

# THE BUILDING TRADESMAN

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## SHORT CUTS

### Michigan's newest fish: land salmon?

Atlantic salmon can make for a tasty entree. For many grocery stores, Michigan's current supplies of the fish are typically transported up I-75 from Florida, after they were farmed in Chile.

Now a Michigan-based, \$178 million "aquaculture" project is being proposed for Muskegon County, to take advantage of available acreage at the county's wastewater site and plenty of available capacity in the wastewater system.

Atlantis Fish Co. presented its plans before a May 23 meeting of the Michigan Strategic Fund Board, which gave initial approval. Construction could start in October.

The group is proposing to build a plant to raise 10,000 salmon per week on 90 acres of property. The company would pump groundwater to fill massive tanks of the fish, then release it to the wastewater system, where it would eventually recirculate back into the ground.

Muskegon County's plant is one of the largest land-applied wastewater treatment facilities in the nation. It would be the first application of the technology in North America.

### Blue Bird bus workers OK union

The Blue Bird Corp. is an iconic American company, a manufacturer of more than 550,000 buses sold since the firm's formation in 1927.

Based in rural Fort Valley, Ga., the company's Deep South location has not been an inviting locale for the formation of a union workforce.

That is, until May 12, when an organizing election led by the Steelworkers union was held and resulted in a 697-435 vote in favor of union representation.

The bargaining unit would cover 1,350 workers, the National Labor Relations Board reports. Total employment at the plant is 2,400. Blue Bird urged its workers to reject unionization – and a contract still must be hammered out.

"We work hard, and we deserve fair pay, safe working conditions and to be treated with respect on the job," said Patrick Watkins, a Blue Bird worker who served on the organizing committee, in a union-released statement. "It was clear that our only path forward was to take our future into our own hands – and that's what we did today when we voted to organize."

The union effort was even more unlikely because the plant is in the rural South, Peach County, as opposed to a city. If a first contract is reached, Blue Bird would become one of the largest unionized firms in that region. It's also the Peach County's largest employer.

Harvard's *OnLabor* blog pointed out that Blue Bird, via county school systems, receives federal funds to build electric school buses, which is what workers at the Fort Valley plant will manufacture. Those funds came with a key federal condition the Biden administration and Congress wrote into the applicable law: Company neutrality during union organizing drives.

Key issues in the 18-month organizing drive were better pay, better working conditions, and company refusal to fix problems inside the plant when workers brought them up to bosses, workers told WMAZ-TV of Macon. (From Press Associates)

### Quotable

"When someone does something good, applaud! You will make two people happy."  
Samuel Goldwyn (1879-1974)



A NEW EXTERIOR and wholesale interior changes at the Jacobetti Complex will greet Northern Michigan University students and staff when the building reopens for the fall the semester. Miron Construction is managing the project. Photo credits: Jack Deo

## 'Transformational renovation' continues at NMU's Jacobetti Complex

By Marty Mulcahy  
Editor

MARQUETTE – Northern Michigan University's Jacobetti Complex is being set up for a revised mission, and a new look, as renovation work at the building is being undertaken by construction manager Miron Construction, its subcontractors and building trades union workers.

A \$28.6 million project, started a year ago, will reduce the size of the 205,000-square-foot Jacobetti Complex by about 20 percent. NMU said it is undertaking a "planned transformational renovation" of the complex into a "Career

and Engineering Tech Facility." About 80 percent of the existing single-story building will be gutted and renovated.

Project planners "took a look at everything and decided we just didn't need all the square footage that was there," said Miron Project Manager Trevor Poupore. "So we removed about 42,000 square feet from the south side."

Expected to employ 20-30 tradepeople this summer, Poupore said the project includes the removal and complete renovation of the front of the building, as well as the overhaul of two mechanical penthouses, installation of new electrical and HVAC, and a nearly wholesale transformation of the

interior.

NMU said its plan for the space includes the modernization of existing classrooms, a new educational manufacturing design center and flexible laboratories for skilled trades learning and product/equipment testing and training.

"Northern's approach to this project will be similar to that used for Jamrich Hall," (a campus project completed in 2014), said Gavin Leach, NMU vice president for Finance and Administration. "We will be evaluating everything about the renovation to ensure it's the most efficient (Continued on Page 2)



SETTING DUCTWORK at the Jacobetti Complex at Northern Michigan University in Marquette are (l-r) Jesse Anderson and Dustin Lohfink. The Sheet Metal Workers Local 7 members are employed by Dresseler Mechanical Inc.

## 'Draft Day' in the U.P. opens doors for careers in construction

ESCANABA – Construction Connect UP wrapped up a new recruitment program on May 12, where "Draft Day" welcomed high school students into building trades apprenticeships and construction-related careers after they successfully completed a testing and training program.

Kaiden Brown of Escanaba High School will join IBEW Local 906. Tyler Smith and Parker LaFond, also of Escanaba, will join Carpenters Local 1510. Lexie Vross of Kingsford High School will work for the Billerud paper mill as an E&I Tech for a five-year commitment while earning her college degree, which will be funded by Billerud.

"The CCUP program is great. You get to work in the real world

instead of working on a simulator at the ISD, and you get paid doing it," Smith said. "It's a great way to get out and learn a new career."

The Upper Peninsula Construction Council collaborated with its signatory contractors & U.P. building trades unions, U.P. Michigan Works, Delta-Schoolcraft ISD, Dickinson-

(Continued on Page 3)

## Robust construction faces 'transitory' future

By Marty Mulcahy  
Editor

Nope, nothing to see here. "The construction sector continues to sweep its economic worries under the rug, even with inflation, unstable banking, and the potential breach of the U.S. debt ceiling," said Richard Branch, chief economist for Dodge Construction Network, on

May 18. "While the presence of, or lack thereof, large manufacturing projects each month has made the data more volatile, the underlying trends point to a very healthy sector. However, this is likely transitory."

