

DC 57 NEWS

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF PAINTERS AND ALLIED TRADES



**HAPPY RETIREMENT,
CHRIS!**

DC 57 BM/ST Chris Geronimos retired in May after nearly forty years as a LU 6 and DC 57 member. Enjoy your well-deserved retirement!

Online Dues Payment Now Available!

Earlier this year, the dues office created a secure online portal for DC 57 members to pay their dues online. Traditional payment methods are still available, but you can access the portal at <https://iupatdc57.org/pay-dues>. Stay tuned for further updates on how you can pay your dues!

In This Issue	
Online Dues Information.....	1
Chris Geronimos' Farewell Remarks.....	2
Introducing BM/ST Brian Herbinko.....	4
Restoring Homestead Cemetary Chapel.....	5
CORE Project in Cheswick.....	6
Department Updates.....	7
Dispatch from the CBTU.....	11
BeneSys Online Profile.....	12
Labor Day Dates and Details.....	12

A Farewell Letter from Chris Geronimos

After forty years in the IUPAT, twenty-seven years on staff, and five of those years as the Business Manager/Secretary Treasurer of District Council 57, I am retiring. And much like my predecessor did, I believe I am leaving it better than I found it. As I hand over leadership to Brian Herbinko, I know that DC 57 will continue to improve on a legacy of excellence that our union has built over the past twenty-five years.

When our International formed District Council 57 in 1999, they had an eye towards the future of the construction industry and the labor movement. In many ways, our communities were in flux as they are now, and we need to make sure now as then that we stick together for our brothers and sisters. Rocky DeStefano, our first and longest-tenured BM/ST, established and grew a strong culture centered on community, fervent trade unionism, and growth through organizing. Rocky always had the members' best interests at heart, and that driving force propelled DC 57 forward during his tenure. As I succeeded Rocky in 2019, I don't think anyone, least of all myself, knew what was in store for our union and the world. The coronavirus pandemic upended everything, but it also proved to our communities something we already knew: our painters, drywall finishers, glaziers, and other craft workers from Erie to Pittsburgh to State College and everywhere in between are essential workers. Without us, Southwestern Pennsylvania cannot thrive.

We're still seeing some lasting effects from COVID, but our craftspeople are more important than ever. The pandemic exposed just how beholden we are on foreign manufacturing, but federal legislation is bringing new plants and production back to our communities, and our DC 57 members are helping build those facilities. The Biden administration's historic investment in infrastructure and manufacturing means we will see dozens of roads and bridges rebuilt, repainted, and repaired in Allegheny County alone over the next few years, not to mention all the infrastructure investments in the thirty-one other counties we represent.

At the end of the day, whether you're a Democrat, Republican, or independent, our members work more hours with more money going to our pension because of our current federal administration's attention to critical infrastructure projects. But it's not just federal leadership that matters. Our own union leadership is just as important. Whether you're a service representative, staff member, or a leader on the jobsite or in the classroom, you must do your part to protect the future of your union. We must follow in the footsteps of those that came before us, leaning on their experience and expertise as we seek to grow market share.

If you'll indulge me for a moment, I want to pass on a few lessons I learned in my time on staff that might help the next and future leadership teams. First, strive to keep your health and welfare well funded. Union leadership and trustees are always looking to make healthcare coverage more affordable, but in the meantime we have to keep our plans solvent. One of the advantages we have over the non-union sector is the ability to provide our members and their families with good healthcare coverage, and regularly allocating money to our fund allows us to maintain that advantage. Second, think about the future of our union hall and training facility. Every member knows how cramped our FTI buildings are, and purchasing or building a new training facility will allow us to take another major step in our District Council's evolution. Our building serves multiple purposes: the main one is to train your future brothers and sisters, but it also showcases our crafts for our union and non-union contractors. It's your house, and you want to impress the people that come to visit. Prospective contractors won't want to sign if they come to a broken house. We established a building fund to meet this goal and we must build up that fund so we can establish a facility that suits our growing District Council.

As our members up north know, having a local training space instead of having to travel hours away for training is a massive improvement, and we are still looking to find a space for our central PA brothers and sisters. In all my years as a member and on staff, the most successful unions I've encountered have always had great funding from the membership. The ones that succeed best for their members are the ones funded by their members. Successful unions are financially healthy due to great funding, whether that's healthcare, annuity, and retirement funds or money spent on improving buildings, supporting pro-labor politicians, and improving market share.

