

For Immediate Release: Mining History Month Observed Locally

Mining History Month Schedule of Events, January 2017

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A regional observance of Mining History Month will take place between January 7-29, 2017, at programs in Wilkes-Barre, Scranton, Pittston, Plymouth, Dallas, Peckville, and Ashley. The annual event focuses on the anthracite industry in Northeastern Pennsylvania, including the mineworkers, their families, and communities.

The programs are sponsored by the Anthracite Heritage Museum, the Anthracite Heritage Foundation, King's College, Wilkes University, Misericordia University, the Boy Scouts of America-Northeastern Council, the Greater Pittston Historical Society, the Huber Breaker Preservation Society, the Genealogical Research Society of Northeastern Pennsylvania, the Wyoming Seminary Lower School, the Anthracite Café, the Anthracite Living History Group, and the Knox Mine Disaster Memorial Committee.

The public is cordially invited to attend all events (except the first & last) free of charge.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR MINING HISTORY MONTH—January 2017

- Sat., Jan. 7, 9 am-1 pm **Boy Scouts of America:** "Mining in Society" Merit Badge Day. Open to Boy Scouts of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Council; (Fourth Floor, Mulligan Science Building, King's College)
- Sun., Jan 8, 7 pm **Plymouth Historical Society-Public Program:** Presenter: Maxim Furek, "*The Sheppiton Mine Disaster, August 1963*"; Moderator: Steve Kondrad; (Plymouth Borough Municipal Building, 162 West Shawnee Ave.), refreshments
- Thurs., Jan 12, 7 pm **Wyoming Seminary Lower School-Public Program:** Presenters: Clark Switzer and Thomas Supey Jr., "*Scratching the Surface: A Chapter in the Anthracite Mining History of Northeastern Pennsylvania*"; (Cosgrove Room, Pittston Memorial Library, 47 Broad St., Pittston), refreshments
- Tues., Jan. 17, 7 pm **Huber Breaker Preservation Society-Public Program:** Presenters: Documentary filmmakers John Welsh and Alana Mauer of Philadelphia, "*Anthracite Region Mine Fires: Exploring One of the Hidden Costs of Mining*"; Discussants: Chris Murley and Banks Ries, *The Underground Miners*; Moderator: Bill Best; (Earth Conservancy Building, 101 S. Main Street, Ashley); refreshments
- Thurs., Jan. 19, 7 pm **King's College-Public Program, The Annual Msgr. John J. Curran Presentation:** "*For the Least of Them*," A one-act play about the life and times of Msgr. Curran, known as "the labor priest" because of his three-decades of work with the anthracite miners, written by Ken Gordon and acted by Billie Herbert; Introduction by Robert Wolensky, King's College;

(Burke Auditorium, McGowan Business School, 133 No. River Street, Wilkes-Barre), refreshments at 6:30 pm

