After 12 years as President of the Iowa Federation of Labor (IFL), Ken Sagar is retiring, April 30, 2020.

Sagar began at the IFL in August of 1997, when he was elected as Secretary/Treasurer. Prior to that, he was Business Manager/Financial Secretary for over 12 years of BBEW Local 204, in the Cedar Rapids with a jurisdiction of 86 counties in Iowa.

He worked in the line department as summer help in 1973, substation department as summer help in 1974 and finally got on full time in the production department at Sutherland Generating Station east of Marshalltown.

He held a variety of positions at the power station including: Utility Man, Coal and Ash Handler, Mobile Equipment Operator, Operating Engineer Helper and finally Relief Operating Engineer. It was from that position he went on union leave on January 28th, 1985 to an Assistant Business Manager position in the IBEW, 204 office. He was elected in June of 1985 to Business Manager.

Sagar held many positions in the union while he was working at the facility including steward, chief steward, plant safety committee, joint safety committee for production department, and negotiations committee. After his election to Business Manager, he also served as: President of the Iowa Utility Conference; President of the IBEW State Conference; IBEW Committee on Utility Deregulations and on a number of International IBEW Convention Committees.

Throughout the years at the IFL, Sagar is proud of the “amazing” staff at the Iowa Federation of Labor; the development of the Working Iowa Neighbors program and building of affiliation with Building Trades unions, United Auto Workers, United Food and Commercial Workers and International Brotherhood of Teamsters. He believed it important to expand the IFL Board to include these new affiliates as well as other unions in the decision making of the Federation.

Sagar committed to George Kourakis, IAM President and 1st Alliance for Retired Americans (ARA) President to build an Iowa chapter and was fortunate to have much support from affiliates, great presidents and staff in building the Iowa Chapter of the Alliance for Retired Americans. He also appreciated the opportunity to help the restructuring of the Central Labor Councils and their transformation to Area Labor Federations which has provided full-time staff to grow and develop worker power.

“I have served on many boards, committees, task forces and other efforts. Some have not lived up to expectations in terms of providing the intended benefits for working people. A few have done something for workers, the IFL Executive Council, the Labor Advisory Committee and the Iowa ARA board”, said Sagar.

“Working with trade unionists in Iowa has been the honor of my life.” Said Sagar. “I believe that working people deserve more than simply surviving, we need to paraphrase Samuel Gompers, ‘more’. We need to rein in the corporate excesses and create a society that values work and those who do it. A society that puts our children, our seniors and those who need our assistance before the creation of more wealth for the wealthy. We can do this and so much more together.”

He is looking forward to spending time with his wife Holly, his children and grandchildren and of course more camping, fishing and working to help workers get their fair share.

“Ken has been a tireless advocate for worker’s rights, and the Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO wishes him and his family a happy and healthy retirement. He’s been a voice for workers for decades, and he won’t stop that important work. While he may be retired from this position, anyone who has ever met him knows that Ken won’t be retiring from the fight.” said Charlie Wishman.
By Peter Hird, IFL Secretary/Treasurer

COVID-19 altered the Iowa legislature like other places where people gather throughout Iowa. The current legislative process at the Iowa capitol came to a halt on March 16th when the Senate and House adjourned until a time deemed necessary by the Legislative Council.

The previous week began like most busy weeks in the legislature. Students visited, advocacy groups set up presentations, lobbyists and legislators shook hands while normal business was being conducted in meetings and on the floor of each chamber. As the week went on, some people went about their normal business, but things were perceivably changing. The act of shaking hands moved to bumps at the elbows, the hand sanitizer placed in front of the House Chamber was running low and rumors started to float about a possible closure.

The Iowa capitol building is home to hundreds of visitors from around Iowa, around the country and from different parts of the world. Shutting down the capitol was the right thing to do.

On March 16th, the Iowa legislature unanimously turned over some emergency powers to Governor Reynolds and appropriated money for regular business such as education, public health and public safety. This allowed public school districts to decide to close without having to make up extra days of school. Wisconsin, Illinois and South Dakota already closed their schools, so it was odd for Iowa to allow districts to choose whether to close their district or not. Only a few days later Governor Reyn-olds finally recommended closing schools for four weeks to slow the spread of the virus after a case of community contact was reported. The Governor also left it up to individual school districts to decide if they wanted to pay their workforce. Thankfully, districts did decide to pay their employees. Some did not initially, but community pressure helped push districts to continue paying many school employees.

Districts have moved to online education or allowing parents to safely pick up materials. This has assisted teachers around Iowa to still help educate their students.

Before suspending this year’s legislative session, many bills were still being discussed. Along with some negative legislation, were still being discussed. Along with some negative legislative session, many bills were still being discussed. Along with some negative legislation, there were a few positive bills for working class folks making their way into discussions. HF 2361 was passed out of a Senate committee which prohibits employers from requiring employees have a microchip implanted and offering incentives to do so. Another bill being discussed, SF 2332, is a bill to prohibit employers from entering into noncompete agreements with low-wage employees. One thing to keep in mind, currently these and many other bills are left in limbo with the temporary adjournment. Very few bills have been signed by the Governor thus far this year. No one knows when the session will pick up materials. This has assisted teachers around Iowa to still help educate their students.

