door and take my home," Jones said.

Both women and Greeley will be members of a panel for a teach-in on how to fight back. "Save Our Homes - Stopping Home Foreclosures in the Northland" is Weds, Feb. 1, 7:30 p.m. at Pilgrim Congregational Church, 2310 E. 4th St. in Duluth.

The Carlton County, Duluth, and Superior central labor bodies, along with USW 9460 and UFCW 1189 are among the two dozen sponsoring organizations of the forum.

Howard thanked State Farm Bank for doing the right thing for Lockwood and hopes for assistance from other banks. "We urge everyone to contact us if they need citizen support or would like to volunteer," she said. The phone number is 218-428-1154.



Mary Ann Jones



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Dayton's bonding bill is full of promise and perhaps up to 21,700 new jobs

On Jan. 17 Governor Mark Dayton released his \$775 million bonding proposal for the 2012 legislative session, building on his plan to get Minnesotans back to work. His proposal would put up to 21,700 Minnesotans back to work by investing in improvements in infrastructure, colleges and universities, and other regional economic development.

"My bonding proposal makes reasonable, focused investments on projects that are ready for immediate action. I hope that the legislature will join me in growing Minnesota's economy now by passing a bonding bill in the first month of the session. Doing so will enable many of the projects, and their jobs, to become realities this year," Governor Dayton said.

Repairing roads, bridges and rail lines can not only give Minnesota the assets to attract

businesses, but can also put hundreds of Minnesotans back to work in the construction industries that are suffering from high unemployment said the governor's statement. Infrastructure investments include:

- \$30 million construction and repair of bridges;
- \$25 million for the Southwest Corridor Light Rail
- Dayton's bonding proposal also includes investments in education that will fill future jobs. Highlights include:
 - \$63.5 million for MNSCU but little of that money is geared for northern campuses
 - \$78 million for the University of Minnesota.
 - \$10.1 million for the St. Cloud Civic Center
 - \$4.8 million for the Lake Superior Lutsen pipeline
 - \$737,000 for the North East Regional Correction Center
 - \$4.75 million for Wadena

Regional Wellness Center

- \$19.5 million for the Camp Ripley Education Center addition

Projects, which enhance the downtowns of regional centers and create jobs, are also important parts of Governor Dayton's 28-page proposal.

Senate DFL Caucus Leader Tom Bakk said, "Minnesota's construction industry is not in a recession, it is in a depression. Over the past six years, more than one-third of the jobs in the state's construction industry have disappeared. This has left tens of thousands of skilled workers without a job and tens of thousands of families struggling to make ends meet. With a bold and targeted capital investment package, we can help private-sector companies put many of these Minnesotans back to work. If we act quickly, we can get the shovels in the ground and paychecks in the mail as soon as this summer."

Range legislators push Buy American bill

(ST. PAUL) — DFL state lawmakers Rep. Carly Melin (Hibbing), Rep. Tom Rukavina (Virginia), and Sen. David Tomassoni (Chisholm) have introduced high priority legislation to buoy the economy and spur job growth on the Iron Range by requiring state funded public works projects to be built using steel products made in America.

"Public works projects like roads, bridges, railways, waterways, wastewater systems, colleges and state buildings should be built using American-made steel products," explained Rep. Melin. "This bill was crafted for all the people of Northeast Minnesota whose livelihood depends on the mining industry, which produces millions of tons of iron

ore pellets each year for steel. Requiring public works projects to be made with U.S. steel will strengthen Northern Minnesota's mining industry and keep these hardworking men and women on the job."

"One key task this session is to pass a comprehensive bonding package that allows the state to issue bonds to fix Minnesota's aging infrastructure," said Rep. Rukavina. "State funded construction projects in the bonding bill, or any other bill for that matter, should be built with U.S. steel products. Infrastructure spending -- whether to build a road or a stadium -- puts lots of people to work and using American-made steel products will maximize the economic benefit. It is good policy to keep as many

of our tax dollars as possible in our state and country."

