

President Dimondstein: We Can Forge Ahead, Build Power & Win!

In a rousing State of the Union speech to convention delegates, President Mark Dimondstein outlined the challenges and possibilities facing APWU members.

“We are working, living and struggling in a time where there is an all-out war on workers, our families, our communities, our standards of living, our rights, our organizations,” he said. “Make no mistake about it: It is Them vs. Us. Wall Street vs. Main Street. Capital vs. Labor...”

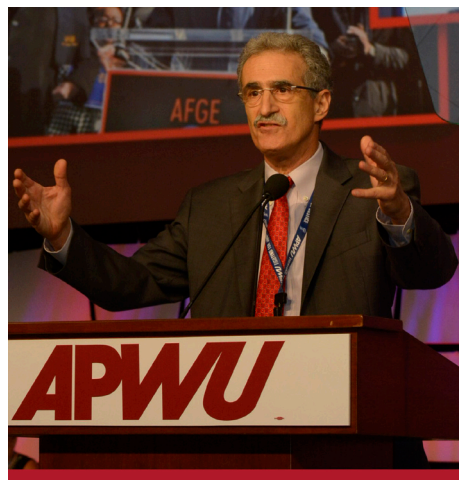
“Our precious right to vote is under severe attack,” and “elections are increasingly and openly bought and sold,” he said.

“By design, we have a ‘winner takes all’ election system that perpetuates the choice between the ‘lesser of two evils,’” and “stacks the deck against the development of a needed union-based political party...”

“CEOs of fast food chains make \$9,000, not a month, not a week, not a day, but an hour – while they resist workers’ demands for \$15 per hour...”

“Public libraries, parks, hospitals, schools, utilities, transportation and yes, public postal services, are under extreme attack aimed at privatization...”

“But since the people trust the post



office and postal workers, outright privatization is not so easy. Instead privatizers seek to degrade service as a means to their end: Keep the lines long, hours short, delay mail, deliver late...

“All this is part of our reality. But there is another truth as well: Workers are standing up and fighting back...”

“Fast food and retail workers are leading the charge for living wages, and making real gains.

“Unionized auto workers stood firm in recent contract negotiations and largely eliminated the divisive two-tier wage systems at the ‘big three’ auto companies.

“Forty-thousand unionized workers took on the behemoth Verizon Corporation in a 46-day strike, and won.

“The entire labor movement stands united against the Trans Pacific Partnership – the TPP – and other rotten trade deals that enrich multinationals at the expense of workers everywhere.

“And the APWU is actively in the midst of this good fight.

“The two years since our last National Convention have been challenging and exciting as we work to transform our union into a fighting, activist organization. Together, we have made many advances.

“Front and center has been the fight for a new Collective Bargaining Agreement with the USPS...”

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Video Highlights

Video highlights will be posted online throughout the convention. You can view them at apwu.org, like us on Facebook at [APWUnational](https://www.facebook.com/APWUnational), or follow us at [Twitter.com/APWUnational](https://twitter.com/APWUnational). Join the Text Loop to stay updated throughout the convention by texting ‘Convention’ to 91990. Message and data rates apply.

Build Power, Forge Ahead & Win

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“With your support and the guidance of the 2014 National Convention delegates, this leadership refused to engage in another round of concessionary bargaining... We made progress on most of our major goals – securing real wage increases, strengthening job security, defending our cost-of-living and no lay-off protections, and enhancing the career and full-time workforce...”

“You played a crucial role by embracing the nationwide Contract Campaign. Contract Action Teams educated their co-workers and the public, organized the buttons, stickers and union gear campaigns...”

“You built solidarity and unity, which carries forward to strengthen our everyday battles for workplace justice...”

“While we focused immense time and resources on preparation, negotiations, mediation and Interest Arbitration in the victorious fight for a good contract, we also made advances on many other important fronts.

“The union leadership of all our divisions won major arbitration cases and reached significant settlements with management that improved job security...”

“Building on the outstanding settlement on the filling of residual vacancies, the union has succeeded in converting 33,000 PSEs to career since the last convention! What a life-changing, union-won event...”

“Last convention, I spoke of the need to build A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service. It is now a reality and consists of 140 organizations,

including 80 national labor, faith-based, community, environmental and civil rights organizations...”

“The APWU has also spearheaded the Campaign for Postal Banking. The ‘legal loan sharking’ predatory payday lending, check-cashing industry preys on tens of millions of the working poor. The Postal Service, with its highly-trained and dedicated workforce and its presence in every community, is well-positioned to provide paycheck cashing and other basic financial services, commonly performed by postal systems around the world. Winning this fight will strengthen our public Postal Service and protect postal jobs.

“And what about the Staples fight? ...Staples stock has dropped 50 percent; the company is shuttering stores; its merger with Office Depot was rejected by the courts (thanks in large part to our efforts); and Staples CEO Ron Sargent was forced out.

“The Stop Staples movement is going strong. Leafleting at Staples stores is constantly turning away customers and we have won significant victories at the

National Labor Relations Board. We have the ongoing support of our sister unions and many allies.

“This is not just a fight against Staples. Plain and simple, this is a campaign to disrupt and stop management’s plans to privatize retail jobs. And here’s some great news: In his farewell address former Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe admitted we are winning when he acknowledged, ‘Unfortunately, it’s now tougher for us to find retail partners...’

