



Since 1952

# THE BUILDING TRADESMAN

Official Publication of the Michigan Building and Construction Trades Council  
Serving the highly skilled men and women in Michigan's building trades unions

VOL. 70, NO. 1 January 15, 2021



## SHORT CUTS

### Union laborer picked to lead Labor Dept.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The building trades and the rest of organized labor have experienced an anti-union barrage from the Trump Administration's Labor Department over the past four years - including the near blowing up of the union apprenticeship model.

But there will be a new Labor Department sheriff in town under the Biden Administration - and he comes in the person of Boston Mayor Marty Walsh, a Laborers Local 223 Union member who was secretary-treasurer of the Boston Building and Construction Trades Council before he was elected mayor in 2013.

President-elect Joe Biden nominated Walsh, 53, for the Labor Department secretary post on Jan. 7. AFL-CIO President Rich Trumka said: "As a longtime union member, Walsh knows that collective bargaining is essential to building back better. "He will have the ear of the White House, the Cabinet and Congress as we work to increase union density and create a stronger, fairer America."

North America's Building Trades Union President Sean McGarvey said "there is no better decision for U.S. Labor Secretary than President-elect Biden could have made than somebody who has been there, done it, with unquestioned leadership, accessibility, and vast executive experience.

"Mayor Walsh is the exact right choice for Labor Secretary at this time in our country's history. We are confident that Mayor Walsh will continue creating pathways of opportunities for anyone that wants a chance to succeed in America's workforce. He is also keenly aware of the perils of health and safety facing workers in this country. He will make sure that America's workers get the proper training and that America's employers, in partnership, follow the rules so that workers arrive home after work in the same condition as they headed off to work in the morning."

Walsh's appointment requires approval by the U.S. Senate.

### 2020 ends with big loss of jobs

A year that was universally hated just got a little worse.

The final employment report of 2020 released on Jan. 8 by the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that U.S. jobs fell by 140,000 in December - "an unequivocal disaster for the state of the economic recovery," said the labor-backed Economic Policy Institute.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, job growth had increased over the prior seven months but waned throughout the fall and fell outright in December. The year ends with 9.8 million fewer jobs than before the pandemic recession hit in February and 546,000 fewer jobs than the start of Donald Trump's presidency in January 2016.

The overall unemployment rate remained at 6.7 percent in December, well below the 14.8 percent peak in April but nearly double the 3.5 percent pre-COVID rate in February.

### Quotable

"Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let every new year find you a better man."

-Benjamin Franklin, 1706-1790



A NEW CENTRAL CLASSROOM Building is under construction on the University of Michigan campus at Geddes and Washtenaw Avenue. Barton Malow is managing construction of the \$150 million project, which is being erected adjacent to the historic Ruthven Building, which is being renovated.  
Photo credit: U-M webcam

## New use, new purpose: trades create new U-M classroom, office space

By Marty Mulcahy  
Editor

ANN ARBOR – The ongoing project to build the University of Michigan's new Central Campus Classroom Building and renovate and reuse the nearby 1928 Ruthven building will check the boxes on a number of school's needs in the area.

Among them:

- The creation of "large, modern, team-based and active-learning classrooms," according to U-M - much-needed space for the university's evolving academic needs.

- The rooms will include

modern technology with a more open plan and increased flexibility, including the ability to transition easily from lectures to small work teams to larger group discussions, U-M says.

"To make room for the new construction, demolished was a 34,000-square-foot, 1964-era addition to the Albert Kahn-designed Ruthven building, while the architecturally significant original building is being reused and renovated into office space. The Ruthven building formerly housed U-M's Museum of Natural History, which has been moved to the Biological Sciences Building.

"The Ruthven project provides us with an opportunity to create contemporary classroom space in a prime, Central Campus location while preserving and reusing a landmark building," says Kevin Hegarty, U-M's executive vice president and chief financial officer.

Barton Malow is managing construction on the \$150 million project at Geddes and Washtenaw Avenue. The new space will include about 100,000 square feet for active learning classrooms, including a 550-seat auditorium. The Ruthven building will see about 135,000 square-feet of renovated space.

(Continued on Page 2)



AT THE GATE of the U-M Central Classroom Building project in Ann Arbor are (l-r) Tyler Crow, Jimmy Coval and Roger Greenwood of Plumbers and Pipe Fitters Local 190. They're employed by John E. Green. Photography is not allowed at U-M projects, so we asked them and others to pause for a photo on their way into the project after their coffee break.

## COVID vaccine injects some hope for 2021

How's the U.S. construction industry performing? What's the outlook for 2021?

The better question is, how's the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine going?

The two leading analysts of the U.S. construction industry diverged a bit in November, with industry numbers showing project starts falling a bit, while government numbers show a modest rise in industry spending.

But long-term, the industry's fortunes - like the rest of the U.S. economy - will hinge on the

nation's ability to disseminate the COVID-19 vaccines and get them injected into the arms of a high percentage of Americans, which would instill some confidence and certainty in the future.

"November construction starts were somewhat of a mixed bag," said Richard Branch, chief economist for Dodge Data & Analytics, on Dec. 16. "On the positive side, the gain in nonresidential building starts shows that the recovery from the early months of the pandemic remains on course. And despite the November decline in single family starts, tremendous positive momentum remains in the housing sector."

"There remains significant concern, however, about the ability of construction starts to maintain their current pace in the face of rising COVID-19 cases.... While the near-term outlook for starts remains cloudy, the recent deployment of a vaccine in the U.S. raises hope and expectation that 2021 will be a better year."

Dodge reported on Dec. 16 that total U.S. construction starts

fell 2 percent in November to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$797.5 billion following a strong gain in October. Included in that was a 7 percent drop in residential starts during November, while nonresidential building starts rose a healthy 19 percent that month.

An analysis by the Associated General Contractors of America released on Jan 4 contradicted the Dodge data, but that's not unusual in short-term market comparisons. The AGC

(Continued on Page 2)

## 80 years later, insulator still enjoying union benefits

By Marty Mulcahy  
Editor

LANSING – Woodrow "Woody" Smith of has been a member of the International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators Local 47 for so long that the union is going to have to have made a unique piece of new hardware to recognize him.

"We've seen members earn 70-year anniversary pins, but I don't think I've ever given out a pin for an 80-year member," said Insulators International General President Greg Revard, himself a

Local 47 member. "This is something really special. We're going to have to have one made!"

On Jan. 10, 2021, Woody entered the realm of having the rare distinction of being a local union member for 80 years. Born in 1919, the 101-year-old Diamonddale, Michigan resident joined the union in 1941 as a mechanic. He may be the oldest living member of the Insulators union.

"I worked for two years as a helper, and at that time, the local needed journeymen insulators, so they tested me out and deter-

mined I was fully capable of working as a mechanic," he said. In 1943, Smith took a military withdrawal card to become a

(Continued on Page 3)

WHAT WERE YOU doing in 1941? That's the year Woody Smith, now 101, joined the Heat and Frost Insulators union. He's shown at right next to Heat and Frost Insulators International Union General President Greg Revard and Insulators Local 47 Business Manager Patrick Welch at a union picnic a few years ago.

## New \$900 billion federal stimulus leaves labor wanting more for workers

By Mark Gruenberg  
PAI Staff Writer

WASHINGTON (PAI) – The \$900 billion stimulus law Congress passed and Donald Trump reluctantly signed has both good news and bad news for workers and their families whose lives have been physically and financially smashed by the coronavirus pandemic and subsequent shutdowns and economic depression used to fight it.

And union leaders greeted ultimate approval of the measure with a "Yes, but..." attitude, saying it was fine as far as it went - but that it didn't go far enough.

Democratic President-Elect Joe Biden said much the same thing. Biden backed this bill's passage after the Senate's ruling Republicans and Trump adamantly refused to even consider larger measures, the more pro-worker Heroes Act, which the Democratic-run House passed twice. Biden backed the Heroes Act, too. But Biden also made clear that once he takes over at noon on Jan. 20, he'll send a new, bigger economic stimulus package to Capitol Hill.

"I have said all along this bill is just a first step - a down payment - on addressing the crisis. There's a lot more work to do. Early next year I will put before the Congress my plans for what comes next," he told a late-December press conference.

In the meantime, workers and families, union and non-union, will have to live with what lawmakers wrought in the waning days of December.

