



# DC 82



**ESTABLISHED 2001**

2001

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF PAINTERS AND ALLIED TRADES DISTRICT COUNCIL No. 82  
**THE MAKING OF OUR DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
MINNESOTA - WESTERN WISCONSIN - NORTH DAKOTA - SOUTH DAKOTA - MONTANA

2018



*I.U.P.A.T. District Council No. 82*

# AN AGENT OF PROGRESS FOR MINNESOTA'S FINISHING TRADES



District councils were nothing new to the International Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades (I.B.P.A.T.) – which would change its name to the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (I.U.P.A.T.) during its 1999 general convention – when it passed a resolution during its 1994 convention requiring all of its locals to affiliate with a council. However, while some district councils did already exist, many locals across North America did not belong to a council, and those that did were mostly painters' locals, whereas few glaziers' locals were associated.

Although no district council existed at the time within Minnesota, a mechanism was in place to organize all of the state's finishing trades locals. The Minnesota State Conference

of Painters had been operating for some time and was, in fact, unique as it had a dues structure in place to fund itself.

Ultimately, the I.B.P.A.T. resolution created the need to establish district councils in many areas (and expand existing councils), including Minnesota. The International Office determined jurisdiction of all new district councils and initially decided that all locals in the state would belong to a single district council. To those ends, union leaders from the International Office, including General Vice President and former Rochester Local No. 681 President Ray Rapp, and from locals throughout Minnesota began meeting as early as 1996 to discuss and plan the formation of a council in the North Star State.

Nearly five years later in March 2001, the I.U.P.A.T. officially chartered District Council

No. 82, which at the time included nine Minnesota locals:

- Mixed Trades No. 61 of St. Paul,
- Mixed Trades No. 106 of Duluth,
- Mixed Trades No. 259 of Eau Claire and LaCrosse, Wisconsin,
- Mixed Trades No. 386 of Minneapolis,
- Mixed Trades No. 681 of Rochester,
- Sign and Display Workers No. 880 of Minneapolis and St. Paul,
- Mixed Trades No. 884 of Brainerd,
- Glaziers No. 1324 of Minneapolis,
- Mixed Trades No. 1962 of Bismarck, North Dakota, and
- Maintenance Workers No. 2002 of Rochester.

Although the state conference was dissolved when the council was formed, its locals utilized

the structure of the conference as the basis of their new organization, including the conference's slate officers and executive board, which contained a representative from each local.

## COMING TOGETHER TO MOVE FORWARD

The consolidation of Minnesota's I.U.P.A.T. locals and the Bismarck local into District Council 82 was fashioned for the benefit of those locals and the union finishing trades industry throughout the council's jurisdiction. Indeed, among many other advantages, the single staff at the district council level would provide greater representation and financial assistance for each individual local at fewer costs – as each local would have access to 13 full-time business representatives and organizers to deal with issues and police local jurisdictions.





## HELPING CHILDREN IN THE COMMUNITY

District Council 82 held its first annual **PATCH (Painters and Allied Trades Children's Hope) Gold Plate Dinner** on October 29, 2001. PATCH is the charitable organization established by the I.U.P.A.T. with a mission to support organizations that provide educational and medical services to youth. After having also collected \$4,000 during PATCH Day at the Metrodome on September 8 and additional funds through various other activities, the council and its members raised a total of \$14,000 to improve children's literacy that initial year.

As a leading fundraiser among district councils, District Council 82 hosts the annual PATCH Gold Plate Dinner and Silent Auction, as well as a PATCH Golf Outing that has grown to attract more than 200 participants. It is one of the top five fundraisers among I.U.P.A.T. PATCH golf events in the nation.

District Council 82's participation in PATCH has continued through additional efforts and events. In March 2009, for example, the district council 82 was proud to donate \$75,000 to the Minneapolis Children's Hospital to build a room to provide a place that could be a home-away-from-home for families of children being treated in the intensive care unit of the hospital.

"My level of appreciation is so high for what the PATCH Foundation has done. Its willingness to support Children's Hospitals to build private rooms for neonates will impact not just one life, but many," Dr. Phil Kilbort, vice president of Medical Affairs and Chief Medical Officer of Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota, said.

Among its many ongoing PATCH activities, the council in 2016 donated \$2,500 to Simon Says Give, a Minnesota-based nonprofit organization dedicated to "kids celebrating kids." Specifically, the donation helped the organization's "High Five for Supplies" program, which provides school supplies and backpacks for children in need.

District Council 82 also has contributed to a wide variety of additional organizations throughout the district council, including Duluth Public Schools, Friends of the Maple Lake Library, Ice Cream for Books, Keewatin Public Library, Lakes International Language Academy, Mesabi East Early Childhood Coalition, Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota, Ronald McDonald House of Rochester and St. Joseph's Indian School. As of 2016, District Council 82 had donated just over \$200,000 to charities that help children.

Additionally, each individual local would gain better representation through the larger membership of the district council. All locals would also be able to benefit from a larger pool of funds through the council, including a consolidation of all fringe benefits, while the combined resources would help increase market share by making new contractors available to all locals.

What's more, all signatory contractors would benefit from a "free flow" of I.U.P.A.T. member craftspeople, as they were able to hire workers from the entire district council, making them more competitive, while paying into a single fringe-benefits fund. Those members would have access to improved training, as educational resources would be consolidated and curriculum would be standardized across the state.

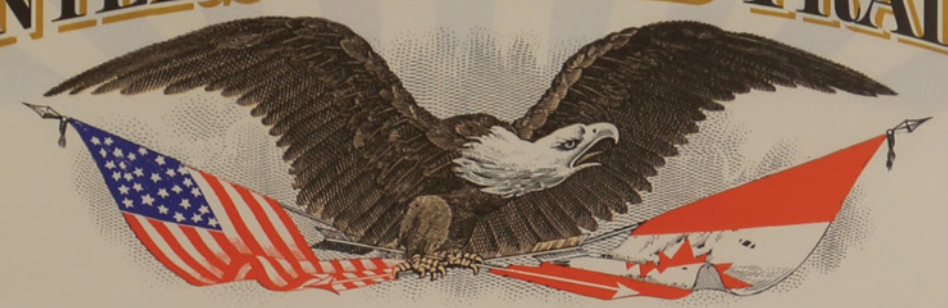
But first, the new District Council 82 had to organize its administration and functions and convince its membership at the local level – many of whom feared they would lose too much autonomy and the gains they had made locally – of the advantages of the consolidation. It took many face-to-face meetings at local halls throughout the state to



ORGANIZING SINCE 1887

# INTERNATIONAL UNION OF

# PAINTERS & ALLIED TRADES



Having jurisdiction over all workers engaged in: all painting, decorating and coatings applications and wall covering; all levels of drywall and wall finishing; any and all labor, material, tools or equipment for preparatory work or surface treatment work in relation to painting, decorating and coatings applications, wall covering, drywall and wall finishing; glazing; architectural metal and glass work; flooring and decorative floor covering work; paint and coatings manufacturing; sign, convention and display work; show decorators; scenic artists and designers; metal polishers; civil service, public and professional employees; book-binding; maintenance work; chemical, clerical and warehouse workers; any and all units, as well as all apprenticeable crafts, that have historically been part of this International Union; and any and all work as may be obtained and maintained through organizing and collective bargaining and shall be comprised of an unlimited number of District Councils, Local Unions and other subordinate bodies, subject to its laws and usages.