- Fri., Jan 20, 7 pm **Wilkes University-Public Program:** Presenter: Christine Patterson, Atlanta, Georgia, "*African American Coal Miners in Northeastern Pennsylvania: A Personal Perspective*;" Discussant: John Hepp, Dept. of History, Wilkes U.; Moderator: Robert Wolensky, Dept. of History, King's College; (101 Stark Hall, Wilkes U.)
- Sat., Jan. 21, 2 pm **Anthracite Heritage Museum-Public Program:** "*The Knox Mine Disaster Commemoration*;" Special tribute for William A. Hastie, the last living Knox Coal Company employee; Bill Hastie video by documentary filmmaker David Brocca of Los Angeles, CA; Erika Funke and Frank Tartella will read Knox disaster-related poetry; anthracite music by Jay Smar; (at the Museum, 22 Bald Mt. Road, Scranton); refreshments
- Sun., Jan. 22, 10 am **St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church, Pittston:** Annual Knox Mine Disaster Memorial Service, 10 am, (35 Williams St., Pittston)
- Sun., Jan. 22, 11:30 am **Public Commemoration of the Knox Mine Disaster:** (PHMC Historical Marker on Main Street, Pittston, in front of Baloga Funeral Home)
- Sun., Jan. 22, 12 noon **Walk to Knox Mine Disaster Site,** weather permitting; (gather at Baloga Funeral Home following the Commemoration)
- Wed., Jan. 25, 7 pm **Misericordia University-Public Program:** "*Oral History Projects in Northeastern Pennsylvania: The Importance of Stories*;" Presenters: Lucia Dailey, Ron Faraday, Melissa Meade, Noreen O'Connor, F. Charles Petrillo, and Mary Policare; Moderator: Jennifer Black, Dept. of History & Government, Misericordia U.; (McGowan Room of the Bevevino Library), refreshments
- Thurs., Jan. 26, 7 pm **Genealogical Research Society of Northeastern Pennsylvania & SIAMO Italian American Heritage Society-Public Program:** Presenter: "Robert Wolensky, King's College, "*Italian American Mineworkers in the Northern Anthracite Field, 1896-1936*;" Moderators: Stephanie Longo and Maureen Gray; (at the Society's headquarters, 1100 Main Street, Peckville, PA), refreshments
- Sat., Jan. 28, 7 pm **Greater Pittston Historical Society-Public Program:** "*Pittston-area Mining Disasters: A Panel Discussion*;" Presenters: Ron Faraday, *Eagle Shaft (1871)*; Robert Wolensky, *Knight Shaft (1871)*; Richard Fitzsimmons, *Twin Shaft (1896)*; and Bryan Glahn, *Knox (1959)*; Moderator: Ed Philbin; (St. John the Evangelist Church basement, 35 Williams St., Pittston), refreshments
- Sun., Jan 29, 5 pm **The Anthracite Café Miner's Dinner:** Special Benefit Dinner on behalf of "*The Knox Mine Disaster*" documentary directed by David Brocca of Los Angeles, CA; Chef/owner Mike Prushinski will serve an authentic Coal Miner's Dinner; excerpts from the Knox documentary will be shown; tickets for the evening are \$22 are available at <https://knoxmine.eventbrite.com> or at the Café

THE UNION NEWS

JANUARY 2017 THE NEWSPAPER SERVING THE WORKING PEOPLE OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA



Wilkes-Barre Labor Council again involved with helping Wyoming Valley community

BY PAUL TUCKER

THEUNIONNEWSWB@AOL.COM

REGION, January 9th- The Greater Wilkes-Barre Labor Council (GWBLC) this past holiday season continued their annual event of stuffing Christmas stockings that were distributed to six Wyoming Valley social services agencies. The GWBLC has gathered for many years around the holiday season to stuff, often donated candy and other items from area employers, into Christmas stockings that are later donated to area agencies that distribute them to needy children throughout the Wyoming Valley.

The Union volunteers and family members met at the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) Union Local 401 building on South Washington Street in Wilkes-Barre to fill approximately 500 stockings.

The project is one that has survived the current boycott of the United Way of the Wyoming Valley by the labor federation. The GWBLC is affiliated with the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) in Washington, DC, the nation's largest labor federation. There are forty-seven area labor organization's affiliated with the GWBLC, which meets the fourth Thursday of the month at the United Steelworkers Union (USW) building on Union Street in Wilkes-Barre.

Joe Padavan, President of the GWBLC, stressed the importance of continued labor federation's involvement with community services despite the boycott of the United Way of the Wyoming Valley.

The affiliated delegates of the GWBLC voted to not participate with the agency because of the sudden termination of Sandra Moosic, the labor supported Community Services Labor Liaison of the United Way of the Wyoming Valley in November 2015. Ms. Moosic was fired after meeting with Bill Jones, President and Chief Executive Officer of the agency. Several labor representatives met with officials of the community based organization regarding Ms. Moosic's firing and left believing she was left-go because Mr. Jones did not personally like her and he could terminate her so he did.

The GWBLC is continuing to support the Wyoming Valley community by coming together and getting involved with projects that help children and other groups of need, which includes their annual Christmas stocking event and project.

The stocking stuffing event has been renamed the "Annual Walter Kle-



GWBLC STOCKING STUFFING VOLUNTEERS

paski GWBLC Union Care Christmas Project" after retired long-time United Way Community Services Labor Liaison Walter Klepaski Jr., who attended.

