

2014 Convention Summary for Monday the 22nd & Tuesday the 23rd of September



WISCONSIN IS READY

Wisconsin State AFL-CIO 28th Biennial Convention

La Crosse Center, La Crosse, Wisconsin · September 22-24, 2014 · WisconsinIsReady.org

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Monday September 22nd, 2014



28th Biennial Convention Kicks Off in La Crosse

On Monday, September 22, 2014, delegates of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO gathered at the La Crosse Center in La Crosse for the 28th Biennial Convention of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO.

Over the course of the day, delegates heard from a variety of state and national leaders including Wisconsin Senator Jennifer Shilling (D-La Crosse), journalist and author John Nichols, and National AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka.

Nominations of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO Officers and Execu-

tive Board were held. Current Wisconsin AFL-CIO President Phil Neuenfeldt and Secretary-Treasurer Stephanie Bloomingdale were nominated and accepted their nominations for President and Secretary-Treasurer. Both were unanimously re-elected as President and Secretary-Treasurer.

President Neuenfeldt and Secretary-Treasurer Bloomingdale each addressed the Convention to outline their platform and vision for the future of Wisconsin's labor movement.

Opening Ceremonies

Bill Brockmiller, President of the Western Wisconsin AFL-CIO, called the state Convention to Order. Mahlon Mitchell, President of the Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin and the Fire Fighters Honor Guard proceeded with opening ceremonies with the Presentation of the Colors. Laurie Gruber sang the National Anthem. Reverend Ellen Rasmussen of Wesley United Methodist Church provided the Invocation.

Report of the Rules Committee was read by George Walls, Communications Workers of America and adopted by delegates. The Report of the Credential Committee was read by Marty Beil, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees District Council 24 and adopted by delegates. The Report of the Secretary-Treasurer's Committee, chaired by Russ Krings, Machinists, was read by Steve Breitlow, Plumbers Local 75, and adopted by the delegates.

Jennifer Shilling: Cranes in the Air and Jobs on the Ground

State Senator Jennifer Shilling who represents La Crosse welcomed delegates by exclaiming that she was, "proud to stand with labor to continue to keep my finger on the pulse of working families in Wisconsin. We are on the horizon for change in this state and we need to make sure our voices are heard to stop the assault on working families."

Senator Shilling said that Gov. Walker's 250,000 jobs promise is broken. "We continue to have lackluster job numbers in our state," said Senator Shilling. "We're last in the Midwest for job creation. We believe in the promise of a better tomorrow and that promise has been broken by Governor Walker. It is time for a change; it is time for new opportunities for the state of Wisconsin."

Shilling continued: "Cranes in the sky, means jobs on the ground," and called for investments in infrastructure and construction which lead to good-paying jobs for working families that grow our economy."

John Nichols: **#Wlready for Economic Justice**

Journalist John Nichols gave a passionate speech condemning the policies of Governor Walker.

Nichols noted the many ways in which Scott Walker has decimated our great state. "When you lie to the people of a state, when you tell them that you will not attack unions, when you tell them you want the economy to grow and be healthy and you adopt different policies, eventually people wake up to the lie and they reject the liar."

Nichols took the crowd through Walker's decision to attack unions and rob public employees of their collective bargaining rights. He continued outlining Walker's attacks on public education and his record billion dollar cuts to Wisconsin's education system. He described Walker's attacks on public services, failed austerity policies and how they have hurt Wisconsin workers. Nichols also ripped Walker for placing "his own political ambitions above the ethics of Wisconsin," calling Scott Walker a "career politician who has no interest in governing and every interest in his next political race."

Nichols reminisced about the hope he felt while watching the Act 10 protests and the strength of the movement it generated. He rallied union members about the importance of getting out the vote in November so Wisconsin can "end a period of failure and return to a period of solidarity and a period of economic and social justice."

Outstanding Organizers

Two outstanding organizers were honored with the 2014 Wisconsin State AFL-CIO Organizing Award. Congratulations to Darrel Schepp, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers District 10 Local Lodge 873, and Michele Ritt, Madison Teachers Inc.

