

# BCTGM *News*

JANUARY–  
MARCH 2024

VOLUME 26  
NUMBER 1

RALLY!

ORGANIZE!

VOTE!

2024:

YEAR OF

ACTION



# *the* PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## Union Leaders are **BUILT** – **Not MADE**

On an unseasonably warm Sunday afternoon in the spring of 1992 in Lebanon, Tennessee, me and a small group of workers from the Bradley Candy Company organizing committee, who had just won their union election, gathered around a shoddy table in a borrowed hotel conference room to hammer out demands for a first collective bargaining agreement.

Some were candy mixers, others packaging operators, maintenance and sanitation workers. All of whom were mistreated by the company. They all knew they deserved better and came to the realization that asking nicely wasn't going to do the trick. They believed the Union could help them and fought hard to win the union election and become members.

I was a new Southern Region International Representative at the time and this was the very first union contract that I negotiated on my own. By the time we departed that afternoon, we had put together the document which would become the first collective bargaining agreement at Bradley Candy.

Our negotiating committee pushed hard against this small, family-run company who openly fought against a fair and equitable contract that would improve the lives of workers. For six months the company fought us and it wasn't until the workers threatened to strike that they agreed to that first union contract.

At the ratification meeting the workers overwhelmingly ratified their first contract, some openly crying. For the first time they would be able to put in job bids and be picked by seniority – instead of favoritism.

This was the early 1990s in a small Tennessee town. Unions were not popular in the South. I was able to help people who thought they had nowhere to turn when management treated them unfairly.

Just like the workers we organize today; these candy workers were pushing back against an employer bent on spreading inequality. They wanted fair treatment, better working conditions, and the right to a collective bargaining agreement.

I thought I knew a thing or two when I was a young union leader negotiating that first contract. Now, looking back on my years of union leadership, of challenging management and winning at the bargaining table, I could fill volumes with what I didn't know at the beginning. The lessons I've learned in five decades of walking in the shoes of the workers I represent have taught me more about union power than I could have

ever imagined 50 years ago when I became a member of this Union.


The most important lesson I took away from that first organizing drive and contract fight is that workers deserve dignity. Our union is only as strong as its members. As union members, you must believe in this Union; believe in our cause and be willing to fight for it.

After that first union contract at Bradley Candy, I spent the next 23 years servicing local unions and negotiating hundreds of contracts for workers in the South. I helped with organizing campaigns all over the country. Some we won, like Rich Products in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Some we lost, like RJ Reynolds in North Carolina. But we never stopped trying to bring more workers into our Union.

For decades, the BCTGM has made real gains for our members. We have improved working conditions, pay and retirement security for workers in all our industries. In recent years, we have hit the picket line to fight for better treatment, higher health and safety standards and a stronger voice on the job – and we have won those fights!


I am truly humbled by my journey from shop steward to International President. I have never, and will never, forget where I came from. All of us must fight to make sure that future generations of workers in our industries have the opportunity to be members of this great Union.

— Anthony Shelton, BCTGM International President



# BCTGM

## News



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The meeting of the International Staff included representatives and organizers from throughout the U.S.

# International Officers and Staff Meet to STRATEGIZE for 2024

As the new year of 2024 opens, so does another chapter in the 138-year history of the BCTGM.

Members of the BCTGM International Staff, together with the Executive Officers and Vice Presidents, gathered for a staff meeting the first week of January in Orlando, Fla.

In 2020, BCTGM International President Anthony Shelton began an ambitious plan to increase the BCTGM International’s field staff. Over the last four years, new International Representatives and Organizers have been added to each BCTGM Region.

The meeting focused on preparing for 2024 contract negotiations, organizing efforts, union member education, servicing local unions and membership, as well as team building exercises.

“For this Union to continue to grow and provide the high-quality service our hardworking members deserve, we have to have a dedicated and diverse staff to help service local unions and organize new members in all regions,” reflects International President Anthony Shelton. “I am proud to say that the BCTGM has an International staff who have been selected from within the ranks of this Union because of their understanding of the work our members

do and the excellent contracts we negotiate and enforce,” adds Shelton.

