

12th Annual Tradeswomen Build



NABTU President Sean McGarvey



General President Mark McManus

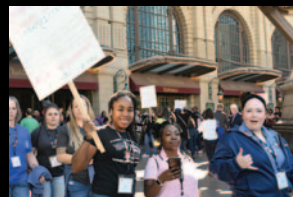
June Day, a fourth-year apprentice with Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 486, Baltimore, MD, got emotional as she described Tradeswomen Build Nations as, “a feeling hard to put into words.” It was Sister Day’s first Tradeswomen Build Nations conference, and her main takeaway was to use the knowledge she gained from the speakers and workshops, and the connections made, to create a bond amongst the tradeswomen at Local 486. Sister Day attended the “Developing Tradeswomen Affinity Groups Within Your Local” workshop, where she was given the knowledge and tools to better navigate within her local union structure and develop a women’s committee. “Knowing that this network of women is here is amazing,” said Sister Day.



Nations *Stronger Together*



Banner Parade



North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU) 12th Annual Tradeswomen Build Nations (TWBN) conference was held on October 28-30, 2022, in Las Vegas, NV. The last time the TWBN conference was held in person was in 2019, which had a record-breaking attendance of 2,800. This year, the attendance record was once again broken, when more than 3,100 tradeswomen and construction industry leaders convened. NABTU's TWBN conference remains the largest gathering of its kind in the world. Attendees shared experiences and best practices with fellow tradeswomen, learned about new programs and opportunities in the industry, and engaged with top leaders from government, industry, and 15 of the largest international building trades unions.

The United Association was the largest international union represented at this year's TWBN conference. The UA had 615 attendees, breaking its attendance record once again. The UA had a fantastic showing of leadership and allies there to witness this powerful gathering of tradeswomen, to better understand the unique and critical issues women face in the workforce, and to learn how to better support their fellow UA sisters.

"How to be a Male Ally in the Union Construction Industry" was one of the workshops offered on Saturday. Recently appointed Director of Education and Training Ray Boyd helped to facilitate this workshop, which discussed the crucial role male allies play in promoting gender equality at work. Many UA brothers attended this workshop to learn how they can better advocate for tradeswomen, help improve jobsite environments, and increase diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in the construction industry.

Being in a union ensures that women get paid the same hourly rate as men on the job, but the big questions raised at the TWBN conference this year were: Are women being treated the same on the job, are women getting the same on-the-job training, are women regularly being offered overtime hours, and how can unions ensure equity on the job? Inequity is one of many



Special Representative for Training and Outreach Laura Ceja



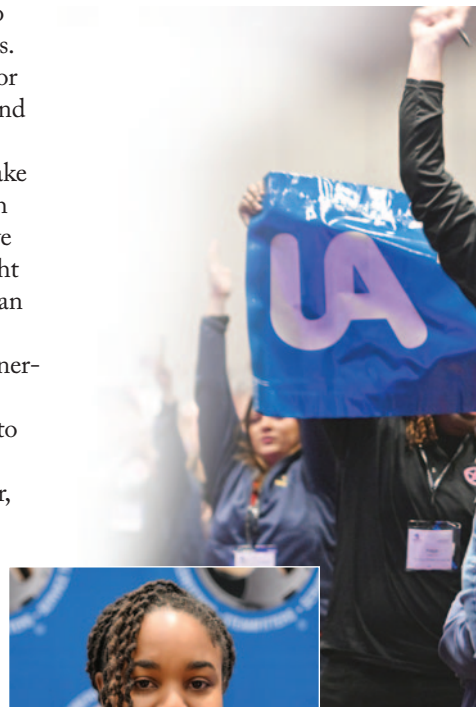
UA Canada Special Representative for Youth, Diversity, and Indigenous Relations Alanna Marklund

issues that tradeswomen are working hard to change for women in unionized trade careers.