"We have abundant resources and a highly skilled workforce right here; it is wrong to buy or import from abroad and send our tax dollars and jobs elsewhere, particularly, when construction and manufacturing workers are struggling with high unemployment at home," said Sen. Tomassoni.

Rep. Melin added, "The recession has been devastating for construction and manufacturing workers and their families. This bill will get unemployed workers on the Iron Range and across the country back on the job and earning a paycheck. When people are working they are buying items and paying taxes, it has a multiplier effect on the economy."

Sen. Roger Reinert of Duluth said, "(Dayton's) bonding proposal recommends \$10 million be dedicated towards the needs of transit facilities in Greater Minnesota, of which the goal is for \$6 million of this fund would go towards the construction of Duluth's multi-modal transit center. This transit center would accommodate bus service and pedestrian connections to and from the Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center and trails system."

Rep. Kerry Gauthier is also hopeful for funding to build a new American Indian Learning Center at the UMD, repair Wade Stadium and docks at the Duluth Port.

For more information on Governor Dayton's Jobs Plan: <http://mn.gov/governor/initiatives/jobs-plan> and www.mmb.state.mn.us

Obama nixes Keystone XL

(PAI)—Union leaders split on President Obama's Jan. 18 denial of a federal permit to build the 1,700-mile Keystone XL oil pipeline from Canada to the Texas Gulf. Construction unions called the ruling a "job killer." But the Transport Workers, Steel Workers, Communications Workers, Auto Workers and Service Employees sided with environmental groups against Keystone.

Construction unions were particularly upset as four unions signed a Project Labor Agreement with TransCanada several years ago to use unionized labor to build Keystone. At that time, the unions calculated the pipeline's construction would employ 20,000 workers directly and many more thousands of people indirectly. But an environmental impact statement by the State Department, which evaluated Keystone since it crossed the international border, put the construction job figure at 5,000-7,000.

Obama said the controversial project could not be constructed as planned by its sponsor, TransCanada, because it would endanger the valuable underground Ogallala Aquifer in Nebraska. He said they could apply again once they worked out a new route around the aquifer. TransCanada said it would.

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Revenue Commissioner Myron Frans serves tax reform to labor lunch

When Myron Frans was being interviewed for the Minnesota revenue commissioner job by Governor Mark Dayton, tax reform was part of the conversation.

“We hit it off on the issue,” Frans told a gathering of labor leaders and area politicians last Friday at a luncheon.

Minnesota Revenue Commissioner Frans has been trav-

eling the state giving similar presentations to four town hall meetings and over 20 gatherings like the one Jan. 20. Following that meeting he went down the street to Minnesota Power to talk to business leaders.

“We’re seeking input from the public on how to solve our tax situation, not to create a report or study, but how to implement it as law into our tax system,” Frans said.

His power point presentation said Dayton feels the way to address the situation is by creating jobs, which will lead to revenue growth, and then by making taxes fairer for all.

Frans showed that when jobs increased by 4.7% from 2004–2008, sales tax revenue increased 5%, income tax revenue increased 23%, and corporate taxes increased 92%.

When the recession hit hard after that into 2009, jobs fell 5.7%, resulting in sales taxes revenue falling 9%, incomes taxes fell 17%, and corporate taxes fell 46%.

Minnesota has a history of creating jobs that pay well and that creates a healthier revenue stream for the state, Frans said.

The types of jobs in the state have changed dramatically. In 1950 61% of Minnesota’s jobs produced goods, and 39% were service jobs. In 2010, only 33% produced goods, while 67% were service jobs.

And before you start screaming its because Minnesota has such high personal income taxes, Frans would tell you that we’ve been below the national average for the past eight years.

Lost tax revenue is something all levels of government are trying to recoup and e-commerce accounts for \$400 million in lost revenue, Frans said, with \$149 million being e-commerce, \$55 million being catalog sales, and \$190 million being from remote sellers.

