



LOCAL 2-21

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21 NEWS

Editor: Steve Benoit

WWW.USW2-21.COM

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21 News is a periodic publication of USW (United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union) Local 2-21, 1201 Sheridan Road, Escanaba, Michigan 49829. The views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily that of the International Union, the Local 2-21 membership, or the officers of these bodies. The editor reserves the right to refuse any article that is detrimental to the Local Union or the USW. Article accuracy and content is the responsibility of the author.

Important Information & Events

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
(www.guidanceresources.com)
1-800-428-4650

Retiree "Get Together"

First Wed. of each Month 10 am at the Union Hall

Union Meeting: May 13, 7pm - Dinner at 6pm

Next Generation Meeting: May 13, 5pm Union Hall

Steward's Meeting: May 27 -3:00pm

Welfare Club Meeting: Monday, May 4 at 7:00pm Mead Rod and Gun Club

Total Benefit Solutions will be at the Union hall Wednesday, May 6th and 13th from 10:00am to 4:00pm for Union Benefit questions and to help "soon to be retirees" investigate the insurance market place and answer questions on the union insurance. Call 1-877-265-2212 to set up an appointment.

Strike for Hunger: June 5-7, Elmer's County Market

Mill/Union Picnic: Save the date the mill picnic will be held Saturday, June 20th at the UP State Fairgrounds. Camping available. Picnic Noon to 7:00 PM. See enclosed flyer.

Committee Members

	Home	Work	Cell
President Steve Benoit	233-7126	233-2366	399-4195
1st Vice Chuck Way.....		233-2705	280-1698
2nd Vice Joe Curran		233-2511	420-3918
3rd Vice Jeff Skorupski.....		233-2556	399-5472
Insurance Gerry Kell.....		233-3062	906-869-7943
Comp Ross Strand.....		233-2549	280-1494
Secretary Brandon Stromberg.....		233-2714	284-1604
Treasurer Guy Trudell.....		233-2922	399-9143

Next Gen/Rapid Response.....Brandon Stromberg..233-2714 284-1604
Hall RentalsSteve Kennedy 789-1933



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<http://pacelocal21.proboards.com/>



Here We Go

info: Stephen Benoit, President

I want to start this Newsletter article, my first as President, saying that I am very proud to serve a membership that has been strong for many years and I commit myself to continuing what those great women and men before me have done for this local. I thank all of those men and women for serving this membership, especially those that now move on. Mike Nantelle has done great things for this membership from the contract, CAT letters, Newsletters, Insurance and many other things he spent hours tirelessly fighting and caring for our membership. I am proud to have served this membership with Mike, but most of all I am proud to call him a friend. John Dubord has always been a union man as long as I have known him. Even before he was on the committee he was making a difference for our members by following and educating us all on the contract. He has been a huge supporter of safety in the mill and I know he will continue. John has been a great inspiration and friend. Ken Curtis has made huge strides for many of us in this membership. His compassion for our members and his passion for the contract has made a difference for many of us. Ken is a person that encourages ideas and impresses the importance to follow through with them. Ken will be missed but we know that he has committed himself and will always be there. Thank you to all of you for your commitment. If you see any of these people please thank them.

Thank You.

Thanks and Welcome

info: Stephen Benoit, President
All members/retirees and their immediate families are invited to a gathering at Steve Benoit's in Soo Hill at 7021 M.5 Lane on May 15 at

7pm to thank the members of the Union Committee that will be moving on and to welcome the new members of the Union Committee. We will be enjoying a bonfire. Please bring your own beverages and a snack to pass. If you have any questions or need directions call 399-4195.

Caring and Accountability

info: Stephen Benoit, President

Well, by now we have all felt the Verso push for change. The change that we have seen has been no shorts or sleeveless shirts, crew led safety plans, no jewelry, smoke free mill and two hour safety meetings (Verso Our Way or the Highway Meetings). Some of these things are understandable based on safety reasons such as jewelry but others have been just downright wrong such as a smoke free mill. Within the contract smoking has been bargained for under the misconduct rules and discipline negotiated for. A grievance has been filed to show that we are not going to allow anyone to come into this mill and disrespect the contract. It is time for us to stand up and use their words against them. Remember what was said they do not care in the sense that we all think. So they will hold us accountable because they care. WE WILL DO THE SAME. I ask you to hold every superintendent, manager, supervisor, salaried person accountable and why will we be sure that they are held accountable, because we care about our membership, we care about our safety and we care about the mill that we have made successful and will continue to make successful. Hold them accountable for your safety and your union brother and sisters safety, hold them accountable for not following the contract and hold them accountable for making choices that put our mill in harm's way. I have seen great things happen and we should praise those great things. I saw a safety concern brought up in a safety meeting and the superintendent of the area go out and correct that concern immediately. These things should be share but remember we must hold them accountable for their mistakes and if you do not I will tell you they will not have a problem holding you to yours. Remember we have power in our contract and in our union. Stand Strong!!