## To All Whom It May Concern, Greeting:

Whereas, A Petition in due form has been received, praying that a CHARTER be granted for the formation of a DISTRICT COUNCIL of the  
**INTERNATIONAL UNION OF PAINTERS AND ALLIED TRADES**

To be located at **Minnesota and North Central**

Know Ye, that acting under the authority vested in us by the CONSTITUTION, LAWS, RULES and USAGES of the INTERNATIONAL UNION, we do direct and cause this CHARTER to be issued for the institution of such DISTRICT COUNCIL, to be known and designated as **Painters and Allied Trades**

DISTRICT COUNCIL **82** and by virtue of this CHARTER to do and perform such acts as are authorized or prescribed by the CONSTITUTION, LAWS, RULES and USAGES of the

## INTERNATIONAL UNION OF PAINTERS AND ALLIED TRADES

It is further agreed that, should the aforesaid District Council withdraw, dissolve, or have its Charter revoked, then moneys, books, papers, documents and seal of the DISTRICT COUNCIL shall become the property of the International Union and be handed over to its legally constituted officers.

The General Convention or General Executive Board reserves the right to suspend or revoke this CHARTER for any NEGLECT or REFUSAL of the DISTRICT COUNCIL to PERFORM the DUTIES required by the CONSTITUTION, LAWS, RULES and USAGES of the INTERNATIONAL UNION.

In Witness Whereof, the General Executive Board of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades has caused the signatures of the General President and of the General Secretary-Treasurer and the official Seal of the International Union

to be hereto affixed, this **1st** day of **March** 20**01**



*Michael C. Moore*  
General President

*James A. Williams*  
General Secretary-Treasurer



District Council 82 charter from the I.B.P.A.T., issued March 1, 2001





The first annual **District Council 82 Picnic** was held in August 2002 at Highland Park in St. Paul. Over 700 members and their family members and friends attended.

just begin to sway some members.

Meanwhile, by the time the I.U.P.A.T. chartered District Council 82 in March 2001, most all of the initial set up for the council had already been completed. Shortly after the council was established, for example, officials formed a set of bylaws that were presented to and ratified by all locals in the state.

Next, the council's membership elected its first slate of officers, with Brother Mike Gavanda, business manager and 25-year member of Local 1324, being elected as its first business manager/secretary-treasurer.

The district council's initial headquarters were soon after set up in the Local 61 offices at 411 Main Street in St. Paul.

Getting down to business, one of the first projects on which District Council 82 and its locals worked with its employing contractors was the formation of the Minnesota Finishing Trades Group. Along with the district council, the organization consisted of the Minnesota Painting and Wallcovering Employers Association; the Minnesota Drywall and Plaster Association; glaziers and glass workers contractors; and sign, display and screen process contractors.

In 2002, District Council 82 received the **Bea Kersten Community Service Project Award**, given annually to labor organizations that exemplify the true spirit of service in the community. That year, the council helped raise some of the \$250,000 needed to renovate the MORE School of the Sisters of Notre Dame while also volunteering time on the project.

The Finishing Trades Group, along with financial help from the Finishing Contractors Association, the Labor Management Cooperative Initiative (L.M.C.I.) and the I.U.P.A.T., developed a local marketing campaign. Over its first six months, the Group put together a recruitment strategy for the council area, which included a short-term media blitz, a CD-ROM presentation, a website and a 24-hour/7-day-a-week toll-free phone number and answering service that would be launched in spring 2002. "This is a fitting example of labor and management working together for the betterment of our industry," Brother Gavanda extolled.

By that time, the district council was also reaching out to all of its individual members through house calls. In fact, leadership planned to visit every member to "encourage his or her involvement in our union" – and during visits, they would present members with a District Council 82 T-shirt and a surprise package.

That first year, the painters of council locals



386 and 61 also negotiated for a new contract – and were ready to flex their new, collective muscle while doing so. Subsequently, the council went on a five-week-long strike after negotiations broke down before the two sides reached a reasonable compromise.

Completing a whirlwind period during which the officers of District Council 82 hoped to establish lines of communication throughout the council, they released the council's first newsletter, *82 Together*, in March 2002.

### **PICKING UP THE PACE AND ORGANIZING**

The spring and summer of 2002 brought numerous contract negotiations for locals throughout District Council 82. Being involved with many of those locals for the first time in negotiations proved to be a very "interesting" experience for the council, as Brother Gavanda described it. However, the council was able to achieve good wage increases and also gained new benefits for some locals that previously had none at all.

In particular, Bismarck Local 1962 had no health and welfare insurance. But labor and management worked together, along with the trustees of Local 386's Health and Welfare Fund, and the council was able to bring Local 1962 into the Local 386 plan, providing the North Dakota members with a vital benefit at a reasonable cost.

Also at that time, only weeks before the contract of Local 259 of Eau Claire and LaCrosse expired, the local was notified that its health and welfare provider was not going to renew the local's ability to purchase coverage through it. With the prospect that the local's members would be left without insurance, the district council worked with the employers and the trustee group from Local 386 to provide Local 259 with the insurance it needed.

The following year in 2003, the contracts for glaziers in Duluth, St. Cloud, Eau Claire and the Twin Cities and workers at Harmon Auto Glass were all completed through District Council 82. Despite a recent sharp decline in





The first annual **District Council 82 Golf Tournament** was held on August 23, 2003, at the Sundance Golf Club in Maple Grove.

the state's economy, the negotiations were very successful, as all groups received in excess of 4-percent increases in wages.

Meanwhile, health and welfare benefits continued to be a primary issue in almost all negotiations undertaken by the fledgling district council. Consequently, during negotiations for Local 1324, the decision was made to begin looking into the possibility of merging its funds with Local 386's Health and Welfare Fund and, eventually, that of Local 61.