Each tradeswoman had her own agenda for the weekend based on her goals. Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 50, Toledo, OH, 23-year member Tresa Reece remarked, "I hope to take away ideas to help women who struggle with women's rights. The more knowledge that we can pass along, the stronger we become. Right now, we're having to fight for our basic human rights, and every single woman here should know that we're not only fighting for our generation, but for the future generation. We're paving the road for somebody, and we need to come together to do that."

Sister Reece and her fellow Local 50 sister, second-year apprentice Sarah Kovach, both hoped to gain a better understanding of how to build a women's committee in northwest Ohio. "We want it to be productive and successful," said Sister Reece. "We would like to reach out to other women to tell them there are other ways to become independent and career oriented and show them the value that they possess."

The 2022 TWBN conference was hosted by NABTU, the NABTU Tradeswomen's Committee, and the Southern Nevada Building and Construction Trades Council. The three-



June Day (Apprentice, LU 486)





Tresa Reece (Journeyman, LU 50) and Sarah Kovach (Apprentice, LU 50)



Lisa Long, a 24-year member with Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 393, San Jose, CA, has been attending TWBN for 20 years. Sister Long chose to attend a workshop on leading, supporting, and inspiring the next generation of women because, "I am always trying to encourage more women and more minorities to get into the trade, so I was hoping the workshop would give me some more guidance and information

on how to do that. I'm not always that outspoken, so I was hoping it would give me more of an idea how to be a leader," she said.

Sister Long is working at being a voice for positive change at her local. She started a women's committee at Local 393 and is trying her best to make it successful. "We had our first meeting last September," she said. "I'm trying to get a group of women together so we can support each other. I've been teaching at the training center since 2017, and I also teach for the NABTU program, teaching pre-apprentices so they can have a chance at getting into any of the UA trades."

Sister Long is paving the way for equity and inclusion at Local 393. "I'm the first African American female teacher and the only African American female at my local, so for me, it's a big deal," she said. "I've always encouraged my local to send as many women as possible, so that when apprentices get in, and they don't know what to do, or don't know who to ask, or have questions, that they are able to come to this conference and know that they're not alone, or that they don't have to struggle by themselves to work through their problems." Sister Long was among 10 other Local 393 tradeswomen who attended the conference this year—a strong increase from previous years—along with the Local 393 Business Manager, Business Agent, and Training Director.



day conference featured two formal plenary sessions, a community service project, a banner parade, and more than a dozen workshops on a range of topics such as retention, recruitment, organizing, leadership, health and safety, government policy, childcare, and retirement and financial planning, among others. The United Association was well represented, with many members facilitating workshops.

Southern Nevada Building and Construction Trades Council Executive Secretary-Treasurer Vince Saavedra, Nevada Governor Steve Sisolak, and U.S. Representatives Susie Lee and Dina Titus kicked off the conference on Friday at the welcome reception. On Saturday and Sunday, tradeswomen introduced keynote speakers with inspiring stories about their career paths, challenges faced, and the phenomenal progress for women in the trades.

During the welcome plenary, NABTU President Sean McGarvey spoke about the impact of TWBN and its exceptional growth over the years. He said, "There is nowhere on the planet where more building trades members gather each year than at this conference, and this year, almost every General President in the building trades attended. Trailblazing tradeswomen among our ranks are leading the future of our industry, and NABTU is committed to empowering them as we increase opportunities for, and retention rates of, women in unionized trade careers. Every day, inspiring tradeswomen advance and recruit more women into the family-sustaining unionized construction careers our affiliates provide. This conference is a celebration of these sisters and a testament to the growth of tradeswomen in our ranks."