Mr. Klepaski served as the AFL-CIO Community Services Labor Liaison for 33 years, retiring in 2013 and was replaced by Ms. Moosic. Currently, there is not a labor liaison at the Wyoming Valley agency. William Cockerill Jr. is the United Way of Lackawanna and Wayne County's Community Services Labor Liaison.

The six Wyoming Valley agencies that received the stocking are: the Childrens Service Center; the Wyoming Valley Children's Association; the Catholic Social Services; the Family Services Association; the Domestic Violence Center; and the Head Start of Pittston.

Mr. Padavan thanked all of the labor organization's and businesses that donated funds or items to the project. He stated enough was collected to pay for this year's event, despite the GWBLC got started on fund-raising a little late. "We will get started earlier next year and have even more stockings stuffed," stated Mr. Padavan predicted.

Scott Kucharski, IBT Local 401 President and Business Representative, served as the overall co-ordinator for this years project.

Anti-unionism appears to be politically popular nationally

BY PAUL TUCKER

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REGION, January 9th- The labor good standing after being hired and community is clearly experiencing a increase of anti-unionism by governments including within the region.

In Kentucky recently it took only three days for their Republican controlled House of Representatives, Senate and Governor, to pass and repeal the ability for labor organizations to negotiate with employers the right to make joining a union part of collective bargaining. The clause must first be negotiated between the union and employer.

The agreement is called a union security clause, which makes joining a labor union a term of collective bargaining and forces employees to become a union member of

Kentucky became the twenty-seventh state to ban the right of employers and unions from negotiating the contract clause and the third in the past several years.

The legislation is commonly known as right-to-work, or what the labor community often refer to as "no-rights-at-work".

Currently, a union security clause can be negotiated with employers in Pennsylvania but several attempts recently have been made to also ban the contract language.

At least two more states could become right-to-work in 2017, including Missouri and New Hampshire. Wisconsin anti-union Republican

Governor Scott Walker signed into law right-to-work or no-rights-at-work legislation in 2014. At that time Wisconsin became the twenty-fifth state in the nation to ban the contract provision.

In Northeastern Pennsylvania, several municipalities have recently voted to overturn legislation that allowed a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) to be signed with local building trades unions for building projects. Future stories will be published in this newspaper regarding the issue.

Under a PLA construction contractors must hire local union members of the Building and Construction Trades Council for building projects. Nonunion contractors are still allowed to bid on any project, but if they are selected, they must

hire from local union halls for the workers rather than importing out-of-the-area nonunion workers.

Anti-union Republicans and their supporters believe with the success on election day last November it should be a opportunity to expand right-to-work laws, and continue to weaken the numbers of union members.

State Representative Mike Carroll (Democrat-118th Legislative District) believes passage of right-to-work legislation is unlikely in Pennsylvania because of Democratic Governor Tom Wolf's veto power. However, Mr. Wolf has joined with the Republicans several times on legislation important to the labor community including the partially privatization of the state run wine and liquor system.

NEPA-ALF recruitment program lands PSEA union's

BY PAUL TUCKER

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REGION, January 10th- Several labor organizations with the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA), Pennsylvania largest teachers union, have become affiliated with the Northeast Pennsylvania Area Labor Federation (NEPA-ALF).

The affiliated unions with the NEPA-ALF represent workers employed in Luzerne, Lehigh, Northampton, Schuylkill, Union, Snyder, Montour, Clinton, Bradford, Lycoming, Columbia, Northumberland, Lackawanna, Carbon, Monroe, Pike, Wyoming, Wayne, Sullivan, and Susquehanna Counties of Pennsylvania.

In previous edition's of the newspaper it has been reported that the NEPA-ALF created a recruitment program to attempt to have area labor organization's join or re-join the labor federation.

There are six Central Labor Council's (CLC's) and one Labor Chapter affiliated with the NEPA-ALF including: The Greater Wilkes-Barre Labor Council; The Northern Tier Central Labor Council; The Five County Central Labor Council; The Lehigh Valley Labor Council; The Scranton Central Labor Union; and The Schuylkill Central Labor Council. The Carbon County Labor Chapter is also affiliated with the NEPA-ALF.