Unlike International Vice Presidents who are elected by delegates to the BCTGM International Constitutional Convention every four years, International staff is appointed by the International President.

“We know that the world is changing and that our Union must not simply change with it, but be at the forefront of that change. It is up to you to help lead the way,” President Shelton said at the conclusion of the staff meeting.

## BCTGM International Staff by Region:

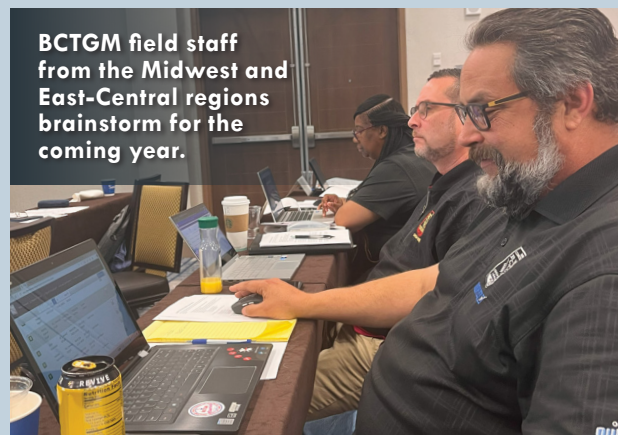
**East-Central:**  
Jared Cummings  
Lisa Gregory

**Midwest:**  
Jason Davis  
Ryan Hocke  
Veronica Hopkins

**Southern:**  
Darrell Copeland  
Jason Thomas

**Western:**  
Alejandro Ahumada  
Andrew Gutierrez  
Karrie Setters

**Tobacco:**  
Randy Fulk  
Derrick Byrd



BCTGM field staff from the Midwest and East-Central regions brainstorm for the coming year.



Intl. Pres. Anthony Shelton presided over the meeting that included two-days of discussions and planning.

# BCTGM Locals Receive Union Recognition

**Under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), employers may voluntarily recognize a union based on the union's showing of majority support.** In these circumstances, a National Labor

Relations Board (NLRB)-conducted election is not required.

While voluntary union recognition has increased over the last few years, many employers reject this process. In many cases, employers force their workers into a union election campaign where they harass and intimidate workers into voting against the union.

However, recently two BCTGM-represented companies voluntarily recognized the BCTGM as the exclusive bargaining agent for its workers.

## Bimbo Bakeries USA

At the Bimbo Bakeries USA warehouse and distribution center in Somerset, Ky., Charles Hill had wanted to be a member of the BCTGM for all of his 10 years of employment. However, the Labor Board will not give union recognition for a single worker. When Daniel Hunt was hired to work with Hill at the distribution center, they each signed union cards and submitted them to BIMBO. The Company agreed to recognize the Union.

Now proud members of Local 57 (Columbus, Ohio), the workers are happy to enjoy the benefits of having a union contract with regular pay increases and pension benefits.

"We're looking forward to working with these companies to ensure that these hardworking employees get the union benefits they deserve. Every worker should have a voice in their workplace," concludes International President Anthony Shelton.



## Michigan Sugar Caro, Mich.

At the Michigan Sugar distribution center and warehouse in Caro, Mich., the company approached Local 260G (Caro, Mich.) about the 12 workers becoming BCTGM members. The BCTGM represents Michigan Sugar workers at the Caro sugar beet processing plant, as well as workers at other Michigan Sugar locations including Sebewaing, Mich. (Local 261G), Crosswell, Mich. (262G) and Bay City, Mich. (Local 263G).

International Representative Lisa Gregory helped facilitate the Memo of Understanding to add the Caro warehouse workers to the Local 260G collective bargaining agreement. According to Gregory, the company wanted to be able to retain workers with the many benefits afforded to other workers in the BCTGM collective bargaining agreement.





Local 104G Committee members and BCTGM Intl. Staff meet to review the contract. Pictured left to right: Bill Warmoth, Chris Pavey, Intl. Bus. Agt./Organizer Ryan Hocke, Andrew Bullman, Roger Smith and Intl. Rep. Veronica Hopkins.

