

# STATEWIDE ACTIONS

BY AMY RUEFF, ILLINOIS AFL-CIO RESOURCE DIRECTOR

## Labor Management Reporting Seminars

The Illinois AFL-CIO annually sponsors one day seminars for local union officials and their accountants on preparation of financial reports and conducting union officer elections. The U. S. Department of Labor (USDOL), Office of Labor Management Standards, provides presentations to participants with detailed information on how to complete and file annual financial reports (LM-2, LM-3, LM-4) required of labor organizations as mandated by the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA). In addition, seminars provide information on election of union officers and LM-30 filing requirements. Other topics include presentations by the Illinois State Board of Elections on Political Action Committees (PAC) and Legacy Professionals, LLP, on Internal Revenue Services (IRS) reporting. For the convenience of the attendees, the seminars are offered in both Burr Ridge and Springfield.

## Workers Memorial Day

Each year on April 28, union and community members across the country honor workers who were killed on the job or died or were injured performing their jobs. These events call on elected officials to push for worker safety laws and encourage businesses to recommit to safer workplaces.

Central Labor Councils coordinate events to honor these workers and to raise public awareness regarding workplace safety issues.

This year, CLCs hosted virtual ceremonies and addressed workplace dangers faced by frontline essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. They collected online pledges of support to continue the fight for safe jobs.

## Labor Education Advisory Board

The Labor Education Advisory Board provides a collaborative partnership giving ownership to labor leaders and allowing them the opportunity to submit educational program needs in order to better serve their membership.

The Labor Education Advisory Board's role is designed to complement what the University of Illinois' Labor Education Program has always been successful at – educating working families. The Labor Education Program currently serves about 2,000 union members annually. They provide open enrollment classes taught on a wide variety of workers' rights issues.

## Statewide Central Labor Council Conference

The Illinois AFL-CIO coordinates an annual statewide conference for Central Labor Councils, Community Services Liaisons and local union activists. These meetings focus on mobilizing around working family issues, volunteer recruitment, common sense economics, coalition building and solidarity.

The Illinois AFL-CIO awards the Robert G. Gibson Community Services Award at the conference. This award was established in 1991 to honor the former president of the Illinois AFL-CIO who began his 32 years of service as the first Community Services Director. The award is designed to encourage, enhance, and recognize the good work that is performed by our rank and file members.

In 2019 the Gibson Award was awarded to Drew Dhabalt, IBEW 193 member, nominated by Springfield & Central Illinois Trades & Labor Council. Brother Dhabalt was recognized for his ongoing support of Little Flower School and Sacred Heart Griffin High School where he goes above and beyond expectations in his volunteer efforts.

## 2019 Robert Gibson Community Services Award



*Drew Dhabalt, IBEW 193 was awarded the 2019 Robert Gibson Community Services Award. He is pictured here with Diana Carlile, President of Springfield & Central Illinois Trades & Labor Council, and Chad Vacek, IBEW 193 Assistant Business Manager.*

## Building & Construction Trades Statewide Meetings

The Illinois AFL-CIO facilitates regular meetings for the Illinois Prevailing Wage Council and the Building & Construction Trades Councils throughout the state. These meetings host a variety of topics specifically focused on building and construction trades. Speakers include elected officials, industrial leaders, academic professionals, state of Illinois directors and more.

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## George Meany Award

Thousands of union members serve youth through the Boy Scouts of America in local districts and councils, and on the regional and national levels. In recognition of their contributions to America's future, the AFL-CIO Executive Council established the George Meany Award. It recognizes union members—men and women—who have made a significant contribution to the youth of their communities by volunteering in the programs of the BSA. The award is named for the AFL-CIO's first president, who gave strong support to Scouting over the years.

## NALC “Stamp Out Hunger” Food Drive

The National Association of Letter Carriers' annual “Stamp Out Hunger” food drive takes place on the second Saturday in May each year. Central Labor Councils and local unions around the state join in this effort to ask residents to place non-perishable food items by their mailboxes. All donations go to local food pantries.

The NALC food drive is the single largest one-day event of its kind. Letter carriers pick up donations in more than 10,000 towns in all 50 states. Since the drive began in 1993, the NALC has collected more than one billion pounds of food for the needy. The 2019 food drive continued to break records in the amount of food collected. The 2020 food drive has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the tradition will continue.