Third, I want to note that how we speak about our union sets a tone. When you talk to other trades and they speak positively about their union and you speak negatively about your union, how does that make everyone feel? Who will join and support you if you trash your union? No union is perfect, and I've certainly made my share of mistakes during my time here, as has everyone. But we must discuss and solve our issues in-house. We fight too many battles against other unions, the non-union, and anti-union politicians to also fight among ourselves. Help your brothers and sisters, find the next members of DC 57, and make sure everyone knows the IUPAT is a place where careers are built and families are uplifted.

Finally, I want to highlight the District Council staff that will carry on the work after I retire. Brian Herbinko, our next Business Manager, is superbly qualified to become the third Business Manager in DC 57's history. He's been a Local 6 member for twenty-three years and on staff for nearly a decade. I know Brian well, and having him shadow me for the past few months has only increased my appreciation for him. Many of you have crossed paths with him already in the training department, but for anyone who might not know Brian, he is a consummate unionist and someone who knows how to get things done. DC 57 is in good hands with him leading the charge. Brian is leaving the training department, but he has put together a team of instructors that do a great job providing western PA with the safest and best-trained finishing tradespeople. Our servicing department, directed by Steve Olash and filled with incredibly dedicated service reps, have navigated COVID and its fallout, helping secure needed protections and record contracts across all our locals.

Joe Hughes and the political department make sure that labor has a voice when politicians decide whether to help corporations or the working class. And while Claire Cawley may be our newest director, the organizing department is making progress signing more contractors across crafts. Last but certainly not least, our office staff: Deena, Jess, and MJ often work behind the scenes, but are invaluable to DC 57's operation. Without their skills the District Council would not exist. I can hardly take credit for having a staff that works so closely together, but I am nonetheless proud that we have such a hardworking, dedicated team. I look forward to seeing everyone do great things.

A secure retirement is one of, if not the, single most important thing for which a union fights. I am grateful to have reached that point, but I didn't do it alone. People helped me every step of the way, and you all are still helping me by paying my pension. But every one of you will reach this point someday, whether you're a first year apprentice or someone with tens of thousands of hours worked. You will need someone to pay your pensions, and I hope that everyone does their best to find and help the person that will ultimately replace them. I ask you as somebody who's stepping away from the organization, but with a heart still here: Ponder these things and hopefully some will ring true for you. Thank you for forty wonderful years with the best union anyone can ask for.



Chris Geronimos
IUPAT DC 57 BM/ST, 2019-2024

Introducing BM/ST Brian Herbinko

Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

First, I want to congratulate BM/ST Geronimos on his retirement and long career as an IUPAT DC 57 member and leader. It is long deserved, and I believe DC 57 is better off because of the wise, and sometimes tough, decisions he had to make. Congratulations, Brother! It is not lost on me that you were also a champion of support for the opportunities granted to me in my journey here at the Council. Thank you, my friend.

As we move into a transition of leadership, let me assure you I have never forgotten where I came from. I know I did not get here alone. Along with my family and friends, it has been the Union and my Brothers and Sisters of DC 57 who have helped me through the tough times and celebrated with me through the good times. I like to believe I have lived a Union life and have never taken for granted that this organization and its members have been a vital part of my life and its rewards. My hope is that every member holds the same regard for this Union.

As we look to the future of DC 57, we will continue to focus on the well being of our members and their families. As always, we will remain diligent in the three key areas that provide strength and growth for our organization: Work hours, market share, and contractor base. We will do this together, Brothers and Sisters. We will stay united on the issues that we face. We will look after one another when needed. We will rely on each other to always do the next right thing. This is what being in a Union is about.

I have always been proud to be a dues paying member of DC 57. Although I have moved to a position that comes with great responsibility, I will remain humble. Like I said earlier, I will not forget where I came from. Working together as Union Brothers and Sisters, I am confident that we have the best times ahead of us.

Brothers and Sisters, I look forward to the next chapter of not only my journey, but OUR journey.

Be leaders. Be family. Be UNION!!!!

In Solidarity,

Brian Herbinko



Brian Herbinko
IUPAT DC 57 BM/ST



Brother Herbinko with his fellow commercial apprentices painting a training center in the early 2000s

This spring, commercial paint and drywall apprentices helped restore a chapel at Homestead Cemetary. Thank you to everyone who helped us with this project!