Here's a sampling of what's in and out:

**In:** One-time \$600-per-person stimulus checks, and \$300 weekly in federal jobless aid, including aid to gig economy workers, independent contractors, farm workers, household workers and other workers not covered by regular wage-and-hour laws. But those workers will now have to document their prior jobs, and that'll cause more delays. The \$300 would also top current jobless benefits - a boon to workers in states with low benefits.

**Out:** The prior weekly amount, which ran out months ago, was \$600. And the \$300 checks are only for 10-11 weeks. Trump's one-week delay in signing the legislation will delay those

Washington  
Wire



checks, too. That means workers likely got nothing between Dec. 26 and Jan. 1, or later.

**Out, thanks to the GOP:** Trump's last-minute demand, accompanying his rumblings that he would veto the whole thing, for \$2,000-per-person one-time checks. Sen. Bernie Sanders, Ind-Vt., has pushed \$2,000 since the pandemic and the depression began. Sanders welcomed Trump aboard. The House GOP didn't, and blocked it. House Democrats later approved a stand-alone \$2,000 aid bill. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell killed it.

(Continued on Page 3)

## Guv's veto reduces jobless benefits from 26 to 20 weeks; fix imminent?

By Marty Mulcahy  
Editor

LANSING – Jobless Michigan workers who file for unemployment benefits beginning Jan. 1 will only be eligible for 20 weeks of benefits, instead of 26 that workers have received during the pandemic.

That's because Gov. Gretchen Whitmer on Dec. 29 surprisingly vetoed bipartisan legislation that would have continued to extend unemployment benefits with those additional six weeks.

As a result, jobless workers will get 20 weeks of benefits this year unless the state Legislature sends her a bill that doesn't move the \$220 million in funding for the benefits from the state General Fund to the Unemployment Insurance Fund. The Governor's office, said the news service MIRS, called the money a "corporate tax cut that the administration never agreed to."

Whitmer's office pointed out that UI benefits were originally cut during the GOP Snyder Administration from 26 weeks to 20 - the first state in history to cut jobless benefit weeks. Whitmer pushed to have those six weeks reinstated at the start of the pandemic last year. She called on the Legislature to simply extend the benefits from 20 weeks to 26 weeks.

A fix could be on the way. Senate Minority Leader Jim Ananich (D-Flint) told MIRS that the Legislature approved the transfer before the federal government passed the \$900 billion COVID relief package, so it's possible the federal money could be

(Continued on Page 2)



# Viewpoints



## How 2020 exposed U.S.

If America learns nothing else from these dark times, here are 7 lessons it should take away from 2020:

**1. Workers keep America going, not billionaires.** American workers have been forced to put their lives on the line to provide essential services even as their employers failed to provide them with adequate protective gear, hazard pay, or notice of when COVID had infected their workplaces. Meanwhile, America's 651 billionaires – whose net worth has grown by over \$1 trillion since the start of the pandemic – retreated to their mansions, yachts and estates.

Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos sheltered in his 165,000-acre West Texas ranch while Amazon's warehouse workers toiled in close proximity to each other, often without adequate masks, gloves, or sanitizers. The company offered but then soon scrapped a \$2 an hour hazard pay increase for warehouse workers, even as Bezos' wealth jumped by a staggering \$70 billion since March, putting his estimated net worth at roughly \$186 billion as the year came to an end.

**2. Systemic racism is literally killing Black and Latino Americans.** Black and Latino Americans account for almost 40 percent of coronavirus deaths so far, despite comprising less than a quarter of the population. As they've borne the brunt of this pandemic, they've been forced to fight for their humanity in another regard – taking to the streets across the country to protest decades of unjust police killings of their community members, only to be met with more police violence.

Among Native American communities, the coronavirus figures are even more horrifying. The Navajo Nation has had a higher per-capita infection rate than any state but can't adequately care for the sick, thanks to years of federal underfunding and neglect of its health care system.

Decades of segregated housing, pollution, lack of access to medical care, and poverty have left communities of color vulnerable to the worst of this virus, and the worst of America.

**3. If we can afford to bail out corporations and Wall Street, we sure as hell can afford to help people.** Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell continues to insist we can't "afford" \$2,000 COVID survival checks for Americans. But the latest coronavirus relief legislation doled out over \$220 billion to powerful business interests that could instead have been used to help struggling working families.

Another way of looking at it: The total cost of providing those \$2,000 checks (\$465 billion) is less than half the amount America's 651 billionaires added to their wealth during the pandemic (\$1 trillion).

**4. Health care must be made a right in America.** Even before the pandemic, an estimated 28 million Americans lacked health insurance. After it struck, an additional 15 million lost employer-provided coverage because they lost their jobs. Without insurance, a hospital stay to treat COVID-19 cost as much as \$73,000. Remember this the next time you hear pundits saying Medicare for All is too radical.

**5. Our social safety nets are woefully broken.** No other advanced nation was as unprepared for the pandemic as was the United States. Our unemployment insurance system is over 80 years old, designed for a different America. We're one of the few countries in the world that doesn't provide all workers some form of paid sick leave.

Other industrialized nations kept their unemployment rates low by guaranteeing paychecks during the pandemic. But Americans who filed for unemployment benefits often got nothing or received them weeks or months late. Under new legislation they get just \$300 a week of extra benefits to tide them over.

**6. The Electoral College must be abolished.** Biden won 7 million more popular votes than Trump. But Biden's margin in Arizona, Georgia, and Wisconsin totaled just 45,000. Had Trump won these three states instead, he would have gained 37 more electoral votes, tying Biden in the electoral college. Under the Constitution, this would have pushed the election to the House of Representatives, with each state delegation getting just one vote. Even though Democrats have a majority in the House, more state delegations have Republican majorities. Trump would have been reelected.

The gap between the popular and electoral college vote continues to widen. The Electoral College is an increasingly dangerous anachronism.

**7. Government matters.** For decades, conservatives have told us that government is the problem and that we should let the free market run its course. Rubbish. If nothing else, 2020 has shown that the unfettered free market won't save us. After 40 years of Reaganism, it's never been clearer: Government is in fact necessary to protect the public.

It's tragic that it took a pandemic, near-record unemployment, millions of people taking to the streets, and a near-calamitous election for many to grasp how broken, racist, and backwards our system really is. Biggest lesson of all: It must be fixed.

**Robert Reich**  
Professor of Public Policy, University of California-Berkeley

The Building Tradesman welcomes your letters to the editor. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and to shorten them. Please sign the letter and include a way to contact you.

How to contact us –

By mail: Building Tradesman Editor  
1640 Porter St. Detroit, MI 48216  
e-mail: buildingtradesman@ameritech.net



Follow us

The Michigan Building and Construction Trades Council

## Guv's veto reduces jobless benefits from 26 to 20 weeks; fix imminent?

(Continued from Page 1) available to help fund the benefits.

"I don't know if the governor didn't realize what the ramifications of her veto would be at the time, or if she did it intentionally – but either way, the people of Michigan did not get the truth from her last week," said state Rep. Mark Huizinga (R-Walker). "We've got to do better moving forward – particularly as people across our state count on their state government to work in their best interests during the challenges of this pandemic."

A statement from her office late last year said "the governor's line item veto to save \$220 million in General Fund taxpayer dollars in the employer-owned Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund has no effect on current (2020) unemployed workers or their benefit weeks. We're hopeful the state Legislature will quickly take action... to permanently extend unemployment benefits from 20 to 26 weeks for newly unemployed workers who file Jan. 1 forward, putting Michigan in line with 40 other states."

"General fund dollars must be used to fund essential services like vaccines and PPE, not to give tax breaks to big businesses. The Unemployment Insurance Agency has also provided more than \$900 million in tax breaks to businesses impacted by COVID-19."

*"We all have such a finite time to leave the world better than we found it."*  
–Dave Kellett

**The Building Tradesman**

ISSN-007-3717

is the Official Publication of the Michigan Building and Construction Trades Council

Patrick Devlin  
Secretary-Treasurer  
Steve Claywell  
President

**MICHIGAN BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL**  
BUILDING MICHIGAN UNION

The Building Tradesman is published bi-weekly (every other Friday) by the Michigan Building and Construction Trades Council, Detroit office. 1640 Porter St., Detroit, MI 48216

Printed at Grand Blanc Printing, a union shop

Periodical mail postage paid at Detroit, MI and additional mailing offices.