Recently it was reported that the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Union Local 1600 in Allentown, which represents work-

ers employed by PPL Electric Utilities, the IBEW Union Local 163, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) Union Local 229, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners Union Local 445, the United Steel Workers (USW) Union Local 2599, the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) Local 101, the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1119, the International Association of Heat & Frost Insulators and Allied Workers Union Local 38, the International Association of Machinists (IAM) Union Local Lodge 2305, and the Communications Workers of America (CWA) Local 13500, were some of the labor organization's that have affiliated under the program.

The Lake Lehman Education Association, and the Wyoming Valley West Education Association, which is affiliated with the PSEA, have also affiliated with the NEPA-ALF.

For more information or to find-out how your local union can affiliate with the NEPA-ALF you can call this reporter at: (570) 343-4958 or by e-mail at TheUnionNewsWB@aol.com. The NEPA-ALF Board voted on January 5th to continue my employment with the organization.

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Annual "stocking stuffing" event named after Klepaski

BY PAUL TUCKER

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REGION. January 7th-The Greater Wilkes-Barre Labor Council (GWBLC), a labor federation with 47 affiliated labor organizations from throughout Luzerne County, named their annual Christmas stockings stuffing project after retired American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) labor federation Community Services Labor Liaison of the United Way of the Wyoming Valley Walter Klepaski. Mr. Klepaski retired on August 2nd, 2013 after serving 33 years on the job.

The AFL-CIO Community Services Labor Liaison is the go-between the labor community and the United Way. However, the Wyoming Valley United Way is currently without the position because Mr. Klepaski's replacement was terminated by the agency on November 15th, 2015 and she has not been replaced.

Mr. Klepaski replaced Rose Brader in 1979 when she retired after serving 31 years as the Labor Liaison of the United Way of the Wyoming Valley for 29 years. Ms. Sandra Moosic, who replaced Mr. Klepaski was only the third Community Services Liaison the Wyoming Valley had since it was established in 1948.

The GWBLC met at the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) Union Local 401 in Wilkes-Barre office to stuff stockings for disadvantaged children from the Wyoming Valley. Approximately 500 were stuffed with candy and other treats that were purchased by the labor community or donated by supporting businesses.

At the event it was announced the annual project would be renamed after Mr. Klepaski, who attended, and stated he was honored to have the stock-



WALTER KLEPASKI

ing stuffer project named after himself and plans to be involved with community projects of the labor community of the Wyoming Valley.

Mr. Klepaski voiced his disappointment that the position of Community Services Liaison is no longer part of the United Way of Wyoming Valley.

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Staples Inc. boycott by the Postal Workers being rescinded

BY PAUL TUCKER

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REGION, January 6th - The American Postal Workers Union (APWU), and the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) in Washington, DC, have suspended their boycott of Staples office supply stores throughout the nation. The two labor organizations put Staples on the boycott list attempting to get the retailer out of the postal business.

The United States Postal Service (USPS) announced in 2014 it negotiated a business arrangement with Staples to offer postal services inside some of the retailers stores. However, the APWU and/or the AFL-CIO never called for a boycott of the USPS only of Staples.

The USPS made the announcement that it was suspending the business arrangement by the end

of February that will result in around 500 Staples retail stores nationwide from offering postal services.

The APWU, which represents mail processing employees of the USPS throughout the nation, began their campaign against Staples in early 2014 which included conducting a "national day of action" in May, 2014. The event included protesting in front of Staples stores that was providing postal services. There was no local Staples that participated in offering postal services.

According to the APWU, postal service management informed the union in writing that it will stop offering postal services at Staples stores by the end of February, 2017.

"With the Staples deal out of the way, there is a fresh opportunity for postal management and the APWU to consider the future expansion and improvement of retail operations without these

misguided privatization schemes that undermine great service, good jobs, and a strong postal brand," stated APWU International President Mark Dimondstein.

Mr. Dimondstein added that Staples attempted and participated in the privatization of the postal service.

"If Staples was going to take our work and jobs for their private profit, we were going to hit back and affect their bottom line," Mr. Dimondstein said. The boycott included a postcard campaign which resulted in 100,000 postcards being delivered to Staples CEO.

