

THE DUBUQUE DISPATCH

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LABOR BUILT THIS COUNTY. LABOR CAN SAVE IT.

This Labor Day, we're honoring the union members who built Dubuque County — and asking what it'll take to protect what they built, starting November 3rd.

Inside: A Word from UAW Local 94's Beau Busch, why organized labor still saves lives, the unions of Dubuque County, and where our candidates stand for workers.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

A WORD FROM A UNION HALL

This month, we handed leadership over to UAW Local 94's Beau Busch.

PAGE 3

WHY ORGANIZED LABOR SAVES LIVES

A Grant County tragedy, and the case for a union.

PAGE 4

THE UNIONS OF DUBUQUE COUNTY

Meet the union locals building our community.

PAGE 5

IMPORTANT DATES

DO YOU HAVE A VOTING PLAN?

Whether you vote early, by mail, or in person on November 3, make a plan now so nothing catches you off guard. Know your polling place, decide how you'll get there, and mark your calendar.

SEPTEMBER 8TH SCHOOL BOARD SPECIAL ELECTION

The Dubuque Education Association supports
Voting YES on the PPEL measure.

The Dubuque County Democratic Party is not making an official endorsement in this race. However, we encourage voters to make an informed choice and support the candidate whose platforms align with our shared values: [Jeremy Vallin](#)

ELECTION DAY IS TUESDAY - NOVEMBER 3

But you don't have to wait until then to vote. Here's what you need to know:

Early Voting: October 14 – November 2

Absentee Ballot Request Window: August 25 – October 19

Absentee Ballots Mailed Out: October 14 – October 19

Absentee Ballots Due: **Must be received by the Elections Office by 8:00 pm on November 3**

Online Voter Registration Deadline: October 19 (you can still register on Election Day)

Election Day Polls Open: 7:00 am – 8:00 pm

GET-OUT-THE-VOTE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Get Involved and Help Win Elections

Whether you enjoy meeting new people, organizing events, working with data, creating content, helping behind the scenes, or talking with neighbors, there is a way to use your time and talents.

You don't need campaign experience. You don't need to know every issue or have all the right words.

You only need an interest in building a stronger, fairer Dubuque County alongside neighbors who care.



Fill out a volunteer interest form at dbqdemocrats.org/get-involved

A WORD FROM LEADERSHIP

BY BEAU BUSCH, UAW LOCAL 94 STEWARD, CAP & VETS CHAIR

This month, we're doing something a little different. Instead of hearing from someone on our executive board or elected official, we wanted to hand this space over to someone out in the community doing the work — Beau Busch, a UAW Local 94 Steward who also chairs our Vets and CAP Committees. Beau is someone I've run into around town more than once, and every time, he's got something worth listening to. So this month, it's his words, not ours. — Josh



I'm proud to be a UAW member.

Members before me — and the ones standing next to me right now — bargained for my family's health care, my pension, our cost-of-living raises, and a lot more that's made life easier. If it wasn't for the UAW, I wouldn't have what I have. Plain and simple.

That's what Labor Day means to me. Not just a day off, but a reminder of what we can do when we stand together instead of going it alone. And it's family, too — my brother did three or four tours in Iraq, my dad and grandpas served, my father-in-law Mike Elliott is retired Navy. Between the union hall and my own family, I've seen what it looks like when people show up for each other.

With the election coming up on November 3rd, I want folks running for office to hear this loud and clear: restore state bargaining rights, end right-to-work in Iowa, stop the outsourcing of jobs, and raise the minimum wage — \$7.25 is a joke. Fix mental health care in this state, because right now it's garbage. And quit gutting veterans' benefits behind bills that look nice up front but hurt vets once you dig in.

Iowans need change. The last 18 years our state has gone down the toilet. We need to vote people in who work for the middle and working class, not the rich.

I've spent my career looking out for the people around me, on the job and off it. This November, I'm asking you to do the same. Vote like your pension depends on it — because for a lot of us, it does.