Brother McGarvey spoke about the many initiatives being put in place by the current Administration and the countless programs created by international unions to strengthen and support the building trades. "We're going to need a big infusion of new tradespeople to get the job done on these large federal investments. This is our opportunity to show the world what we're capable of achieving," said NABTU Pres-

ident McGarvey. "We want you to help us. Spread the word on the good work you've done in every community. You're the ones who build our infrastructure. You're the ones who keep our local communities running. You're the ones who are essential throughout the pandemic and in some of the most uncertain times in recent history. You've continued going to work, showing that when workers stand together, we can accomplish anything. I encourage you to use this power to influence other women in your respective communities to join the movement. Tell them about the programs that unions offer and the family-sustaining careers that come with being a building trades member. Talk to your local leadership and building trades councils about implementing apprenticeship-readiness programs if they don't already have one. Use your voice and your passion to be as involved as possible in your union. Continue to create positive change for all building trades members and their families."

The U.S. Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh began his speech by thanking the local union leaders and incredible women in the trades for attending the TWBN conference. "This gathering tells you that union tradeswomen are here to stay. It tells you that union tradeswomen are our future, and it tells you that today, tomorrow, and forever, a woman's place is in her union," said Secretary Walsh. "I think the most important people in this room today are the retirees—you are the trailblazers who knocked down doors and smashed ceilings."

He emphasized that the Employment and Training Administration is working hard to scale the Department of Labor's efforts across the country, stating, "We're committed to making sure women,



U.S. Secretary of Labor Martin J. Walsh





AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler brought more than a dozen AFL-CIO national staff with her to TWBN this year. “They need to experience it, and be your voice, and carry your message. I know we’ve worked together to pass legislation and create hundreds of thousands of good union jobs. There are many more women ready to take on those jobs,” she said. “Every one of us shows incredible leadership and perseverance every single day. I know how exhausting and frustrating it can be, but remember, you’re not alone. We’re in this together. I know, and we all know, what it has taken for you to get to where you are. Raising children, being one of the only women on the jobsite, or dealing with the daily injustices of racism, homophobia, or transphobia—we’ve broken through so many barriers, and we’re continuing the fight, because we know that our struggles create pathways for other women to follow. Look how far we’ve come. We have new childcare pilot programs, we have maternity leave programs, we have Lean In Circles, and we have all kinds of tools to help us navigate on-the-job issues.”

She continued, “You’re leading the way. Leadership is at the podium, or at the microphone, or in front of a camera, but the quiet acts of leadership also matter. They’re just as powerful. Be a mentor and take someone from the next generation under your wing, or start conversations with other women on the job about what can be better and what you can change together. Think about those leadership opportunities, big and small.”



Tradeswomen Build Nations Lifetime Achievement Award

Alise Martiny, the first female Business Manager/Financial Secretary of the Greater Kansas City Building & Construction Trades Council, was honored with the first ever Tradeswomen Build Nations Lifetime Achievement Award. NABTU President Sean McGarvey presented this award to Operative Plasterers’ and Cement Masons’ Local 518 42-year member Alise Martiny for her service, leadership, and solidarity benefiting hundreds of thousands of men and women in the unionized construction industry. She has actively recruited women and minorities during her entire career. “We applaud your impactful career,” said President McGarvey.





U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina M. Raimondo spoke to the tradeswomen delegation on Saturday. She said, "Right now, we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to finally break through. There are two reasons for that. One is because there's a shortage of skilled tradespeople, and we need to recruit, train, and retain women if we're going to meet those needs. But here's the real reason: President Joe Biden. He's all about unions, and he's all about the trades. He has \$1 trillion to invest in infrastructure through the Infrastructure Bill, the semiconductor CHIPS and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act. We're going to create a couple million trades jobs. We have to use this moment to make sure enough of those jobs go to women. I am responsible for \$100 billion of that—\$50 billion for infrastructure to lay broadband to make sure every American has internet and \$50 billion for semiconductors. If we invest that, and I promise you that I will, we're going to spur opportunities for women in your industry. I pledge to you, with this \$100 billion in the Commerce Department, it will be different, and I'm not alone. Marty Walsh, he's in on this. Secretary Pete Buttigieg, he's in on this. Sean McGarvey is in on this, Liz Shuler's in on this, and your leaders are in on this. Everybody is going to come together to make this happen. ... I'm here to announce a new initiative called, 'A Million Women in Construction Act.' Right now, there are about one million women who work in construction. I'm pledging to you that investing this taxpayer money, over the next five to 10 years, is going to bring another million women into construction with these high-paying jobs."