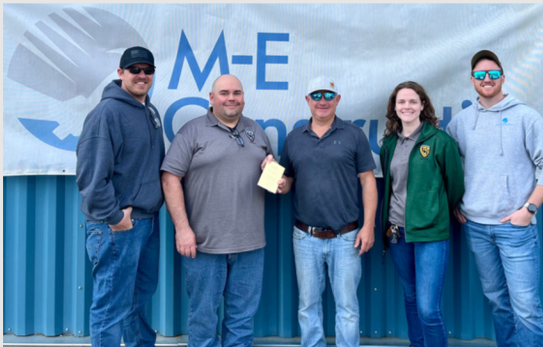


DC 57 staff and member volunteers worked hard on a CORE project to freshen up the PA Adult and Teen Challenge in Cheswick, a recovery center for people in our community fighting addiction. Thank you to Sherwin-Williams for donating materials and everyone who came out for donating their time!



Department Updates

I think it's fair to say we all wish we could ignore what's happening as we approach the general election this November. But as union members and working people, we can't dissociate from this fight. I don't want to raise anybody's blood pressure by rehashing each presidential candidate's shortcomings and the unprecedented chaos of this presidential cycle—we are bombarded by this topic daily. Instead, I want to remind everyone of the Biden administration's ethos—its character and moral nature. During this administration's time in office, we largely regained the normalcy of our pre-pandemic lives. We've experienced a red-hot labor market with employers competing for qualified workers, often by providing higher pay and other attractive workplace benefits. And most importantly, we've seen the enactment of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law bringing historic investments to our communities—investments that are translating into work opportunities for IUPAT members. Biden appointed people that are incredibly pro-worker to key positions like the Secretary of Labor and the National Labor Relations Board.



After years of hard work, M-E Construction in Erie signed in May to become DC 57's newest contractor.

You might be wondering why this matters to us as union members, and maybe you're thinking "Claire, why aren't you talking about Organizing?" I am talking about Organizing. I'm talking about a presidential administration that holds a clear and strong commitment to improving the lives of working people in our country. Organizing is hard. But we're living in a time that holds major favorability for forming unions, and a lot of that is due to the ethos on display by this presidential administration. DC 57 wants to help every non-union worker we encounter join or form a union, and we strive to accomplish this every single day. Our challenge of Organizing will only be more difficult if we fail to elect the person who will carry on President Biden's pro-worker agenda: Kamala Harris. I know I've left out a lot of the details that make this such a contentious race in many peoples' minds, especially after all of July's events. If you'd like to discuss these intricacies, I'm more than happy to do that with you. But the simple reality for us as union members is that we cannot support a candidate that prioritizes the interests of corporations (and other insidious threats) over the interests of working people.

As we head into the remainder of 2024, let's renew our solidarity as brothers and sisters of the IUPAT. Let's care for one another and resist the vitriol and divisiveness pushed on us daily. **Let's remember that we are a union of working-class people with a collective mission to better our working conditions and lead dignified lives both in and out of the workplace.** If you've made it this far, thank you for your time and attention. I'd love to hear from anyone who would like to discuss what I've written and the important decision we'll make in November.

In solidarity,

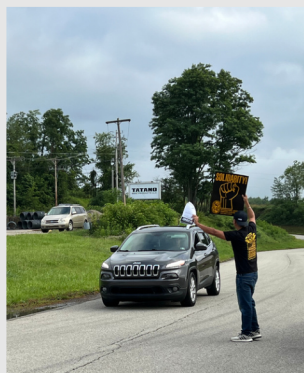
Claire Cawley

Director of Organizing

ccawley@iupatdc57.org | (412) 526-0141



DC 53 joined us in picketing a Fayette County facility in support of striking IUPAT members in Indiana.