# Local 104G Negotiates **Historic** Contract With ADM

In early 2024, after fruitless negotiations, Local 104G (Frankfort, Indiana) members who process soybeans at the Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) mill in Frankfort voted overwhelmingly to strike.

According to International Business Agent/Organizer Ryan Hocke, who was leading his first negotiations as a new staff member of the International Union, the Local 104G members were not happy with the wage proposal submitted by the company.

“We negotiated for three days. At the end of the third day, we could not reach a mutual agreement on the financials before the company issued a ‘Last, Best, Final Offer.’ We held a vote on the offer which was overwhelmingly rejected by the membership and then held a strike vote,” recalls Hocke.

To avoid a strike, the company asked to resume negotiations. “ADM knew our members were serious about their needs at the table,” says Hocke.

The final agreement was overwhelmingly ratified by the members. According to Hocke, the contract was historic for the local. “This contract brought 7%

increases for a vast majority of the membership and an even greater increase for those on the off shifts due to an increase in shift premiums,” notes Hocke.

Other benefits negotiated include an on-call wage adjustment of \$150 per week; an additional holiday; improved language concerning the joint labor-management safety and health committee; and, improved security camera language. Lastly, all employees received retroactive pay to December 1, 2023 when the contract expired.

According to BCTGM International Representative Veronica Hopkins, who assisted with the negotiations, Local 104G members were very happy with the settlement. “A number of members said these are the best raises they’ve ever achieved. They were proud of themselves for standing up to one of the largest agricultural companies in the world,” said Hopkins.

The Local 104G bargaining committee included President Roger Smith, Vice President Christopher Pavey, and Committee members Andrew Burman and Bill Warmouth. International Representative Jason Davis also joined Hocke and Hopkins in assisting the Committee throughout the contract negotiations.

The BCTGM represents thousands of members at ADM facilities across the United States.

## Local 10G Leader Retires

After more than 43 years, Local 10G (Cedar Rapids, Iowa) Vice President/Chief Shop Steward Donnie “Ned” Clark is retiring from Treehouse Foods. Local 10G President Mark Randall reflects, “Donnie has served as a Chief Steward and Committeeman for the last 25 years. We all wish him a great retirement and thank him for all the work he put in as a union leader for BCTGM Local 10G!”



# Local 22 Members at Broadway

All the fresh-baked goods sold at Jerry's County Market in Minnesota and Wisconsin are proudly made by Local 22 (Minneapolis, Minn.) members at Jerry's Broadway Bakery in Minneapolis.

Union members produce bread, rolls, cookies, brownies, chunky breads, hand rolled and cut cinnamon rolls, specialty cakes and a vast array of other sweet treats at the bakery to ship out to 18

different County Market locations.

A majority of these members used to work in the company's retail stores. Jerry's opened Broadway Bakery in an effort to become more efficient at producing certain products to ship to their stores. The bakers of Local 22 transferred from retail locations to Broadway Bakery for a new adventure. Their skill set coming into the new bakery enabled the company to immediately begin producing



Jessica Hamada



Michael Rowles



Carmen Paucar



Matt Hamada and Joe Ziemer



Shanda Trotter



Ceila Ros

# Brooklyn Bakery in Minneapolis Shine

products not long after new equipment was up and running.

According to Local 22 President Wally Borgan, Brooklyn Bakery opened with 60 members and has expanded to include more than 100.

Local 22 members in the retail store bakeries fry fresh donuts on site, make pies, decorate cakes and bake other specialty goods.

“The Brooklyn Bakery Union members are always working hard every time I walk through the

shop and I am always met with smiles and very few concerns,” says Borgan.

Shop Steward Matt Hamada says that the members have a good working relationship with management. “Any issues that come up, management works with me and Local 22 to get the best possible solution. We are very proud to display the BCTGM Shield logo on store windows and take great pride in showing solidarity for other Union members in need,” says Hamada.



Joe Ziemer



Margaret Wolf



Cindy Compton has worked for Jerry's for more than 40 years.



