



# UPDATE

American Federation of Teachers Local 604, AFL-CIO

[www.aftlocal604.org](http://www.aftlocal604.org)

August/September 2019

## Sweet endings for AFT Local 604 Treasurer, Carla Hettinger

Carla taught at East Aurora School District #131 starting in 1988 and ended in 2008. She held several union offices in that council and also served as council president. She was an AFT Local 604 vice president and an IFT vice president. Carla served as a professional growth instructor for first-year teachers and was an instructor for the AFT Educational Research and Dissemination program. She started as a field service director and also served as treasurer of AFT Local 604 in August of 2008-August 2019. As well as the duties of each of those jobs, Carla went above and beyond in helping all who needed help. *This has not gone unnoticed!* I'll let the remarks speak for themselves...

1. In addition to being dedicated to Local 604, Carla is one of the kindest, most generous people I have ever met. She will be greatly missed (especially by members who call the Local between 6:00 and 8:00 a.m.)! **Dan Mercer**, Field Service Director for AFT Local 604

*"Carla is one of the kindest, most generous people I have ever met".*

2. Carla wears her heart and her passion for the union on her sleeve. She has always been a fighter for what's right and has never been afraid to speak up on issues. She has demonstrated so much patience when it comes to explaining the complicated ins and outs of being a union treasurer and working with complicated tax forms. She understands that being an educator comes first, and the union job a close second. Carla, thank you for everything you have done for me personally and for Local 604. You will be missed! **Julie Harris**, Council President at Tinley Park

3. Carla has been an incredible part of the Local 604 who will be greatly missed as she enters a new chapter of her life. Carla worked tirelessly in multiple roles including field service director and more recently over the past 8 years as treasurer for the Local. We wish Carla nothing but the best in her retirement! Travel, read, garden, sleep in, or whatever your heart desires. Most of all enjoy your retirement as you fully deserve it! Thank you always for your kindness and respect. Sincerely, **Michelle Nevin**, Council President at Lemont

4. Carla, you are such a kind soul and I am going to miss you very much! Thank you for accepting me into my new position and being willing to help in any way you could. You are the most generous person and I love that quality about you! It won't be the same across the cubicle unless Sean starts yelling, "ach du Lieber"! I wish you the best of the best in your retirement! Please keep in touch. Sincerely, **Darlene Mercer**, AFT Local 604 Office Manager

5. The AFT Local 604 Retiree Group has always appreciated Carla's outstanding organizational skills and impressive efficiency in handling any questions we have about funding our meetings and programs. She is always gracious with a welcoming smile. We will greatly miss her and wish her the best in her retirement. **Anita Schluter Wilson**, AFT Local 604 Retiree Group

6. Carla, best wishes in your retirement! You deserve nothing but happiness! :) **Dorene Barrera**, IFT/Aft Local 604 Retired Secretary

7. After many conventions with Carla, there were two things that I could always count on: Carla would be the first one up and ready to start the morning breakfast meeting (just like opening the doors at Local 604 at 4:30am) and secondly when at convention she would always cover her smiling face anytime I'd be snapping photos for the UPDATE! I hope someone had better luck capturing a photo of Carla than I did. Enjoy your real retirement Carla!! **Phil Staley**, AFT Local 604 Vice President

8. Thank you, Carla, for providing a steady hand for us and the entire union over the years. I am particularly happy that I got to know you even better in the last year. Best of luck in your retirement. **Bob Marcink**, Council President @ Joliet Jr. College

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Bill Briggs

## Promises made during the campaign

# Has JB lived up to expectations?

In education, concern often exists with a change in leadership. The unknown can sometimes be worse than the known. That, my brothers and sisters, was in the back of many of our minds when the IFT came out early and strongly for JB Pritzker for governor. A lot of promises were made, but has he delivered?

After four years of Rauner trying to destroy unions and public education, what has transpired since JB took office on January 14 has been amazing. To refresh our memories, Illinois went without a state budget from July 1, 2015, to August 31, 2017, a 793-day-long crisis that helped to divide the state even more between the city of Chicago and the surrounding counties with downstate. Many state agencies had to cut services and the Illinois economy and credit rating were adversely affected.