The discussion and development continued into and throughout 2003 until the local realized its goal when the District Council 82-wide Health & Welfare Fund, in which all of the council's locals could participate, was established on January 1, 2004.

Meanwhile, back in February 2003 during the General President's Advisory Committee (CPAC) meeting, District Council 82 was asked to participate in a Market Recovery study to find additional ways to provide new employment opportunities for members. In conjunction with the L.M.C.I., the district council began to do its part by assigning representatives from both labor and management for the project.

Initially, organizer Rod Hogetvedt worked with Ralph Trallo, executive director of the L.M.C.I., to put together a Plan of Operation for the survey. Ultimately, leaders met with local employers to receive their advice and input – while also using those opportunities to educate them on the need to organize – and also conducted a COMET (Construction Organizing Membership Education Training) class and outlined the council's new Market Recovery Plan.

However, while many District Council 82 members helped with many organizing efforts during the first two years after the district council was formed, there was not enough participation to “do the kind of job we think is necessary to keep and grow our share of the market,” Brother Gavanda declared at the time. Therefore, in late 2003 the council made organizing activities mandatory for each member, amounting to giving one day per year per member to help in organizing.

Specifically, the council leadership enacted articles 16.6 and 16.7 of the District Council 82 Bylaws to affect the edict. Article 16.6 stated, “Every member shall be required to assist the District Council and its officers by engaging in picketing, handbilling, salting and other organizing activities.”

### **A New, CENTRAL HOME AND TRAINING FACILITY**

Even before its inception in March 2001, one of the primary missions of District Council 82 was to establish a headquarters and training center so that it and all of its locals could function as a single unit under one roof. Almost immediately, the council worked with a developer and general contractor AMCON to make the facility a reality, as well as the Little Canada City Council and Union Bank to negotiate favorable terms for the parcel at 3205 Country Drive in Little Canada and its mortgage.

The district council closed on the property on August 15, 2003, and broke ground for construction of its new facility on August 18, with a scheduled move-in date of January 1, 2004. As work on the 56,000-square-foot complex progressed, Brother Gavanda commented in the July-August 2003 issue of the 82 *Together* newsletter, “We’re excited about our new facility, which will allow all District Council 82 offices to be housed in the same building. The training center will have the needed flexibility to provide more hands-on training to members to help make them



the most qualified and best workers in the industries we represent.”

During that time, the merger process of health and welfare funds for all locals in District Council 82 also continued to move forward. A subcommittee was working diligently to design a plan that would give members the benefits they needed with an overriding goal to control ever-increasing costs.

What's more, the council's organizing initiative was also advancing, with many members stepping up when asked to participate in activities ranging from picketing and permit intervention to attendance at city council meetings and participating in COMET classes, to name only a few. “Others have come reluctantly, but once they have gone through the daily activity, they too have found it a worthwhile experience,” Brother Gavanda noted.

On April 5, 2004, District Council 82 began

the large task of moving locals 61, 386, 880 and 1324 and the apprenticeship offices into its new building. As the move was taking place, there were still many finishing touches being done to complete the project.

But at long last, on April 12, 2004, District Council 82 had completely relocated into its new home in Little Canada, combining the office staffs of those locals and the apprenticeship offices and new training center in the facility. Afterwards, Brother Gavanda commented in the May-June 2004 newsletter:

*“It was an awesome task, moving all the records from these offices. D.C. 82's full-time staff is to be commended for their hard work in making a smooth transition to our permanent home.”*

*“This consolidation of not only our union's offices but also of our Training*





*Center will create many advantages and opportunities to make D.C. 82 a stronger organization. It will also bring us together as a team for the betterment of our membership.*

*“Our new building will give us the ability to expand training opportunities for everyone. It will also give us the advantage of having our own meeting halls and facilities for our members to use for functions such as retiree clubs, receptions, as well as social functions.”*

To top off the celebration, the district council held an Open House event on Saturday, June 12, 2004, for everyone to see the new, state-of-the-art complex. The day was filled with many friends and visitors joining the council to celebrate its new home.

## **POLITICS, P.L.A.s MOVE TO THE FOREFRONT**

While it was a time for celebration, much work for District Council 82 remained. In particular, the council mobilized its political clout for the 2004 presidential elections.

Backing Democratic Party candidate John Kerry as part of the I.U.P.A.T. “Black & Gold Army,” the district council led the way in Kerry’s victory in Minnesota, which had been named a “vulnerable state” by the Republican Party and was also declared a “battleground state” in the media. In supporting the pro-union candidate over incumbent President George W. Bush, District Council 82 helped Kerry win by a 3.5-percent margin in the state (although he would ultimately lose the nationwide election).

Contract negotiations also kept the council staff busy, particularly during the spring of 2004, when numerous agreements were up for renewal during a slow economic period. But the council had already been discussing industry issues with management long before the expiration dates of the contracts so that they



could be better addressed before negotiations, including market share, market recovery and membership training.

As a result, although the negotiations were difficult, the painters and drywall finishers in both the Twin Cities and Duluth gained very strong increases, averaging about 4 percent per year.

By that time, procuring union-friendly Project Labor Agreements was also a focus of the District Council 82 staff, which would work closely with local Building Trades councils to negotiate job-specific P.L.A.s in both the private or public construction sectors. With a P.L.A., a project would be built with union wages, fringe benefits and working conditions while the owner is provided with a strike-free project and the contractors are provided with a thoroughly trained workforce.

The district council had also rolled out its new Market Recovery Program, from which the council by 2007 was reaping significant benefits. The council had almost immediately recovered 1,000s of hours of work and fringe-fund contributions that would have otherwise been lost to non-union contractors; instead, District Council 82 members performed the work on those projects.



I.U.P.A.T. General President Jimmy Williams, District Council 82 Business Manager Terry Nelson and members of the council helped prepare pancakes for labor walkers in St. Paul in 2012 when union members and officials from the I.U.P.A.T., AFSCME, ATU, AWIU, Education Minnesota, IAM, LIUNA, NALC, SEIU, SMWIA, U.A., USW and Working America gathered at the St. Paul Area Labor Council building for breakfast and an informational “door knock.”



Over the course of the previous three years, District Council 82 had supported the International’s three-nickel programs, namely its L.M.C.I., Minnesota Finishing Trades and National Apprenticeship and Political Action, with the promise that the union would return two of the nickels back to District Council 82 to use for political action, candidate contributions and organizing. That collaboration paid off when in March 2007, the district council received its first installment of \$70,000 towards its Organizing Fund. What’s more, during the previous political cycle, thousands of dollars were returned to the council to support its local political candidates.