Las Vegas Raiders President Sandra Douglass Morgan sent a video to the TWBN delegation, which was played during the welcome plenary. She remarked, "As you come together in my hometown of Las Vegas to celebrate and support the women in the con-

struction industry, I hope you do so with a tremendous sense of pride, because you built this city and this state. This year's theme, 'Stronger Together,' takes me back to the arrival of the Raiders organization to this region just a few years ago, and the tremendous opportunities the stadium has meant for Las Vegas. Having a franchise in your town builds a sense of community and pulls people together in a uniquely American way. Similarly, you have all chosen to be a part of the North America's Building Trades Unions in a mutual passion for empowering and building up tradeswomen and their careers. We each have a role in mentoring and supporting women and those who will follow in our footsteps. I tip my hard hat to each of you for your commitment to excellence as you work to foster supportive environments that embrace and celebrate diversity and equal opportunities for women in the workplace."





*Ørsted U.S. Labor Relations Manager
Allison Ziogas*



*NABTU Special Assistant to the President
Melissa Wells*



*International Union of Bricklayers and Allied
Craftworkers President Timothy Driscoll*



people of color, and all workers have real access to pre-apprenticeship programs and good union jobs. We have a way to go to get to full equity in the United States, but we're going to keep pushing. You have an Administration in Washington, D.C., that cares and believes, and we need to continue to move forward and continue to make opportunities. We know that we can do it, not just in this industry, but in every industry, because in this room, you are living proof of that. You're not alone. The President and the Vice President of the United States have your back, and as Secretary of Labor, I'll always have your back. The Secretary of Commerce, she has your back, and this entire Administration stands with you."

Secretary Walsh and Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo are committed to working together to create good union jobs with the tools to access those jobs. To achieve this, they launched the Job Quality Toolkit, which provides strategies and actions to help small- and medium-sized organizations recruit and retain a high-performing workforce. "So far, our collaboration has led to more than \$42 billion of grant funding, and we're just getting started," said Secretary Walsh. "We have 40 similar partnerships with the Departments of Transportation, Energy, and Education, and we're driving good union jobs and access for women into the heart of our economy."

Secretary Walsh's closing remarks roused the crowd when he said, "You have proven that women can do any job they want in this country or in this world. My message to you is never stop fighting, keep standing proud, keep building our future, keep changing the world, and I'll always stand with you."

The plenaries also included insightful and powerful keynote speeches by U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, Las Vegas Raiders President Sandra Douglass Morgan, AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler, Ørsted U.S. Labor Relations Manager Allison Ziogas, International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers President Timothy Driscoll, U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau Director Wendy Chun-Hoon, NABTU Special Assistant to the President Melissa Wells, NABTU Tradeswomen's Committee Chair and Ironworkers Diversity Director Vicki O'Leary, and Boilermakers National Coordinator of Women in the Trades Initiatives Erica Stewart.

After Saturday's plenary session, participants took to the Las Vegas Strip for the highly anticipated banner parade and rally. Thousands of participants proudly displayed their local union pride with custom-made banners. Bystanders were intrigued by the rallying tradeswomen as they repeatedly shouted mottos such as, "Stronger Together."

On Saturday afternoon, each union held a





U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau Director Wendy Chun-Hoon



NABTU Tradeswomen's Committee Chair and Ironworkers Diversity Director Vicki O'Leary



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Caucus meeting. UA Special Representative for Training and Outreach Laura Ceja kicked off the UA's Caucus by recognizing the tremendous support the UA receives from local union Business Managers, the membership, and their sponsors, who made it possible for so many tradeswomen to attend the conference. Many tradeswomen made sacrifices to attend TWBN, some paying their own way and giving up paid time on the job.