**POSTMASTER send postage returns to:**  
**The Building Tradesman**  
1640 Porter St.  
Detroit, MI 48216  
Phone: (313) 961-3800  
Fax: (313) 961-2467

Union members with address changes are asked to contact their local union.

**Editor/Photographer**  
Marty Mulcahy  
E-mail: buildingtradesman@ameritech.net

**Advertising Director**  
Joe Hoshaw  
E-mail: btads@ameritech.net (734) 558-6955

Subscription Rate \$15 annually (group rate for unions)  
Visit our website: www.michiganbuildingtrades.org



HEFTING DUCTWORK at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor Central Classroom Building project are Mike Cassani, Bryant Stafford and Rik Watson of Sheet Metal Workers Local 80. They're employed by Applegate.

## New use, new purpose: trades create new U-M classroom, office space

(Continued from Page 1) including a 200-person capacity multipurpose room, as well as administrative space to house the U-M Central Administration Department, including the university president and other executive officers.

Constructed of red brick and Bedford limestone in the Classic Revival style, the Ruthven project lines up with the university's traditional priority of

preserving its historic collection of buildings while making them more environmentally sustainable. The former museum will retain a spectacular historic rotunda and double height space. This project will seek a Silver LEED standard for environmental sustainability.

The project's design team includes Harley Ellis Devereaux (HED) and Stecker Labau Arneil McManus (SLAM) Collabora-

tive. HED said the new Central Campus Classroom Building and Alexander G. Ruthven Renovation project "delivers the solution to a three-fold problem on the University of Michigan's Central Campus: 1) lack of large-format instructional space 2) a historic and beloved structure in need of reimagining and repurposing and 3) the university's leadership and administration disconnected from the campus and student population."

They added that the project "redefines the east edge of campus, creating a new gateway experience to the campus and providing a memorable learning experience for the nearly 10,000 students expected to utilize the facility each day."

Said Neil Martin, SLAM's design principal: "The design team has worked closely with the university to design not only a building, but a series of interactive classrooms that illustrate U-M's commitment to continue to be a world-class institution. The building is designed to be purposeful while engaging the campus fabric as a gateway to the university."

## COVID vaccine injects some hope for 2021

(Continued from Page 1) said that U.S. construction spending "was a tale of two industries" again in November, as it said higher single-family construction spending masked ongoing downturns in private and public nonresidential construction.

"Private nonresidential construction declined for the fifth-straight month in November, while public nonresidential spending slipped for the fifth time in the past six months," said Ken Simonson, the association's chief economist. "Unfortunately, our latest survey finds contractors expect the volume of projects available to bid on in 2021 will be even more meager."

U.S. construction spending in November totaled \$1.46 trillion at a seasonally adjusted annual rate, an increase of 0.9 percent from the pace in October and 3.8 percent higher than in November 2019. But the AGC said gains were limited to residential construction, which rose 2.6 percent for the month and 16.2 percent year-over-year. Meanwhile, the AGC said private and public nonresidential spending slumped 0.6 percent in November from October and 4.7 percent from a year earlier.

The AGC urged the incoming Congress to act quickly to boost investments in infrastructure. "Without additional measures to boost demand for non-residential construction, this year is likely to be a challenging one for the industry," said AGC CEO Stephen E. Sandherr. "The impacts of the pandemic are clearly accumulating for many construction employers."

*"No passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear."*  
–Edmund Burke (1729 - 1797)

*"Democracy and defense are not substitutes for one another. Either alone will fail."*  
–John F. Kennedy (1917 - 1963)

*"Love your enemies; for they shall tell you all your faults."*  
–Benjamin Franklin (1706 - 1790)

**Reference Based Pricing  
Higher Standards, Lower Costs**

**Varipro**  
BENEFIT ADMINISTRATORS

800-732-3412 | varipro.com

**AIELLO LAW GROUP PLLC**

**Construction Injury Specialists**  
Representing Tradesmen and their families over 25 years

**WORKERS' COMP  
SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY  
CONSTRUCTION ACCIDENT LITIGATION  
ESTATE PLANNING - ELDER LAW**

**Mark Aiello**

Our associates also handle:  
**UNEMPLOYMENT • ANY INJURY CASE  
ASBESTOS/TOXIC EXPOSURES • DRIVERS LICENSE RESTORATION**

3031 W. Grand Blvd, Suite 440, Detroit 48202  
**(313) 964-4900 - (800) 881-8896**  
www.aiellolawgroup.com email: maa@aiellolawgroup.com

**FREE INITIAL CONSULTATION • VALIDATED PARKING**

**NETA** ACCREDITED COMPANY

**Utilities Instrumentation Service**

**#1 Michigan Electrical Maintenance Firm**

- Licensed Electricians with the State of Michigan (IBEW-JIW)
- Member of the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA)
- Full Member of the InterNational Electrical Testing Association (NETA)
- ISO/IEC 17025 Accredited

**Electrical Testing & Commissioning**

- Protective Relays • Transformers • Commissioning & Technical Support • Switchgear • Breakers • Infrared & Ultrasonic Survey • Cable Locating • VLF & Tan Delta Testing • Partial Discharge • Meters • Grounding • Generator Controls • ATS • UPS • Battery Systems • Motor Control Centers • Switches • Capacitor Banks

**Electrical Engineering**

- Short Circuit/Device Coordination Studies • Arc Flash/Shock Hazard Studies • Harmonic/Power Factor/Transient Studies & Corrections

**Training**

- Electrical Safety & Troubleshooting • NFPA 70E

Call - When downtime is not an option™  
**866-967-9464**  
www.uispowerservices.com

UNION Solution Since 1976

**Over 32 Years of Continuous Service**

**2021 LOGBOOK AVAILABLE**

**HARD COPY & MOBILE APP VERSIONS**

Aiello Law Group, f/k/a Esper Aiello Law Group has released our 2021 Construction Worker's Daily Logbook in both print and digital versions! We have provided logbooks to Michigan's building trades for 32 years!

The traditional paper version can be picked up in our law office, your union hall, the Building Trades office at 1640 Porter in Detroit, or can be mailed directly to you by calling (313) 964-4900. The digital version can be found on the App Store by Apple or on Google Play for Android. Simply search "Aiello Digital Daily Logbook."

Available on the **App Store** and **Google Play**

# BUILDING MICHIGAN!

## Cookin' with gas

### HISTORY IN THE MAKING

By Marty Mulcahy



A CREW BUILDS the Michigan-Wisconsin Pipeline circa the late 1940s, location unknown. With new post-war housing being built at a fast pace, the new pipeline would feed the region with plentiful, cheap natural gas. Coal producers bitterly opposed the construction of the new pipeline, rightfully fearing that homes would be heated with this newly available source of furnace energy.

Since humans figured out how to create and harness fire, everyone has wanted reliable, reasonably priced energy. But how that energy is harvested and transported has been a constantly evolving process, which is being transformed today by wind, solar power and improving battery storage. Today, the vast bulk of the sources of our energy are based on decades-old decisions made by lawmakers and regulators who were more interested in customer demand and corporate bottom lines than on the ecological impacts of where or how the hardware that was put into the ground.

In the 1930s, natural gas production in Michigan and the nation was The Next Big Thing for economically heating homes and businesses, fueling kitchen stoves, lighting street lamps and firing up industrial machinery. Michigan communities had been producing their own energy, much of it in the form of "coal gas" aka "city gas" or "manufactured gas."

