

# WRENCH & WOOD

Wood, Pulp and Paper Workers News



2026

Volume 13, Number 2

## Building Strength Together in West Virginia

Congratulations to our newest members in Heaters, West Virginia. In March of this year, workers at the Weyerhaeuser OSB mill voted overwhelmingly to join the IAM Union. The campaign was led by Assistant Organizing Coordinator Brent Coleman in coordination with IAM District 54 and the Eastern Territory.

After the successful election, the IAM Woodworkers Department International Representative Billy Barnwell attended meetings with the unit held between March 18 and March 20. The meetings were also attended by District 54 Business Representative Don Riffie and Eastern Territory International Representative Chuck Herod, along with Organizer Coleman.

Between the several sessions held, which were intended to educate the unit about the process of collective bargaining, over 110 of the 140 employees attended. This is indicative of the outstanding job done by Brother Coleman, and all involved. This unit truly shows what it takes to have a successful organizing campaign in an area that is not known to be particularly Union friendly. It takes a motivated workforce, who communicate with one another, and are committed to a common goal. Said brother Coleman, "This group has been fired up from the start. They stuck together, did their research, and knew that the IAM had a history of getting good contracts with Weyerhaeuser."

BR Riffie has already begun the process of preparing for negotiations. Soon, the group will elect a bargaining committee and the IAM Woodworkers Department will assist in training and preparing this unit for negotiations for their first collective bargaining agreement. Said IR Barnwell, "I'm very excited to work with this group. Their enthusiasm reminds me of why we do what we do. I will be able to help a group of workers who took the initiative to make their workplace better by forming a union. It really doesn't get any better as a Union representative."



## MNPL Conference Builds Momentum Ahead of 2026 Elections

This year's MNPL Conference brought added urgency as delegates gathered ahead of the 2026 mid-term elections, focusing on rising costs, threats to workers' rights, and the need to strengthen political engagement.

IAM International President Brian Bryant delivered the keynote, calling MNPL "The political engaging of our union" and emphasizing the importance of building worker power to shape our future.

Delegates also heard from Texas State Council of Machinists President Taylor Rehmet, who recently became the first rand-and-file union member elected to the Texas State Senate. IAM National Legislative and Political Director Hasan Solomon highlighted the importance of continued activism and praised members for exceeding fundraising goals.

The conference concluded with a strong show of solidarity at the "No Kings" rally in Savannah, Georgia, bringing together labor and community activists in support of economic justice and worker rights.

As the MNPL program approaches its 80th anniversary, members are encouraged to stay engaged, grow participation, and continue building political strength ahead of the 2026 elections.



## SAVE THE DATE

*Saturday and Sunday*

*August 15 & 16, 2026*



## PCA Paper Workers in Minnesota Ratify Strong Agreement with Major Wage Gains, Protected Health Insurance

IAM Union Local W33 and 760 members working at PCA Paper Products in International Falls, Minn., along with members of the four other unions represented at the plant, have ratified a strong four-year agreement after two weeks of negotiations.

The agreement provides 12.5% in general wage increases, a guarantee that current health benefits will not change, improvements to scheduling language, better grievance procedure, better paid personal time language, and other improvements.

“This agreement shows what’s possible when workers stand united across unions with a clear plan and strong preparation,” said IAM Midwest Territory General Vice President Sam Cicinelli. “Our members at PCA fought for—and won—real gains that protect their families, strengthen their jobs and set a powerful standard for paper workers across the Midwest.”

The Joint Union Committee, representing members of two IAM Locals, the IBEW, SEIU, the IUOE, and the Teamsters, were led by IAM District 5 Directing Business Representative Jeff Hoopman. On hand to assist was Woodworkers Department International Representative Billy Barnwell.

“I was very impressed by the cohesiveness of this group,” said Barnwell. “DBR Hoopman was very well prepared, as was the entire committee. That preparation paid off with a fantastic contract for our members.”

“I’m very proud of the work and commitment put in by this committee,” said Hoopman. “Such a large committee representing so many unions can be a challenge, but this group really acted throughout with one purpose: to get a great contract for their members and they accomplished that.”

IAM Union members on the bargaining committee prepared for negotiations for months, including attending a Negotiation Prep program at the IAM’s Winpisinger Education and Technology Center. Also, the IAM Strategic Resources Department assisted with surveys of the entire unit, which were used to set priorities for negotiations.

The new agreement, which is retroactive to May 1, 2026 and runs through April 30, 2030, will be a yardstick for future negotiations, said Woodworkers Chief of Staff Bob Walls.

“This represents one of the best agreements we have seen in the paper sector in quite a while and will be something that our members in the industry should look to as an example,” said Walls. “The workers at PCA are the economic backbone of northern Minnesota and they deserve to be recognized as such.”



### Quick Fact:

IAM breaks ground on current Headquarters building, April 1991

## BIO-CORNER



Brent Coleman currently serves as an International Representative (Assistant Organizing Coordinator) and has been a dedicated member of the trade since becoming a Machinists in September 2007 at Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD.

Brother Brent began his career as a Federal Contractor Painter (2007-2018) before moving into union leadership. Brent served as a District Organizer from 2019 to 2023 and stepped into his current international role in June 2023.

Over the years, he has held numerous IAM positions, including Local Vice President, Trustee, Steward, and Negotiating Committee member. He also served as a District Trustee (2012-2019) and Organizer, as well as an Eastern Territory Special Representative (2023-2025), before joining the Organizing Department as an International Representative.

Outside of work, Brent has been married for over 25 years and is a proud father of six. He enjoys his kids' sports, working on cars, and spending time outdoors.

## WOODWORKERS



*Photo courtesy of Jason Williams, President-Local Lodge W130*

**SOLIDARITY**  
WITH ALL STRIKING WORKERS

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