Dodge's monthly analysis of the U.S. construction industry, released May 18, show that total construction starts fell 4 percent

in April to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$1.04 trillion. Nonresidential starts, down 22 percent, led the drop, while non-building starts rose 7 percent and residential construction finally started to show momentum, up 12 percent.

As Branch indicated, the longer-term trend has been more promising, with total U.S. construction 11 percent higher for the 12 months preceding April 2023, compared with the same period in April 2022.

Construction's employment picture is also solid, in Michigan and in most of the rest of the country, the Associated General Contractors reported May 19. While only 24 states added construction (Continued on Page 2)

## Dems move to reinstate public payroll deductions for political giving

By Marty Mulcahy  
Editor

LANSING – After the initial flurry of legislative activity this year doing away with the state's right-to-work law and then re-introducing prevailing wage, Democrats – who control both houses of the Michigan Legislature for the first time in four decades – have since been moving more slowly righting wrongs for the state's workers.

But they have been moving. The latest action came on May 16, with the movement of legislation that would repeal a particularly onerous law adopted in 2012 by ruling Republicans. The law disallowed units of government in Michigan from administering automatic payroll deduction plans for workers wishing to make contributions to political candidates or causes like political action committees.

House Bill 4230, which was adopted by the House Elections Committee and now moves to the full House for consideration, would eliminate that decade-old law, and House Bill 4234 would reset state law to allow such

payroll-deducted contributions for the public-sector workers, who are often union members.

"Beginning in 2012, the anti-worker legislature began to chip away at unions' abilities to guard and advocate for their members," said state Rep. Penelope Tsernoglou (D-East Lansing), a bill sponsor. "By taking away automatic payroll deductions, they succeeded in silencing many of these workers' voices for the past 11 years."

When the bill was adopted in 2012 to end the payroll-deducted political contributions, there were no local government payroll clerks clamoring to end the deductions because of additional workloads.

Once payroll deductions are placed into a payroll system, they're automated: set and forget. That consistency was no doubt the unstated reason why state Republican lawmakers instituted the law – to reduce workers' ability to voluntarily provide automated funding for their preferred candidates or causes.

What the GOP didn't do at the time was institute a similar (Continued on Page 3)



News from Lansing

## More needed to make highway work zones safer, new study says

More than half of the nation's highway construction contractors have experienced the incursion of a moving vehicle into one of their workplaces during the past year.

Granted, the workplaces are often along active highways – but it's still a fearsome acknowledgment that workers are being put into grave danger every day by motor vehicles zooming by inches from their workplace.

A survey released May 25 by the Associated General Contractors of America found that 55 percent of U.S. highway contractors report that motor vehicles had crashed into their construction work zones during the past year.

The survey results led to a highway work zone safety study conducted by the Associated General Contractors of America and HCSS, a software company serving the heavy civil construction industry. They called on state and local leaders to enact new enforcement and education measures to improve work zone safety.

"Elected and appointed officials are not doing enough to protect workers and motorists in highway work zones," said Ken Simonson, the AGC's chief economist and author of the annual survey. "Our transportation networks may be invaluable, but the lives of workers and motorists are priceless."

The work zone safety study was based on a nationwide survey of highway construction firms contacted by the association in April and May. More than 900 contractors completed the survey.

According to the survey results, motorists are in even greater danger from highway work zone crashes than construction workers, which is not unusual, (Continued on Page 10)

## IBEW will be at the wheel for new EV corridor

By Marty Mulcahy  
Editor

A new "electric vehicle corridor" was announced by state and federal officials on May 16, heralding the setting of a system of DC fast chargers along a route from Kalamazoo to Detroit to Windsor, Ontario and then to Quebec City, Quebec.

The corridor will feature DC fast chargers approximately every 50 miles, and the 859-mile international stretch joins the existing 75,000-plus miles of alternative fuel corridors in the nation. And federal policy aims to give the IBEW and their contractors first dibs on the work.

"The U.S. and Canada have long enjoyed a productive partnership on transportation issues and in that spirit we are proud to announce the first-ever U.S.-Canada EV Corridor," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. "With historic investments in EV infrastructure from the Biden-Harris Administration and the Canadian government, we are creating a new generation of good-paying manufacturing jobs, making it possible for drivers everywhere to reap the benefits and savings of these vehicles while helping us fight climate change."

The May 16 announcement came on the heels of a Biden visit to Canada, where he and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

committed to work together to harmonize EV charging standards and develop cross-border alternative fuel corridors between the U.S. and Canada.

"This first cross-border alternative fuel corridor will help drivers to travel across the border and charge or refuel worry-free," said Canadian Minister of Transport Omar Alghabra. "It contributes to bringing us another step closer to making our air cleaner while helping people save money on traditional fuels."

It's not clear how many chargers would be placed as part of the corridor, which mainly follows I-94 in Michigan and then Highway 401 into Ontario. The Michigan chargers, expected to be installed by IBEW union craftworkers, is expected to be funded by a portion of the \$110 million that's being (Continued on Page 3)

IBEW-NECA Training programs are gearing up to train members to install electric vehicle charging stations. Union contractors are "explicitly recommended" by the Biden Administration to do the work, the IBEW said.

Photo credit: IBEW



# Viewpoints



## Kids are back on the job

Corporations are bringing back child labor in America. And some Republicans want to make it easier for them to get away with it. Since 2015, child labor violations have risen nearly 300 percent. And those are just the violations government investigators have managed to uncover and document.