The victory for JB was a true mandate: 54.5% to 38.8%, 2,479,746 votes to 1,765,751. Now, over six months later, was the Billionaire true to his word? Would we see a brighter future for our state? Before I go into the proof that he is a man of his word, I must mention *The Chicago Tribune*, a newspaper I read daily, though for how long, I do not know. The doom and gloom seem to continue, although there might be a bit of positive wordage upon occasion.

From the IFT Director of Political Activities, Michelle Paul reports the following successes.

### 3% liability cap repeal

You, our colleagues, and the IFT work diligently by contacting our elected officials and lobbying in Springfield to repeal the 3% liability cap. Now, members of TRS and SURS can negotiate raises up to 6% without fear of the district facing pension liability.

### A responsible budget

The state now has a balanced budget, which is required by the state constitution, that will support the IFT's vision "of a better-educated, more equitable, and prosperous Illinois." As a result of both parties working together, the new budget will

- Make the full FY2020 payment to the pension systems
- Increase Evidence Based Funding for education by \$375 million
- Expand Early childhood education programs
- Increase funding for universities and community colleges by 5%
- Boost MAP grants and scholarship programs
- Provide increased funding for state operations and back pay for state employees

- Provide more the \$1 billion to pay down our backlog of bills and slash interest costs.

In addition, our support to place a **Fair Tax** on the 2020 ballot was a success. Some worried that this would open the full state Constitution for review, but that is not true. It will amend the Constitution. If passed, the Fair Tax will generate \$3.4 billion each year in much-needed funding for public schools, higher education, and state services. Only those earning more than \$250,000 per year will see a tax increase while 97% will pay the same or less.

In addition, **PSRPs** now have recall rights, like teachers, in the event of layoffs. This IFT-initiated bill, HB 921, passed with a nearly unanimous vote in both chambers.

Educators who receive an "unsatisfactory" evaluation will now have an appeals process. This change to **PERA** was SB1213.

**SB 1226 abolishes** the State Charter School Commission and gives oversight of state-authorized charters to the Illinois State Board of Education.

The **minimum wage** will gradually rise to \$15 per hour by 2025 because of **SB 1**. For our support staffs, this increase should have a major impact on attracting and keeping quality workers.

Our brothers and sisters in the trades also received encouraging news. On July 1, anyone buying gas in Illinois saw a **19-cent increase per gallon** in order to help fund the \$45 billion infrastructure plan detailed in **SB 1939**; this is the first capital bill in 10 years for the state and the first increase in the gas tax since 1991.

So, what's next? *The Tribune* predicts moving vans departing the state will be common and people will drive to neighboring states to buy gas. Is it possible, yes; realistic, maybe. However, this exodus is already happening in the Midwest, not just in Illinois. Pritzker will have to continue to work on making our state attractive.

That said, the teacher in me wants to grade him. For me, that is pretty easy, A-, since there is always room for improvement. So far, a job well-done.

William E. Puggi

## AFT Local 604 Scholarship Winners

At the AFT Local Senate meeting, we awarded four \$4,000 scholarships to dependents of AFT Local 604 members who are in good standing.



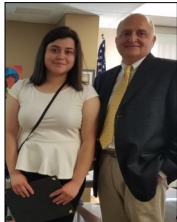
**Georgia Kapetaneas** was awarded the *Jacqueline B. Vaughn Memorial Scholarship* by AFT Local 604 President, Bill Briggs. Georgia's mom, Christina Kapetaneas, is an AFT Local 604 member who works with the Support Staff at LP High School. Georgia will be attending school at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign.



**Hannah Delorto** was awarded the *Jacqueline B. Vaughn Scholarship* by AFT Local 604 Office Manager, Darlene Mercer. Hannah's mom, Cheryl Delorto is an AFT Local 604 member who works at Peotone as a PSRP. Hannah will attend Illinois State University in Bloomington.



**Michael Jeszke** was awarded the *Paul O. Johnson Scholarship* by AFT Local 604 President, Bill Briggs. Michael's mom, Lisa Jeszke, is an AFT Local 604 member who works at Homer with the Support Staff. Michael will be attending Illinois State University in Bloomington.



**Jacqueline Mendoza** was awarded the *Paul O. Johnson Scholarship* by AFT Local 604 President, Bill Briggs. Jacqueline's dad, Jesus Mendoza, is an AFT Local 604 member who works at Valley View in maintenance. Jacqueline will be attending Western Illinois University.