ORGANIZATION SPOTLIGHT HOPSICE OF DUBUQUE

Since 1982, Hospice of Dubuque has provided compassionate end-of-life, palliative, and bereavement care to the tri-state area. As a local 501(c)(3) nonprofit, they reinvest all surplus funds directly into patient support rather than profits. Recognized as an elite five-star hospice by CMS, they rank in the top 10% nationwide. Their dedicated team averages over 11 years of experience, providing significantly more nursing and therapy visits than for-profit alternatives. Ultimately, Hospice of Dubuque focuses on helping patients live fully and comfortably, prioritizing the community above all else.



Hospice of Dubuque
Community. Compassion. Nonprofit.

LABOR DAY REFLECTION

WHY ORGANIZED LABOR STILL SAVES LIVES

August 7, 2026 a 44-year-old construction worker fell nearly 30 feet to his death while repairing a farm building roof in Grant County, Wisconsin — just across the river from us. He was identified this week as Joel Antonio Alvarez Renderos of Darlington. His death is under investigation by OSHA, the Grant County Sheriff's Office, and the county coroner.

It's a hard way to start a Labor Day message, but it's also exactly why this month matters. Labor Day isn't just a long weekend — it's a reminder of why workers organized in the first place: to come home alive at the end of the shift.

DUBUQUE AREA LABOR-MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Growing up in 1990s Dubuque, the fallout of the 1980s economic crash was still visible on the faded t-shirts of older residents, echoing the infamous local billboard: "Last one to leave Dubuque, turn off the lights."

Behind that lingering despair was a devastating period where local unemployment reached 23%. While it is tempting to view the era's factory closures solely through the lens of corporate divestment, the historical reality was a deeply fractured community torn apart by endless, bitter strikes. The local economy was effectively paralyzed by zero-sum warfare between organized labor and management. demonstrated that sustainable labor reform requires establishing a permanent, equitable voice for workers long before a crisis takes hold.

The genuine solution that ultimately saved the city did not come from a victorious picket line, but from structural cooperation. In 1988, the newly formed Dubuque Area Labor-Management Council (DALMC) forced fierce rivals to the same table. By collaboratively managing job retention and workplace safety, unions and management replaced hostility with partnership. This shift demonstrated that sustainable labor reform requires establishing a permanent, equitable voice for workers long before a crisis takes hold.

Top WORKER Issues

A different perspective on labor priorities



1 Worker Right to a Living Wage

- Increase minimum wage at \$17/hr. and index to inflation
- No minimum wage



2 Worker Rights: Support the PRO Act

- Supports initial collective bargaining
- Punishes employers for violating workers' right to organize
- Closes loopholes regarding employee misclassification



3 Further Protect Worker Right to Unionize

- Increase penalties for employers who interfere with unionizing efforts
- Prevent mandatory anti-union meetings
- Allow workers to bring lawsuit against employers unlawfully interfering with unionizing efforts
- Require first contract to be negotiated in a timely manner
- Allow unions to collect dues from non-union members they represent
- No Right to Work laws
- Prohibit employers from permanently replacing striking workers



4 Worker Pensions

- Corporate bankruptcy reform to protect worker pensions
- De-rising of corporate pension investments
- Employer requirement for pension or 401(k) contribution
- No reduction of Social Security benefits
- No reductions in age or formula change



5 OSHA / Worker Protections

- Ensure fully funded and staffed OSHA
- Increase budget for enforcement
- Increase penalties for violations
- Demand action plans to rectify violations with recurring penalties for lack of action plan compliance
- Escalate penalties for repeated violations
- Ensure protections include public sector workers
- Increase workplace violence protections



6 No Trade Agreements Without Worker Participation

- No free trade agreements without workers at the table
- Renegotiation of United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement



7 Global Workers Rights

- No use of child or forced labor

8 AI

- Worker displacement support

THE UNIONS BUILDING DUBUQUE COUNTY

Dubuque County is home to more than 20 union locals — from the shop floor to the fire station to the mail route. Here's a look at some of the unions represented right here in our community.