The Department of Labor says it's currently investigating over 600 cases of illegal child labor in America. Major American companies like General Mills, Walmart, and Ford have all been implicated. Why on Earth is this happening? The answer is frighteningly simple: greed.

Employers have been having difficulty finding the workers they need at the wages they are willing to pay. Rather than reduce their profits by paying adult workers more, employers are exploiting children. The sad fact of the matter is that many of the children who are being exploited are considered to be "them" rather than "us" because they're disproportionately poor and immigrant. So the moral shame of subjecting "our" children to inhumane working conditions when they ought to be in school is quietly avoided.

And since some of these children (or their parents) are undocumented, they dare not speak out or risk detention and deportation. They need the money. This makes them easily exploitable. It's a perfect storm that's resulting in vulnerable children taking on some of the most brutal jobs. Folks, we've seen this before. Reformers fought to establish the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 for a reason – to curb the grotesque child labor seen during America's first Gilded Age. The U.S. banned most child labor.

But now, pro-business trade groups and their Republican lackeys are trying to reverse nearly a century of progress, and they're using the so-called "labor shortage" as their excuse.

Arkansas will no longer require 14- and 15-year-olds to get a work permit before taking a job – a process that verified their age and required permission from a parent or guardian. A bill in Ohio would let children work later on school nights. Minnesota Republicans are pushing to let 16-year-olds work in construction. And 14-year-olds in Iowa may soon be allowed to take certain jobs in meatpacking plants and operate dangerous machinery.

It's all a coordinated campaign to erode national standards, making it even easier for companies to profit off children.

Across America, we're witnessing a resurgence of cruel capitalism in which business lobbyists and lawmakers justify their actions by arguing that they are not exploiting the weak and vulnerable, but rather providing jobs for those who need them and would otherwise go hungry or homeless.

Conveniently, these same business lobbyists and lawmakers are often among the first to claim we "can't afford" stronger safety nets that would provide these children with safe housing and adequate nutrition. So what can stop this madness?

First: Fund the Department of Labor so it can crack down on child labor violations. When I was Secretary of Labor, the department was chronically underfunded and understaffed. It still is, because lawmakers and their corporate backers want it that way.

Second: Increase fines on companies that break child labor laws. Current fines are too low, and are treated as costs of doing business by hugely profitable companies that violate the law.

Third: Hold major corporations accountable. Many big corporations contract with smaller companies that employ children, which allows the big corporations to play dumb and often avoid liability. It's time to demand that large corporations take responsibility for their supply chains.

Fourth: Reform immigration laws so undocumented children aren't exploited.

And lastly: Organize. Fight against state laws that are attempting to bring back child labor. Are corporate profits really more important than the safety of children?

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

# 'Transformational renovation' at NMU



**ELECTRICAL WORKER Will Choudhry** peers above a drop ceiling before installing a fixture at the Jacobetti Complex renovation project at NMU in Marquette. The IBEW Local 906 member is employed by S&T Electrical. *Photo credit: Jack Deo*

(Continued from Page 1) and effective use of space and to utilize the resources allocated for the project in the best way possible. That includes a review of existing programs and exploring opportunities for new programs that will enhance job creation, talent development and economic growth. This will be a major, positive change on campus. We're excited to begin updating the facility changing the learning environment and making it adaptive to changing technologies."

Located on the north campus, the Jacobetti Complex spans nearly five acres and has had more than 40 specialized laboratories and classrooms. Students learn skills in mechanical and electrical engineering, hospitality management, cosmetology, automotive repair, construction management, building technology, electronics, industrial technology and skilled trades such as HVAC, welding, industrial maintenance and computer numerical control. It also has a commons area and café.

The building is named for the late State Rep. Dominic Jacobetti, who holds the record for the longest term of office in the state Legislature (39 years).

The building was originally dedicated in May of 1981 as the

D.J. Jacobetti Vocational Skills Center. Renovation work is expected to wrap up in time for the fall semester.

"We have had a great project, we're on budget, we're on schedule," said Poupore. "The trades have been great partners, we have had some struggles, but there has been nothing that we haven't been able to work through."

## Robust construction industry faces 'transitory' future

(Continued from Page 1) employment from March 2023 to April 2023, a solid bloc of states. 42, added Hardhats to the payroll in April 2023 compared to April 2022.

"Contractors continue to report strong demand for projects and have added employees in all but a handful of states over the past year," said Ken Simonson, the Associated General Contractor's chief economist, on May 19. "The fact that employment dipped in April in half the states may reflect an inability to find qualified workers at a time of record-low construction unemployment, not a slowdown in demand."

Comparatively, Michigan continues to be a strong construction industry employer, adding 7,800 jobs from April 2022 to April 2023. That 4.3 percent increase in employment ranked Michigan No. 14 among the states. Michigan now employs 191,300 workers in construction, strongly outpacing the 177,800 workers we employed just prior to the onset of the Covid pandemic in February 2020.

Branch's aforementioned "likely transitory" outlook for construction is based on Dodge's Momentum Index for U.S. construction, which tracks projects in the earliest stages of planning. It's falling, Branch said, "which should lead to weaker starts in the second half of the year – especially for the private sector."

The Dodge Momentum Index dropped 8.6 percent in March and another 5.1 percent in April.

## Corporate food giants gorge... on us

By Jim Hightower

Oftentimes, when you suspect you're being gouged by corporate price fixers, you're right.

Take the rat-a-tat-tat of today's price jumps at supermarkets and chain restaurants. They make you want to race to the cash register before they raise prices again.

No, no cry the CEOs of food giants, it's not us, it's "supply chain disruptions." Then corporate politicians and economists chime in with old platitudes about the invisible hand of "supply and demand" while media know-nothings pile

on, blathering about "ne'er-dowells" causing a labor shortage.