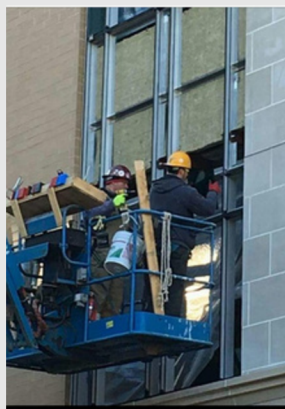
Meet Thaddeus Szymkowiak, DC 57's newest **Director of Training!** Thad's been a Local 751 glazier for nearly twenty-five years, with twenty years of experience in the field before joining the FTI staff as its first full time glazing coordinator in 2020. Thad's first job in the field was also his favorite he ever worked on: Heinz Field. While he worked on plenty of exciting jobs throughout the Pittsburgh region, he finds a lot of joy in his job as an FTI instructor. He gets to see brand new apprentices obtain knowledge, gain certifications, and have appreciation for what they've learned, and Thad genuinely wants to see every apprentice be successful in the industry.

Teaching isn't without its challenges, though. Thad notes that "as instructors, we have to find ways to connect with a wide variety of people. So I have to adjust my teaching style for all age groups and every student's learning ability." That willingness to adapt and grow—a mindset that Thad carried from the field to the classroom—will help him in his new role as Training Director. He's looking forward to expanding his own knowledge of the other crafts we represent and take what Brian built, and with the help of the rest of the instructors improve the training opportunities at FTI of Western PA. When asked which qualities he values most in apprentices and students, he cited a willingness to learn, being on time, showing up every day with a good attitude, doing what is required of them, asking questions, participating in class, and being teachable. He can teach apprentices the skills they'll need on the jobsite, but those unteachable qualities are what set the best tradespeople apart from the rest.

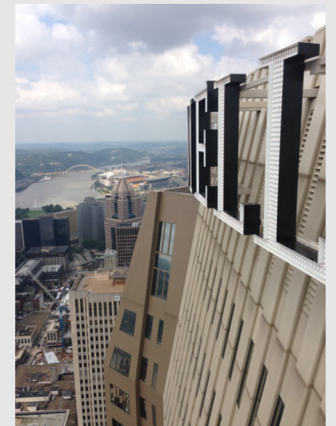
When he's not in the training department, Thad likes to spend time with his family, travel (especially on bowhunting trips), reading, going to his camp, riding motorcycles, and listening to live music. Whether you've known Thad for years or will get to know him in the coming weeks, make sure to introduce yourself. He will have a big role in training the next generation of DC 57 members, but members in the field have an equally important job in creating the best tradespeople western PA can offer.



Thad on the jobsite when he worked in the field.



A couple shots Thad took while working on the BNY Mellon Building



Monica Dunn Attends Women in the Workforce Roundtable

DC 57 drywall finishing coordinator Monica Dunn participated in a Women in the Workforce roundtable to speak about both the challenges and opportunities facing women in the trades. Monica noted that during her more than 13 years as a finisher, she's "seen plenty of women who come in, and they crush it. They come out and do great, and they push through." As a Finishing Trades Institute (FTI) instructor she helps shape the next generation of IUPAT members from all backgrounds. As we enter one of the busiest construction periods in recent memory, we will need all the workers we can get, and recruiting women into our trades is a major key for the continued success of our District Council.



Government Affairs

Remember Your Obligation

As IUPAT members, we all take an obligation when we get sworn into our local. Part of that obligation states that we will make ourselves aware of the “policies and programs” of our District Council. When it comes to politics, we choose endorsed candidates based on what they will or won’t do for our working class livelihood. Not personality, not likability, but **policy** and how those policies will affect our work. When we make endorsements and support candidates, we do not care if there is a D or R next to their name. We take the time to understand how their **policies** will help or harm our membership. As we approach the 2024 election we ask that you remember your obligation and support the candidates that support our work.

-Joseph Hughes, Director of Government Affairs



Above: Selected speakers at the RISE PA press conference. Below: Brian Herbinko details how this proposal would benefit labor via prevailing wage and other provisions.