## **NEW LEADERS USHER IN A NEW FUTURE**

After six years, the majority of the 4,000 painters, glaziers, glass workers, drywall finishers and sign, display and screen processors of District Council 82 decided it was time for a change in their leadership. Subsequently, on June 21, 2007, Local 386 President Terry Nelson, a 20-year painter and wallcoverer, was elected the district council’s business manager and secretary-treasurer. Additionally, three member locals chose new

business representatives: Painters Local 61 of St. Paul elected Scott Thompson, Painters Local 386 of Minneapolis elected Mark Christianson and Glaziers Local 1324 elected Richard Johnston.

Notably, the 2007 elections drew nearly two-and-a-half times the typical number of voters in a District Council 82 contest.

After all four new representatives took office on June 22, Brother Thompson, who ran on a combined ticket with brothers Nelson and Christianson and together campaigned their way to the “surprise” victory, reflected, “It’s almost unheard of for rank-and-file members to come up and overtake elected officials, so it was very difficult. But we had the ear of the membership, and we listened to our constituency and the members came out to vote.”

Part of the strategy of the new officers was to take full advantage of the council’s multi-craft approach, which would allow them to gain an industry-wide understanding of the challenges faced by union members and contractors. “Although I represent glaziers, I also get to know people from all the different crafts when I’m out checking jobs or talking to members,

*Continued after next spread.*





# COMMITTED TO WORLD-CLASS TRAINING OF ITS WORKFORCE

The District Council 82 Training Center, constructed in 2003 and 2004 as part of the council's headquarters building in Little Canada, provides a state-of-the-art educational facility in which the council provides apprenticeship training to journeyman candidates and upgrade training to its current journeymen. The program is operated by the Finishing Trades Institute of the Upper Midwest (F.T.I.U.M.) and serves current and potential I.U.P.A.T. finishing-trades workers throughout Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and western Wisconsin.

In order to fulfill its mission, the F.T.I.U.M. works in partnership with District Council 82, the Minnesota Drywall and Plasterers Association, the Minnesota Painting and Wallcovering Employees Association and the Twin Cities Glass Association.

Each year, between 70 and 100 new apprentices are brought in to fill the needs of the finishing-trades industry within the council's jurisdiction. F.T.I.U.M. provides training and career opportunities in four primary industries:

- Painting and Wallcovering;
- Drywall Finishing;
- Glazing and Glassworking and
- Sign, Display, Screen Process, and Tradeshow Working.

With instructors who are highly qualified, industry-certified and experienced in their respective industry areas, the F.T.I.U.M. trains apprentices and journeypersons in all aspects of painting, glazing, glassworking, drywall finishing, sign installation and convention working, along with basic math skills. Specifically, the District

Council 82 Finishing Trades Training Facility provides training in faux and fine finishing; all applications of spray; floor coatings; bead blast; wallcovering; and specialty glazing; boom, scissor and scaffold training; welding labs; and Green LEED certification training.

Importantly, the industry-funded F.T.I.U.M. programs allow apprentices to earn wages while they learn their selected trades. In addition to general career training, the F.T.I.U.M. also provides instruction in several distinct areas:

- OSHA Safety Training - OSHA-10 and OSHA-30
- American Red Cross 1st Aid/CPR/AED Certification and Refresher Training
- Continuing Education
- On-the-job Training
- Product Training
- AWS Welding Refresher and Certification Training

In November 2014, the F.T.I.U.M. curriculum became fully accredited by the Council on Occupational Education, which formally grants national accreditation to technical colleges, allowing them to be recognized as institutions of higher education. In becoming accredited, the F.T.I.U.M. met all official requirements of academic excellence, curriculum, facilities and several additional factors.

The groundwork for accreditation actually began several years prior when District Council 82 merged its training funds and constructed its new training facility. Then, after several years of curriculum advancement, faculty professional development and strengthening F.T.I.U.M.'s financial ability, its Board of Directors

approved funding for accreditation in May 2013.

"Accreditation raises our training to a whole new level. It means that the F.T.I.U.M. now operates under standards used by technical schools, colleges and universities, including required minimum completion rates," District Council 82 Business Manager Terry Nelson wrote at the time. "Having earned accreditation, the F.T.I.U.M. will be eligible to apply for grant funding that will help build a solid foundation for the future."

The F.T.I.U.M. training facility itself has also continued to evolve over the years. For example, in summer 2016 a number of portable work studios were built and added to the center's hands-on instructional resources. The studios were needed to handle the additional capacity of painter and drywall-finisher apprentices that would start in the program that fall semester.

By that time, six "sizable" modules were also in use by glaziers to refine their skills while also giving glazier instructors space and flexibility to handle increasing class sizes. The steel and wood structures with multiple openings in combination with Tubelite Architectural Curtainwall Systems enables apprentices to build their experience with perimeter anchoring, floor line anchoring, welding anchor clips, caulking end dams, fastening pressure plates, structural silicone glazing and applying pressure plates.

In a nod to the commitment District Council 82 has made to career training through F.T.I.U.M., Business Manager Nelson on April 24, 2015, joined 150 employers, labor leaders, educators and tech innovators from across the country at a White House summit to answer President Obama's recent call to action to equip workers with the skills they need to advance into better-paying jobs. The president's Upskill America Initiative brought those leaders together to develop plans to work together and promote the adoption of training and career advancement strategies that improve workers' ability to earn more over time.

Specifically, Brother Nelson was selected to participate because of the commitment the members of District Council 82 have made to successfully build community partnerships in Minnesota and neighboring states through its CORE (Community Organizing for Real Economics) program.



The F.T.I.U.M.'s ability to offer advanced training also has made it a leader in the nation. Notably, CAS (Coating Application Specialist) certification has been valuable in preparing members who complete the rigorous training and pass exams for certification, which is awarded by the SSPC (Society of Protective Coatings). Industrial infrastructure standards for the state of Minnesota require a certain percentage of workers on bridge projects to be CAS certified.

Based on the CAS program, the F.T.I.U.M. is building a new program that follows its example for glazier training. In addition, the many upgrades to F.T.I.U.M. training include a virtual reality aerial lift, virtual reality welder and virtual reality spray units.







and that's a great thing for communication," Brother Johnston said. "Because we all work together, we've been able to better grasp the industry's problems and how we can fix them."

What's more, the staff already in place at District Council 82 was key to getting a handle on the work the new officers needed to do. "We feel lucky to have joined such a strong team," Brother Nelson said at the time. "We feel like we've been able to hit the ground running with such a knowledgeable, dedicated group already in place, and that's a great way to start."