But that's hogwash – your suspicions are right: It's plain old price fixing by avaricious food monopolies.

Top executives even brag about it when talking to their bankers and stockholders. McDonald's, for example, recently told investors that "strategic menu price increases" in the past three months had boosted profits by 63 percent.

Big Mac's CEO exulted: "I'm really proud of how our system has executed pricing." Never mind that it's their customers being executed.

Well, say free-market proselytizers," just buy from a competitor. But in nearly all segments of today's food economy, a handful of giants control the market

– with each one in on the fix.

For example, Chipotle, a McDonald's rival, also jacked up prices in the same three-month period, manufacturing an 84 percent profit increase. Its CEO then gloated to Wall Streeters: "I think we've demonstrated we do have pricing power."

By the way, these same giants are also fattening their profits by ripping off their workers.

The federal poverty level is now \$25,000 a year, with fast-food workers typically getting only \$3,000 a year more than that bare minimum for a 40-hour week. But profiteering executives hold each worker to about 26 hours a week, creating a sub-poverty labor force for this multi-billion-dollar industry.

Via *otherwords.org*



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## BUILDING MICHIGAN!

# Michigan was coal country, for a while HISTORY IN THE MAKING

By Marty Mulcahy

Nobody has thought much about it for the past half-century. And there isn't much to suggest that anyone will do anything with it for the next hundred years – or ever.

But Michigan is sitting atop a fairly significant supply of coal. You know, the chunky black stuff that a vanishing number of utilities burn as fuel to create energy. Due to the effect of carbon emissions on global warming and the rise of greener forms of energy production, the extraction of coal has been on a consistent downward trend in recent years.

Turns out, Michigan was one of the early states to thumb its nose at coal mining, but that early economic trend had nothing to do with improving air quality. It had everything to do with another form of green energy: money. Last century it eventually became impossible to make a profit mining coal in Michigan, and it would make even less economic sense today.

The "Michigan Coal Basin," says *Mining Artifacts*, covers an area of about 11,000 square miles almost in the center of the Lower Peninsula. It is the only coal field in the vast St. Lawrence drainage basin, a 246,000-square-mile area that encompasses all of Michigan, eastern Wisconsin, northern Ohio, and a vast swath of Quebec and Ontario around the Great Lakes."

The first use of coal in Michigan would have been as an alternative for burning wood on a local level. The rise of steam power and the use of coal as fuel during the Industrial Revolution were yet to come.

"Coal was first discovered in Michigan around 1835," the *Mining Artifacts* paper said, "as pioneers built a grist mill west of Jackson. In 1837, Michigan's first geologist, Douglass Houghton, who investigated the coal deposits, reported: 'In the bed and bank of the (Grand) River...at Jacksonburgh, the sandstone is seen to embrace a bed of bituminous shale...intermixed with very thin layers of coal.'"

The article added: "Much of the coal existed in outcrops, which made excavation easy. In 1840 settlers extracted 1,500 bushels of coal for local use. But because there were few steam powered engines or large institutions to provide the markets essential for the commercial development of coal mining, it would be almost 20 years before their needs spurred the commercial mining of coal."

When coal prospectors started fanning out, they found that the size of Michigan's coal seams varied, with the thickest about three feet wide. The black stuff was found near the surface in Ingham and Jackson counties. In Midland County coal can be found at a depth of 800 feet.

In the 1870s and 1880s, the Jackson area was the leader of coal production in Michigan. In 1870 the *Jackson Weekly Citizen* boasted of "inexhaustible beds of bituminous coal, capable of furnishing fuel for the fires of central Michigan for an unlimited number of years."

The Michigan coal miner's job was as difficult as you'd imagine. According to Michigan State University's *Project Geo*: "Once the men were underground they lit lard lamps. Beneath their feet pools of water covered the floor. The air was rank, despite ventilation shafts. The galleries created as the coal was mined were reinforced with timbers. In the galleries the miner walked – stooped over. Reaching the seam where the last mining had occurred, he chipped away at the base of the seam and then drove a wedge between it and the limestone ceiling to break out the coal.

"He loaded the coal into an iron car pulled through the galleries by the underground mules. Many times miners chipped away at the coal seam while laying on their bellies – in wet mud that made up the floors of the mines.

"The iron cars were hooked to an 'endless chain' that was powered by the steam engine. Full cars, attached at any point on the chain, were emptied into



**MINERS AT MICHIGAN'S** Coal Mine No. 8 in St. Charles, a village about 12 miles southwest of Saginaw, year unknown. According to the historical marker at the site: "Coal was discovered in the St. Charles area in 1896. On this site in 1917 the Robert Gage Coal Co. sunk a shaft two hundred feet beneath the surface. The main entry off the shaft was about three miles long. At times, the mine employed as many as 400 men, who worked in pairs. In 1919 a miner earned 60-70 cents per ton. After undercutting and blasting coal from seams 22-24 inches thick, miners shoveled it into cars that were pulled by mules and electric motors to the cage, where it was lifted up the shaft to the tippie. It was then sorted, weighed and loaded into railroad cars. The highest grade of bituminous coal in Michigan was mined here until 1931, when the shift to other fuels and competition from higher grade coal in other states made it necessary to close."

Photo credit: Harley Outdoor Education Center



**THE PERE MARQUETTE** coal works near Saginaw, year unknown. The site produced coal as fuel for the Pere Marquette Railroad's steam locomotives. Pere Marquette had coal mines southwest of Saginaw, in Fordney as well as near Bay City.

Photo credit: Mining Artifacts

chutes that fed into railroad cars or wagons. Often railroad companies built tracks up to a mine so that cars could be loaded directly. Wagons hauled coal into town, but most of it was shipped by railroad."

The average miner harvested 2.5 tons of coal a day.