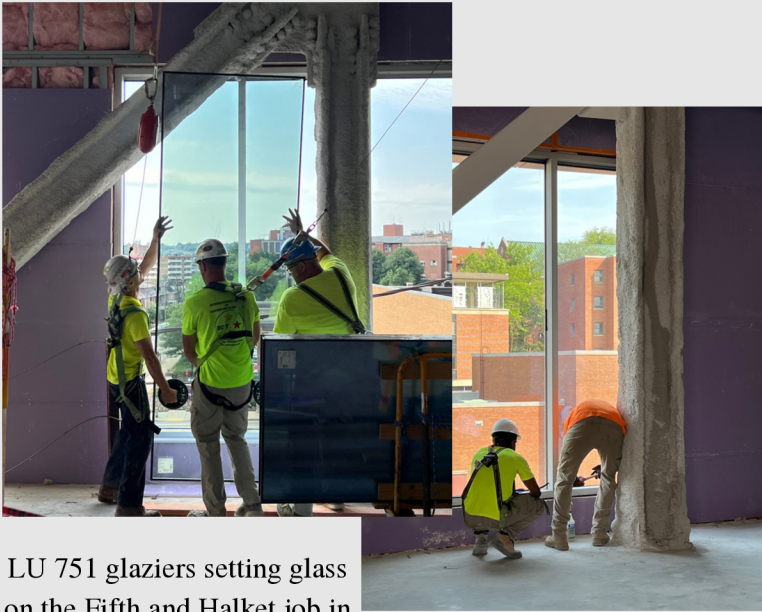
2024 Endorsements

Our 2024 general election endorsement slate is now online! Visit www.iupatdc57.org/political-action to see DC 57's endorsed candidates and find out more information about the **November 5th** election. You can always email voteraction@iupatdc57.org with any questions.

More Infrastructure Money On Its Way to PA

On April 2nd, IUPAT DC 57 hosted a press conference at the Carnegie hall and training center to announce Pennsylvania DEP’s \$475 million RISE PA Community Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) application to the EPA. The grant proposal seeks to decarbonize Pennsylvania’s heavy industry, one of the traditionally harder industries in which to reduce carbon emissions. Because the Shapiro administration took care to involve labor from the early stages of the grant process, there will be fair labor bonuses, prevailing wage, and apprenticeship standards attached to all projects under this grant should the Commonwealth receive the money from the EPA. As the speakers, including DC 57's own Brian Herbinko, noted, this proposal is a common sense approach that helps business, the environment, and labor. While labor and environmental groups don’t always see eye to eye, this proposal, which would put our members to work on energy efficiency measures without restricting current energy production facilities, gives us an unprecedented opportunity to work together to make our communities cleaner and more equitable. The Environmental Protection Agency agreed, and on July 22nd announced that the RISE PA grant was awarded to the PA DEP. We look forward to this money being used to put union members on jobs that benefit our community.

Out in the Field



LU 751 glaziers setting glass on the Fifth and Halket job in Oakland.

Greetings Local #549 members,

I hope everyone is having a fabulous year so far. Work has picked up and is only getting busier. We recently signed M-E Construction, a new drywall contractor. As a result, we have been working diligently to recruit both new apprentices and journeypeople. We have had several evaluations at our training center and have been able to send out several new members, but we are still looking for manpower. The training department has also been busy in Erie with physicals, aerial lift training, and most recently OSHA 10. Reminder to all members: these upgrades and continual education is very important for members and contractors. When we continue our education and have good participation from the membership, we negotiate from a stronger position in future contract talks. Make sure you are investing in your future. I hope everyone has a safe and wonderful summer and I look forward to seeing you at the next union meeting! Remember, our meetings are the fourth Thursday of each month and are held at 4:30 PM. Hope to see you there!

-Jerry Ferilla

Union brothers and sisters,

I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the members of the Local 6 Painters Union for their incredible hard work and dedication. Your exceptional craftsmanship and unwavering commitment to our union have been instrumental in our collective success, and we are immensely proud of all you have achieved so far this year. As we head into the summer months, I encourage each of you to take some well-deserved time to relax and recharge. Please prioritize your family, safety and well-being during this time, I hope you have a summer that is both enjoyable and secure. Remember that we, as your union, are always here to support you in any way you may need. Whether you have concerns, need assistance, or just want to share your experiences, we are here for you. **Your contributions are invaluable, and we are committed to standing by you every step of the way.** Have a fantastic summer and thank you once again for all that you do.

-Ray Maioli Jr.



LU 6 member Richard Matthews speaking on camera about the career benefits the union has provided him.

A Word from Your Servicing Director

First off, I'd like to thank everyone for their support and belief in our staff—elected and appointed. Being a union leader is something we all take seriously and with great pride. We will continue to work with all departments of DC 57 for the betterment of the membership and our industries.