# Congratulations

## Ladies PSRP Conference at the Flamingo in Las Vegas



Left to right... Kathy Alexander, Ariel Mankiewicz, Kim Crowe, Carly Ringo, Erin Marcum, and Sofia Thomas

In April, these ladies attended the PSRP conference in Las Vegas. This year's training topics included; Work Shouldn't Hurt (Staff Assaults), Managing Student Behavior, and Dignity & Diversity in the Workplace.



## Chicago Federation of Labor— William A. Lee Memorial Scholarship

From left to right

CFL President Bob Reiter, Laura Cotner (mother of Jamie Kaiser & AFT Local 604 member), Jamie Kaiser (recipient of scholarship), Stu Cotner (father of Jamie), Vicki Goebel (AFT Local 604 Field Service Director), and CFL Secretary-Treasurer Don Villar. Congratulations Jamie! Jamie is attending University of Georgia, Athens to double major in Genetics and French.



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# ***Your rights under the workers' compensation act***

*by James M. Ridge, attorney at law*

## **Governor Pritzker Updates IWCC with New Appointments**

**A**s new Illinois Governor JB Pritzker settles in, the state will begin to see beneficial change coming from the Worker's Compensation Commission.

In March of this year, Governor Pritzker announced the appointment of **Michael Brennan** as Chairman of the Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission, replacing Joann Fratianni-Atsaves. The Chairman serves as the Chief Administrative and Executive Officer of the Commission and also is designated as a public representative Commissioner.

Chairman Brennan has served the Commission as a public commissioner for 6 years and has 20 years of experience as a workers' compensation attorney. His experience and knowledge of the Commission and Workers' Compensation Act will serve him well in his new role.

Additionally, Governor Pritzker appointed two new public commissioners and two new labor commissioners. As public commissioners, Barbara Flores is to replace Michael Brennan and Maria Portela to replace Joshua Luskin. The governor has also replaced two of the three current Labor Commissioners. Douglas McCarthy will replace David Gore and Marc Parker will replace Charles DeVriendt.

New Commissioners **Douglas McCarthy** and **Barbara Flores** served as arbitrators prior to their Commissioner appointments; they are familiar to practitioners and veterans of the industry.

New Commissioner **Maria Portela** served as in-house counsel at AIG prior to her appointment.

New Commissioner **Marc Parker** managed his own Plaintiff/Petitioner practice in Madison Country before his appointment.

The Governor still has to fill an "employer representative" Commissioner seat, previously held by Kevin Lamborn. There also remain two Arbitrator seats to be filled from the elevation of Douglas McCarthy and Barbara Flores to Commissioner. We are hoping Governor Pritzker does this quickly to keep the business at the Commission moving quickly for our clients.



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## Springfield addresses educator shortage

In 2017-18, the state had 2,894 unfilled positions according the Illinois State Board of Education. When the numbers come out for the most recent school year, they will not be better. A major question is what can be done about the shortage in Illinois?

State Senator Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant, 49<sup>th</sup> District, said, “We have taken solid first steps toward addressing the teacher shortage”.

To that point, the following bills were passed in Springfield during the last session.

**HB 2078** increases the statewide minimum educator salary to \$40K by the 2023-24 school year.

**HB 423** pauses the basic skills test for teacher candidates until 2025

**HB 35** restores Grow Your Own Teacher (GYO) control over the program and creates a dual credit pipeline to allow students to enter teacher prep programs sooner.

**SB 1460** provides for priority distribution of Illinois Teaching Excellence funding to Tier 1 districts.

**HB 1472** allows a teacher to return to work in subject shortage areas without impairing retirement status.

**SJR 41** establishes a joint advisory council to study how Illinois can maximize the number of students completing credit-bearing courses or programs and earning degrees. The council will be coordinated by the Illinois Community College Board and the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Council membership will include IFT representatives.

With these changes, Sen. Bertino-Tarrant added, “We need to continue to work on finding solutions for not only encouraging new teachers, but also retaining our qualified teachers. This is about providing a state-wide culture recognizing the demands and importance of our teachers and the education profession.”