Cell Phones

info: Stephen Benoit, President

Recently some rumors were going around that the company would be taking away the use of our cell phones. When we attended Safety Leadership the question was asked because of the wording in the Escanaba Safety Rules, "What is considered the Operating Area?", I said that to me, and how things work, the operating area would be considered the operating floor and I continued to explain that we are allowed to use the phones in the control room but not on the floor and that this makes sense that we are not allowed to use them on the floor. Management informed us that operating area means the operating floors and control rooms, phones should only be used for emergency use. Management went onto say that it bothers them that when they enter a control room and an employee does not put these devices away and that this is wrong (after they said this one of management picked up their phone and answered a text). We asked if anything is said to these people on the floor. We explained that you cannot take cell phone use away because of a few people and because you are not managing the situation, this is people's contact with their families outside of the mill. After sometime management agreed that they would leave things as they are and start managing the situation but if things did not change they would be revisiting the situation. Please be sure that you are not using your phone if management is in the room, we do not want to give them any excuses.

Below is the language that is in the safety policy: Personal Electronic Devices & Cell Phones: Personal cell phone use and electronic devices used for conversations, texting, internet use, games, movies, etc. shall be prohibited in the mill operating areas during working hours except for emergencies. Company issued or department approved cell phones are permitted for business purposes only; however, they are prohibited for use while employees are performing at risk or hazardous job tasks such as: driving company-supplied vehicles, heavy equipment, industrial trucks (fork/clamp), locomotive, operating cranes, etc.



Keep Safe and Do the Right Thing

info: Stephen Benoit, President

Take time be safe. Before you start jobs take time to be safe. Before you start the job be sure that you have all the correct tools to do the job, all the right PPE, make sure you are following all the correct Lock out/Tag out rules and if you are confused on rules or policy take the time to go to the policy on Sharepoint so you know that you are following the rule and remaining safe. We have been told that there is time for your safety. We had our first heat stress recordable this weekend (day after the change in shorts) please be sure to stop and hydrate, take time to break when the heat is affecting you, take time to get a cooling vest, take time to cool yourself with a cooling bandana. It is extremely important that you take time. Taking time sends home a message.....we know how important safety is also.



Maintenance Relief

info: Chuck Way, 1st Vice President

Within our Maintenance group at Escanaba we just encountered a scheduling of five sixteen hour shifts in a row, Midnights to days, a hard shift when you are normally a day worker. Steve Benoit and I approached John Cretens about how much exhaustion this was going to create as it has a major fatigue factor built in to it. We discussed about how we felt extended stretches of hours like this was a major issue for the health and welfare of our local's employees. John responded that if someone was exhausted and they wanted to go home, with this they would then be allowed to contact their supervisor and scheduler and depart for home with no consequences (checkmarks/reprimands). Just to be

sure Steve contacted Nikki to confirm this. She confirmed what John stated and added some to it by stating it has always been our practice that whether scheduled for an additional 11-7 shift or on a callout during the evening, employees could go home without consequence if they felt they could not continue with their shift safely whether it be at the start of their shift or later in the shift (example they leave at noon). They would then return for their next scheduled shift.

Lead the Way

info: Chuck Way, 1st Vice President with quotes from the book Lead the Way by John Nora

Do we know what the answers to the paper industry demise are? I can tell you it is called effective leadership. That is leadership that is able to unite diverse groups and make them involved in the common pursuit of making paper at a profit. That means having an understanding of what is needed to get along and why it is needed. This means not forcing changes on people until they have a full understanding of the concept. That leadership will come from within.

Leadership has to be passionate about safety and plant cleanliness. That requires the example to be set by spotting potential hazards and assuring corrective actions occur before an injury does. That also means that personnel must continually be involved in housekeeping and improvement efforts. Safe practices that are effective must be created also. The collection of data to improve on reducing injuries is a must. Our leaders must be sensitive to the environment and maintain and improve compliance to the environmental laws.