Over the past few years, we have had a lot of new faces here in the service department and have accomplished some good things but feel we have so much more to go. A few new things are available and will be coming soon. Soon you will be able to pay your annuity loan or healthcare self-payment online through BeneSys; keep an eye out for a mailing with further information. We've sent another mailing for annuity target date funding, which helps you determine how your portfolio should be set to secure the optimal retirement future. As we've stressed in meetings and communications, though, all members will still have ultimate control over their funds. **We also have a new employee assistance program (EAP) with Workpartners to help any member or their household in need of any substance abuse or mental health assistance at no additional cost to the members.** We have also revamped the S.T.A.R. program, if you're not eligible you are missing out on some great prizes! Perhaps most importantly, we have been able to negotiate some of the best contracts seen in all the trades, but that is a two way street. Now we need to do our part in taking the annual physical, staying up to date on our training and on top of the latest trends in our market to be the safest and most efficient workforce that the end-user has available. Participate in training and be on time and productive on the jobsite. By doing these things we can secure our future for years to come.

In solidarity,

Steve Olash, Director of Service

Dispatch from CBTU

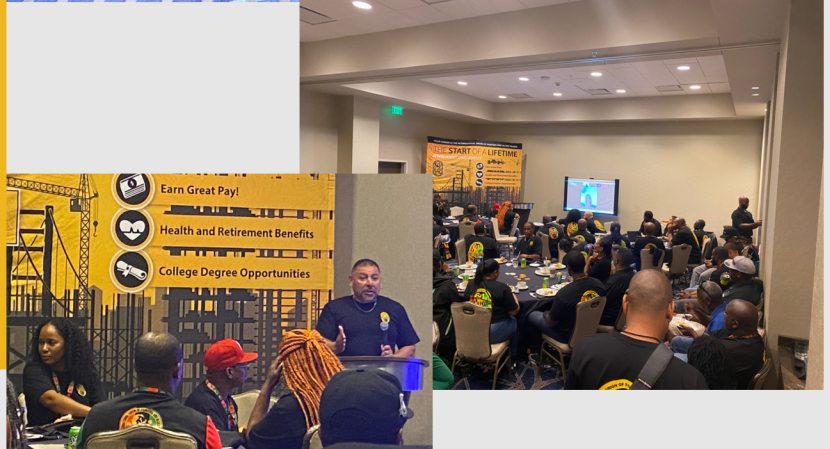
LU 751 Business Representative David Lovelace recently attended the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) conference in Houston. Here's what he had to say about the event.

As the chair of DC 57's Black CORE Committee, I attended this year's CBTU conference alongside 70 of my brothers and sisters from District Councils around the country. GP Williams addressed our group, as did GVP Mike Gutierrez, speaking about the fight for equality and inclusion in our union and the need to recruit members from all backgrounds and walks of life. Construction trades unions have not historically been the friendliest to Black workers, but it's encouraging to see the IUPAT and other building trades focus on bringing in workers from communities we may have overlooked in the past. All of our crafts are extremely busy and our jobs are more stressful than ever, so it's important that we create spaces for everyone to join a career in the trades and thrive in that career. I'm proud to be a Black trade unionist, and I'm proud to be part of a union that takes the time to make sure you're welcomed into the career, regardless of your race or background.

If you're interested in joining DC 57's Black CORE Committee, contact David at dlovelace@iupatdc57.org.



Top to bottom: IUPAT members gather for a photo at CBTU Houston; GP Jimmy Williams addresses members of the Black CORE Committee; GVP for the Western Region Mike Gutierrez speaks to IUPAT members.



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Register Your BeneSys Portal

Did you know you can manage your healthcare accounts online? Visit

www.IUPATDC57benefits.org to obtain basic benefit information, access your personal benefit information, and communicate with the Benefit Office. If you haven't registered your account yet, visit the website to sign up or call (330) 779-8865 to learn more.

Labor Day Parades

Attention members: Labor Day is **Monday, September 2nd**. We look forward to seeing everyone at the parades this year. Feel free to bring your family; below are details for this year's parades. Please contact the hall (412) 276-5758 with any questions.

Pittsburgh: September 2nd-Meet at the corner of Fullerton St/Wylie Ave (the old Mario Lemieux Way) at 8:30am.

Erie: September 2nd-Meet at Erie Bank (10th and Peach) between 8:00am and 8:30am.

Altoona: August 31st-Meet at 9:30am outside the Altoona Water Authority Building and Wingate Hotel.