Senator Pat McGuire, 43<sup>rd</sup> District, found some frustration, though, in his attempt to address the shortage. He said, “I worked across the aisle with Sen. Dan DeWitte on his **SB 1809** to allow a fifth year of MAP grants to Illinoisans with a bachelor’s degree who are changing careers and entering teacher education programs. The bill passed the Senate 56-1 but got stuck in a House Committee.”

Of the unfilled positions mentioned, 1401 were teaching, 1300 school support personnel, 113 other licensed staff, and 79 administrative.



## Treasurers' Corner

The start of the new school year brings new treasurers for some of our councils. Keeping that in mind, it is time to remind all treasurers of things that need to be taken care of beginning with September.

### Monthly checks and balances

Be sure you balance your checkbook and receipts with your bank statement each month. Additionally, you need to make certain you have itemized receipts to coincide with expenditures. These receipts should be stapled to your monthly reconciliation sheet and kept in a monthly file. You do not need to send copies of the reconciliations or bank statements to our office.

### Council Audit, 2018-2019

It is time once again to complete your 2018-2019 council audit. All council presidents and treasurers received a memo detailing the directions for completing the audit. Make certain your audit committee gets a copy of the memo detailing the process for doing the audit and that they follow the directions that were highlighted. Please try and get this audit completed as soon as possible. The deadline for filing the completed audit with AFT Local 604 is **November 15, 2019**.

### Council Dues Payments

At the end of each month you need to complete and submit to AFT Local 604 the monthly dues statement along with your remittance. The forms are provided for your use throughout the school year. Remember dues are paid over ten months from September through June of each school year. When submitting your dues, please remember to fill in the **number of members**, and **do not staple the check to the remittance slip**. **Make** all checks payable to **AFT Local 604**.

For members that begin employment after the start of the school year, their level of dues payment **is not based on how much they will earn in the amount of time they work**. **Their level of dues payment is based on how much they would earn if they had worked the entire year**.

### Council Rosters

Along with each dues remittance payment, our office needs a roster of all members. The information needed for each person on the roster is their **first and last name, address, employee number, and dues deduction (level of dues payment)**. This is needed in an Excel format. By having it in the Excel format, it can be easily merged with our data base thus avoiding errors in our membership database.

### 990 Filing

It is the time of year again to file 990 forms in order to keep the tax exempt status. Be certain that your council files the **appropriate** form by the deadline. Councils that are filing late are subject to a daily fine for each day the form is filed late. Information regarding the filing requirements for the 990 forms and the council’s deadline for filing, based on the end of your fiscal year, has been sent to coun-

## Sweet endings (cont.)

9. Thinking of Carla, one word comes to mind, HEART. She cares about everyone and puts others needs in front of her own. She is the epitome of what a professional educator, friend, or Union brother/sister should be. Her heart will be with us always. **Bill Briggs**, President of AFT Local 604

10. The first convention that I attended with Carla was in Los Angeles, CA. We were sitting in the convention central. There was an elderly man sitting in front of us and he turned around and started a conversation with me. He asked that I tell his wife that he was going to the back room as he needed a break. I said, "Yes Sir". Carla looked at me and said, "Do you know that man?". I said, "I've never seen him before in my life". We laughed so hard that we were in tears! Carla has always been so kind to me and I will miss her. **Kathy Alexander**, Council President @ Lockport H.S.

11. I first met Carla back in 2008 when I was thrown into the President seat over the Office Staff at Joliet Township High School. At that time, I had no idea of what was to become of this. Carla was there every step of the way to guide, teach and support me with this new responsibility. Her knowledge of unions put together with her caring personality made my job so much easier to handle. She was there to bring me down off the ledge numerous times just by listening and calming me down. Carla has always looked out for me which is how I was able to get my position here at IFT. She is the one who called me to tell me about an open position and I thank her for the phone call. Carla is one AWESOME LADY and it is an HONOR to know her... Carla I will miss you! **Angela Rallis**, IFT Secretary @ AFT Local 604

12. I've known and worked with Carla for quite a few years during the annual audit process, but this last month I have really gotten to know her better as she was training me for my new position w/ AFT Local 604. The office will not be the same without her. Carla has shown great professionalism and dedication to her job and her coworkers. We will miss her at the office! Thank you for being a great mentor and good luck on your retirement! **Sean Hunt**, Treasurer/Business Manager @ AFT Local 604.