“Two years ago, our Postal Union Alliance was new. Since then, the relationship has grown stronger...”

“On the legislative front, let’s face it: These are difficult and politically hostile times...”

“We have worked with our sister postal unions and even postal management to gain legislative relief. We have begun to build relationships that did not previously exist with Republican members of Congress from rural states as part of our fight to restore and protect good postal services...”

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Courtney Jenkins, standing, co-chaired the workshop.

Below: Panelists Daleo Freeman; Keith Richardson, and Rachel Walthall, who co-chaired the workshop.

Empowering Young Workers

At a workshop on Empowering Young Workers, Robin Robertson asked the question on everyone's mind: How do we attract more young workers to the union cause? At 38, the secretary-treasurer of the St. Louis Gateway Area Local is the youngest activist in her local.

In the past, locals had bowling leagues and invited workers to join; if they heard you singing by your machine, they asked you to join the chorus, said Clerk Craft NBA Rachel Walthall, who helped lead the workshop.

But as Cleveland Area Local President Daleo Freeman pointed out, "You have to craft the message for the time."

If a young worker is interested in art, ask them to design a flyer for an upcoming event, Walthall suggested. "Find out what they are into, what excites them," she said.

"Find your niche," said Keith Richardson, Central Region Accident Benefit Association Director. "Find that first and then you grow. Every local has something that you can take from it and grow."

In a panel discussion, Walthall, Freeman and Richardson – now in their 40s – shared lessons from their own triumphs and tribulations when they were young, new union activists. The panel discussion was moderated

by Courtney Jenkins, a member of the Baltimore Area Local's Executive Board and the APWU's representative to the AFL-CIO's Young Worker Advisory Council.

Growing Pains

There's no denying that being a young union activist comes with growing pains. Mistakes will be made, but finding a mentor – or several – to guide you will keep you moving in the right direction, Jenkins said.

Walthall echoed that theme, repeatedly paying tribute to the experienced union officers who guided her when she got started – and who continue to give her counsel to this day.

But older, more experienced union officers don't always encourage young people to get involved, Freeman noted. Sometimes, he said, "They tell you to wait your turn."

"Don't think you are going to run in and become president," he added. "What you need to do is get involved. That's the only way we are going to perpetuate ourselves."

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Empowering Young Workers

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Young members have every right to attend meetings and voice opinions, Walthall said, and when their numbers grow, their voices will grow louder, too.

By the same token, newer activists must recognize they have a lot to learn. Freeman recalled how proud he was of the first grievance he settled as a shop steward, until a more experienced

representative helped him negotiate a better deal.

Finding the balance between asserting yourself and learning from others was a theme throughout the workshop. But all agreed: Getting more young people involved is essential to the future of the APWU.

Johanna Rice, from the Northeast Florida Area Local, asked how to avoid getting overwhelmed by the responsi-

bilities of being a steward, especially when time to conduct union business is scarce.

“You have to learn to sustain yourself. It’s not a sprint, it’s a marathon,” Freeman said.

Getting young workers involved is a must, Walthall said. “We want to make sure the union is here for working people,” she said.

Build Power, Forge Ahead & Win!

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“The 2016 presidential primary season was truly historic...The APWU National Executive Board was on the cutting edge of history when we endorsed Sen. Bernie Sanders, an outstanding friend and supporter of postal workers. And so many APWU activists were enthusiastically ‘Feeling the Bern.’

“In light of the results of the presidential primary, and given the stark choices, the National Executive Board has now endorsed the Democratic Party nominee, Hillary Clinton. It will now be up to this convention to decide the best way forward in this 2016 election.

“Remember, elections come and go. But the struggle continues... The main challenge going forward will be to build a powerful movement for social and economic justice...

“We will continue the fight to improve working conditions... We will continue to resist the slash-and-burn policies former Postmaster General Donahoe put in place that undermine good service to the people and job security and we will build the fight for expanded services.

“We will continue to fight for needed postal reform... We will continue to build the ‘Stand Up for Safe Jobs’ campaign in every corner of every post office.

“We will continue the good fight to stop further plant consolidations and closings and to return to overnight service standards...

“Together, with all of you, we will continue to build an activist, fighting union... From our workplaces to the streets, from our neighborhoods to the halls of Congress, it is time to ever more seriously educate, organize, mobilize and galvanize.

“We will not be able to elect, litigate, hope or grieve our way out of these difficult and dangerous times. We will have to fight our way out with a movement of millions and using all the tools at our disposal. We must build a crusade to organize the unorganized! We must continue to organize a crusade to save the public Postal Service. We must be part of a crusade to save our unions! We must be part of a crusade for social and economic justice. Let’s continue to stand up and fight back, hand-in-hand

with each other, all postal unions, all labor, the public and our many community allies...

“The last two years have shown us this truth. Mobilized and united in action, ‘Fighting for Justice,’ we made great progress. We can forge ahead, build our power, and win! Carry On and Solidarity Forever!”

APWU NEWS Bulletin
23rd Biennial Convention
Bulletin No. 1
August 22, 2016

Credentials Committee

As presented by Co-Chairperson Sharon Collona of the Twin Cities PDC Local, the preliminary report for the APWU Credentials Committee for Monday, Aug. 22, is as follows:

The 23rd Biennial Convention’s 2,039 delegates represent 327 locals, 50 states, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Also in attendance were 76 national officers and five Retiree National Convention Delegates.