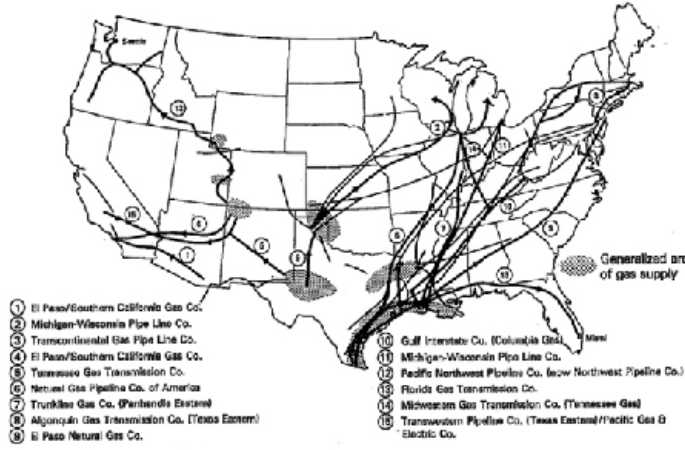
Beginning in the 1820s, using ubiquitous coal as fuel, local gas manufacturers would burn the black product and create a flammable gaseous fuel that would be distributed through pipes to local customers. Coal gas systems were always a noxious, dirty and polluting method of creating energy, with product being burned locally during both manufacture and consumption. It was an evolving technology, but engineers were never able to produce coal gas that burned as clean or with as many BTUs as underground sources of natural gas that were being discovered in Michigan and in other areas of the country.

A short-lived supply of that natural gas trickled in via pipelines from nearby Ohio and Ontario, until the source flamed out.

"The first natural gas imported to Michigan was via Northwestern Ohio Gas Company, which brought gas to Detroit from gas fields around Findlay, Ohio in 1889," says *About Michigan's Natural Gas Industry*, written in August 2019 by the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC). "This lasted until 1893, when the fields were too depleted to maintain pressure to move the gas to Detroit. In 1894, natural gas was imported from Ontario, Canada to Detroit until those fields lost pressure in 1902."

A history provided by the former ANR Pipeline said "until the 1930s, communities like Detroit that were located away from natural gas fields had relied exclusively on gas produced from coal. This manufactured gas produced comparatively little heat per unit burned, and, although gas had been used extensively for lighting and cooking, the cost of gas heating was

### U.S. natural gas pipeline map, late 1940s



prohibitive. In the mid-1930s natural methane gas had been used in small areas of Michigan on an experimental basis, and it was found that, with natural gas's higher heat value, gas costs for home heating could be cut by about 50 percent."

As the extent of the supply of underground natural gas reserves became apparent in Texas, Louisiana and Oklahoma after the turn of the last century, it would take three decades before those mother lodes could be made available through further discovery, tapping and then with the creation of a distribution system of pipelines and compressing stations to move the product around the nation to a new customer base.

Then the inevitable happened, or at least it looks inevitable today: pipelines were built to start moving that high-quality natural gas to where it was needed. And Michigan – with a burgeoning industry and a willing residential customer base – was ready.

"The first interstate gas to be imported to Michigan on a sustaining basis was imported by Panhandle Eastern Pipe Line Co. in 1936, which delivered gas from Oklahoma and Texas to Detroit," the MPSC said. "At 1,200 miles long, it was the longest pipeline in existence. According to Panhandle, when it started building this pipeline in 1930, its order for steel pipe was the largest single steel purchase ever made from the U.S. steel industry."

The report said improvements in technology, such as electric welding – which joins high-carbon steel and machines capable of laying heavier and larger diameter pipe – allowed for economical long distance transmission pipelines. Pipelines at first were built with a diameter of up to 20 inches and could operate with natural gas at internal pressures of 500 pounds per square inch. "Each decade after brought larger, higher pressure pipelines and new interstate gas pipeline companies to Michigan," the MPSC said.

Of course Michigan wasn't the only state that wanted the gas. American Light and Traction (which was the parent company

of the Michigan Consolidated Gas Co. which was eventually absorbed into DTE Energy), entered into an agreement with the largest natural gas supplier at that time, the Panhandle Eastern, to extend the pipeline from Indianapolis to Detroit. By 1943 MichCon's sales of gas for home heating had almost doubled.

In order to meet the increasing demand for natural gas, American Light and Traction also founded the Michigan-Wisconsin Pipe Line Co., on July 25, 1945, which would later become ANR Pipeline. In 1947, the company received federal approval to build another feeder, a \$52 million, 1,800-mile-long pipeline from the Texas Panhandle region, to a path where it split in Illinois to serve the Detroit-Ann Arbor area and Wisconsin. It began operations on Nov. 1, 1949.

The gas was then distributed within Michigan via existing pipelines, much of it owned by Consumers Power.

Natural gas reserves were also found in Michigan in the 1930s. The MPSC issued its first Standard Well Connection Permit in 1933 to a gas well – the "Michigan Stray" – in the Austin Field located in Mecosta County near Big Rapids. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Michigan Stray was the dominant producing formation with some fields producing from the Detroit River, Berea, Dundee, Traverse, Salina, Sylvania, Antrim, Richfield, and Reed City. In the early 1960s several big Niagaran formation discoveries were made such as Belle River Mills and Ray fields (which are now natural gas storage fields).

In 2018, Michigan wells yielded about 90 billion cubic feet of natural gas, which was mostly used in our state. That represented about 10-15 percent of the total gas consumed in Michigan, the MPSC said. All of the state's natural gas production is in the Lower Peninsula, with the most active well being in Antrim County.

Natural gas in Michigan is moved through more than 50,000 miles of distribution pipelines that cross our state, plus more than 3 million service lines.



AN INTERNATIONAL-HARVESTER TD-24 from the late 1940s or early 1950s, fitted with a Superior side boom pipelayer, lowers a steel pipeline into a trench.

# New \$900B federal stimulus leaves labor wanting more

(Continued from Page 1)

**In:** \$45 billion for transportation, including mass transit systems (\$14 billion), Amtrak (\$1 billion) and airlines, plus another \$10 billion line of credit for the Postal Service, all saving jobs.

**Not in:** A solution to long-standing financial ills of those multi-employer pension plans hit hard by the 2008 financial crash and which have never recovered. Current law lets plan trustees cut current recipients' pensions in order to keep the plans alive for future recipients.

Backed by the Teamsters and other unions, Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), pushed the Butch Lewis Act to offer low-interest, long-term federal loan guarantees to such troubled plans, on condition they don't cut payments to present beneficiaries.

"Multiemployer pension plans have been further jeopardized by economic conditions created by the coronavirus, making action to protect the hard-earned pensions of retirees and workers more urgent," Teamsters President James Hoffa said.

The entire package left labor a bit disappointed, said AFL-CIO President Rich Trumka. "Millions of Americans are sick with this virus, have depleted life savings to stay afloat or are suffering economic hardship through no fault of our own," he said, so "we are pleased a relief deal is finally on its way. It will put money in people's pockets, keep transportation workers on the job and bolster housing, health care and food assistance. It's an important step as President-elect Joe Biden prepares to wage a long overdue national fight against this virus."

"But this package should've been so much more," the AFL-CIO president added.

North America's Building Trades Unions President Sean McGarvey also chided Congress for favoring business and the wealthy over needy Americans.

The stimulus package, including \$25 billion-plus for vaccine production and distribution, was tied to a \$1.4 trillion bill to keep the government going through Sept. 30. That's where Republicans got some extrane-

ous goodies. One was a tax break for wine, beer and spirits producers. Another restored the full corporate tax deduction for moguls' "three-martini lunches." Overall cost of the tax breaks: \$110 billion over a decade.

"As we pour through details of the COVID-19 relief deal and omnibus agreement," McGarvey said, "it is clear that Congress failed to meet the moment. While they resurrected the "three-martini lunch" tax deduction in this bill, although not as outrageous as the \$210 billion tax cut for the wealthiest families in the country in the Cares Act, Congress should sip on the fact that they will be directly responsible for not supporting the creation and retention of thousands of middle-class jobs in their states and districts."

"We are particularly displeased that Congressional leaders who by now should understand what the electorate said loud and clear on Nov. 3 and that this morning's *Washington Post* article laid bare. It is about working families' economic security."

# 80 years later, insulator still enjoying union benefits

(Continued from Page 1)

Boilermaker 2nd Class (T) in the Navy during World War II. "I took an aptitude test and the captain put me in with the boilermakers. I would insulate the valves after they tore them apart. I put my skills to work," he said of the maintenance work he did ship-board. He proudly served on the USS Pastores and was awarded the Bronze Star for his service. In December 1945, he received his honorable discharge and returned home to Michigan – renewing his career as an insulator.

When reflecting on the beginning of his career, he recalled the early days when Local 47 was just getting started.

"At that time, the local was just beginning to grow," Woody said. "A few Local 25-Detroit members formed Local 47 a few years before I was hired on in 1941. We all knew each other. They used to call me 'Sly Fox' because they never knew what I was going to do next!"