UAW Local 94 (Auto Workers): Representing the heavy equipment workforce at John Deere Dubuque Works, they enforce labor standards, negotiate contracts, and drive regional grassroots political action



IBEW Local 704 (Electrical Workers): Covering Inside Wiremen and Telecommunications Technicians, they dispatch manpower for regional projects and co-manage the Dubuque Electrical Apprenticeship training program.



Carpenters Local 678: Representing skilled craftspeople across all major construction sectors, they partner with regional contractors to ensure safe, quality craftsmanship and drive industry standards through rigorous apprenticeship programs.



Dubuque Federation of Labor (AFL-CIO): The central umbrella organization for over 18 affiliated union locals across the region. They mobilize members for economic justice and coordinate unified political action across trades.



IAFF Local 25 (Firefighters): Representing Dubuque's professional firefighters and paramedics, they negotiate crucial operational standards—like 24-hour shift schedules—and fiercely advocate for frontline occupational safety.



NALC Local 257 (Letter Carriers): Representing local USPS city delivery carriers, they protect working conditions, enforce workplace agreements, and organize major community outreach like the annual "Stamp Out Hunger" food drive.



Dubuque Building and Construction Trades Council: A coalition of regional construction locals that partners with contractors to negotiate project labor agreements, ensuring major city developments are built safely by highly trained union labor.

Solidarity starts with showing up. Your local is only as strong as its active members. Check with your shop steward, reach out to your local's hall, or visit dubuquefed.org to find the date for your next membership meeting. Whether it's joining a committee, attending a rally, or simply casting a vote on the floor—your voice matters. Get involved today.

And 15+ more locals across Dubuque County. Full list at dubuquefed.org/affiliated-unions.

AUGUST LOOK BACK



L-R: Lindsay James, Tyler Stewart, & Ryan Comer



Sam Wooden

Pints & Diplomacy



Ryan Peterman



Making Waves for Clean Water



Mary Unga-Sogaard



Rick Dickinson

Shari Flatt



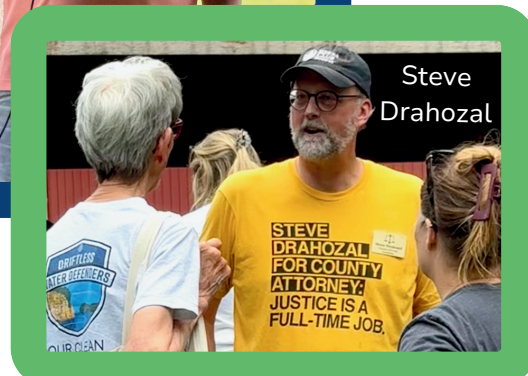
Chris Jones



Ann Sweeney



Kristin Dietzel



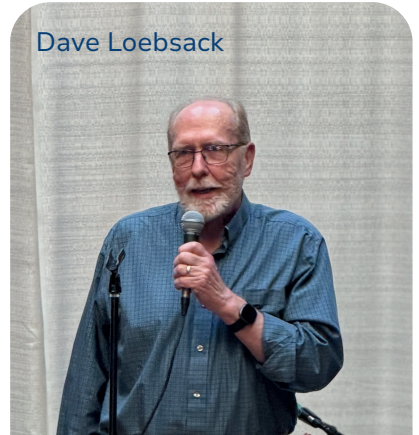
Steve Drahozal



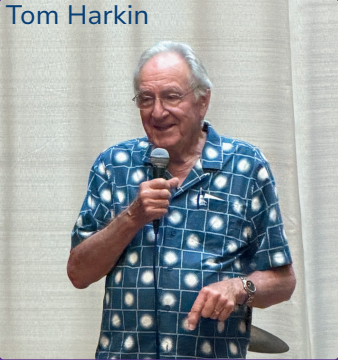
Matt Robinson



Lindsay James



Dave Loeb sack



Tom Harkin



Lindsay James Corn Boil



Rob Sand

Rob Sand - 100 Town Hall Tour



Tom Townsend's Golf Outting



Dubuque County Meet the Candidate



John Norwood

WHERE WE STAND

Labor Policy & Platform

Dubuque was built by working people — factory workers, teachers, nurses, tradespeople, small business owners, and union families who believed hard work should lead to stability and opportunity. We believe workers deserve fair wages, safe working conditions, paid family and sick leave, and the freedom to organize and bargain collectively.