L. 22 Pres. Wally Borgan (right) and Gabby Prosser



Samara Starr



Brandon Carr

# Local 196T GROWS in N

**BCTGM Local 196T (Owensboro, Ky.) members produce some of America's best-known brands of smokeless tobacco at the Swedish Match factory in Owensboro, Kentucky.**

Union members also produce a unique made-only-in-Owensboro tobacco-free product called ZYN, a flavored nicotine powder pouch.

In 2019, the company announced a \$115 million expansion to the plant to exclusively focus on the ZYN product line. The expansion of the plant has meant hundreds of new workers have been hired. Six years ago, there were 200 workers employed at the smokeless tobacco plant. In 2024,

the number of workers will exceed 900.

According to Local 196T President Brent Clary, this has presented an exciting opportunity to help grow and strengthen the Local. Because Kentucky is a right-to-work state, the Local has developed an extensive new member orientation program.

"We understood that we would be welcoming in people who haven't ever been exposed to a Union in the workplace," says Clary.

"We wanted to be able to communicate with every single new employee coming into our Union and to instill the knowledge of the pro-union culture within our plant. We want to develop strong relationships with every worker from the beginning and cultivate unity and strength," he adds.



The L. 196T Executive Committee (left to right): Pres. Brent Clary, Vice Pres. Preston Higdon, Recording Secy. Jeff Beavers and Fin. Secy.-Treas. Rick Gant.



L. 196T members (left to right) Lee Ranburger, Morgan Clary, Jake Lyons, Baylee Hall, Brian Powers, Carson Brooks, Branson Brooks and Jackson Ford.



Chief Steward Chris Hatfield.



Judy Freels (left) has the highest seniority (5/12/75) at Swedish Match and Kyle Rice is the newest member (11/6/23).



The Health and Wellness Committee (left to right) includes Jordan Cook, L. 196T, Vanessa Sigers, Michelle Kistner, and Melissa Montgomery.



# Members and Solidarity

Each new member is invited to the Local Union office to be officially welcomed by the Executive Committee. They are presented with a Local 196T welcome gift bag that includes a BCTGM Power/Union Plus discount brochure, a copy of the Local 196T bylaws, a copy of the BCTGM International Constitution, a Union Worker's Bible, a list of the Local's committees, a list of departmental stewards and a BCTGM 196T hat.

During this first meet-and-greet, the new members are asked to participate in the Local 196T Union Education Program. Developed by the Local's Education Committee, this new program includes the Union History, Understanding Union By-Laws, Committees (elected), Committees (appointed),

Grievances, Contract Negotiating and the ever-popular subject, "What does the Union do for you?" By attending this hour-long education session, members are entitled to have their \$35 union initiation fee waived.

"We believe that through the meet and greet time and the education class, we can keep our Union growing and strong," concludes Clary.

Local 196T has also established a robust Health and Wellness Committee that allows the local to offer help to Union members who suffer hard times. The committee raises funds by holding fundraisers throughout the year and in the last four years, the Local has distributed more than \$9,000 to members in need.



The Education Committee includes (left to right) Dana Hopkins, Joe Cravens, Morgan Clary, Kevin Lindsey, Gary Bumpus and Michelle Kistler.



Every new member receives a Union hat at the end of orientation.



Committee (left to right) Lori Thompson, Melisa, and Bride.



New Union member orientation.



L. 196T Pres. Brent Clary (right) reads the code of conduct to new members.



Holding their Steward certificates, from left to right: Kenneth Montoya, Tim Lucero, Patricia Bahati, Samuel Garcia, Tobi Goodrich, Art Duran and Damian Martinez.

# Local 35 I Stewards Hone Their Skills

## Stewards from Local 35 I successfully completed a steward training education conference.

The training was run by International Representatives Karrie Setters and Andrew Gutierrez.

The two-day education conference focused on teaching the roles and responsibilities of union stewards by using role playing, small group activities and focusing on plant-specific challenges faced by stewards regularly.