Sister Ceja said, "The UA gave me everything: a career, college credits, great pay, great benefits, and a home, but most importantly, a family. There was one thing missing from my UA family though—a sister. After weeks of being the only UA sister on the jobsite, I met someone like me—a woman—but not just any woman. I met a veteran UA tradeswoman—a woman who had been there and done that—a tradeswoman who showed me the ropes and did not let me quit. That's why I'm here, and that's why a lot of you are here, because a tradeswoman encouraged you when you wanted to give up and supported you when you needed it most. We are here today to make sure that women at the UA know they are not alone, to make sure women know about all the amazing career opportunities in the UA and know they can rise to any position within the United Association. We are here to support each other, to encourage each other, and to spread the word, because for tradeswomen to build nations,

we must first build up each other and our ranks."

UA Canada Special Representative for Youth, Diversity, and Indigenous Relations Alanna Marklund asked the delegation to look around the room to see how many UA members were there in support of the tradeswomen movement. "This is what change looks like," she said. "This is what inclusion looks like, and this is what believing in yourself looks like."

Sister Marklund continued, "This is a room full of people who truly believe in this movement. We want to see women here have success in this industry, because empowered women empower women. The entire foundation of a union is to come together, and that is what makes us so strong. The reason we have so many people in this room right now is because you have support from the UA. ... You are all here because you have truly earned a place with your dedication, your skills, and your desire to be involved. You have proven time and time again that you are worth it. Know that you are supported, and know that you are valued, because behind every strong woman is her union."

General President Mark McManus was introduced by Special Representative Laura Ceja, who said, "Over the last six years, he has made it his mission to increase the number of women at every level of the United Association." General President McManus addressed the UA tradeswomen, stating, "I have never been





prouder than at 8:10 this morning when they called the United Association, and that roar came up. It warms my heart. We are not only the largest delegation here, but we're also the best trained, the most passionate, the most prideful, and the most professional."

He continued, "The diversity of our work and the diversity of our skills are what set us apart from every other union in the United States and Canada. Our diversity in our rank-and-file is also a hidden gem. We need to look like the cities we represent, and we need to look like the two countries we represent. That means it doesn't matter your gender, race, or ethnicity—we are one United Association, and we have the greatest lineup of work in front of us. We can control this work going forward. We could look back in 10, 15, 20 years, and the UA could be 600,000 strong if we continue to treat people the right way, if we continue to be professional, and if we continue to open our eyes and our doors to skilled craftsmen and women and bring them into the UA."

General President McManus announced the new UA Maternity Benefit Plan, which provides short-term disability benefits to support UA members in good standing following their childbirth. The Maternity Benefit is payable in the amount of \$500 per week for a maximum of six weeks (\$3,000 maximum benefit). "It's a first step, and it's a significant step," he said. "I think it's the least we can do by including that in the disability benefits for all the things that you will need, that child will need, and your family will need. I'm more than proud to be the General President to announce that to all of you."

Brother McManus emphasized that there are still issues that need to be addressed for women in the UA, stating, "We have to fix those issues locally and be involved at a local union level. It is no longer acceptable to have a sister on the job just to check a box. That's not what you're interested in. You're interested in being a leader. You're interested in being an equal. You don't need to be the check mark on a box—that's not the goal. The goal is to get that skillset for all

United Association members as high as possible to grow our market share. The future is staring right at me, and it's in this room. You're the next generation of Coordinators, Instructors, and UA Officers. ... Bring your fresh ideas. All the good ideas don't come out of Ottawa or Annapolis or out of the Business Manager's office. The power of the UA is the rank-and-file of the UA, so good ideas need to come from the sisters, from the brothers, and from the next generation. We love our traditions in the UA, and I love our traditions, but as times change, our traditions need to be adjusted and need to be eradicated if it is holding us back. We need to embrace the next generation."