Fully funding and staffing OSHA, real penalties for violations that escalate for repeat offenders, extending protections to public sector workers, and stronger workplace violence protections.

Raising the minimum wage to \$17 an hour and tying future increases to inflation — including ending the subminimum wage, so everyone doing a full day's work earns a real wage for it.

- Paid family and sick leave.
- Protecting collective bargaining rights.
- Preventing wage theft and worker exploitation.
- Protecting public employee pensions like IPERS.
- Investing in infrastructure projects that create local jobs.
- Supporting ethical business practices that put workers and communities first.

We also believe workers with disabilities deserve equal pay for equal work, and that all workers should have access to safe workplaces and fair treatment.

Nominee and Elected Officials Thoughts

Kristin Dietzel

When workers do well, families, businesses, and communities thrive.

Tom Townsend

Through tireless efforts of many brave workers joining together working conditions have improved for every worker. Unions fought for safety and better working conditions before labor laws existed.

Sam Wooden

My father was a union pipefitter and business agent. I saw firsthand how unions balance corporate power, ensuring workers have a say rather than having to just "deal with it."

Mary Ungs-Sogaard

"Labor" means the framework of laws and practices that protects our workforce, supports business growth, and holds both sides accountable.

Steve Drahozal

Union labor put food on our table growing up, which is why I continue to back the movement.

County Nominees



Kristin Dietzel
County Supervisor



Rick Dickinson
County Supervisor

**Vote
for
Both**



Steve Drahozal
County Attorney



Ann Sweeney
County Recorder

2026 DUBUQUE DEMOCRATIC NOMINEES

State Nominees



Rob Sand
Governor



Dave Muhlbauer
Lt. Governor



Ryan Peterman
Secretary of State



Taylor Wettach
State Auditor



John Norwood
State Treasurer



Nate Willems
Attorney General



Chris Jones
Secretary of
Agriculture

Federal Nominees



Josh Turek
US Senate



Lindsay James
US House: CD02

State Legislative Nominees



Mary Ungs-Sogaard
Iowa Senate 33



Brian Bruening
Iowa House Rep 64



Carolyn Wiezorek
Iowa House Rep 65



Michael Coonrad
Iowa House Rep 67



Sam Wooden
Iowa House Rep 71



Matt Robinson
Iowa House Rep 72

VOTING RESOURCES

Make sure you're ready for the next election by accessing official voting information. Whether you need to verify your registration status, find your polling place, or review local election administration details, the best approach is to check the official sources.

Here is where to find the most accurate and up-to-date information for elections in Dubuque:

County Election Information: For comprehensive details on county-wide elections, voter registration, and official updates, start with the local authority.

Visit the [Dubuque County Elections](#) official website.



Dubuque County
Elections Website

Find Your Polling Place: Polling locations can sometimes change. Ensure you know where to go on Election Day by using the official lookup tools.

Use the [Where to Vote](#) tool provided by Dubuque County, or check the [Iowa Secretary of State Polling Place Lookup](#).



Where to Vote Polling Place
Lookup

City Election Details: For information specific to municipal elections and local candidate filings, refer to the local government site.

Visit the [City of Dubuque Elections](#) page.



City of Dubuque
Elections

Verify, Don't Assume. Election details can shift, so always rely on official government websites or the election auditor's office to confirm your voting logistics.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Get Involved and Help Win Elections

Please get involved. We have momentum, and if you are looking for a way to help our community, check out our website, stop by our local office at 123 Main Street, or reach out to a nominee who needs help door-knocking.

This edition features a strong focus on the labor and economy of Dubuque: where it is headed, where it has come from, who to lean on for assistance, and how to connect to build a better future for all.



Best
Josh Lampman



Check out September's
upcoming events!