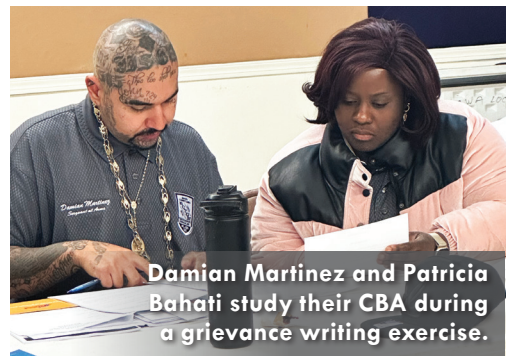
Stewards in this class were eager to learn more about the International Union, how to “talk

union,” and how to properly explain the Union contract to members and investigate a grievance.

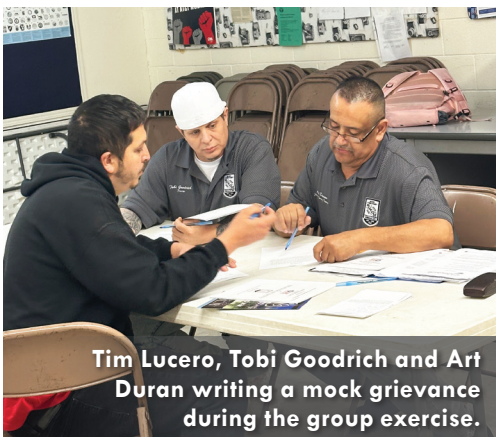
“The BCTGM’s extensive steward training program is creating one of the best educated Unions in the labor movement,” says Matthew Clark, Executive Assistant to the International President. “Educated stewards can handle grievances promptly and efficiently. Well-respected stewards can educate newcomers on the contract and guide them to become strong trade-unionists. Simply stated, well-informed, educated and enthusiastic stewards are the bedrock of a successful Local Union,” adds Clark, who formerly served as the BCTGM’s Director of Education.



Intl. Rep. Karrie Setters educates Local 35 I stewards.



Damian Martinez and Patricia Bahati study their CBA during a grievance writing exercise.



Tim Lucero, Tobi Goodrich and Art Duran writing a mock grievance during the group exercise.



Intl. Rep. Andrew Gutierrez speaks to the group and answers questions.

# Local 232 Stewards, Ready to Lead

**Ten Local 232 (Phoenix, Ariz.) shop stewards have completed a two-day training in Phoenix.**

The union members, who make bread and buns for Bimbo Bakeries in Phoenix, Ariz. and flour for Bay State Milling in Tolleson, Ariz., are hungry to shake things up, according to Western Region International Representative Andrew Gutierrez. “We have quite a few young, energized guys in the Local who are ready to lead. We were going to do this training at a later date but they were ready for it,” he said.

Along with Gutierrez, Western Region International Vice President Shad Clark helped guide the trainings on January 25 and 26. “Our shop stewards are motivated and prepared to take on the challenging but rewarding job of representing the membership of Local 232,” said Clark.

Pictured here, from left to right, are Shop Stewards Bernardo Chacon Velez, Rosalinda Calvillo-Vargas, Bay State Chief Steward Ron Wolfe, Chris Urteaga, Sergio Macias, Bimbo Chief Steward Mike Jones, Daniel Westerfield, Jody Daniels and Intl. Rep. Andrew Gutierrez.



# Local 103 Stewards, Refreshed and Motivated

**Five stewards are hitting the ground running after a one-day training with Southern Region International Representative Darrell Copeland.**

On February 5, Local 103 (Orlando, Fla.) Shop Stewards Gregory Tucker, Debra Smith, Oscar Harris, Vanessa Wilson, June Wren and Roderick Lee spent the day with Copeland at the local library.

“One of the stewards is newly elected and the others were ready for a refresher, so we decided to hold a training,” says Copeland. They learn a lot and motivate one another.”

The stewards make bread and buns for Kroger Anderson Bakery. Steward Smith reflects with gratitude, “Darrell showed us a lot of things we weren’t doing that we need to be doing. He really gave us a lot of information, especially on labor laws. I hope we can have more of these classes as more stewards are added.”