Schepp was acknowledged for his drive and determination in organizing non-union workers on multiple organizing campaigns including Spartech Packaging Technologies in Ripon and Skana Aluminum in Manitowoc. Schepp is an IAMAW member at John Deere, Horicon and serves as a member of their Organizing Committee.

Michele Ritt has personally made it her cause to approach each non-union member at various worksites and explain the value of union membership. Her bargaining unit has 97% union membership. Her approach and success in organizing is making a difference in the lives of educators.

AFL-CIO President Trumka: **You've Awoken the Movement**

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka pumped up the crowd with a fiery speech about how workers need to mobilize and organize for a better future and to get out the vote for Mary Burke because we can't afford another 4 years of Scott Walker! Trumka explained, "Scott Walker is the symbol of the anti-worker. Gov. Walker stands for pushing every worker to the bottom."

Trumka praised the spirit and the unity of the Wisconsin labor movement, and credited the collective action of the Act 10 protests with awakening a movement by inspiring "our entire country to look again at this thing called 'collective bargaining.'" Since Act 10, working people have mobilized to support exciting campaigns like the fast-food strikes, the Walmart walk-outs, and have stood together to push for a higher minimum wage and paid sick days for all workers.

Trumka reminded the crowd that working people want populism and they want a progressive agenda that can provide them with assurances that better economic times are ahead. To realize this vision, union members will have to work hard, get involved, get motivated and get active to make sure Wisconsin elects the right candidates on Election Day.



George Meany Scouting Award

The 2014 George Meany Scouting Award recipient is Gary Ruhl, Bricklayers Local 19, who is a dedicated Scout Leader from Oshkosh.

The George Meany Scouting Award was conceived in 1974 by the AFL-CIO Executive Council to recognize organized labor's dedication to public service and make the public aware of labor's important role in the community. Delegates rose to their feet to honor Ruhl's years of dedicated Scout service.



#WIREADY 

For Good In-State Jobs!





#WIREADY

To Demand Workers' Rights!



#WIREADY

For an Honest Governor!



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President Neuenfeldt:
**Wisconsin is Ready for
a Better Day**

After accepting his nomination and being re-elected for a second four-year term as President of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO, Phil Neuenfeldt brought the crowd to their feet with a motivating speech that recognized the achievements of Wisconsin workers, put forth the challenges facing the movement and laid out an agenda for moving forward.

"Here we are together, brothers and sisters, we are here together to take on the challenges and forge ahead together as workers indivisible," said President Neuenfeldt. "The work we do here this week is important. Our labor moves the economy forward and our voices and union rights keep workers safe on the job. Unions give people who work dignity and respect and the chance to make a decent life, to make a decent go at it, to make a go at the every evasive American Dream that seems to be harder to hang on to for so many people."

"We're ready for a better day," said President Neuenfeldt. "Wisconsin is ready to respect all those who labor a hard day's work. Wisconsin is ready for good jobs and to give workers a raise. Wisconsin is ready brothers and sisters to elect honest legislators, to remove corrupt politicians and to restore democracy to our great state. Wisconsin is ready to bring back the middle class to make Wisconsin strong again."

Secretary-Treasurer Bloomingdale:
**Our Movement Breathes
Life into the Soul
of America**

Re-elected for a second four year term as Secretary-Treasurer of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO, Secretary-Treasurer Bloomingdale outlined the great divide between the haves and the haves-not and called out politicians for pushing policies that help billionaires over the working class.

Declaring Paul Ryan and Scott Walker "out of touch," Bloomingdale called for delegates to lead and step up to the challenges ahead. Explaining that the movement is "stronger than the sum of its parts" Bloomingdale called on each and every delegate to get active to protect America's middle class. "Our Labor movement helps improve the lives of individual workers, but in times like these, we bear a much greater burden. We are the creators and guardians of the American Middle Class, the rock on which our nation rests. This is the patriotic struggle of our generation."

Bloomingdale continued, "we are reminded once again that the very causes our union movement fights for, justice and dignity and equal opportunity for all, are what breathes life into the soul of America."

Kicking Off Tuesday...