Indeed, the new team set right out to work to tackle a busy agenda during its first several months at the helm. In the Bismarck area, for instance, Brother Nelson was already teaming with others to negotiate a contract and working to recruit non-union contractors on an organizing campaign. In the metro area, he was also working to enforce and strengthen the council's jurisdiction through jobsite sweeps, picketing and keeping its membership informed through local union meetings across the district council.

However, District Council 82 had been facing a number of growing problems in the recent years prior to the election – with which

Brother Nelson and his fellow officers were forced to contend. In particular, enforcement was significantly lacking and, consequently, maintaining the union's jurisdiction as well as fair enforcement of the collective bargaining agreement had become one of the new leadership's primary objectives.

"My goal is to make things fair for both the members and the contractors," Brother Christianson said at the time. "There are a lot of people who are not playing fair. Civil rights laws are being broken, and people's lives and businesses are being hurt by a few people who want to make all the money."

In addition to increasing enforcement and creating growth for both members and contractors, the leadership also intended to improve education. However, although enforcing contracts and building educational and work opportunities for the council's large number of widespread members presented considerable challenges, the council's leadership team was also battling another, less concrete obstacle: Perception.

"There's a lot of negativity about unions that we have to counter, but with the right plan, I believe we can turn that perception around," Brother Nelson said. "Unions train

very qualified individuals for their crafts, and then those craftsmen bring their skills back to benefit their communities. These people are the volunteers for Scouts, the little league coaches. They're good, productive, tax-paying citizens. And not all of them stay union; some become contractors. It's a productive, beneficial cycle for everyone."

### ABLE TO SURVIVE CHALLENGING TIMES

While work had been plentiful in the mid-2000s, a historically depressed job market in the wake of a nationwide recession left District Council 82 facing three very lean years later that decade and in the early 2010s. During that time, unemployment in the district council was up to 50 percent at times, and in 2010 the council was nearly out of funds.

In response, the council leadership wisely took action, with Brother Nelson switching all "8F" contracts to "9A" contracts and implementing for district council staff, not the rank and file, a mandatory "work five days for four days of pay" system that lasted more than year. All locals in the council then voted for the business manager's proposed dues raise to 3.5 percent of a member's total pay package (not just wages), which brought more money into the council. This was a key decision because during the recession, the district council lost 50 percent of its man hours, so countering that financial challenge by raising dues allowed the district council to grow a war chest to protect the membership.

In addition, the district council instituted a change so that contractors could no longer simply write a letter to end a contract with 30 days' notice.

In the same period of time, District Council 82 went to work on merging the Central Minnesota Health Care Plan for former Local 884 members with the District Council 82 Health and Welfare Plan B, which strengthened

In the summer of 2015, District Council 82 conducted a volunteer project by bringing together the **Hubert H. Humphrey Job Corps Center** in St. Paul, the United Way and Catholic Charities. Painting instructor John Kaiser, along with J.A.T.C. students Main Din, Aung Lay and Eh Kai, painted the entire exterior of Northside Child Development Center in Minneapolis, applying more than 100 gallons of paint and caulking many cracks in the building.

"This was an excellent training piece for my students, as we had scaffold set up, ladder work, brush, roll, spray and roll," Brother Kaiser said. "Plus, we used a 40-foot JLG for the areas that scaffolds couldn't reach."

the insurance for the membership and built a true bank for those members.

Meanwhile, the district council began expanding into North Dakota – and would later extend itself into Montana in 2012. Eventually, Brother Nelson and the leadership team negotiated over \$20 in wages and benefits, which was fully half of the total pay and benefits package ... a significant accomplishment on behalf of members in Montana.

### BUILDING FOR SUSTAINED GROWTH

As Brother Nelson has emphasized, "We want to be sure every member gets home at the end of the day." That commitment to on-the-job safety led to District Council 82 establishing the Safety Training Awards Recognition (STAR) program in 2009 to reward members who successfully completed safety training classes presented by the Finishing Trades Institute of the Upper Midwest. Building and encouraging a culture of safety on the job, the STAR program has grown each year, both in the number of participants and in the variety of classes offered.

Indeed, with each advanced safety training class members complete, they increase their skill level, making them and everyone at their job sites safer.

The annual STAR celebration has become



A pair of raffle winners during the District Council 82 sixth annual STAR Program Awards on June 21, 2014, at the National Sports Center in Blaine, Minnesota, accept their grand prizes, a new Ford Fusion won by Local 386 member Eriberto Galvan (left) and a Ford F-150 pick-up truck won by Local 1324 member Matt Barland.





In January 2016, District Council Business Manager/Secretary-Treasurer Terry Nelson received the **Labor Leader Award** from the St. Paul Regional Federation of Labor on behalf of District Council 82. The Federation represents over 52,000 members of 175 different unions and annually honors labor leaders and union members for their exceptional activism in politics, community action and organizing.

Brother Nelson and his fellow council members won the award for their outstanding efforts in political action. The District Council 82 team of volunteers knocked on the doors of voters in their assigned county during the previous election and built on their continued success in changing the area from a Republican-leaning region to Democratic through voter education on the issues.



a highlight of each year and brings together members from throughout the district council to enjoy great food and drawings for hundreds of prizes, including trucks, cars, boats and power equipment. From a first year attendance of 70, the STAR celebration has grown to 700 participants in 2017.

Each member who completed safety training and attended the 2017 celebration held at the National Sports Center in Blaine, Minnesota received a gift card from the district council at the registration table, and that was on top of any prizes they might win in the drawings. STAR is now a tradition and a celebration – many members bring their spouses or significant others.

By late 2010, the economy and District Council 82 began to stabilize.

Importantly, the political policies that the Nelson Administration had put in place from the outset remained solvent during that time of crisis. As such, in 2010 the district council was able to help Mark Dayton become the first Democratic governor of the State of Minnesota elected in 20 years, despite national success for the Republican Party, including in the

Minnesota legislature.

The resolve to be politically active at all levels has grown from Brother Nelson's belief that all politics are local. Realizing that political activity would be the best way to have the union's interests represented when decisions are made at all levels of government, the district council added a political director to the staff. So, from city council to state legislature to congressional races, District Council 82 has worked to educate candidates about what matters to union members and learn whether candidates share the members' concerns.

In 2010, Tony McGarvey added political duties to his responsibilities as an organizer, as former organizer/political director Rod Hogetvedt moved on to the I.U.P.A.T. International staff as Central Regional political director. He was followed by Don Mullin, who was also business representative for Local 880, until he accepted the post of executive secretary of the St. Paul Building & Construction Trades Council in 2015. Josie Vautrin served as full-time political director from 2015 until 2017, when Tony McGarvey, who was most recently an organizer, took on full-time duties as director of government of affairs.