Pictured here, from left to right, are Oscar Harris, June Wren, Roderick Lee and Debra Smith.

# Local 358, focused on GROWTH

Thirteen rank-and-file organizers at Local 358 (Richmond, Va.) recently completed a training focused on growing their Union.

The training was led by East-Central Region International Vice President Roger Miller and International Representative Jared Cummings. "Darlene wants to grow the local," Miller said of Local 358 Financial Secretary/Business Agent Darlene Carpenter, "and this is how you do it. The organizers seemed inspired after the one-day training."

Below Local 358 organizers reflect on their experience.



Name:  
*Mahdee Fareed*  
Employer:  
*UNFI*

*"The Organizing Training was a great opportunity to shed light on the power in having a union to those that don't have one."*

Name:  
*Austin Seay*

Employer:  
*Nabisco*

*"The training was very hands on with us going out in the field and trying to make contacts at other plants. I really enjoyed this opportunity to learn how to organize future union members."*



Name:  
*Jaquisha Wright*  
Employer:  
*Sauer Brands*

*"I loved the training. It gave me insight on how organizing worked and I really enjoyed when we actually went out to talk to people at prospective plants about possibly getting the union at their workplace."*



Name:  
*Douglas Benton*  
Employer:  
*Nabisco*

*"Organizing uses a simple approach to making our working life better."*

Name:  
*Camilo Perez*  
Employer:  
*UNFI*

*"The organizing training was a good learning experience. It allowed me to pick up some useful knowledge."*





Twenty Local 218 (Kansas City, MO) stewards for FritoLay attended the presentation with OSHA Compliance Assistance Specialist Brian Wood (right) on February 23.

# FritoLay Stewards: Serious About Safety

**When Local 218 (Kansas City, MO) Business Manager Chantel Mendenhall touched base with an Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) representative about a safety concern at her FritoLay shop earlier this month, she wasn't expecting to learn the person she was on the phone with also conducts 'Intro to OSHA' classes.**

"I figured this would be good information for our stewards, so I invited him to our quarterly meeting," Mendenhall recalls. "Compliance Assistance Specialist Brian Wood was very informative about safety in the workplace. We learned a lot about our rights as workers and union members."

Wood discussed common injuries and fatalities in the workplace with the Local 218 stewards. He also taught the stewards how to report unsafe working conditions. Wood provided insight to what happens during an OSHA investigation and explained the different fines a company can be charged if found not complying with OSHA standards. "He was very informative and kept the presentation interesting

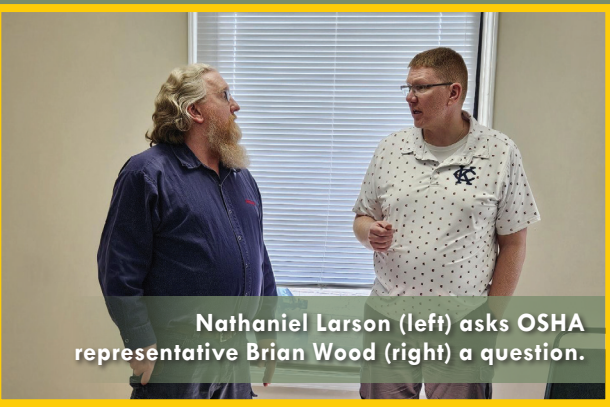
and helpful. He also gave everyone his business card while encouraging us to contact him with any questions we may have," Mendenhall said.

Wood left the union leaders posters for their office, safety stickers for each steward and provided the Local with 'Worker's Rights' and 'All About OSHA' booklets.

Mendenhall received a lot of positive feedback from stewards following the meeting. Steward Brenda Owens told her, "I thought Brian did a great job with his presentation. I learned so much about OSHA."

Steward Jesse Savoy reported, "I liked the fact that he was personally from a union background and was able to address questions we had as stewards. Also, he made us aware of several areas where the company may not be fulfilling their duties, which we as stewards can try to hold them accountable to or file a complaint if necessary."