Later the coal deposits to the north were exploited.

"The largest deposits found were in the Saginaw Valley," said *Project Geo*. Most mining activity was in Bay, Saginaw, Tuscola, and Genesee counties. "The height of production was 2 million tons in 1907, but most mining operations had stopped by 1920 except for some small-scale, open pit mining near Williamston, which ended in 1952."

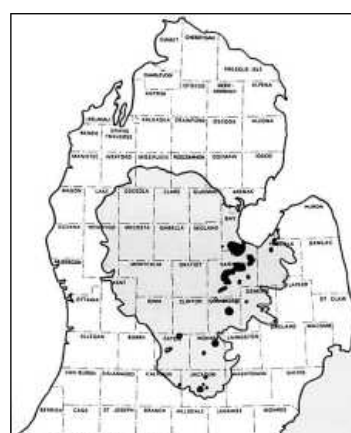
At one time more than 160 coal mines were active in the Michigan Coal Basin. Michigan's coal mining's major production period spanned from 1860 to 1949 and produced more than 46 million tons of coal. The great majority of the coal extraction was through underground shaft mines, with some small open pit operations.

A 1900 State of Michigan publication, *Mines and Mineral Statistics*, reported that for the year 1900 "coal production of the state will closely crowd one million tons. No other state in the Union approached Michigan in the percentage of increase of coal production for 1899 over 1898," when production nearly doubled in that single year.

The publication continued: "The geographical location of the Michigan coal fields is excellent. The country is thickly settled, with flourishing agricultural, trade and manufacturing interests, which afford good home markets. The mines of the Saginaw Valley are located exceptionally well, having water transportation almost at their shafts, with unlimited markets to the north and west.

"The Michigan coal field is the only one which actually touches the chain of Great Lakes at any point. The coal measures in Michigan rarely outcrop on surface, which has been one reason for their late development.

"Another cause for their tardy start is found in that the energies of the residents of the Saginaw Valley were so fully



Michigan's coal basin is shaded. Dark spots are where major mining operations took place. The Upper Peninsula has had varied minerals mined, but coal is not one of them.

Source: U.S. Geological Survey

taken up with the pine log in years past that little attention was paid to anything else, except salt, which afforded a profitable means of using some of the great amount of fuel made by the waste from the sawmills."

All of Michigan's coal is bituminous, a mid-grade of coal between lignite and anthracite.

According to *Project Geo*, a variety of factors led to the abandonment of coal mining in Michigan. The major problems were the relative low quality of the coal, including a weak structure that makes the coal break down into powder when transported, thin and limited-length coal seams, and large amounts of "overburden" – non-coal materials mixed in that handicapped the use of open pit mining methods.

There was cheaper, better, more accessible coal in areas like West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Kentucky and later Wyoming, and that's where the market went.

The *Mining Artifacts* article added: "Today, over 300 million tons of coal remain beneath the Lower Peninsula. An open-pit mine operated briefly in Ingham County in the mid-1970s, and in the early 1980s mining operations leased thousands of acres of former coal mines in anticipation of strip mining coal left behind by earlier operations.

"But the drop in coal prices halted production before it began, and thus, current production of coal in Michigan is essentially nil."

# Dems move to reinstate public worker payroll deductions

(Continued from Page 1)

law outlawing corporations from setting up automatic payroll deductions for their employees. Under the Michigan Campaign Finance Act, there has been no rule to prohibit private employers from allowing such wage deductions, including making contributions to political candidates, when an employee consents.

But government employees, usually union members, are treated differently.

State Rep. Jimmie Wilson (D-Ypsilanti), a co-sponsor of one of the bills, said his legislation would end the "unfair distinction" between public and private sector employees by removing the restriction on public employees and allowing payroll deduction plans to be set up for

political contributions.

When Republican led-legislation prohibited local school districts from participating in such payroll deduction plans in 2011, one of the GOP sponsors of the bill said "I believe it's the right thing to do. These are taxpayer funds and they have to be used in the best way possible."

That comment came at the same time a nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency's analysis of the bill said removing such public payroll deductions – which had been in place for decades – "would have no significant fiscal impact on school districts." On May 17, the same agency reiterated that passage of the legislation would "have no direct fiscal impact on the state or local units of government."

Tsernglou said: "Allowing workers to affirmatively opt in for payroll deductions to the organizations who represent their interests simply levels the playing field when corporations can use the same system of deductions to solicit donations to their corporate PACs."

This legislation comes a couple of weeks after other pro-worker legislation was introduced to help reduce "1099 cheats" – an effort in the Democrat-led House to make it more difficult for unscrupulous employers to misclassify workers as 1099 independent contractors, thereby denying them jobless benefits, access to workers compensation and retirement benefits. Such a scenario often gives a bidding advantage to low-paying nonunion contractors.

Organized labor in Michigan is pushing for passage of the above legislation, as well as moving the maximum weeks for jobless benefits back to 26, from the 20 weeks imposed by Republican lawmakers.



**PARTICIPATING IN THE DRAFT DAY** program were (l-r) Kevin Hogan IBEW 906 JATC Instructor; DJ Dean IBEW 906 Organizer; Kaiden Brown, IBEW Local 906 apprentice (via the draft), and Curtis Servant, Master Electric.

## 'Draft Day' in the U.P. opens doors for construction careers

(Continued from Page 1)

Iron ISD and Marquette-Alger Regional Education Services Agency to develop a program that is skill-based, labor- and industry-approved and directly linked to real workplace situations.

Students in the program spend half the day in school, and the other half working, learning – and earning \$13 an hour – on job sites.