We can't talk about safety and accept a dirty, unorganized work place. That's just a sign that people don't care about their peoples well being. Our leaders cannot just keep walking by and ignoring the hazards of unkempt areas. There has to be some leadership in this area by salaried because sooner or later it becomes the norm and we become complacent. Without engaged leadership we will fail. Does our leadership have the skills necessary to develop a high performance organization? Not the way it looks now. Apathetic employees and frustrated floor managers who have forgotten how to lead are not the answer. People are the lasting competitive advantage. Improvements and innovation come from the people who do the jobs. We cannot use heavy handed tactics to suppress them as tactics like this just tend to make them withdraw from being engaged. Salaried must be true leaders, not someone whose motives and

means are to further themselves but to truly further all they are leading. You can't lead if you have not made the decision to make a positive difference in the lives of others. Building people is the answer, not tearing them down.

Can our leaders use their ambitions and egos to building a great mill? Will they put our company first or themselves? Believe me if it is the latter we will fail. People who trust their leaders will follow them relentlessly otherwise they will just tolerate them. They will talk and give the team the compliments not themselves. All should prosper not just lead men. Gains and benefits of the team should be ahead of the gains of a leader. He should serve those who are led not themselves.

False leaders are ignorant, arrogant, selfish, lazy, insecure, and impatient. If you can resist these as a leader you can be a true leader and make a lasting difference.

The Way We Do Things and Respect

info: Joe Curran, 2nd Vice President

For those of you who may have been trying to get a hold of me I apologize for I was on vacation for the past two weeks (it was awesome). With that being said I was keeping up with the information coming from the committee and one thing seems evident to me, Verso likes to say they are going to follow the contract until it doesn't work for them. Examples of this are not utilizing the Central Safety and Safety Leadership language in Article 9 Section 2, not living up to the intent of the designated smoking areas and misconduct language by announcing the mill will be going smoke free, giving out unjust punishment that violate a contractual side agreement when dealing with our crane policy and the simple fact that they don't seem to want to work together to fix these problems but seem to be working extremely hard to create them. Despite our differences with past owners we developed these 3 examples together to keep the mill safe, operating efficiently, and to be fair and just to the people that keep the paper flowing out the door every day. I sure hope the same effort being put forth against the Union is being put forth to make us successful because the 3 examples above don't have anything to do with making paper but sure a consuming a lot of time and energy.

It is easy to forget the things we (USW) have done for the paper industry that had huge benefits to companies such as Newpage and Verso. Remember back in 2008 and 2009 when our industry was taking huge hits from China and Germany and we teamed with employers to fight for anti-dumping legislation

that would allow us to climb out of gutter. Also, at a local level the countless hours our own members have dedicated away from family to develop safety programs and put on safety courses for each other.

We have a culture here at Escanaba doesn't need to be changed, what we need is ownership who will manage the rules we have in place and that wants to make paper not waves. I am not saying some changes in our paper making process don't need to be changed, that I agree with. Decisions that affect our runability and quality need to change and I think Verso is miles ahead of Newpage on that front.

That being said respect is not given it is earned and this works both ways, so in the coming months keep a level head but also question decisions and choices made from above and remember you have a voice. Solidarity



Rapid Response and Legislative Conference 2015

info: Gerry Kell,
Insurance
Advocate/Rapid
Response

This year's Rapid Response conference marked the 20th anniversary of USW's flagship program aimed at protecting worker's rights and interests through legislative action. Ken Bower and I attended the conference in Washington, D.C. from April 12th through the 16th. It also represented the culmination of Ken's work and participation in the conference as an active USW member due to his plans for retirement. Having attended this conference over a half dozen times proved invaluable as he passes the baton.

Although Rapid Response represents an ongoing initiative to promote the well-being of labor and employees across the nation, there are often topics that arise which require special attention, action, and focus. This year's focus for the conference was to address two very significant problems we are currently facing: the looming Trans Pacific Partnership international trade deal (TPP) and a congressional vote on trade promotion authority (Fast Track). I know there's a good possibility that reading about these topics can be confusing, boring, and painful, but their importance cannot be overstated. The TPP trade deal can be explained best to those over thirty as "NAFTA on steroids" and to those who don't recall that disastrous 1994 trade deal, I'll try to summarize it without putting you to sleep,