The APWU is the second largest labor organization that represents USPS employees. The National Association of Letter Carriers Union (NALC) represents the most USPS workers. The NALC represents employees that deliver mail and packages to residents homes and businesses.

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DOL reports nonfarm jobs increase within the MSA by 900

BY PAUL TUCKER
THEUNIONNEWS@AOL.COM

REGION, January 5th - According to data provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry (DOL), Center for Workforce Information and Analysis in Harrisburg, nonfarm jobs within the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre/Hazleton Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) have increased by 900, rebounding from previous reports that indicated employment within the sector dropped by 1,200 in 2016 to 261,600. However, there are 600 fewer nonfarm jobs within the MSA than twelve months ago.

The MSA includes Lackawanna, Luzerne and Wyoming Counties of Pennsylvania.

Also, the DOL's data indicates there are 231,600 private jobs within the MSA, decreasing by 700 from twelve months before but rising by 700 from the prior report.

The Scranton/Wilkes-Barre/Hazleton MSA has the fifth largest labor force in Pennsylvania with 278,600 civilians. The Philadelphia MSA, the Pittsburgh MSA, the Allentown/Bethlehem/Easton MSA, and the Harrisburg/Carlisle MSA have a larger civilian labor-force than the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre/Hazleton MSA. There are 17,000 civilians without employment within the MSA the DOL's data indicates.

From the previous report the Leisure and Hospitality sector lost the most employment, dropping by 300. Overall, the sector employs 23,500 workers. Accommodation and food services of the sector lost 300 jobs from the previous report to 20,700 while food services and drinking places employment decreased by 200 jobs to 17,700.

Local government jobs showed a decrease of 200 from twelve months before to 4,300 while state government jobs are unchanged during the

period at 19,500. Federal government jobs have increased by 100 from one year ago, the DOL data indicates.

Several industries within the MSA has experience job declines within the Retail Trade industries from twelve months before including general merchandise stores, dropping by 100. Overall the sector lost 300 jobs during the period, but grocery stores employment was unchanged at 6,400.

Professional & Business Services jobs have decreased by 1,400 during the period with 29,200 employed within the sector.

There are 43,600 healthcare and social assistance jobs within the MSA, rising by 800 jobs from twelve months before. Overall, there are 53,300 jobs within the Educational and Health Services sector of the economy, rising by 1,800 from twelve months before.

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Dallas teachers union and school district still without pact

BY PAUL TUCKER

THEUNIONNEWS@AOL.COM

REGION, January 9th- John Holland, Region Field Director and Chief Negotiator for the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA), which represents teachers of the Dallas School District in the back mountain area of Luzerne County, told the newspaper he and his union will not be "pushed around" by the school board.

The Dallas Education Association members were on strike for 22 days against the Dallas School District because of the failure of being able to reach a new collective bargaining agreement (cba).

The teachers went on strike on November 14th, 2016 and returned on December 19th. However, the union members returned to their classrooms without reaching a new cba.

During their strike the teachers picketed in front of the Dallas High School and Middle School. The teachers were sometimes joined with other members of the labor community including Steelworkers, Sheet Metal Workers, and labor organizations affiliated with the Greater Wilkes-Barre Labor Council.

Meanwhile, according to Mr. Holland, the teachers will again strike on February 27th, if the parties fail to reach an cba before then. Successor contract negotiations are underway but the parties are far away from being able to reach an accord.

Mr. Holland told the newspaper progress was made between the parties after the strike was first suspended by the union but, it has now stalled. "We did make some progress, but everything seems to have stopped. We will not be pushed-around. We want a new contract, but the

board must be willing to compromise," added Mr. Holland.

Under the Pennsylvania Act 88, the law for which teachers unions and school districts must follow, teachers can strike twice in one year and the first work-stoppage must end in time for the students to complete the required 180 days by June 30th. After the strike begins, the Pennsylvania Department of Education calculates a strike-ending date.

The Pennsylvania State Education Association is the largest teachers union in the state and is affiliated with the National Education Association (NEA), the nation's largest labor organization.