With the job market showing much-needed improvement over the previous three years, in 2011 the district council was on the road to recovery and was having trouble manning jobs. What's more, while the council had been struggling to "stay even" in most all the agreements it had negotiated within the past two years – and in some cases, took "major pay cuts" to keep members working – in 2011 the council gained a three-year contract with a glazing unit that resulted in a 5-percent raise for each year.

At the same time, District Council 82 in August 2010 played a part in securing the first-ever P.L.A. on a project in South Dakota, the

\$405 million, 300-net megawatt natural gas Deer Creek Generation Station, which would be completed in 2012. "I'm proud to have been a small part of something so historic for South Dakota trade unions and we're hoping it's the beginning of something big," the District Council 82 business marketing development consultant said at the time the P.L.A. was signed by the Eastern South Dakota Building & Construction Trades Council.

## COMING BACK WITH A ROAR

District Council 82 immediately capitalized on and moved forward with its rediscovered favorable condition. In doing so, the council in 2011 instituted many programs that would help bolster it for the coming several years – and beyond.

First, the council promoted its Young Lions Program to educate, motivate and mobilize its members under 35 years of age. The goal of that effort was to get those members active in all aspects of the labor movement and the community.

The council also rolled out a new program called "ROAR" (Responsible Organization of Activists Retired) to mobilize retired members into the council's political activities. Headed initially by Brother Hogetvedt, the council's

District Council 82 members participate in the Community Day of Action with the council's community partner, Shoreview Area Housing Initiative, by painting a home for a veteran on April 16, 2016.



On January 27, 2015, the Minnesota A.F.L.-C.I.O., during its **Labor 2014 Volunteer Recognition** event, presented District Council 82 with the top award for having the highest percentage of members volunteer for service projects that year and for making a Political Action Committee contribution to the Labor 2014 movement.

former political director and the Central Regional director for the I.U.P.A.T., ROAR would implement those members along with the Young Lions in many ways to build the council's political influence within its jurisdiction.

The council also hired a lobbying firm to lobby on behalf of the District Council 82 at the legislative level on I.U.P.A.T. issues and defense strategies in upcoming law-making sessions. The council's goal with that was to be in the decision-making process to obtain better work opportunities for all members in the I.U.P.A.T. and to identify members who can run for political office at local, state and federal levels. In 2012, Mike Sundin, Local 106 member and District Council 82 organizer, was elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives. By strengthening its political involvement, District Council 82 continues to increase its ability to effectively represent members' interests.

District Council 82's enforcement efforts were also back in full force by that time, resulting in a major victory for the union in November 2011 when the owner and president of Franklin

During the I.U.P.A.T. **Community Day of Action** on April 16, 2016, District Council 82 volunteers partnered with the community group Housing Our Heroes to paint a two-story home for a disabled military veteran in Shoreview, Minnesota, while other council volunteers repainted the St. Joseph's Home for Children in Minneapolis.





District Council 82 Business Manager Terry Nelson speaks with Congressman Keith Ellison for a new episode of Ellison's "We the Podcast," talking about important updates to the Finishing Trades Institute of the Upper Midwest while in Washington D.C. for National Building Trades Legislative Conference in April 2017.



Drywall was sentenced in federal court for one count of providing false statements to two labor union pension and benefit funds. District Council 82 led the effort to prosecute the Little Canada-based company, which had underpaid employees for overtime and the union for pension and benefit funds as required by collective bargaining agreements.

In the end, Philip Joseph Franklin admitted to filing false reports with both the Minnesota Carpenters and the District Council No. 82 pension and benefit funds. In his plea agreement, Franklin admitted that to evade payments into the pension and benefit funds, he directed his employees to falsify timesheets and submitted false information to the union pension and benefit funds that materially under-reported the hours worked, according to media reports. Franklin also routinely directed Franklin Drywall administrative employees to report to the pension and benefit funds no more than 40 hours of work per week for any Franklin Drywall union employee, regardless of the number of hours worked, the media reported.

From January through December of 2006, Franklin evaded payment of at least \$190,000 owed to the pension and benefit funds. He was subsequently sentenced to 24 months in prison.

The district council also in November 2011 reached a significant settlement with RTL Construction of Shakopee on allegations that RTL failed to pay employee benefits according to their contract with the I.U.P.A.T. In November 2009, the council and the trustees of its apprenticeship, pension and healthcare funds filed claims in federal court that RTL Construction underreported hours worked by its employees with the intent to pay less in associated fringe benefits.

According to the January 25, 2012, *Labor World* newspaper, the agreed-upon public disclosure from the settlement provided: (a) Defendants deny any and all liability associated with the claims made by the Trustees in this Federal Court Action; (b) the Trustees' claims, inclusive of attorneys' fees and costs, were resolved to the Parties' mutual satisfaction, which included Defendants' payment of monetary compensation to the Trustees in excess of \$1 million; and (c) the Parties look forward to working together in the future."

"We are pleased that we were able to settle this matter for our members without undergoing a lengthy and costly trial," Brother Nelson said in the *Labor World*. "We look forward to putting this dispute behind us and working with RTL, and the rest of our employer partners, on creating more jobs for the working men and women of Minnesota."

Also, in 2011 and 2012, recognizing the importance of upgrading prevailing wage protection, Brother Nelson worked with a software developer to devise a software program that would enhance reporting to the state on prevailing wage. It was the first program in Minnesota to electronically file reports to the state.

In 2011, to strengthen the pension funds that members count on in retirement, the district council began the process of merging the multiple defined contribution funds into a single, stronger District Council 82 Defined Contribution Plan, which was realized in 2016. This important accomplishment has developed into a state-of-the-art pension plan with flexibility to allow participants and retirees to have control over their retirement accounts.

During the same period, in the metropolitan area the board of trustees was exploring the merger of Local 386 and Local 61 defined benefit funds to strengthen the funds into the future. Defined benefit plans came under attack during the George W. Bush era with zone statuses and PPA and PPGC funding changes and the deregulation on Wall Street. That merger was realized in 2015 and has been possible with full affiliation under the strength of a district council.