13. Carla was my mentor in the truest sense of being an educational advocate within the union. My first experience with AFT Local 604 was working with Carla on a testing scandal that involved administration. I witnessed firsthand her admiration and compassion for the teaching profession. Through the years I have learned much from her and work to emulate her level of advocacy for the educators we represent. I will continue to reflect on her skillset and hopefully I can continue to advocate with her calm and collected approach. Thanks for sharing your skills with me. **Adam Harding**, Field Service Director for AFT Local 604

14. I have had the pleasure to work with Carla since 2001, back when she was a council officer at East Aurora to treasurer of AFT Local 604. Carla has a wealth of knowledge that can't be replaced. She is the most selfless person that I have ever known. She has been a wonderful colleague and friend and will be missed tremendously here at the Local. I wish her the very best in her retirement. **Kathy Harris**, IFT Secretary @ AFT Local 604

15. I met Carla during my first year working at Local 604. She was a teacher and officer at our East Aurora Council. She was also an instructor in what used to be called the ER&D Program and is now the AFT Teach Program. I knew instantly from the first time she taught classes at the local office that she was meticulous, organized, personable and an excellent instructor.

At our AFT Convention in July of 1998 (my first convention,) I had the pleasure of getting to know Carla even more. I had a big responsibility at the convention, and Carla made it easier for me. She was always early at breakfast to help save tables for our group and always volunteered herself and other East Aurora delegates to get to the convention floor early to help secure seats, so our group could sit together. I could always count on Carla at every AFT and IFT Convention for whatever help I needed.

When it came time to replace Local 604 field service director Sis Sullivan, I immediately suggested Carla as a replacement to then Local 604 president Dick Manley. He gave me usual 'thoughtful' look and then said, "Let's take her to lunch." We both agreed she was perfect for the position. She showed great leadership in her council and was retiring from teaching.

Carla had a way of looking at problems and solving some of the most difficult problems and situations in a very professional and tactful way. She was always the first at work taking the early morning 'problem' phone calls and never hesitated to pick up the phone, when the secretaries were busy.

When it came time to find a replacement for AFT Local 604 treasurer, I again recommended Carla. Besides teaching, she had an office background and was good with numbers. That, with her organizational skills, Carla made an excellent Treasurer.

Carla was not only a coworker to me. She was always a friend (and still is,) and someone to talk to during the difficult times in my life. She always knew what to say to make me feel better.

Carla, I wish you nothing but the best in your retirement. It is well deserved, and it is time for you to enjoy life to the fullest! You've earned it! Your friend and former coworker, **Kathy Stenson**, AFT Local 604 Retired Office Manager

16. Our Local 604 Treasurer, Carla, is the true treasure here at Local 604. She has a heart of gold and exemplifies the model of a Union sister. She will be missed! **Katie Kollross**, Field Service Director for AFT Local 604

17. Thank you for all you've done for Local 604 and the Valley View Council wishes you the best in your retirement! **Renee Calabrese**, Council President @ Valley View

**Our very best wishes go out to you Carla!**  
**Congratulations on your Retirement!!**



## Summer Workshops

**Managing Behavior in School Communities** (1 class, 4 days long) by Marjorie Kubacki. This class offered 30 CPDUs and for an additional fee also offered 2 credit hours from Governors State University or Prairie State College. This class scored mostly all 4s (strongly agree) on the effectiveness of this workshop! We hope Marjorie will continue working w/ our members even though she has retired from Valley View H.S. as of this 2019 year. Congratulations & thank you Marjorie!

**Student Debt Clinic** (4 sessions) by Beth Anderson & Katie Kollross. This class will be offered again on Sept 11 and Sept 18, 2019 from 6:00pm to 7:30 pm. Please call the office to get signed up or email [darmercer@ift-aft.org](mailto:darmercer@ift-aft.org). Income driven repayment plans (REPAYE, PAYE, IBR, ICR) will be discussed as well as enrolling into the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program. There has been a fantastic response to these classes. Thank you Ladies for attending a weekend ULI and then sharing your knowledge w/ our Members.

**Digital Learning Workshop** (2 workshops w/ 2 sessions each) by Michelle Nevin. These classes offered 3 CPDUs for each workshop completed. These google tools and assessment classes were well received by the participants. Thank you Michelle for your expertise in these areas and for sharing it w/ our Members!