"I really enjoyed the work and the camaraderie. They became family in a sense. My role model was Larry Brimmer. I really looked up to him and learned the trade from him," Smith added.

A Lansing resident at the time, Smith said he worked "all over" but was fortunate to work close to his home much of the time. He recalled working on jobs in Kalamazoo and in Sault Ste. Marie, but spent much of his career working on the Michigan State University campus. "I was running work within a few years of entering the trade," he said. "My projects were mostly working as a commercial insulator, but I did spend time at the local municipal powerhouses. I've also worked in the shipyards in Bay City and the chemical plants in Midland."

Smith was not the only member of his family to work as an Insulator, as his brother-in-law and nephew both became pipe coverers. Woody retired after 39 years on the job – so, incredibly, he has been receiving his retirement benefits for more years than he was working in the trade.

"I got to know Woody regularly at our union picnics, and



WOODY SMITH and his wife Kathleen.

he's a wonderful person," said Revard, who spent a number of years as business manager of Local 47. "It's amazing to me that we have an 80-year member. "When I was with the Local, he was an active and engaged mentor to our members, and such an asset to Local 47 and to the Union."

"Our members don't always appreciate that people like Woody helped establish the union benefits that we have today. Those were members at the time who first voted to set up the pension and hospitalization plans that we're still using today. So hat's off to him."

Woody is married to Kathleen, and they have four children and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He is a lifetime member of the VFW and regularly volunteers at his church.

Current Local 47 Business Manager Patrick Welch said union anniversary pin recipients usually can get their pins at the annual union picnic – which may or may not happen this year because of COVID-19 restrictions.

"I have talked to Woody in the past, and it's amazing to hear his stories from the 1930 and 40s, what the industry and jobs were like, what was going on in his life," Welch said. "For me it gave me much more of an appreciation for what they went through in that time period. You can tell that he has been very much a union

man, and he loves his trade." To those entering the trade, Woody has a few words of encouragement and some advice for a successful career. "I tell them to learn the trade and enjoy the work. Enjoy the people you work with. I sure enjoyed the work, and being in the union did a lot of good for me. I've been a union man all my life."

He added: "I've had a great life. The trade has taken care of my family and myself both before and after retirement. I don't regret anything."

(Significant content contributed by the International Association Of Heat And Frost Insulators And Allied Workers' *Insulators Union Journal*.)

"It is no profit to have learned well, if you neglect to do well."

–Publius Syrus (~100 BC)

"Every man is guilty of all the good he didn't do."

–Voltaire (1694-1778)

"A mind set in its ways is wasted. Don't do it."

–Eric Schmidt

"If you want to make peace, you don't talk to your friends. You talk to your enemies."

–Moshe Dayan (1915-1981)

"Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities. Truth isn't."

–Mark Twain (1835-1910)

A detective sergeant was interrogating three guys who were candidates to become detectives. To test their skills in recognizing a suspect, he shows the first guy a picture for five seconds and then

hides it. "This is your suspect, how would you recognize him?"

The first guy answers, "That's easy, we'll catch him fast because he only has one eye!"

The detective says, "Well...uh...that's because the picture I showed is his side profile."

Slightly flustered by this ridiculous response, the sergeant flashes the picture for five seconds at the second guy and asks him, "This is

## Just joking

your suspect, how would you recognize him?"

The second guy smiles and replies, "Ha! He'd be easy to catch. He only has one ear!"

The policeman angrily responds, "What's the matter with you two?! Of course only one eye and one ear are showing because it's a profile! Is that the best answer you can come up with?"

Extremely frustrated at this point, he shows the picture to the third guy and in a very testy voice asks, "This is your suspect, how would you recognize him?" He quickly adds, "think hard before giving me a stupid answer."

The third guy looks at the picture intently for a moment and says, "The suspect wears

contact lenses."

The detective is surprised and speechless because he really doesn't know himself if the suspect wears contacts or not. "Well, that's an interesting answer. Wait here for a few minutes while I check his file and I'll get back to you on that." He leaves the room and goes to his office, checks the suspect's file on his computer and comes back smiling.

"Wow! I can't believe it. It's TRUE! The suspect does, in fact, wear contact lenses. Good work! How were you able to make such an astute observation?"

"Duh, that's easy..." the third guy replied. "I mean, how can he wear glasses if he only has one eye and one ear?"



# The season of giving



IBEW Local 692 in Bay City partnered with the local United Way to build baskets that they distributed along with food boxes to their neighbors in need. Baskets included items such as detergent, dish soap, toothbrushes, etc. They also included a box of food containing a turkey, potatoes, carrots, bread, and canned food. "One of the many benefits of membership in the IBEW is the ability to give back to our communities. It's an important part of what we do." Helping out above, (l-r) are Brian Klele, Sam Malone, Gus Voisine, Nick Tobolski, Brendon Baranek, Steve Pahl, Travis Brady, Craig McDonnell, Casey Stoike, and Ryan Charney. There were 100 baskets given out to Bay County residents, including one, below.



THE MICHIGAN BUILDING and Construction Trades Council got a shout-out of thanks from the Facebook page of Sparrow Health System in Lansing, where the Council and affiliate unions provided meals to feed approximately 200 frontline Sparrow caregivers on Dec. 23 as a show of support for their extraordinary work during the pandemic. "The generosity of our community is incredible," Sparrow said. Above, MBCTC President Steve Claywell hands some meals to Sparrow personnel. Among those delivering food to Sparrow, at right, are Ed Bracamontes of the Michigan Painters District Council, Steve Claywell and Deshon Leek of the Michigan Building Trades, Eric Farrington and Michael Salas of Sheet Metal Workers Local 7, and Price Dobernick of Plumbers and Pipe Fitters 333.



THE PLUMBERS AND PIPE FITTERS of Local 333 on Dec. 23 had a tremendous turnout of volunteers in front of the state Capitol Building in Lansing, above and above left, handing out 500 Christmas dinners, and gallons of milk, above, to residents in a drive-through operation. "We're certainly proud to be in a position to be able to do this for the residents of Lansing," said Local 333 Business Manager Price Dobernick. The group had help from Gov. Gretchen Whitmer (at left), Mayor Andy Schor, and some of Lansing's finest in blue. "I think it's been pretty amazing, this has been a hard year, and this is a particularly hard time of year, especially," Whitmer said. Thanks to all who helped!



EXTRA BOXES from the UA Local 333 drive-through were donated to Lansing's Cristo Rey Community Center. Fifty boxes were hauled and delivered by Local 333 member Jeremy Garza (and Lansing City Council member) and Lansing Police Community Services Officer Anthony VandeVoorde.



IBEW LOCAL 557 joined with United Way of Saginaw County to spread some holiday cheer, sponsoring Christmas gifts (above) for families impacted by the mid-Michigan flooding and those experiencing economic hardship.



FOR THE PAST EIGHT years, IBEW Local 58 volunteers in conjunction with the International Workers of the World (the Wobblies) have sponsored the "Wobbly Kitchen," an assortment of volunteers who feed people in Detroit's Cass Park. Set up in any weather, volunteers cook and serve meals on two Sundays every month. "We share a meal, some clothing, the necessities, some songs, some happy chatter and genuine friendship," the group's Facebook page says. "This is an open and welcoming group of people that come together from all around the Detroit metro area to spend some time with people from all around the Cass Park area." Anywhere from 100 to 300 needy individuals show up for the meals, and they're met by 30 or so volunteers from the Wobblies, the IBEW, UAW, and other members of Detroit's labor community.



KUDOS TO THE Blue Water Building Trades, who donated boxes full of food on Jan. 6 to serve 84 households, in conjunction with the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan. The boxes are shown ready to go in the parking lot of the Blue Water Labor Temple in Port Huron, at right, and volunteers (above and below) made them available for pickup in what was an impressive operation.















# Heat and Frost Insulators Local 47

Heat and Frost Insulators & Allied Workers Local 47

LANSING – To combat and limit the spread of Covid-19, Local 47 encourages all members to continue to work safe, and if you feel sick contact a doctor immediately.

Any retirees wanting to go to work, please call the office.

The Funds Trustees have waived the 79-hour rule.

All members should have received a letter from our International regarding the Asbestos Exposure Scientific Study. For more information on how to participate in this study, please contact Business Manager Patrick Welch at the main Local 47 Office number: 517-708-0665

Per the Rules and Procedures:

Members must notify the office within 24 hours of being laid off or charges may be placed.