Our aging population is also hard on tax revenue. Tax revenue for the state declines 40 to 50% after people retire. Projections show that from

2007 to 2035 we’ll have 850,000 more people over 60, but only 60,000 more between the ages of 35 and 59.

Efforts to simplify complex tax systems since the 1980s have actually seen them get worse. Adjustments and credits have increased from 9 to 50. In 1973 there were 26 property tax classes, today there are 55.

Lost revenue from all the tax expenditures available are like hidden state spending Frans said. There is \$27 billion in total state tax revenue before tax payers invoke their preferences. Tax expenditures and loopholes—207 of them, including for musical instruments for students, and for concrete trucks—delete \$11 billion, leaving \$16 billion in 2010’s state tax revenue. Frans said for every dollar of state tax revenue without preferences, 60 cents goes to education, health care and other public expenditures, with 40 cents going to tax expenditures and loopholes.

The result is that the Minnesota’s tax burden is being shifted to the middle class and those least able to pay. You may have noticed that in your property taxes, which have increased because the state is paying less in local government aid, so property taxes is where local units of government go to fund their needs.

Rep. Kerry Gauthier said Duluth’s overall average increase in property taxes has been 10.3%.

Also at the luncheon were Lt. Gov. Yvonne Prettner Solon, Sen. Roger Reinert, Rep. Mary Murphy, and City Councilor Sharla Gardner.

Frans used two stools as props to how our mix of taxes has become unbalanced. One stool’s three legs had property, income, and sales taxes all contributing 33% to revenue. What’s happened is that property taxes in 2010 were 40%, income taxes were 33%, and sales taxes 27%. That’s not a stool to be sat upon.

The Republican majority in the Minnesota Legislature is starting their push to eliminate corporate property taxes all together over the next 20 years. You’d better get your ideas of a fair, simple tax system that supports growth heard too.

Frans presentation can be found at <http://taxes.state.mn.us/pages/taxreform.aspx>. He says in May a new tax website will be available.



Minnesota Revenue Commissioner Myron Frans shows a labor lunch Jan. 20 what the 3-legged stool of state revenue should look like. The slide at top shows how it has gotten off kilter and why you can’t sit on that stool.

Obama panel’s plans for business tax cut plans panned

(PAI)—The only two union leaders on a 21-member presidential advisory panel on jobs and competitiveness criticized its advocacy of business tax cuts. AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, stayed away from the panel’s Jan. 17 session where the plans were released

and authored a long critique. Change To Win Chair Joe Hansen, raised questions at the session, then abstained saying “my concern is with the tax reform.”

The panel report, praised by Democratic President Barack Obama, calls for a cut in the

present legal 35% corporate tax rate – a rate that is now honored in the breach. It recommends redoing regulations and re-orienting the nation’s schools, with business aid, to train students for jobs firms claim they’ll provide.

Trumka said the panel

“misidentified the root causes of the structural problems” in the ailing economy. “Corporations as a group pay too low a share of taxes to support the kind of infrastructure investment and education/skills upgrades so urgently needed at this time – and that are so essential to the success of business, as the report points out,” he said.

“The report places way too much emphasis on statutory tax rates, mentioning only as an aside that the effective rates paid by corporations are much lower, and that overall corporate tax revenues as a percent of GDP are the fourth lowest” among top developed nations.

“The report mentions a couple of times that ‘the high statutory corporate tax rate in the United States reduces the returns to saving and investment.’ But having a high statutory tax rate does not ‘reduce the return to saving and investment’ if few pay the full statutory rate – which is clearly the case with most multinational corporations based in (U.S.)”

He blasted the panel’s recommended shift to a “territorial” business tax system. The panel said that would create more jobs. Trumka said it would let firms get away with having their foreign profits completely untaxed.