About 65 people attended Draft Day, representing the building trades unions, signatory contractors, UP Michigan Works, and school districts. The event began with networking, followed by a program that featured Michigan Building Trades President Steve Claywell and Sean Egan, deputy director of the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity. State Sen. Ed McBroom (R-Vulcan). State Rep. Dave Prestin (R-Cedar River) were also present.

"We couldn't be more thrilled with how everyone came together to make this program a success for the students," said UPCC Executive Director Mike Smith. "They received an outstanding academic education while learning the skills to compete in the construction industry."

Construction Connect operated as a pilot program for the second semester of this school year. A full program will follow for the 2023-24 school year.

Applicants for next year will receive resume writing and interview training in June from UP Michigan Works, and financial literacy training from Peninsula Federal Credit Union. Interviews will take place in July.

The application period has closed, but it could reopen again in July if all 12 places aren't filled. To qualify, students must be a high school senior at least 17 years of age; be enrolled in a certified CTE Program; live within a 15 minute drive of Marquette, Escanaba, Sault Ste. Marie, Houghton, or Iron Mountain; and have a driver's license or in process and reliable transportation.

## Just joking

One day, a husband and wife went to see a marriage counselor for the first time and were ushered into the counselor's office.

As soon as the couple had taken their seats, the wife started complaining about her husband.



"He never cleans up, he never cooks for the family, and he doesn't say he loves me enough," she said.

The wife kept complaining about her husband. "He doesn't spend time with the kids. He doesn't initiate intimacy. He doesn't fix things around the house!"

The marriage counselor listened attentively and thought it best to let the woman take out her frustration and anger. After listening for some time, the counselor stood up from his seat and asked her to stop talking and said, "please walk over to me."

So the woman complied and walked over to where the counselor was standing. The counselor suddenly grabbed her tightly by the waist and leaned in to give her a long, passionate kiss. He ended the embrace and turned to the husband and said:

"See? That's not so difficult. Give her some attention! She needs that three times a week to make her happy!"

Replied the husband. "You got it, doc! I can drop her off Mondays and Wednesdays, but Fridays I go fishing!"

# IBEW at the wheel for new EV corridor

(Continued from Page 1)

received through the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program and the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law passed in 2021. IBEW member Bill Baisden was asked to join the group that made the announcement on the Detroit riverfront.

"Cars have always been king here in the Motor City – and they still are," said Baisden, IBEW Local 58 member and the founder and owner of Dynamic Electrical Group. "In the past two years we have seen rapid growth in the residential EV charging market to meet the demand for electric vehicles, spurred by the passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act, and I'm proud to say IBEW members are on the front lines of this transition."

A number of IBEW local unions are gearing up their training programs to deliver a sufficient number of trained workers to install the chargers.

"New federal guidance for the creation of a national network of electric-powered vehicle charging stations explicitly recommended that agencies consider the IBEW-NECA Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program as they look to spend billions in funds allocated by President Biden's infrastructure bill, which passed last November," the IBEW says.

"History never looks like history when you are living through it."

–John W. Gardner (1912 - 2002)

"Be a craftsman in speech that thou mayest be strong, for the strength of one is the tongue, and speech is mightier than all fighting."

–Maxims of Ptahhotep, 3400 B.C.

"I tasted too what was called the sweet of revenge – but it was transient, it expired even with the object, that provoked it."

–Ann Radcliffe (1764 - 1823)

## The Building Tradesman

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Secretary-Treasurer

Steve Claywell  
President

Visit our website: [www.michiganbuildingtrades.com](http://www.michiganbuildingtrades.com)

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IBEW 58
DETROIT - The next General Membership Meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 20, 2023.

Disbursement from the Vacation Fund is anticipated to be transferred to your PNC Bank Stored Value Card or if you elected, direct deposited into your checking or savings accounts...

ATTENTION - You may check your Stored Value utilization history by logging on to www.pncpaycard.com and by entering your 16-digit card number...

The RENEW Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, June 27 at 5:00 PM. The Safety Committee meeting will be on Monday, June 12 at 5:30 PM.

IBEW Local 58 Brick Pavers - are available for purchase. Please contact the Union Hall for an Order Form. 7x9 brick pavers can have up to 6 lines of lettering and 17 spaces per line.

Local 58 Dues Department - Stay current on your dues! Look at your Dues Receipt - if your paid through date shows 03-23 or earlier, you are not current and will have a reinstatement fee (4 months or more behind).

Local No. 58 Benevolent Fund: Next meeting is Tuesday June 6. We are proud to announce we are officially a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

Members of the Community Service Committee: The next meeting will be Tuesday, June 13 at 5:30 pm. The Wobbly Kitchen (Sundays in the Park) will be the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month...

Contact the Union Hall (313) 963-2130 or Ray Kujawski (number above) for further information to volunteer or participate.

Members of the Entertainment Committee: The next meeting will be Tuesday, June 13 following the Community Service Committee meeting that starts at 5:30 p.m.

EWMC of Southeastern MI - The next chapter meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 19 at 6pm. This will be an in-person meeting with a ZOOM option.

The Veterans Committee will now be meeting monthly immediately after the Safety committee meeting on the 2nd Monday of each month.

The Political Action Committee (PAC) - If you have any questions or concerns or would like to attend our next PAC meeting you can reach out to our registrars at registrar@ibewlocal58.org.

Local 58's Women's Committee - Our Sister Exchange Closet is looking for donations. If you have any new or gently used work clothing, cold weather gear, boots, coats, or even tools, please consider making the contribution.

Local 58 Motorcycle Group: Meetings have moved to Sundays at different restaurants before a ride. Open to everyone and all riders are encouraged to join us!

IBEW LOCAL 58 Retirees Association: Our June Board meeting is Wednesday, June 14, 2023 in the Bill Rushford Room in the lower level of the union hall.