Dallas School District Solicitor and chief negotiator Vito DeLuca has been professional during contract negotiations Mr. Holland stated, but clearly the district is playing hard-ball with the union.

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The American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations



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MSA's unemployment rate decreases to 6.1 percent

BY PAUL LEESON

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REGION, January 5th- According to the latest labor data provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, Center for Workforce Information and Analysis in Harrisburg, the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre/Hazleton Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dropped by five-tenths of a percentage point to 6.1 percent. There are eight-teen MSA's within the state and the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre/Hazleton MSA has the fourth highest unemployment rate. The MSA includes Luzerne, Lackawanna, and Wyoming Counties of Pennsylvania.

The Johnstown MSA has the highest rate in Pennsylvania at 6.8 percent while the Erie MSA having the second highest at 6.7 percent. The Williamsport MSA and the East Stroudsburg MSA are tied for the third highest unemployment rate in Pennsylvania at 6.3 percent. The Pittsburgh MSA has the fifth highest rate at 5.8 percent.

The Gettysburg MSA and the State College MSA are tied for the lowest unemployment rate in the state at 4.1 percent while the Lancaster MSA is second at 4.2 percent. The Harrisburg/Carlisle MSA has the third lowest at 4.5 percent and the Lebanon MSA is fourth lowest at 4.6 percent followed by York/Hanover MSA with the fifth lowest unemployment in the state at 4.7 percent.

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in Pennsylvania was reported to be at 5.7 percent, dropping by one-tenth of a percentage point from the previous report, which was released approximately four weeks before.

There are 373,000 Pennsylvania residents without jobs, but that number does not include residents that have exhausted their unemployment benefits and stopped looking for work. Pennsylvania has a seasonally adjusted workforce of 6,528,000 and 6,155,000 of them have employment. The state unemployment rate increased by one full percentage point from twelve months before.

The national seasonally adjusted unemployment rate is 4.6 percent, de-

creasing by three-tenths of a percentage point from the previous report and four-tenths of a percentage point lower from one year ago. The data indicates that there are 7,400,000 civilians nationwide without employment.

The Scranton/Wilkes-Barre/Hazleton MSA has the fifth largest labor force in Pennsylvania with 278,600 civilians, decreasing from the previous report by 2,100 civilians and up by 100 during the past twelve months. There are 17,000 civilians without employment within the MSA, dropping by 1,400 from the month before.

The Philadelphia MSA has the largest seasonally adjusted labor force in Pennsylvania at 3,105,100 with 156,700 not working; the Pittsburgh MSA has the second largest labor force at 1,226,700 with 70,800 without jobs. The Allentown/Bethlehem/Easton MSA has the third largest labor force in Pennsylvania with 429,200 civilians. There are 23,000 civilians without employment within the Allentown/Bethlehem/Easton MSA. The Harrisburg/Carlisle MSA has the fourth largest labor-force at 296,000 and 13,500 are jobless.

The Bloomsburg MSA has the smallest civilian labor force at 43,500 with 2,300 unemployed and the Gettysburg MSA has the second smallest labor force in Pennsylvania with 55,400 civilians also with 2,300 jobless followed by the Williamsport MSA with the third smallest labor force at 59,600 with 3,800 without jobs.

Within the MSA, Lackawanna County continues to have the lowest unemployment rate at 5.6 percent, dropping by five-tenths of a percentage point from the previous report. Lackawanna County has a civilian labor force of 106,100 with 6,000 without jobs.

Luzerne County has the highest unemployment rate within the MSA at 6.3 percent, five-tenths of a percentage point lower from the previous report. Luzerne County has a civilian labor force of 157,900 with 9,900 jobless.

Wyoming County's unemployment rate is 5.9 percent. Wyoming County has a civilian labor-force of 14,100 with 800 without jobs.

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Teachers Union's have a lot to worry about in 2017

BY PAUL TUCKER
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REGION, January 2nd- Labor organizations that represent teachers and other school employees have a lot to worry about with the incoming Donald Trump Administration in Washington, DC because of his pick for Education Secretary Betsy DeVos opinion regarding public schools. Ms. DeVos is chairperson of the anti-teacher union American Federation for Children, an national organization dedicated to pushing on behalf of for-profit charter schools.