The second day of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO Convention convened on Tuesday, September 23, 2014 with an Invocation from Rabbi Simcha Prombaum of the Congregation Sons of Abraham Synagogue. Wisconsin Representative Jill Billings (D-La Crosse) addressed delegates outlining her priorities to raise wages for all workers, support collective bargaining rights, invest in public education and strengthen our communities by working to prioritize family-supporting jobs for the region. Gubernatorial candidate Mary Burke and Attorney General Susan Happ outlined

their individual platforms for convention attendees. U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin spoke to delegates. The AFL-CIO's Luke Canfora gave a presentation on right to work laws and Beth Levie, AFL-CIO Organizing Department, gave a presentation on organizing new workers. Laura Dresser, Associate Director of COWs, outlined the shortfalls of Wisconsin's economy under Gov. Scott Walker and the best ways to create high-road solutions to help both workers and business.

Mary Burke Stands with Workers

Wisconsin AFL-CIO endorsed gubernatorial candidate Mary Burke gave a rousing speech to Convention delegates as she heads into the final weeks of her campaign to unseat union-busting Gov. Scott Walker. The Convention floor was alive with energy and on its feet as Mary Burke took the stage to discuss her plan to create jobs and get Wisconsin's economy back on track.

Mary Burke is ready to restore collective bargaining rights to public workers, raise Wisconsin's minimum wage to \$10.10, invest in education and infrastructure to create jobs.

Mary Burke exclaimed: "I'm going to be a governor who puts the people of Wisconsin ahead of big money special interest. I'm going to be a governor who puts common sense ahead of the politics. Every single day I'm going to be working for the people of Wisconsin and I can't wait to get to work."

Wisconsin workers are ready to get to work, knock doors, make phone calls and leaflet worksites to have the vital one-on-one conversations about candidates that can put pro-worker candidates over the edge. Wisconsin is ready for a new direction. Wisconsin is ready for Mary Burke.

Susan Happ for Attorney General!

Susan Happ is running for Wisconsin Attorney General to protect and serve Wisconsin families across the state. As a prosecutor, small business owner, and mother who understands the issues facing both Wisconsin's cities and rural areas, Susan Happ is ready to bring her unique set of experiences to work on day one as our next Attorney General.

Wisconsin deserves an Attorney General who will bring justice to victims of crime, protect consumers and working families. Happ is ready to support voting rights, women's rights and the rights of workers. Workers are ready to make it "Happen" by educating fellow workers and turning voters out on November 4th.





Keep it Made in Wisconsin says Senator Tammy Baldwin

"We have a proud tradition of making things in Wisconsin," said U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin. "Wisconsin is home to one of the largest manufacturing sectors in the nation, supporting a large share of our workforce and Wisconsin families depend on good manufacturing jobs."

U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin emphasized the need to prioritize federal legislation that supports Wisconsin workers and jobs. Sen. Baldwin highlighted "Made in Wisconsin Monday" a special undertaken that shines a spotlight on Wisconsin-made products via Senator Baldwin's communication to constituents.

Committee Reports

John Schmitt, Laborers, read the Laws Committee Report. Mark Maierle, Operating Engineers Local 420, spoke in favor of the Laws Committee Report. Jim Koeberl, United Auto-workers Region 4, chaired the Legislative Committee and Scott Van Derven, Wisconsin State Association of Letter Carriers, read resolutions from the Legislative Committee meeting.

Brats and Politics on the Mississippi River!

Delegates and guests gathered on the banks of the Mississippi River in Riverside Park for an outdoor fundraiser for the Committee on Political Education (COPE). The United Food and Commercial workers provided union-made brats that were grilled by the Western Wisconsin Building Trades Council. United Auto Workers Brewery Workers Local 9 donated union-made Miller beer. Union members talked politics and enjoyed union-made in Wisconsin products at this year's successful COPE reception.

Sector Reports

Sector Reports were done in a Solidarity Roundtable style to inform delegates of the issues various sectors are facing and what union members can do to best build solidarity and unity to move the movement forward. Kim Kohlhaas, AFT, presented the Education Report. Mahlon Mitchell, PFFW, and Marty Beil, AFSCME DC 24, did the Public Sector Report. The Industrial Report was provided by Russ Krings, IAMAW, and Michael Bolton, USW. The Trades Sector overview was given by John Schmitt, Laborers, and Steve Breitlow, Plumbers Local 75.