Members must notify the office before ANY overtime is worked.

Contracts are available at the Union Office or at the Union Meeting upon request.

OSHA 10: Local 47 will be offering OSHA 10 to any Active Member who is not current with the program. The course is done online, so if you wish to take the course please contact the Local Union office with your email address and we will be more than happy to set it up for you. If you do not have a computer at home, you are welcome to come to the Local Union Office to take the course.

To ensure all Active Members and Retirees are receiving their Robo calls please make sure you have not blocked the following number: (804) 441-8365. There are several members who have the number blocked and therefore are not receiving the Robo Calls. These calls are only used for Important Notifications from the Local Union Business Manager and Funeral Notifications.

If you are not receiving these calls, please contact the Local Union Office and we will double check to make sure we have the correct number in the system or if you may have blocked the number.

Local 47 has been receiving a lot of returned mail from our members. We ask that if you have a change of address or phone number to please call the Local Union Office right away so we can update your information throughout our system, TIC's, and the with the International. It is very important to make sure your contact information is always update with Local 47.

Anyone interested in joining the newly formed Breath Of Life Committee is asked to please call the Local Union Office.

Pension and Health Welfare: Josh Kroell (989-385-2671)

Allied Workers' Local 47 Fringe Benefit Funds  
6525 Centurion Drive, Lansing, MI 48917-9275

Toll Free Number: (800) 323-8079

Telephone Number: (517) 321-7502

Fax Number: (517) 321-7508

Josh Kroell will be available via phone to answer any questions regarding Pension, Welfare and Vacation Funds. Josh is the new Secretary for the Pension, Welfare, Vacation and Special Benefits and can be reached by phone at 989-385-2671

To all active members, if you have not sent in your Coordination of Benefits Form, your Spousal Form, or your Birth Certificates for your Children, no one will be covered on our insurance until these items are sent to TIC. Please call TIC immediately at (800) 323-8079 and get the above-mentioned forms into the fund ASAP and you will be reinstated retroactively

Remember that Auto and Motorcycle accidents are not covered by our plan. Auto and Motorcycle accidents should be covered by your personal Auto Insurance policy.

Members having questions regarding Pension and Welfare Fund please contact TIC International at the numbers below or log

(Continued next column)



# Heat and Frost Insulators Local 25

Heat & Frost Insulators Local 25 SOUTHFIELD-REMINDER: We continue to be under the directive



CURT MCGLONE

of the International Union and pursuant to that directive, the FEBRUARY 2021 UNION MEETING HAS BEEN CANCELLED.

Continue to monitor the Facebook page for updates.

UNIONELECTIONS: Election ballots have been mailed to eligible voting members. Please mark your ballot and return it as soon as possible. Ballots must be received by February 15, 2021 to have your vote count.

WEBSITE: The new website is up and running. It can be located at: <https://heatfrostinsulators.org>.

APPAREL New Local 25 apparel is available at the Union Hall. New items include: knit hats and beanies, new hi-vis short and long sleeved t-shirts and hi-vis hoodies. Apparel can be viewed on the Facebook page.

M.U.S.T. SAFETY MODULES: It is important to keep your M.U.S.T. Safety Modules up to date. If you have Modules expiring and needing to be completed, give the Union Office a call to have the testing authorization turned on.

EMPLOYMENT CHANGES: All employment changes; hire, lay off, fire, shop change, disability, etc. must be called into the Union Hall. The only way to guarantee you are on the out of work list and your employment records remains current and correct.

LAY OFF/HIRE: Please be reminded, all members shall notify the Business Manager within forty-eight hours after accepting a job or upon termination of employment. Failure to report will result in an automatic fifty dollar fine.

S.U.B. FUND: Please be reminded, in order to receive a S.U.B. Fund check on Friday, all paperwork must be submitted to the Office no later than 2:00 p.m. on Thursday.

SUBFUND TIME LIMITATION: Please be reminded, per the Plan Document: Each time a participant receives a State Unemployment check, he/she must mail or deliver the receipt, check stub, or a copy of the check to the Administrator's office within 30 days of receipt of said State Unemployment check.

Any request for a benefit payment past the 30 days will be denied per the Plan Document.

BENESYS: When calling the Fund Office, Benesys, please be sure to get the name of the person providing you information. Lately, we have been experiencing some incorrect information being provided to our members. In order to make sure the correct information is provided, it helps to have a name so the Union Office can call Benesys, correct the person providing incorrect information and find out why they are providing our members with incorrect information.

SICK AND INJURED: Please keep all our sick and injured members in your thoughts and prayers.

## Local 47, con't

onto their Website: [www.heatfrostlocal47benefits.org](http://www.heatfrostlocal47benefits.org).

Please complete and return the working spousal forms to TIC.

JATC Coordinator Phil Wilson (616-466-8736)

Applications are open for the Apprenticeship Program. Call the Union Office.

Under Duties of Apprenticeship, Section 5.3 part L, page 4 of the Apprenticeship Standards states, "According to the Apprenticeship Standards you are required to accurately fill out the online work report for NO later than ten (10) days from the end of the current work week."

Good and Welfare: Get well to all our sick and injured members.



# Abatement Workers Regional Local 207

Abatement Workers Local 207

TAYLOR – There are a lot of upcoming projects slated for late winter so be prepared for work during a time when traditionally work is slowing down.

When you do return to work, follow all required Covid guidelines that may be in place for certain sites. Remember to call in if you are unem-



KEVIN MEAGHER

employed for help with future placement. Updated, working telephone numbers are necessary to help you with work placement. Do not get caught without the necessary current job site credentials, although several state agencies have relaxed renewal requirements due to the pandemic.

The General Office still has a ban on Union Meeting and Elections. Our current election process is still on hold until an ok is given to proceed. All members will be notified by mail when the election can resume.

Work in other areas of the region have been picking up over the last couple of weeks in Ohio and West Virginia. Winter outages in all areas in the region are on the horizon so make sure if you can travel that you make sure to get licensed as soon as possible.

With most state agencies working from home during this pandemic filling out on-line renewals is the way to go. They are processing much quicker than traditional mail in applications. If you have any questions about on-line applications or what states you may want to get a license for do not hesitate to call the office or my cell. We are looking at scheduling a new initial class for November so please if you can recommend anyone that you know can handle this work have them call the office to get an application filled out and sent in so we can get them into the next class.

UPCOMING ASBESTOS TRAINING CLASSES: Asbestos Supervisor Refresher January 17<sup>th</sup> with a new 40 hour Initial Scheduled for Feb. 3-7<sup>th</sup>.

Check with the Office to ensure the classes will occur as scheduled.

— All classes will be held at Local 207's office @ 26453 Northline in Taylor.

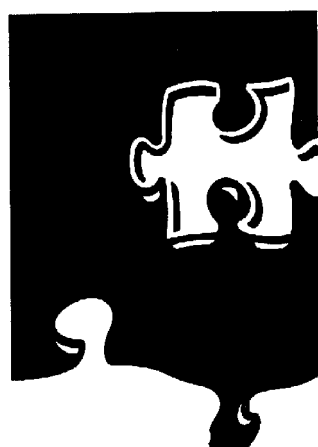
— Classes begin promptly at 8AM and end at 4PM, followed by a Lead Awareness Update.

If you are due to expire and need one of these refreshers now, please call the Taylor Office (1-800-207-5622) to register.

— Class sizes are being limited due to state guidelines currently in place.

BE SAFE, WEAR YOUR MASKS, & FOLLOW THE SOCIAL DISTANCING GUIDELINES!

## You Are the Missing Piece.



Attend Your Union Meetings!



CONSUMERS ENERGY late last year completed construction of the 9-mile Saginaw Trail Pipeline, a natural gas line that dates to the 1940s. Photo credit: Consumers Energy

# Consumers Energy completes 90-mile Saginaw Trail Pipeline

JACKSON – Consumers Energy late last year wrapped up construction of the Saginaw Trail Pipeline, a four-year, \$610 million project to upgrade natural gas pipelines and infrastructure in Saginaw, Genesee and Oakland counties to improve natural gas reliability and safety in Michigan.