At the UA Caucus, members also heard from UA Health, Safety, and Environmental Administrator Jen Massey, MCAA President Robert Bolton, and four UA tradeswomen in a panel discussion.

In 2021, the number of women working in the trades reached its highest level yet at more than 300,000. Based on the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics *Current Population Survey Annual Averages*, from 2016 to 2021, the number of tradeswomen increased by 32.1 percent, and for women working as pipelayers, plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters, there was a 51 percent increase. This shows



MCAA President Robert Bolton





Seven tradeswomen participated in a panel on the topic of retention and recruitment, discussing strategies for how tradeswomen can advance in the trades.



In a panel discussion at the UA Caucus, four young tradeswomen spoke about their personal journeys and how they became successful in their local unions.



"... Bring your fresh ideas. All the good ideas don't come out of Ottawa or Annapolis or out of the Business Manager's office. The power of the UA is the rank-and-file of the UA, so good ideas need to come from the sisters, from the brothers, and from the next generation."

– General President Mark McManus





Health, Safety, and Environmental Administrator Jen Massey spoke at the UA Caucus. She said, “Early in my career, I set a plan for myself, and I hope that’s something that you all do. That plan serves as a roadmap, which can navigate your career path. I know personally that if I did not have that plan, I would not be standing in front of you today. When things got challenging, I probably would’ve quit if I didn’t have that plan. For myself, I was always looking one year, five years, and 10 years out. Sometimes those plans changed, but the core plan stayed the same. For example, when I was an apprentice, I recognized that the associate degree that I had an opportunity to earn through the apprenticeship would help progress my career, so I took action. Soon after I turned out, I achieved an Occupational Safety Degree in Safety and Health with a concentration in Fire Science and Industrial Hygiene Management. We have to continue progressing our skills and our knowledge. I just recently earned an Associate Degree in Risk Management, and I hold many safety credentials in both safety and risk management. In fact, I was the sixth individual in the world to earn all the safety certifications that BCSP (Board of Certified Safety Professionals) had to offer at the time, and I was the first person and first woman to earn them in the timeframe that I did. The UA gives us so many opportunities in almost every direction we look. I firmly believe that the glass ceiling that so many of us have faced has shattered, or if not, significantly fractured. This allows us to be trendsetters going forward. I hope next year that there will be many more of us here at this conference. We need to continue to grow and thrive, and it’s up to each of us every day to make that happen.”



Union Sportsmen’s Alliance held a fishing expedition for tradeswomen on Friday, October 28.





that construction careers are attracting more women, and with the current manpower shortage, women are an untapped source of workers who need to be utilized to their full potential.

Tradeswomen have made progress in recent years, but too many women still face discrimination in the hiring and employment process and are less likely to be retained on core crews, promoted to field leadership positions, or to receive the same treatment on the job as men. In 2021, women made up only 8.6 percent of construction managers. These unfavorable conditions mean that women are less likely than men to finish their apprenticeships and are more likely to leave the industry. Women make up only 11 percent of the construction industry, including office and administrative staff.

Retention of women in the trades was a big topic of conversation at this year's conference. Today, due to a wide majority of the workforce retiring and the increasing number of construction jobs follow-

ing the COVID-19 pandemic, construction trades are looking for women to step in and work to repair and rebuild the country, and the women at this year's TWBN conference are more than ready to show the world what women can do.

By sending tradespeople to the TWBN conference, these 15 building trades unions are showing that they support the tradeswomen movement. This conference cultivates leadership, mentorship, sisterhood, and activism to address vital issues facing tradeswomen. Throughout the weekend, tradeswomen garnered support from one another, engaged on issues, came up with solutions to challenges, learned about important work being done across the U.S. and Canada, inspired younger generations to follow in their footsteps, and empowered and encouraged one another to create positive change and transform the outlook of the building trades for generations to come.

Stronger Together