## Labor Day

Labor Day is a day of solidarity in Illinois. The Illinois AFL-CIO works closely with the National AFL-CIO to provide messaging and promotion to Central Labor Councils hosting Labor Day activities. These include parades, picnics, Labor in the Pulpits, plus opportunities to register voters and organize volunteers. The proud tradition of honoring working men and women is alive and well in Illinois.

## State Fairs

The AFL-CIO pavilion at the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield is a permanent structure providing shade and water to fairgoers. The Springfield & Central Illinois Trades & Labor Council coordinates activities to highlight labor unions, career opportunities, union solidarity and labor history.

Additionally, the Egyptian Building Trades and Southern Illinois Building Trades provide similar displays at the Illinois State Fairgrounds in DuQuoin, IL.

## COVID-19 Response

Labor unions practiced solidarity in a big way to respond to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Union members collected food, donated personal protective equipment, and constructed face masks for essential workers. Southern Illinois unions created a “Snacks-to-go” program for healthcare workers. AFL-CIO Community Services Liaisons worked with local United Ways to collect and distribute funds to workers who were affected by the pandemic. Other CLCs created food pantries or volunteered to help unemployed families during the crisis.

Chicago unions were involved in a massive preparation effort to convert McCormick Place into a temporary hospital which could serve thousands of individuals if needed.



*Nick Dodson, AFL-CIO Community Services Liaison and Dean Webb, Greater Madison County Federation of Labor President deliver “Snacks-to-go to frontline healthcare workers in their community.*

## Mother Jones Partnerships

In 2015, the Illinois AFL-CIO worked in partnership with the Union Miners' Cemetery Perpetual Care Association and other groups to restore the Mother Jones Monument and cemetery in Mt. Olive, IL.

The Mother Jones Monument celebrates the courage of a woman who fought most of her life for the rights of others and offers a glimpse into the hardships of a coal miner, and the dangerous fight unions waged in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Thanks to union donations, new inspiration awaits the thousands of guests who visit the rural cemetery each year.

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## Union Sportsmen's Alliance

The Union Sportsmen's Alliance (USA) is working to unite union sportsmen and sportswomen and like-minded individuals to educate future generations of sportsmen, conserve healthy wildlife habitat and volunteer their time and skills for projects that improve access to quality places to hunt, fish, shoot and recreate outdoors.

In 2019, the Illinois AFL-CIO partnered with Central Labor Councils, Building & Construction Trades Councils, and affiliated unions to host several events for the Union Sportsmen's Alliance. These include Illinois Conservation dinners in Chicago and Collinsville; and a sporting Sporting Clays shoot in Morris. These events grow each year and feature dinner, speakers, raffles and a live auction.

The hosting committees receive a portion of each year's event proceeds to perform conservation projects in their communities. The winning 2019 projects included:

- Torstenson Youth Conservation, sponsored by Northwest Building Trades, to build four elevated duck blinds and repair six others damaged by the flood. Also provided for repair of culverts and drainage.
- Pyramid State Park, sponsored by Egyptian Building Trades, to build 10-15 acres of waterfowl wetland.
- Heron County Park, sponsored by Danville Building Trades, to repair boardwalk damage, build embankment and rebuild concrete pathway.
- Wolf Lake, Chicago, to add fishing pier, sidewalks, bike repair stations, benches and floating kayak launch
- Rend Lake Archery Center, to construct an archery range, fix concrete and construct an elevated archery shooting platform.

## Labor Appreciation

The Illinois AFL-CIO hosts labor appreciation receptions at their office building for union members and their families during the week of the Illinois State Fair. This event has grown each year and allows members the opportunity to visit casually with elected officials and each other.

Additionally in August 2019, Governor JB Pritzker hosted a BBQ at the Governor's mansion for Illinois' working families.



*Lincoln Land Building Trades president, Josh McElravy, presents a \$10,000 check to the Cumberland County Sportsmen's Club on behalf of Union Sportsmen Alliance. The proceeds are being used to fund the construction of new trap and skeet fields.*



*Union members attended a Working Families BBQ at the governor's mansion for an opportunity to meet Governor JB Pritzker.*