If you are interested in having an OSHA representative speak to your local union leaders, you can check the [osha.gov](https://www.osha.gov) website to see what is offered in your area.



Nathaniel Larson (left) asks OSHA representative Brian Wood (right) a question.



Local 218 Stewards from FritoLay listen intently to Brian Wood's presentation on OSHA's standards.



# VACATION

Most travelers plan their summer vacation in the month of February. The Union Label and Service Trades Department, AFL-CIO, wants to help you plan your next getaway. Search their database for more information: [unionlabel.org](http://unionlabel.org).

## COCKTAILS

Celebrate the warm breezes by sharing a tropical union-made cocktail. In a large pitcher, stir together Dole pineapple juice, Captain Morgain spiced rum and Del Monte fresh lime juice. Refrigerate until chilled. Serve over ice.



## HOTEL

Find your union hotel by visiting the UNITE HERE Fair Hotels website: [fairhotel.org](http://fairhotel.org).



## PACKING

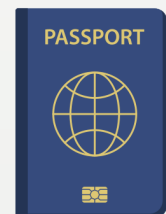
Whether heading to the beach or having a stay-cation by the pool, be sure to pack your union-made Coppertone or Bain de Soleil sunscreen, some Chapstick for our lips and some Solarcaine, just in case.



## TICKETS

Book your flight on a union airline. Most U.S. airlines are union staffed from pilots and crew to mechanics and reservation call centers.

U.S. Passports are issued through your union staffed post offices. TSA Agents at airports are AFGE members.



## ROUTES

Amtrak operates inter-city rail service in 46 of the 48 contiguous U.S. states and three Canadian provinces. Its trains are operated, staffed and maintained by union members of the ATU, which also represents the operators, drivers and support workers for the DC Metro transit system. As well, Avis and Budget Rental are Union.



## DESTINATIONS

Many family-friendly destinations from national and state parks and landmarks, American's favorite baseball stadiums, Disney World and most other theme parks are union staffed. Union members can find discount admissions tickets to select theme parks from Union Plus online at [unionplus.org](http://unionplus.org). Other union destinations include Broadway shows, Sporting events, Smithsonian galleries, museums and zoos, and the Grand Ole Opry, just to name a few.

A woman in a dark graduation gown is shown from the chest up. She is holding a light pink piggy bank in her right hand and a rolled-up white diploma tied with a red ribbon in her left hand. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with greenery.

BCTGM

**POWER**

# Affordable College for Union Families

**BCTGM POWER is helping union families reach their education goals without breaking the budget!** A college degree can provide a big boost to your career, but the high cost of a higher education puts college out of reach for many people. **Being a BCTGM member makes everything better.**

Union members and their family members who wish to earn a college education can access affordable options, including discounts, grants and financial aid. Earn your degree while minimizing your out-of-pocket costs.

## Choose from:

**Associate Degree:** Find tuition rates as low as \$250/credit hour. Use the education marketplace powered by Edvance, providing union families access to a growing network of schools. Go to [unionplus.org/benefits/education/college-program/associate-degree](https://unionplus.org/benefits/education/college-program/associate-degree).

**Bachelor's Degree:** Choose from a large selection of B.A. and B.S. degree programs, and enjoy exclusive benefits such as waived learning assessment fees for union families. Go to [unionplus.org/benefits/education/college-program/bachelors-degree](https://unionplus.org/benefits/education/college-program/bachelors-degree).

Learn more: [unionplus.org/benefits/education](https://unionplus.org/benefits/education)

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# ***ELECTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES... and it starts in the **PRIMARIES!*****

## **What is a Primary?**

An election to select candidates—typically for a specific political party—who will appear on the general election ballot. Candidates must reach a certain number of delegates to win a nomination, and those delegates are awarded in the primaries.

## **Who can vote in the Primaries?**

In most cases, voters must be registered with a particular party in order to participate in the primaries. Rules vary from state to state, so check yours at [vote.com](http://vote.com) and start making a plan now!

***Check your state's Primary schedule and  
update your voter registration NOW!***



# **VOTE.ORG**