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Invocation & Presentations on the Final Day

The third and final day of the 28th Biennial Convention began with an invocation from Rev. Chris Miller, a retired pastor. The invocation was followed by a report from the Election Committee by Sheila Cochran, Milwaukee Area Labor Council, and a reading of the Election Rules by Scott Redman, Plumbers Local 75.

Ann McNeary, Community Services Chair, gave a presentation on community involvement and labor giving back to the com-

munity. David Newby, President Emeritus of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO, gave an overview on international trade policies including the massive 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership and its impact on Wisconsin working families. Newby told the audience the best way to stop the TPP is by lobbying Congress to oppose Fast-Track legislation. Fast-Track is a proposal for Congress to relinquish its opportunity to revise or change a trade agreement.

Labor for Campaign Finance Reform & Voting Rights

Michael Childers, the Director of the School for Workers, spoke to the audience about money in politics and its corrosive influence on democracy. To run for US House, the average Representative must raise \$1.5 million and the average Senator has to raise \$10.2 million. This gives wealthy campaign contributors an outsized influence in our democracy. Childers emphasized that working people must place a heavy emphasis on supporting campaign finance reform. Childers also touched on Wisconsin's new Voter ID law which will disenfranchise an estimated 300,000 Wisconsinites who do not have the proper ID required to vote.

Swearing in of Officers and Executive Board Members

President Emeritus David Newby swore in newly elected officers President Phil Neuenfeldt and Secretary-Treasurer Stephanie Bloomingdale as well as Members of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO Executive Board.

Convention Closing

Two retired union members with the band "The Executives" closed the Convention with a live rendition of "Solidarity Forever." The 28th Biennial Convention of the Wisconsin AFL-CIO was adjourned Wednesday, September 24, 2014 at approximately 11:15 a.m.

Resolutions Adopted by Delegates *at the 28th Biennial Convention*

- No. 1: **Raise the Minimum Wage**
- No. 2: **Oppose Legislation Adverse to the Prevailing Wage**
- No. 3: **Oppose UW-Superior Outsourcing**
- No. 4: **Expanding Family Medical Leave**
- No. 5: **Support for Redistricting Legislative Districts**
- No. 6: **Support Women in the Workplace**
- No. 7: **Rebuild & Repair Wisconsin's Infrastructure**
- No. 8: **Support Postal Workers: Boycott Staples**
- No. 9: **Justice for Asbestos Victims**
- No. 10: **Creating a Retirement Savings for All Workers**
- No. 11: **Restore Voting Rights**
- No. 12: **In Support of Regulating For-Profit Schools**
- No. 13: **Buy Wisconsin-Made Products Campaign**
- No. 14: **Community Engagement**
- No. 15: **Stop Corporations from Padding Profits w/ public subsidies for workers**
- No. 16: **Support Postal Workers: End Mail Delivery in the Dark**
- No. 17: **Expand Voting Rights**
- No. 18: **Restore Collective Bargaining Rights to Public Sector Workers**
- No. 19: **Oppose Right to Work**
- No. 20: **Support Medicaid Expansion & Full Implementation of Affordable Care Act**
- No. 21: **Trade Policy for Shared Prosperity**
- No. 22: **Workers Voice / Labor 2014**
- No. 23: **Protect & Promote the Wisconsin Retirement System & Promote Retirement Security for All Working People**
- No. 24: **Good Jobs Agenda**
- No. 25: **Every Member an Organizer**
- No. 26: **Support Solidarity Roundtables**
- No. 27: **Reclaiming the Promise of Public Education**
- No. 28: **Supporting Workers' Rights at the UW Hospitals & Clinics**
- No. 29: **Fix & Staff the VA Hospital, Don't Privatize It**
- No. 30: **Support Equitable Rates for Distributed Generation**
- No. 31: **Reaffirms Past Convention Action on Legislative Issues**