an admittedly arduous task. The TPP deal is a potential free trade agreement between the United States, Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam. So, what does a free trade deal with these nations do to us? Well, while the negotiations and how we got here are fairly complex, the implications are pretty clear—it's detrimental to domestic manufacturing and will most likely expand existing trade deficits by billions. Even proponents of the deal agree that the positive impact to our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will be minimal if at all positive and will really only help bolster the foreign economies. Without proper tariffs and trade protection, the goods we manufacture here will have to openly compete with nations that lack environmental regulations, decent wages, and legislative oversight to promote ethical treatment of employees. Furthermore, the TPP would allow these manufacturers to seek monetary damages for foreign legislation that may interfere with the potential to market their product successfully in that nation. For example, if Australia requires tobacco companies to sell their product in plain packaging, Philip Morris could sue Australia for 'harming' their investment. Sounds crazy, huh? Well, that's exactly what they did. They did so by basing it out of Hong Kong and exploiting a trade agreement from the 1990s. Thankfully, they were unsuccessful, but the fact that it was even an option is absurd and there are still similar, ongoing suits. We are in the paper industry and what foreign paper is doing to our jobs and mills is frightening. We need to support fair trade not free trade.

Fast Track (TPA) is a legislative approval method which basically allows Congress to permit the President to negotiate toxic trade deals with very little input and debate from them once the agreement is settled. Unfortunately, that silences the voices and concerns of voters and the representatives' constituency. If Fast Track is allowed to be used in approving TPP, Congress will have a simple Yea or Nay vote for it to be implemented. For the record, no trade deal under Fast Track has ever been turned down by Congress including NAFTA. That's the equivalent of letting someone else pick out a house for you without being able to look at the roof, or check out the HVAC, structural integrity, and foundation—they just come back with a price and you say "Yes" or "No" to the deal.

Although TPP and Fast Track were clearly the prominent focus of this year's conference and I could

really go into much more detail, there were also plenty of workshops and well organized meetings to address the never-ending issues we face every day including CBAs, pensions, safety, and wages. Another significant tool employed by this conference was Lobby Day. On Wednesday, hundreds of USW members from every district attended meetings with their representatives in the Senate and House to express concerns after holding a rally outside the Capitol building. Ken and I (along with four RR members from Marquette's Tilden and Empire mines) met with Dr. Dan Benishek, the Representative from Michigan's 1st District out of Iron River. He initially countered our concerns with apprehensions he was hearing out of our district from agriculture and their want of a free trade agreement. After explaining the significance of the industries that would be negatively impacted by such a deal he seemed receptive to our points and even agreed to some extent. We'll see where his commitment lies when it comes time for him to vote.

The conference was truly an enlightening experience and I'm openly inviting you all to become engaged in Rapid Response on any level of commitment. I'm fully aware of the taboo that most people apply to politics and why they may prefer to stay on the sidelines, but whether or not you like it, these issues will directly and indirectly affect you and your community. On that note, I just want to thank all of you for supporting our presence at this conference, it's a great program that mostly goes unnoticed to the average USW employee, but has been very successful in protecting many of our jobs through legislative intervention. If anyone is interested in further details about the trip feel free to contact me.

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Yet Another Reason To Be Thankful That You Are A Union Member



info: From a USW Local 21 Wife

Let me tell you a story, a true story. Eighteen years ago I started working in the medical field, with a foot doctor and a wonderful nurse. We worked together as a great team for fifteen years at one organization. Many changes were being made there so we decided to make a change and

move to a smaller and private practice. We went as a package, but I always felt unaccepted by the manager as she didn't hand pick me.

Things went ok for the first year. I worked my forty hours a week which I was hired for.

The next year my hours started getting cut little by little, which was ok. A day off during the week to spend with my grandchildren was great! I was told this was temporary as we were slow.

As girls left the office for various reasons I got my hours back. This was good.

Now in March of my third year I lost my aunt and uncle (a union brother of yours) in a terrible accident. I took off three days. Also in November of the same year my father needed open heart surgery. I took off three more days (I still had paid time off left).

Upon my return, I was called into the office and told I had too many family issues so they were putting me to part time.

Then again in April I was called into the office and told things were slow again so I was being laid off temporarily. I could apply for unemployment. Now they called me whenever anyone wanted a day off. Here is the kicker, they had a girl from the other clinic (hired after me) come over and work my hours! So I put up with this.

In August our clinic's office manager quit and left the area. If we had a union her job would have been offered to me! They offered it to a person off the street, one related to one of the employees! This put me back to part time.