"We are pleased to share that the Saginaw Trail Pipeline has been successfully completed," said Dennis Dobbs, vice president of enterprise project management for Consumers Energy. "The project was a huge undertaking and we are grateful for the cooperation and patience shown by affected landowners, community leaders, residents and other entities throughout construction. We also recognize the outstanding efforts of the hundreds of company and contractor skilled trades em-

ploees who worked through the challenge of COVID-19 to bring this project to successful fruition."

The project, which was performed without service interruptions, modernizes Consumers Energy's natural gas infrastructure while providing environmental enhancements along the route.

The Saginaw Trail Pipeline project replaced 78 miles of a 1940s vintage natural gas pipeline with about 90 miles of new, larger pipeline. While most of the project followed the existing route through rural agricultural areas, the utility said a pipeline reroute was designed to avoid densely populated areas in Saginaw and Flint. In addition to replacing pipeline, crews also rebuilt city gate facilities where gas pressure is regulated for safe delivery to homes and businesses. Some additional final restoration work will occur this year.

A number of environmental concerns were taken into consideration along the pipeline's path, including relocating more than 100,000 turtles, frogs and snakes from the project area during construction, planting a special pollinator mix of seeds to restore more than 550 acres of wild and wetlands areas, and partnering with local landscape companies to recycle wood waste as mulch for lawns and gardens.

"The Saginaw Trail Pipeline helped model the way for environmental sustainability efforts for these types of large pipeline projects," Dobbs said. "I am so proud of the care and concern shown by our employees and contractors who worked to ensure that we protected the landscape of our great state as this project was constructed."

# Understanding the root cause of COVID-19 outbreaks in construction

By Nick Fox Laborers Health and Safety Fund of North America

Recently, several media outlets have reported on COVID-19 outbreaks on construction sites. If you only read the headlines (especially sensational ones), you might think COVID-19 cases are running rampant on construction jobsites. There's not much data to support that, especially since there's no nationwide system to track COVID-19 cases by occupation.

"We commend all the steps that LIUNA District Councils, Local Unions, members and signatory contractors have taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 on construction jobsites," says LIUNA General President Terry O'Sullivan. "Their commitment to implementing the necessary safety and health protocols, and taking quick action when positive cases do occur, is why these essential projects have been able to remain open."

In the construction industry, safety and health professionals often talk about getting to the root cause of injuries. The root cause is the fundamental, underlying reason why an incident occurred. The goal isn't to point fingers or place blame, but to understand every link in the chain of events that led to the incident so it can be prevented in the future.

We need to apply the same concept to COVID-19 outbreaks in the construction industry. If we don't identify the root causes behind cases and outbreaks, we risk choosing the wrong corrective measures. Rather than collecting anecdotal evidence to build a story about an entire industry, we need to dig into the root causes behind each individual outbreak.

For example, an investigation of an outbreak at a Colorado construction company traced the source to lax enforcement of wearing facial coverings in an enclosed area. The investigation noted that workers would wear their masks when new people were on the job, but when it was just their regular crew, management wouldn't enforce wearing of masks or wearing them correctly.

In another example, an outbreak at the construction site of a chemical plant in Pennsylvania was linked to either not having or not enforcing a physical dis-

tancing policy, which led to crowded buses bringing employees to and from work. In that instance, the employer also reported that contact tracing showed transmission was tied primarily to contact outside the jobsite.

These two examples alone illustrate how root cause investigations can lead to new policies or a redoubling of efforts to stem transmission. Because COVID-19 can be transmitted in several ways, and because transmission often starts off the job, root cause analysis is an effective tool that provides valuable information and context. An effective workplace COVID-19 risk assessment should also include the current level of community spread overall.

Another area where we need to be clear about root causes is when discussing COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths in the construction industry. A recent study of construction workers in Texas generated a lot of headlines like this one: "Construction Workers Have Higher Risk of COVID-19 Hospitalization."

Headlines like these suggest that construction jobsites or tasks bring a higher risk for COVID-19 exposure. When we dig past the headline, however, we find that the risk is rooted in a lack of access to health care and the disproportionate impact COVID-19 is having on racial and ethnic minorities. As the study itself notes:

"Nearly 30 percent of the construction workforce in the U.S. are Latinx individuals ... in Austin, 66 percent are Latinx individuals ... Approximately 24 percent of all construction workers and nearly 48 percent of Latinx construction workers do not have health insurance and thus lack access to preventative care, have disproportionate comorbidities and are less likely

to seek timely and safe treatment for COVID-19 infections. ...

Finally, transmission may be amplified by symptomatic cases continuing to work out of economic desperation and above-average sized households."

The Fund recently covered the value of health insurance on improving worker health, including how union workers are far more likely to have access to health insurance through their employer. Texas has one of the lowest rates of unionization of any state, at only four percent.

To limit the spread of COVID-19 and protect worker health and safety, we must be willing to read past the headlines and look at what's truly driving new cases.

Outbreaks can be caused by many factors, including inadequate infection control policies on the job, public health disparities or other causes. Performing root cause investigations and reviewing the science is the only way to ensure we have a full, accurate picture of the risks faced by construction workers.

"The fellow that agrees with everything you say is either a fool or he is getting ready to skin you."

—Kin Hubbard (1868 - 1930)

"Man, unlike the animals, has never learned that the sole purpose of life is to enjoy it."

—Samuel Butler (1835 - 1902)

"It still holds true that man is most uniquely human when he turns obstacles into opportunities."

—Eric Hoffer (1902 - 1983)

"Think not those faithful who praise all thy words and actions; but those who kindly reprove thy faults."

—Socrates (469 BC - 399 BC)

CASH FOR \$CRAP METAL

Aluminum - Copper - Brass  
Nickel - Alloys - Carbide  
Radiators - Lead - Batteries

<p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">McNichols Scrap Iron &amp; Metal Co. 6500 E. McNichols (near Mt. Elliott) <a href="http://mcnicholscrap.com">mcnicholscrap.com</a> <b>(313) 365-6100</b></p>	<p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">Detroit Iron &amp; Metal Co. 8300 Dix (corner Lonyo) <a href="http://detroitironandmetal.com">detroitironandmetal.com</a> <b>(313) 841-5100</b></p>
--	---













# Return of the Arctic Grayling



In 2016, a proposed initiative intended to reintroduce Arctic grayling to select Michigan streams was announced. That idea immediately caught fire, and Michigan's Arctic Grayling Initiative now counts more than 40 member organizations among its supporters.

Before the northern Lower Peninsula was heavily lumbered in the mid- to late 1800s, Arctic grayling were the dominant salmonid (fish of the salmon family) species found in cold-water streams.

They were present in such large numbers that people flocked to northern Michigan towns to target this attractive fish, known best for its prominent dorsal fin. Some anglers were catching them in huge numbers and shipping them on ice back to large metropolitan areas like Detroit and Chicago to be sold in fish markets.

They were extirpated (wiped out) from Michigan due to degrading of habitat associated with the timber harvest practices of the day and overharvest by recreational and market anglers. Competition with and predation by introduced species, like brown trout, also played a role in their disappearing from Michigan waters.

Fast forward more than a century to Sept. 17, 2020 – a big day in the history of fisheries management in Michigan.

That was the day that the first year-class (fish all produced in the same year) of Arctic grayling future brood fish (those used for breeding purposes) were transferred from an isolated rearing facility at Oden State Fish Hatchery, near Petoskey, to the Marquette State Fish Hatchery in Marquette County.

Approximately 4,000 fish, averaging 6.5 inches in length, made the trip to Marquette.

"This was a really exciting day for the Arctic grayling initiative," said Michigan Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Division Chief Jim Dexter. "A lot of planning and work has gone into this program and it's great to see it moving forward."

Along with the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, the DNR is one of the two foundational



ARCTIC GRAYLING are poured from a net into a raceway at the Marquette State Fish Hatchery in Marquette County. MDNR photo

partners taking the lead in the effort to restore this native species to Michigan waters.

Roughly 10,000 eggs collected from the Chena River, a tributary to Alaska's Yukon River, were brought back to Michigan by Michigan State University doctoral candidate Nicole Watson in the spring of 2019.

"Our partners in the Alaska Department of Fish and Game have been instrumental in getting the program to where it is," said DNR Fish Production Program Manager Ed Eisch. "They put in a significant amount of extra work during their normal spring egg take operations to help us meet our genetics management goals. That effort allows us to start this program out with a very robust founding stock. The program would not yet have gotten out of the starting blocks if not for their efforts."