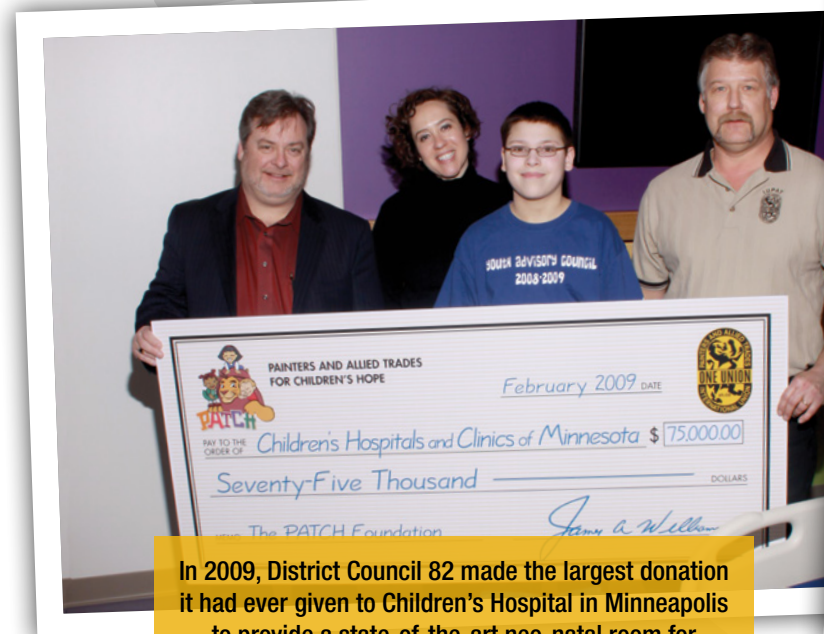
At the same time, the glaziers were facing a 33 percent increase in healthcare premiums, with a benefit cut, so the district council worked to merge the glaziers into District Council Health and Welfare program. This was realized in 2016 and has resulted in stability for those members.

These examples show the strength of the district council and its ability to effectively serve its members. As Brother Nelson noted, "There is strength in numbers, and we've been able to use that strength to develop plans that protect our members' interests for the future."

## PREPARED TO TAKE ON THE FUTURE

District Council 82 has continued to win over contractors with the work ethic and skills of its membership. Significantly, the expanded training opportunities offered by the Finishing Trades Institute of the Upper Midwest have had a positive impact on the careers of apprentices and journeyworkers.

The F.T.I. began in 2001 as the Minnesota Finishing Trades Training Center, with original director of training Bob Veilleux. He was followed by Jerome Balsimo and Kyle Paulson.



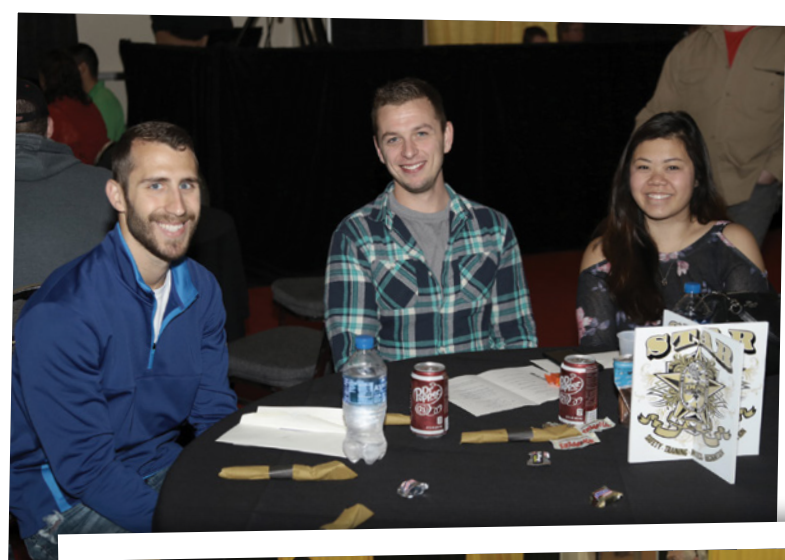
In 2009, District Council 82 made the largest donation it had ever given to Children's Hospital in Minneapolis to provide a state-of-the-art neo-natal room for parents while their children are in the hospital.



Swedish Painters Niklas Holmqvist and Stefan Cedermark visited District Council 82 for a week in 2017 to learn more about the union and its training facility.







STAR Awards 2017

Then Patrick Rome took on the duties from 2008 through 2017.

“The training center had found itself impacted by the Great Recession, and Terry described to me how he not only saw the need to get the training center headed in the right direction, he also described evolving the school into something more than it had ever been,” Director Rome explained. Changing the name to the Finishing Trades Institute of the Upper Midwest expanded the center’s identity as serving a broader region and the term “institute” aligned it with academia.

The Finishing Trades Institute (F.T.I.) of the Upper Midwest (F.T.I.U.M.) earned accreditation from the Council on Occupational Education in November 2014, making it only the second free-standing I.U.P.A.T. training center in North America to gain accreditation. Its reputation was further enhanced when it became a degree-granting institution in 2017. Now apprentices can earn an associate (A.A.) degree in construction technologies when they complete their apprenticeship because the program includes general education classes in addition to classes focused on finishing trades skills. All classes can be completed through the F.T.I.U.M., rather than having to complete general education classes through a partner community college.

Bob Swanson, president of Swanson & Youngdale, worked alongside Brother Nelson, Director Rome and F.T.I.U.M. staff to secure accreditation, which they all agree was a lengthy, rigorous but worthwhile endeavor.

“Now that we offer an associate degree, the F.T.I.U.M. offers members even greater career opportunities,” said Brother Nelson, who serves as co-chair of the F.T.I.U.M. “It also creates pathways for workers as they mature

and want to move into project management or other leadership roles.”

As of 2017, Christine Storms was appointed president of the F.T.I.U.M. and Tom Aasheim assumed duties as director of training and dean of trades. Previously, President Storms had served as associate dean of continuing education and customized training at Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College and Director Aasheim had been the F.T.I.U.M. paint and drywall coordinator.

This division of responsibilities was in keeping with the recognition of the F.T.I.U.M. as an accredited institution of higher education. As Director Rome noted at the time of the transition, “If we are going to be a college, we need to think and act like one.” He recommended the F.T.I.U.M. bring in a person with leadership experience at a community or technical college.

“When the district council moved into this facility, I never thought we would outgrow the space,” Brother Nelson said in 2017, as the F.T.I.U.M. served 480 students. “But now we ask, ‘Where do we go from here?’”

## A Common Denominator

Education is a common denominator, and both labor and management can agree on its importance.

In 2017, Brother Nelson, F.T.I.U.M. President Storms, former Director Rome and District Council 82 Government Affairs Director McGarvey were joined by Minneapolis Glass C.E.O. Mike Horovitz, co-chair of the F.T.I.U.M. since 2016, on a two-day lobbying trip to Washington, D.C. It was the first time an employer had been part of a District Council 82 delegation to visit congressional offices.

In a marathon of 15 meetings in two days, the visit included congressional offices representing Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota, South Dakota and Montana. As Mr. Horovitz explained, “We wanted to establish a process going forward that allows us to be at the table when funding for higher education is discussed.”