Then in the beginning of November I learned the office manager had returned to town. My next day back to work I was again called into the office and told we were really slow and again I was being laid off. I was still an employee but when I was called back it would be on a per diem basis (only when needed)!

Now here is another kicker, just guess who has my position and my hours? YES, the old clinic manager who quit and left four months earlier!

So please be thankful for your union and back them whenever, however you can. If I had that union they would have had my back!

High School Collective Bargaining Workshop

info: Doreen Bower, Business & Project Manager UPLMC

The U.P. Labor-Management Council, Inc. held a High School Collective Bargaining Workshop on May 1st. Approximately forty-five students from Gladstone High School and Escanaba High School attended the one day workshop. This is the primary education program the Council has chosen for the youth. Students were assigned to either a "labor" or "management" team and were given the assignment of negotiating a collective bargaining agreement between both sides. Steve Benoit and Joe Curran, USW Local 21/Verso; Dan VanWychen, F.M.C.S., and Michelle Gill, Marquette Public Schools., volunteered as "coaches" to guide the students through the negotiating process. The exercise introduces students to concepts in economics, politics, history, and labor law, and provides a glimpse into real issues that arise in the world of work.



Students who participate in the Council's high school collective bargaining workshop during high school are eligible to apply for a \$500 scholarship offered by the Council, in honor of past Council member Gerry Kendziorski.

Additional information and photos of past workshops can be found on the Council's website at www.uplmc.com.



Strike for Hunger

info: Brandon Stromberg,
Secretary/Next Gen
Coordinator

Last year, our members came together and did something amazing for the community. We raised over 1.5 tons of food and almost \$3,000 in monetary donations for the community.

The Strike for Hunger

was a success because of you! This year, we are planning the Strike for Hunger from June 5-7 (Friday-Sunday), starting at 5pm. Will you volunteer some of your time to help out with this event? Please give me a call at 906-284-1604 or email brandon.stromberg@versoco.com. Thank you.

Stay in the Know!

info: Brandon Stromberg, Secretary/Next Gen Coordinator

Over the past couple years, residents, in various counties across Michigan, have been feeling negative effects from Michigan Tax Tribunal (MTT) rulings.

Let me explain with an example. A Lowe's store would like to open up in Marquette. The owner takes

a loan out for \$7 million, the property is insured for \$7 million, their property is assessed and taxed for \$7 million by the city, but the owner does not think their property should be

taxed for \$7 million. The owner wants to be taxed like closed down stores, and vacant stores with numerous deed restrictions, so they challenge the city and go before the MTT. They MTT decides Lowes has a case and should be taxed at \$3 million instead of \$7 million. The city used the manuals, provided by the state, to assess the property; they have to. The MTT does not have to use those same tools. The assessors and local communities are at a huge disadvantage. In a nutshell, \$4 million is lost in taxable value for services such as: library services, recreational parks and trails, ball parks, ice rinks, fireworks, mass transit subsidies, senior services, and community celebrations. Things that make our community a better place to live, work, and play. The sad reality is this is becoming a huge problem. There



are currently 12 stores in Marquette Township pending resolution of MTT challenges. I was told Marquette could lose over \$1.2 million for their services. Libraries, parks, and other services still need money to support their communities. Who do you think will cover those costs? And yes, it has started in Escanaba. Menards has been the first to go through the MTT and successfully reduce their taxable value by millions. Other businesses who are already in the process are: Walgreens, Autozone, O'Reily, and others. Every taxpayer in this community will suffer from this and have to pick up the tab for services our family's rely on. This is just a brief explanation of a complex problem that has come to our community and our state.

June 16, the Escanaba Power Plant will be closing down. 17 IBEW and 1 salary job will be lost. Sterling Energies has offered to buy the plant from the city and convert it to a biomass facility. Sterling has successfully done this process twice already on other areas. If everything goes smooth, those employees could come back to work in the fall. Sterling would also like to add more jobs, totaling around 25. We were able to attend a meeting with Senator Casperson to talk about this transaction and he said he would be sharing with city council his support of this.

If you haven't heard already, the Empire Mine in Marquette will be temporarily laying off 350 USW workers. All industries are effected by foreign competitors. Please take a moment to educate yourself on the Trans-Pacific Partnership. To my knowledge, not one free trade agreement in our entire history has benefited American Manufacturing. This year is them, next year could be us. Our most powerful weapon is our voice.

Thinking about your retirement plans?
Or rethinking your current plan?

Let's talk.



Les Cseter, CTFA
SVP—Trust Manager

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