**Building Rep Training** (1 session) by Vicki Goebel & Dan Mercer. This class was well reviewed by the participants. Watch for this class to be offered again this Fall. No date has been set yet.

**Presidents/Treasurers Workshop** (1 session) Taught by Adam Harding, Katie Kollross, Vicki Goebel, Sean Hunt, Carla Hettinger and Dan Mercer at the AFT Local 604 office in Crest Hill.

Please watch our website at [www.aftlocal604.org](http://www.aftlocal604.org) for the latest information.

## Ratification of Contract at Joliet Jr. College

The fulltime faculty at Joliet Junior College have a new contract that will run four years beginning this fall and ending at the end of the summer session in 2023.

The contract maintains the 24-step system and includes cost-of-living raises of 2.25 percent in the first year and 2.5 percent in years two and three. The raise in year four will be determined by the Consumer Price Index, with a floor of 1.25 percent and a ceiling of 3 percent.

The union also kept its health insurance intact for the next four years, with any changes during that time requiring approval by both the Board of Trustees and the union executive board.

The agreement between the faculty union/council and the JJC Board of Trustees marks the eighth consecutive time the two parties have reached an agreement without a work stoppage or lockout. The process was long and arduous, but it paid off in the end for all concerned.

Beginning in early January, the union team met several times a week with a team of College administrators in an effort to reach an agreement. The meetings normally lasted three to four hours in the early stages, but they were extended to six and even eight when time to finish approached.

Negotiations went straight through until the final week of April before the two sides reached a tentative four-year agreement. That step was followed by a faculty vote of approval in early May, but the Board of Trustees vote was delayed until June because the Board had to wait a full 30 days before voting on the College's 2020-21 budget, which had a first reading in early May.

Four weeks after the faculty vote, the Board approved the four-year pact at its June 12 meeting.

Two significant issues hung over the negotiations. First, no one knew when or if the state would pass its first budget under new Gov. J. B. Pritzker. Second, the state decision in 2018 to limit raises to 3 percent in the years counted towards the calculation of a teacher's pension—or else the college or district would be surcharged—made negotiators across the state nervous about future wages and benefits.

Although it got dicey close to the deadline for the budget and the end of the JJC negotiations, both parties, acting in good faith, wrote contingent language that would address the issue if the 3 percent rule were not overturned. That language found its way into the final contract that was voted on by both the faculty and the Board.

By: Robert Marcink, President of Joliet Jr. College Faculty



# AFT Local 604 welcomes new Treasurer/ Business Manager

Here is a quick introduction of myself. I am married to my wife Kelly Hunt and have two children Tim and Lucy. We live in Palos Heights. I have an accounting degree from Eastern Illinois University and an MBA from Saint Xavier University. In my spare time, I enjoy spending time with my family, watching sports and playing golf. For the past 12 ½ years, I have worked at the accounting firm Bansley and Kiener, LLP and I have been performing the annual audit for AFT Local 604. I am very excited to join the AFT Local 604 team and look forward to the future.



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American Federation of Teachers  
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Our best wishes to these Union member retirees!

Richard Koefoed from West Harvey

Karen Stiehr from Joliet H.S.

Deirdre Galvin from Homer Support

## Next Senate Meeting

**Wednesday, October 16th @ 6:00 p.m.**

**AFT Local 604 office in Joliet**



IFT/AFT, AFL-CIO

## UPDATE

American Federation of Teachers Local 604  
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Anita Wilson, Retiree Chair

### Vice Presidents

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Beth Anderson  
Renee Calabrese  
Robert Marcink

Michelle Nevin  
Kristen Ryan  
Phil Staley  
Mary Ann Stubler

Adam Harding, IFT Field Service Director  
Angela Rallis, IFT Secretary  
Carla Hettinger, Local 604 Field Service Director  
Dan Mercer, IFT Field Service Director  
Erik Jurgens, Local 604 Field Service Director  
Kathy Harris, IFT Secretary  
Katie Kollross, IFT Field Service Director  
Todd Stachowiak, IFT Field Service Director  
Vicki Goebel, Local 604 Field Service Director



**Have a happy & successful year!**