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Trainings set on right to work, super majority for raising taxes, spending

With Republicans controlling both houses of the Minnesota legislature and DFL Governor Mark Dayton's veto pen at the ready to stop their conservative agenda, GOP leaders are working to turn their issues into ballot questions for the Nov. 6 general election. By bringing their positions to a vote as constitutional amendments Republicans can bypass the governor.

For unions the worst ballot question is the one that will try to turn Minnesota into a right-to-work (RTW) state. Right-to-work (for less) is how labor looks at those laws that give individual workers the power to decide if they want to join the union in their workplace or not. RTW bills are surfacing in state legislatures throughout the U.S. Labor knows RTW as just another attempt by monied interests to attack the wages and benefits that help working families be part of America's middle class.

The next Duluth AFL-CIO

Central Labor Body meeting, Thursday, Feb. 9 at 7:00 p.m. in the Labor Temple's Wellstone Hall, 2002 London Road, will include a presentation by the Minnesota AFL-CIO on RTW. Education Minnesota and other unions have been holding RTW trainings for their members.

Corporate interests have always pursued right-to-work laws because organized labor is their strongest enemy even though unions only represent about nine percent of workers in America. By passing RTW laws they will cut off some of the revenue unions receive from members. Too much of that money is used in electoral politics for business interests, which align predominately with Republicans.

Odd circumstances are surrounding the issue in nearly all of the 28 states that don't have right to work laws.

In Indiana where Republicans control the House 60-40 and the Senate 37-13, Democrats are looking to bring

RTW to voters this fall because they probably can't stop the Republican's legislation. A website has been set up in Indiana against RTW at www.badforindiana.org.

At the Jan. 12 Duluth Central Body meeting delegates voted to join an effort to stop another ballot question that puts Minnesota's future at risk. Republicans introduced three bills as constitutional amendments last year that would require a super majority legislative vote to raise taxes,

use reserve funds, and restrict lawmakers from using available resources. Currently a simple majority can determine the size of the state budget and how they want to manage resources.

A super majority law of 60% would mean any agreement would be hard to reach and more budget gimmicks would be used. State government's ability to respond to emergencies would be severely curtailed. The state's ability to address changes in physical

and social infrastructure would be limited.

Same sex marriage and voter photo identification are two other constitutional amendments for November that labor is poised to oppose.

The Minnesota Council of Non-Profits, which the Central Body is a member of, will conduct a free training on ballot questions on Tuesday, Feb. 14 at the Ordean Building, 424 W. Superior St., from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

IUPAT, contractor settle

On November 9, 2011, representatives of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT) District Council 82 and RTL Construction of Shakopee reached a significant settlement on allegations that RTL Construction failed to pay employee benefits according to contract. RTL President Michael Larson and employee Jeffrey Rensch were also named in the settlement.

"We are pleased that we were able to settle this matter for our members without undergoing a lengthy and costly trial," said Terry Nelson, business manager/secretary-treasurer of the IUPAT District Council 82, one of the unions that represents the RTL employees. "We look forward to putting this dispute behind us and working with RTL, and the rest of our employer partners, on creating more jobs for the working men and women of Minnesota."

In November 2009, the IUPAT and the trustees of the organization's apprenticeship, pension and health care funds filed claims in federal court that RTL Construction, Larson, and Rensch underreported hours worked by RTL's employees with the intent to pay less in associated fringe benefits.

The agreed-upon public disclosure from the settlement provides: "(a) Defendants deny any and all liability associated with the claims made by the Trustees in this Federal Court Action; (b) the Trustees' claims, inclusive of attorneys' fees and costs, were resolved to the Parties' mutual satisfaction, which included Defendants' payment of monetary compensation to the Trustees in excess of One Million Dollars; and (c) the Parties look forward to working together in the future."

The International Union of Painters and Allied Trades represents over 3,500 men and women in drywall finishing, painting, glazing, sign and display in Minnesota and North Dakota. Learn more at www.iupat82.org and www.IUPAT.org.

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