



 From The Desk of

UFCW International President Marc Perrone

Welcome to the second edition of UFCW News, a new quarterly newsletter that is designed to update you about what your union is doing to build a better life for our members and workers everywhere.

As this year's election draws near, I want to emphasize the profound importance of participating in this democratic process. **The choices we make at the ballot box will have deep implications for our rights as workers, for our families, and for the future of organized labor in the U.S. and beyond.**

Recently, we've seen alarming statements suggesting that **striking workers should be fired** and **questioning whether workers who put in extra hours deserve overtime pay**. These statements reflect a worldview where the interests of a few outweigh the needs of working families. As union members, we must take a stand against policies that undermine the dignity of work and the rights we've fought so hard to establish. **This election isn't about left or right; it's about choosing leaders who value labor rights, fair wages, and protections for working people.**

What we decide in this election will affect working families everywhere. The policies our leaders put forth have an impact far beyond our borders. Our vote here has the power to send a message of solidarity and strength that can inspire change for labor rights worldwide.

I urge each of you to make your voice heard this election. Vote for leaders who will stand with working people, safeguard the rights we have fought for, and strengthen the protections that support our families and our futures. **Together, we can ensure that the voices of our members – and all working families everywhere – are empowered and heard.**

For more information about this year's election, visit ufcwvotes.org.

Thank you for all you do for your union family and your community.

In solidarity,

Marc Perrone
President, UFCW International

Spotlight On **UFCW Local 99**

Building a pro-worker movement in the face of anti-union laws isn't easy. However, 2024 was a banner year for **UFCW Local 99**, which represents **25,000 essential workers in Arizona, Utah, and New Mexico**.

In a Right-to-Work state like Arizona, organizing new members can be an uphill battle. Thankfully, that hasn't stopped UFCW Local 99. In January, workers at the **Trulieve Magnolia cultivation facility** became the **first-ever cannabis agricultural workers to unionize** by voting to join UFCW Local 99. The Local's cannabis movement also grew significantly in Arizona's dispensaries when in July, workers at **Zen Leaf's Chandler** and **Local Joint** locations ratified the **first cannabis union contract in the state**. The Local also made historic gains for bookstore workers, helping Bookmans Entertainment Exchange employees in Tucson and Flagstaff become the first in their industry to unionize in the Grand Canyon State.

Apart from their organizing wins, much of UFCW Local 99's success in 2024 was years in the making. On the heels of a midterm election cycle that saw the Local's endorsed candidate for Attorney General elected by only 280 votes, **UFCW Local 99's work to oppose the pending Kroger-Albertsons merger has been significantly bolstered by Arizona Attorney General Kris Mayes**, who in February joined the FTC's lawsuit to **block the \$25 billion deal**. In September, Attorney General Mayes and Governor Kaite Hobbs joined more than **300 UFCW Local 99 stewards and activists** at their annual conference to report on their respective work to stop the merger and protect the interests of Arizona's working families.

For the Local's members who work at Fry's, Safeway, Smith's and Yuma Albertsons stores, 2024 was also a year where the fruits of their hard-fought bargaining were realized. With a strong mandate from **20,000 grocery members** to raise wages and decrease the health care probationary period in 2023, **UFCW Local 99 delivered the strongest possible agreement last year— more than six weeks before the expiration deadline**. The end result saw the health care waiting period cut in half, from 12 months to only six months for new employees, as well as **the largest contractual wage increase for Arizona grocery workers in over 20 years**.

From mobilizing members for positive change in the halls of power, to leveraging worker power at the bargaining table, **UFCW Local 99's recent accomplishments are a testament to the power of solidarity in the Southwest**.

Keep up with UFCW Local 99!

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Spotlight On

Hershey Chief Shop Steward



John Whitecavage is the Chief Shop Steward at his plant and has worked as a Sanitation Operator at the Hershey plant in Hazleton, Pa. for over 30 years.

As Chief Shop Steward, he oversees five to six stewards while working on grievances and other issues in the plant. In his role as Sanitation Operator, John does the hard work of keeping the plant clean, at times in confined spaces or under intense heat, to make sure the plant is still safe and clean for both consumers and his fellow workers.

His plant produces some of the most recognizable Hershey Halloween products, including Kit-Kats.

John says what many “people don't realize is...most of our Halloween stuff is done.” In fact, “around this time, like the end of October and November is when two of our lines go down for major cleaning for about three to four weeks...our workload gets pretty heavy at that point because we're cleaning everything.”

For food processing workers like John, the preparation for Halloween kicks off in the beginning of summer with Christmas following shortly after. “You see Christmas stuff sitting around on the lines [over the summer]. It's pretty neat.”

The work that John and his fellow plant workers do for the holiday season is critical, and when John sees people celebrating the holidays with Hershey candies he feels good “knowing that what we do every day is creating a safe product for the consumers.”

With 32 years of experience under his belt and a contract ratification this past March, John has one important message he wants to share: “there's a lot of good workers at Hershey, a lot of good union members that work hard...making American made products...hopefully you know, they appreciate it.”

Making sure to shop union this Halloween and upcoming Holiday season is more important than ever. With anti-union competitors taking up space on store shelves, John says he hopes “people realize” the importance of supporting union plants “and buy from us, not them.”



Featured Photo



UFCW Solidarity Day March (1991)

On August 31, 1991, thousands of UFCW members joined 325,000 unionists and allies to march on Washington, D.C., delivering a strong message to the nation's elected leaders - there is strength in unity.

When asked why he was marching, UFCW Local 227 member Grant Tinsley Jr. stated, "The country needs unions. We need to elect a president who will back the working people - the backbone of this nation."

The impact of the crowd's message could be felt by sheer numbers alone, as the turnout exceeded even the most optimistic of

predictions and easily surpassed the number of participants at the first Solidarity Day in 1981.

Today, as we approach Election Day, former UFCW President William H. Wynn's words still ring true, "The time for action is now."

Recent Victories



PetSmart Workers in Indiana Make History by Joining Local 700

The 28 workers, including groomers, bathers, pet specialists, cashiers, and dog trainers, joined our union due to concerns about company restructuring and potential benefit reductions, while also seeking a voice in the workplace to improve services for both customers and the animals in their care.

[Learn More](#)



Co-op Workers in Minnesota Join Local 1189

Workers at all three Mississippi Market Co-ops, located on Selby Avenue, West 7th Street, and East 7th Street in St. Paul, voted in favor of joining UFCW Local 1189 by 83 to 19 and cited unpredictable schedules, unrealistic attendance policies, and inconsistent management as reasons for forming a union.

[Learn More](#)

America's Food and Retail Union

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