Those eggs were destined to make their way to the Oden State Fish Hatchery in Emmett County, once the facility was ready to receive them. Until that time, they were hatched, and the fry were cared for in Watson's lab at MSU in East Lansing. The work being done in her lab focuses on interactions between Arctic grayling, brook trout and brown trout.

Because the eggs originated

from outside of the Great Lakes drainage, they had to be held in quarantine until three separate health exams could be completed.

"The last thing we wanted to do was inadvertently introduce a new pathogen to Michigan's waters," said Dan Sampson who oversees daily operations at Oden Hatchery. "The whole crew here was determined to do this the right way. I'm proud of the commitment shown by the Oden Hatchery crew."

In order to house the grayling at Oden's isolation building, the structure first needed to be outfitted with an ultraviolet filter on the outflow from the isolation facility. This is different from how UV filters are normally used in hatchery settings.

Typically, they are used to protect hatchery fish from pathogens in the rearing water. In this instance though, the UV filter is being used to protect the fish in the receiving waters from unknown pathogens that the hatchery fish may be harboring.

"Now that we've completed a rigorous testing protocol, we're confident that they are fit for use in this reintroduction effort," Eisch said.

Installing the UV unit was an expensive endeavor. The roughly \$300,000 project was funded al-

most entirely by donations from charitable organizations, families and individuals. The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians and the Henry E. and Consuela S. Wenger Foundation led the way with very generous donations toward this project.

This first year-class of fish will now be cared for by the Marquette State Fish Hatchery staff until they are ready to begin producing eggs. That normally occurs when the fish are 4 to 6 years old.

While the global coronavirus pandemic situation forced a one-year hiatus in development of the grayling brood stock, DNR staff are planning to go back to Alaska to retrieve two additional year-classes of grayling eggs in 2021 and 2022.

There are four watersheds currently being considered as candidates to receive the Arctic grayling in northern Lower Michigan. These include the Manistee River watershed, with a focus on the middle and upper portions, the Maple River watershed near Pellston, the Boardman River watershed near Traverse City and the Jordan River watershed near Charlevoix.

There were two criteria to be met for river systems to be considered as grayling reintroduction watershed candidates. First, they must have historically held self-sustaining Arctic grayling populations. Second, there must be clear community support for reintroduction, as evidenced by the stream being nominated by local governments, angling groups, et cetera.

There is much to do while waiting for the grayling brood stock to reach sexual maturity.

Decisions still need to be made on which watersheds will be targeted in this effort. Field staff and researchers from several of the partner groups will be closely evaluating habitat to determine which streams provide the best chances for successful reintroduction.

Habitat appropriate for all life stages must be present; the connectivity of the watershed must be adequate to allow the fish to reach those habitats at the appropriate times; temperature patterns must be right; large numbers of predator species such as brown trout must not be present. Understanding the conditions in the streams will maximize the likelihood of success for this exciting program.

This is not your average fish stocking endeavor.

Rather than stocking fingerlings or yearlings that were reared in hatcheries, this program calls for stocking eggs into remote site incubators that will be placed right in the streams where it's hoped the fish will thrive.

Soon after hatching, the fry will emerge from the incubators into the stream. From that point, it will be up to them to survive. The strategy is being modeled after successful efforts to bolster Arctic grayling populations in Montana.

The goal of Michigan's Arctic Grayling initiative is to restore self-sustaining populations of this iconic species to streams in Michigan where they historically existed before their elimination.

"This is more of a marathon than a sprint," Dexter said. "The absolute pinnacle of success of this program would be to someday have fishing opportunity in the streams where grayling was once king."

(From the Michigan DNR)

**Celebrating 40 years as a Building Tradesman advertiser!!**

RECYCLING METAL PRODUCTS FOR **CASH!** FULL-SERVICE SCRAP RECYCLING COMPANY

DEALER & PROCESSOR OF FERROUS & NON-FERROUS SCRAP METALS

**WE'VE TRIPLED OUR SIZE!!**

Easy Access Best prices

**1-734-728-8050**

WWW.HANDHMETALS.COM

MON-FRI: 8-5 SAT: 8-12

• Prompt Professional Service • Pickup & Roll Off Container Service • State Authorized Weigh Stations

29131 MICHIGAN AVE. (at Middlebelt Rd.) 5 Minutes North of I-94 & Middlebelt Road Exit INKSTER, MICHIGAN 48141

**COMMERCIAL • INDIVIDUAL • INDUSTRIAL**

# FIGHTING FOR MICHIGAN WORKERS.



## LET US FIGHT FOR YOU.

We believe the hardworking people of Michigan's Labor Unions are the backbone of our great State. So if you're the victim of an accident on the job — or even after you punch out — call Ven Johnson Law. From cases of Personal Injury and General Negligence, to Vehicle Accidents, Civil Rights, Medical Malpractice, and more, we've been fighting for justice on behalf of people just like you for over three decades.

# Ven

JOHNSON LAW, PLC

DETROIT • FLINT • GRAND RAPIDS • NATIONWIDE

1.855.VENFIGHTS / VENFIGHTS.COM

VEN JOHNSON  
ATTORNEY & FOUNDER



# CALL THE LAW OFFICES OF **SERLING & ABRAMSON P.C.** *MESOTHELIOMA • LUNG CANCER*

Our Michigan-based law firm filed the first asbestos case in Michigan in 1975 and has specialized in representing victims of asbestos disease for the past 40 years. Our attorneys have over 100 years of combined experience in asbestos disease cases.

“From the very first conversation, we knew that the Serling firm would be honest, hardworking and compassionate. We felt so comfortable and protected with the Serling firm.”

-Widow of Chrysler Engineer

**Experience • Results • Michigan Attorneys • Asbestos Product Experts**

**Insulators • Pipefitters • Bricklayers • Plumbers • Boilermakers  
Electricians • Iron Workers • Steel and Chemical Workers • Other Trades**

**THERE IS  
NO FEE UNLESS  
YOU RECOVER  
DAMAGES!**



**DANGER**

**ASBESTOS**  
CANCER AND LUNG  
DISEASE HAZARD  
AUTHORIZED  
PERSONNEL ONLY  
RESPIRATORS AND  
PROTECTIVE CLOTHING  
REQUIRED IN THIS AREA

Visit us online at  
[www.serlinglawpc.com](http://www.serlinglawpc.com)

CALL for a FREE consultation  
and we will review your claim

**(248) 647-6966**

**(800) 995-6991**



**\$1.8 Million** Goldberg, Persky and White Verdict Considered  
**Largest** in History of Michigan Asbestos Litigation.

# ASBESTOS

**FREE ASBESTOS CLAIM EVALUATION**

**GOLDBERG PERSKY WHITE P.C.**  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW  
SAGINAW SOUTHFIELD

**ASBESTOS CLAIMS**  
Evaluation Request Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Union : \_\_\_\_\_ Local No: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Employment: \_\_\_\_\_ thru \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been exposed to asbestos?  
 Yes       No

Have you been diagnosed with:  
 Mesothelioma     Asbestosis  
 Lung Cancer       Colon Cancer

Do you have shortness of breath?  
 Yes       No

Return this form to:  
Goldberg, Persky & White, PC  
P.O.Box 5769, Saginaw, Michigan 48603 or  
**Call 800-799-2234**

**ALL BUILDING TRADESMEN**

## Notice of Asbestos Health Hazards in Michigan

**Exposure to asbestos can cause deadly diseases such as mesothelioma, lung cancer, and asbestosis.**

Many Michigan building tradesmen worked with or near asbestos. Thousands have developed asbestos disease. Some are not aware they were even exposed.

For more than 30 years, GPW has represented thousands of Michigan union workers in lawsuits against the asbestos industry. We can arrange a free chest x-ray review by a NIOSH Certified B-Reader to all qualified building tradesmen with start dates prior to 1980.

Return the form or contact us today:

**800-799-2234**

[www.gpwlaw-mi.com](http://www.gpwlaw-mi.com)

**Please don't delay, protect yourself and your family before it's too late. No recovery-no fee**

We are considered the Very Best Mesothelioma Attorneys in Michigan for good reason- our results speak for themselves