Randi Weingarten, President of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the second largest teachers union in the nation, only behind the National Education Association (NEA), stated that Mr. Trump has chosen "the most ideological anti-public education nominee since the creation of the Department of Education."

Ms. DeVos, a billionaire, has lobbied and advocated for several decades for the public education killing charter school choice system, which would allow parents to remove their children from local publicly funding schools and enroll them into private for-profit schools taking their money with them. The system would take funding away from public schools which would hurt the system.

Ms. DeVos is from Michigan and is a Amway executive and has never worked as a educator, served on a local school board, or have any involvement with public education other than be an advocate against it.

Also, on the table in 2017 will be the possible decision of the United States Supreme Court that will further effect labor organizations that represent teachers.

Last January the nine member Supreme Court Justices heard arguments



PRESIDENT ELECT DONALD TRUMP

on why it is unconstitutional that the unions can collect compulsory dues from employees that refuse to join to pay the expense of representation. However, after Justice Scalia died suddenly in July, the court ruled four-to-four and the law went unchanged. It is expected Mr. Trump will be successful in appointing a justice that will support the anti-union decision.

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A UNION OF BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EMPLOYEES WORKING FOR YOU.

Killing NAFTA concerns profiteering business owners

BY PAUL TUCKER

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REGION, January 11th- Several reports have indicated that some businesses located around the United States-Mexico border are concerned that their employees will be effected if President-elect Donald Trump holds to his pledge to tear apart the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), that have cost American jobs for two decades.

NAFTA, which took effect in January 1994, was signed into law by Democratic President Bill Clinton after he was elected President in 1992. At the time of its passage, the sometimes labor-supporting Democratic party, controlled both chambers of congress. However, enough Democrats joined the Republicans in the House of Representatives and the Senate to pass the trade agreement.

Meanwhile, the Trans-Pacific Partnership Trade Agreement (TPPTA) is considered dead, mainly because Mr. Trump during the 2016 political campaign stated he was against the trade pact and suggested he would also re-negotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement.

The TPPTA is a measure meant to ease trade restrictions with Japan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Peru, Chile, Mexico, New Zealand, Australia, Brunei, Singapore, and Canada.

President Barack Obama made the passage of TPPTA a major part of his agenda during his final year in office. President Obama argued TPPTA would boost opportunities in the fast growing Asia region and would create a system for investment of American companies into a region where China now challenges the United States long-held dominance.

The legislation was opposed fiercely by the labor community but the full Senate passed it on June 25th, 2015, 60 to 38, which allowed Mr. Obama to negotiate the trade deal. Most of the Senate Democrats voted against the measure including Senator Robert Casey Jr. but Pennsylvania's other Sen-

ator Republican Pat Toomey voted in favor of the legislation.

Mr. Trump promised during the political campaign to re-negotiate or tear apart NAFTA, stating it was "the worst trade deal in history," and allowed many American companies to relocate their factories to Mexico, without facing tariffs. The anti-trade agreements was something that many union represented workers found appealing and voted for Mr. Trump in November.

It is estimated that around forty-four percent of union represented workers voted for Mr. Trump over his Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton nationwide, which is the main reason Mr. Trump won Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania giving him the election.

Several areas around the border, including in the United States, have seen a economic boom because of NAFTA and some business operators feel threatened if NAFTA is repealed.

On a average day thousands of tractor-trailers cross the United States/Mexico border loaded with non-American made goods.

Approximately 14,000 tractor-trailers alone cross the Mexican-United States border a day in Laredo, Texas, a city of 255,000 people. It is estimated that one of every three jobs in that Texas community is related to the trade agreement and the ability of Mexican produced products coming into the nation.

Larado, Texas earns revenue of around \$60 million alone from tolls from the international bridge traffic with much of it being tractor-trailers crossing the border with Mexican made goods to be sold in the United States and mostly empty trucks driving back to Mexico.

Economist have predicted that renegotiating NAFTA will wallop Mexico which is currently the United States biggest trading partner, something that many working Americans support and often the main reason cited why union members voted for Mr. Trump in November.

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