He noted that the senators, congressmen and congresswomen and their staff members were impressed with the fact that labor and management were working as a team. “It’s



Sister Karen Chilstrom, a painter in Local No. 61, accepts her prize from Business Manager Terry Nelson during the District Council 82 STAR event in 2017.





Business Manager Terry Nelson (second from left) and some members and retirees of District Council 82 placed a small, swing stage model (which was created by member Robert Erickson) on the wall of the District Council union hall in 2018.

an example of how a common vision and a common mission bring everyone together. Now they understand how important the school is to advance our industry.”

### **Moving Ahead**

Leading up to its 15th anniversary, 2015 was a successful year for District Council 82, as it produced many job opportunities for members while continuing to make inroads in Montana, where it secured contracts with school districts and counties. That year, the council also welcomed many new members, including new members at the capitol complex.

Nearly two decades ago, District Council 82 started on a new path that required demanding work and commitment: Building a reputation of fighting for workers’ rights. Creating a Finishing Trades Institute that’s a model for the nation. Initiating STAR as a safety training program to keep members safe on the job. Strengthening the district council’s political involvement to help elect candidates who share members’ concerns. Giving back to the communities where its members live and work through fundraising for the PATCH Foundation.

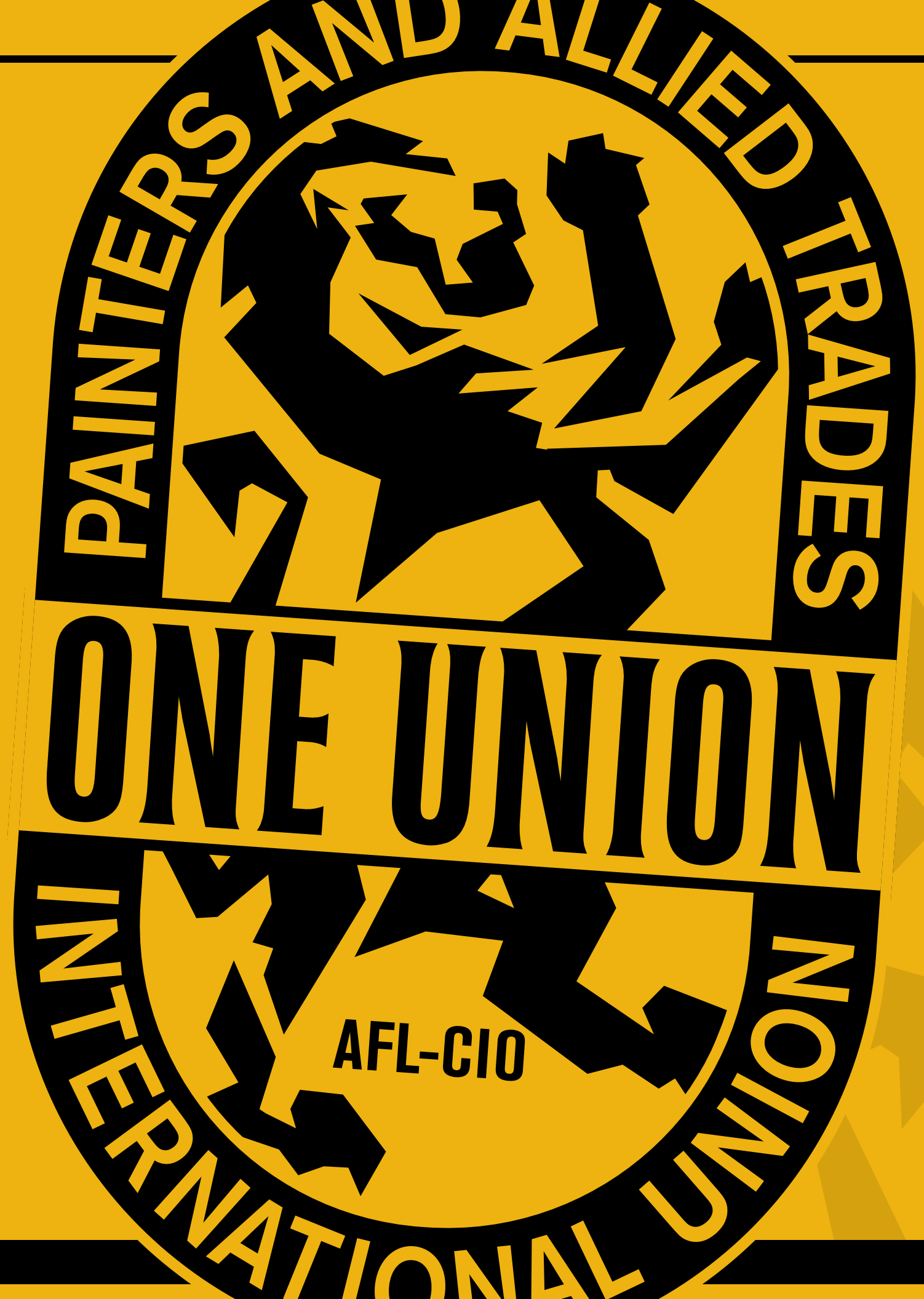
Today, District Council 82 is an organization serving approximately 4,000 members and retirees in nine local unions. It has expanded to the point where its political program outpaces those of all other AFL-CIO unions – the council has four seats on the Minnesota A.F.L.

general board, whereas it had only one just nine years earlier. The district council also has won recognition from the Minnesota AFL-CIO for having the highest percentage of members volunteering for union-endorsed candidates. Throughout the years, District Council 82 contracts have gained over \$20 in increases for members, which in many cases resulted in a gain of over 50 percent of an agreement’s package.

With a strategy for continued leadership and succession planning, District Council 82 has strengthened its position in serving the interests of its members. As a district council, it is far ahead of many others around the country as it places its focus on one-, three- and seven-year plans, as well as long-term goals to position itself for continued growth and success for future generations.

*“The success of District Council 82 has been made possible through teamwork and a dedication to improving the lives of our members. We have built an organization with a focus on enhancing educational opportunities, enforcing contracts and creating a presence on the streets. Our history shows the power of working together, and that’s why we look to the future with confidence.”*

Brother Terry L. Nelson, Business Manager/Secretary-Treasurer  
I.U.P.A.T. District Council 82







This book was proudly produced by

**UNION HISTORIES**<sup>TM</sup>  
*Preserving the Proud Stories of Local Unions*  
[unionhistories.com](http://unionhistories.com)

Head Historian: Calvin Jefferson

Art Direction: Andy Taucher

Layout & Design: Steven Demanett