The June Luncheon takes place on June 28 at the Gazebo Banquet Center, 31104 Mound Road, Warren, doors open at 11 and lunch will be served at noon.

Local 58 Retirees' Association Fall Bus trip. The Retirees bus trip to Charleston, S.C. has seats available. It is also open to friends and family.

WIREMEN'S Golf Association (WGA) Members: This year the Association Tournament (Continued next column)

will be hosted by Local 86, Rochester, NY on Aug. 15-18 with the optional scramble being held on Aug. 15.

Local 58 Senior 55+ Softball Team is getting underway. Games will be played at two locations. FF = Shelby twp., Ford field on 23-mile road just west of Van Dyke.

Local 58 Senior Golf Outings 2023: are as follows: Thursday, June 15, 2023, Maple Lane Golf Club, 33203 Maple Ln Dr, Sterling Heights, MI 48312.

Electrical Workers Credit Union - Our website is http://WWW.EWCU.NET (313) 963-6060. In the market for a loan? Check out our low rates!!

BE SURE TO KEEP BENEFCIARY FORM UPDATED: A friendly reminder that beneficiary forms are available at the fund office AND at the hall for anyone that may need to update beneficiary information.

IBEW Pension: Congratulations to the following members who have been placed on International Pension: James Banks, Jeffrey M. Hall, Randall Worosz, Donald Yochim, and David Zamesnik.

"The advantage of a bad memory is that one enjoys several times the same good things for the first time." -Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 - 1900)



IBEW Local 252 ANN ARBOR - 2023 Official Ballot of Local 252: President: elect 1 (one); Mike Cox.

Recording Secretary: elect 1 (one); M. Lisa Grove. Treasurer: elect 1 (one); Stacie Butler.

Executive Board: elect 6 (six); Dan Beck, Jeff Burdick, Jake Church, Traverse Cogan, Johnnie Hall Jr., Jacob Isaac, Geoff Morning, Rick Plisko, Travis Stachlewitz, Rob Steele.

The election of officers shall take place at a special-called meeting between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, June 17, 2023 at the Union Hall, at 7920 Jackson Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48103.

A complete listing of the results shall be posted on all union bulletin boards by the close of business on the day following the election. In the event a runoff election is required, same shall be held a special-called meeting on Saturday, July 8, 2023 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Union Hall, at 7920 Jackson Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48103.

Members who requested an absentee ballot for the regular election will automatically receive the same for the runoff. Absentee ballots shall be available to any member upon written request to the election judge.

ERTS: Please make sure that you are signed up in the Electronic Reciprocity Transfer System. You must be signed up in ERTS before working outside of Local 252's jurisdiction or your benefits will not be transferred back.

Aflac Insurance: Aflac has teamed up with the IBEW to offer its members Aflac benefits at a reduced rate. Contact Representative Lisa Enerson for information about Accident, Cancer, Critical Care, Dental and Vision insurance from Aflac.

RETIREMENT: NEBF and applications take 3 months to process but can be filled out as early as 6 months before your planned retirement effective date.

SOLAR: The Biden Administration's investment in infrastructure and renewable energy generation is going to result in massive amounts of labor hours for all of the building trades. Please take advantage of the continuing education courses offered at our training center to help secure this work and show our commitment to this scope.



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IBEW Local 445 BATTLE CREEK - Local 445 Officer Elections 2023. The Officer election will be held on Monday, June 12, 2023, from 6am to 4:45pm.

Condolences: it is with a heavy heart Local 445 informs you of the passing of retired member Ken Eyre on March 17, 2023.

IBEW Local 445 Night at the Ballpark is scheduled for June 17 and July 14, 2023. Mark your calendars. More info to follow.

IBEW Local 445 Annual Golf Outing is scheduled for July 15, 2023, with a shotgun start at 8am. Mark your calendars.

IBEW Local 445 Annual Picnic is scheduled for September 9, 2023. Mark your calendars. More info to follow.

General Membership Meeting is the second Monday of each month and starts at 5:00 p.m. at the Hall.

Personnel information Please keep your address, phone number and email address up to date at the Hall. Also, contact the Hall with marriages, births and divorces.

Executive Board E-Board meets the fourth Monday of each month starting at 4:30 p.m. Retiree Breakfast: The Retiree monthly breakfast at 9am at Lux Cafe at 2587 Capital Ave SW.

Local Website - Please check the Local 445 website for the latest information, including job postings. The Local 445 web address is IBEW445.com.

IBEW 252, con't cards, birth certificates, marriage certificate, divorce decrees, etc. for you and your spouse with your applications.

NOTICE TO RETIREES: If your 50-year commemorative watch stops working for any reason please contact the hall.

Condolences: The Local sends our sincere condolences to the family of Dennis "Denny" Arntz, who passed away on May 18, 2023.

CREDIT CARDS: The Local is now accepting credit cards to pay union dues. We accept Visa, Master Card, American Express and Discover.

UNION DUES FOR 2023: Effective Jan. 1, 2023, union dues for "A" members will increase to \$131.25 per quarter.

DUES PAYMENTS - Please look at your dues receipt. If your dues paid through date shows 3/2023, your dues are not current. "A" members pay \$131.25 per quarter for 2023.

The Union Hall will be closed July 3-4, 2023 in observance of Independence Day.

"It is never too late to give up our prejudices." -Henry David Thoreau (1817 - 1862)

CASH FOR \$CRAP METAL Aluminum - Copper - Brass Nickel - Alloys - Carbide Radiators - Lead - Batteries McNichols Scrap Iron & Metal Co. Iron & Metal Co.















## Outdoors



### Wildlife babies (usually) don't need us

(From the Michigan DNR) Springtime in Michigan marks the arrival of babies! It's an exciting time of new beginnings, particularly for wildlife. As baby birds, rabbits and deer start to make their grand entrance, it's important to be respectful and mindful of their space.

All wild mothers have strategies for how to best raise and protect their babies. If you come across young wildlife, do your part by simply leaving them alone. They may look abandoned, but mom is just away avoiding scary predators (like you!), until it's time to feed them again.

**An egg-citing surprise.** Bird nests are found in all kinds of places, so don't be surprised to find one in a flowerpot, downspout or elsewhere in your backyard. Mallard ducks often build nests in unexpected places near people in cities and suburban neighborhoods. The mother duck will lead her ducklings to water soon after they hatch. If you spot a nest, be a good neighbor: Leave it alone and keep pets and children away.

Remember, too, that bird nests and eggs are protected under federal law. It is illegal to touch, move or possess any part of the nest or eggs without the proper permit.

**Watch your step.** A mother deer's best survival strategy for her fawn is to leave it unattended for several hours a day. She might leave the fawn near your home, or you may stumble upon it in your backyard, garden or patio.

These babies are not forgotten; the mother carefully selects a location and will return periodically to feed her baby. By staying away, she avoids drawing attention to its hiding place.

Young fawns have exceptional camouflage, almost no scent and remain still, making it difficult for predators to spot them. If you find a fawn – don't touch it. Admire it quietly from a distance to increase its chance of survival.



**WILDLIFE MOMS** know what's best for their babies, and humans can do our part by leaving their babies alone. *MDNR photos*

Only licensed wildlife rehabilitators may possess abandoned or injured wildlife. Unless someone is licensed, it is illegal to possess a live wild animal, including deer, in Michigan.

Find more tips about springtime wildlife at [Michigan.gov/Wildlife](http://Michigan.gov/Wildlife) or contact the DNR Wildlife Division at 517-284-9453.

**The great escape: Helping out urban mallards.**

In the next few weeks, mallard ducklings across Michigan will be hatching and following their mothers to marshes, ponds and streams to be raised into big, strong ducks. For most mallard families, this process goes off without a hitch. But every year, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources gets calls asking for help to relocate broods of ducklings from buildings and roofs to nearby wetlands.

According to Karen Cleveland, a DNR game biologist,

**MOTHER DUCKS** can choose interesting urban places to raise a family.

it's illegal to capture ducks and transport them to a new location, but when a bird is trapped in – or on – a building, it is legal to help move them outside so they can leave on their own. Fortunately, this is usually easy to do when a duck nests in an enclosed courtyard or on a flat roof, because mallard hens won't easily abandon their ducklings, and ducklings will follow their mothers closely.

"Your first choice, if at all possible, should be to avoid trying to catch the ducks," Cleveland said. "Mallard families can be gently herded by one or two people following them and can be

led into buildings, down hallways and outside. This often takes only a couple of minutes, and then they'll be on their way."

When the nest is on a roof or other place that can't safely be walked out of, collect the ducklings into a box or bag, take it outside and place it on the ground as close to the nest location as possible. Wait 40 to 50 feet away until you see the hen return to investigate the container the ducklings are in.

"Quietly approach and tip it over so the ducklings can get out, and then back off so the hen can come back and collect her brood."



A BAND OF PAINTER'S TAPE around a tree trunk is used to trap some later instar spongy moth caterpillars, showing their distinctive red and blue dot pattern.

*Photo courtesy of Karla Salp, Washington State Department of Agriculture.*

### Spongy moth caterpillars rear their ugly heads this spring

(From the Michigan DNR)

**The 2023 spongy moth forecast.**

Despite springtime cold weather, spongy moth caterpillars already may be hatching in the Lower Peninsula, according to Michigan State University's Enviroweather prediction model.

The good news is that areas hardest hit by the nuisance caterpillars in the last few years should see a significant population decrease this year. According to James Wieferich, forest health unit manager with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the outbreak cycle for most of the state peaked in 2021 and will continue to decline overall.

"Aerial and forest surveys mapped over 1.35 million acres of defoliated trees in 2021, compared to 386,000 acres in 2022," said Wieferich. "This substantial population collapse is a result of the naturally occurring nuclear polyhedrosis virus, or NPV, and the Entomophaga fungus that affect spongy moth caterpillars."

Areas that escaped the recent outbreak may see new defoliation, and localized areas where infestations began in 2021 or 2022 may see outbreaks peak this year.

"While spongy moth defoliation will never cease to exist, viral and fungal agents already in the environment are working to control this naturalized pest," said Wieferich.

Following an outbreak, spongy moth populations usually remain at low levels for five to 10 years and sometimes longer, until environmental conditions trigger a new outbreak, initiating a new cycle.

If spongy moth populations are high in your area this season, there are steps you can take. Focus management in areas where caterpillars, their feeding or their frass (droppings) will create the most problems.

•Before hatch, inspect decks, outdoor furniture, fences and trees, focusing on your favorite outdoor use areas. Scrape any accessible egg masses into a bucket of soapy water or burn or bury them.

•After hatch, use a whisk broom to sweep young caterpillars into a bucket of soapy water. Let them soak overnight, then dispose.

•Make a tree trunk trap: Cut a band of burlap 18 inches wide and long enough to go around the tree trunk and overlap a bit. Tie a string around the center of the band to make a two-layered skirt around the trunk. When caterpillars climb trees daily to feed, they will get caught in the band. Scrape them into a bucket of soapy water to kill them.

If you choose to use a pesticide, use Btk (*Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki*), which is highly effective on spongy moth but has little impact on beneficial insects. Always follow label instructions to ensure safe pesticide application.

If you're in an infested area, accept it's impossible to get rid of all spongy moth caterpillars. Consider cost, safety and environmental health in your management choices.

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

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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

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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.

**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

Return the form or contact us today:

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