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The Working Class Will Save This Nation

Just exactly who the job creators are and what they have done to this nation and its economy is reminded of this since the global pandemic and political persuasions have been the thanks and appreciation of all Americans. Americans of all stripes and political persuasions have been reminded of this since the global outbreak of the Covid-19. It is the 99% who will save this nation, not the 1%, or the so-called “job creators.” Americans have found out just exactly who the job creators are if they already did not know.

By Jay Smith & Dennis McElwain

During the course of the last seven weeks, in some ways, the world has changed profoundly. However, in other ways, it has not changed at all. And, it is the way in which the world has not changed at all that should remind us how important the stakes are in November’s Election, and for that matter, in every election.

As many Iowans know, Iowa is a national leader in pork production. There are large pork meatpacking plants scattered across Iowa, including in Sioux City, Denison, Waterloo, Marshalltown, Ottumwa, Perry, Storm Lake, and Columbus Junction to name a few places. Some of these plants are represented by the Local Unions while others are not. In total, these plants and others are vital to the national food supply chain as well as the communities in which the plants are located. And, importantly, due to the close proximity in which employees have to work, these plants have the potential to increase the spread of COVID-19 dramatically without adequate standards in place to protect employees.

It would seem to make common sense that Iowa’s Governor and the President would take the opportunity to protect these critical cogs of the nation’s infrastructure and food supply in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic. It would seem to make common sense that there would be rules, not guidelines, to attempt to make the plants safe for workers. And, it would seem to make common sense that enacting such rules would not only help safeguard the food supply and workers, but also the larger communities, including strained health systems, from the spread of COVID-19. It would seem to make common sense. However, it is apparent that common sense, and for that matter common decency, is in short supply when the use of common sense potentially interferes with profits.

Today, there are no OSHA standards to protect against the spread of COVID-19 in the meatpacking industry – none. OSHA and the CDC put out guidelines for the meatpacking industry to deal with COVID-19. However, guidelines are not standards, but rather, guidelines are voluntary recommendations. As with any guideline, there is no legal basis to compel action. There is no legal basis to require compliance. In turn, employees of the meatpacking industry and the community are dependent upon employers, whose primary motive is profit, to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Put another way, there is no enforceable, legal mechanism to require meatpacking employers to take precautions to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

To make matters worse, the President issued an Executive Order prohibiting states from shutting down meatpacking plants due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, which appears to have been done at the behest of John Tyson, Chairman of Tyson Foods, Inc. (Tyson has several meatpacking plants in Iowa). And, the President also has indicated that he would like to see these employers shielded from legal liability as a result of employees contracting COVID-19 in their plants. Meanwhile, Iowa’s Governor has stood shoulder to shoulder with the President urging him along. Simply put, it is apparent that the President and Iowa’s Governor value profits over people.

Throughout its history, the Labor Movement has largely stood on behalf of working people. The Labor Movement has largely stood up to this challenge. COVID-19 is not going away any time soon. For the time being, our world will continue to be profoundly changed. However, the Labor Movement has the opportunity to help lend its voice once again to working people and to help in institute new leadership on both the Federal and State Level. In the November election, it is not too much to say that lives are on the line.

Proms Over People

Profits Over People

The President’s View...
Iowa Federation of Labor
2020 Election
Endorsements

Alvin Aragon
Iowa State Senate SD38

Keith Puntenney
Iowa State Senate SD24

Tom Courtney
Iowa State Senate SD44

IOWA STATE HOUSE

Bjorn Johnson
Deb Jensen
NO ENDORSEMENT
Chris Hall
Steve Hansen
Charlie McConkey
Jen Pellant
Jan Creusman
Nick Miller
Ryan Morrison
Shawna Anderson
Caleb Short
Scott Osruth
Cody Dilinier
Les Breckenridge
Lori Sliners
Rick Olson
RuthAnn Gaines
Brian Meyer
Bruce Hunter
Ako Abdul-Samad
Martí Anderson
Andrea Phillips
Heather Matson
Karin Derry
John Forbes
Jo Oldson
Kristin Sunde
Jennifer Konfrst
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IOWA STATE HOUSE

Kenan Judge
Beth Wessel-Kroeschell
Ross Wilburn
Shelly Stotts
Jack Friend
Selden Spencer
Dennis Evans
Jane Podgorniak
Todd Prichard
Sharon Steckman
NO ENDORSEMENT
Kayla Koether
Angela Reed
Andy McKeen
Bob Kressig
Dave Williams
Timi Brown-Powers
Ras Smith
Carissa Froyum
Bruce Bearinger
Liz Bennett
Art Staed
Eric Gjerde
Molly Donahue
Kristen Running-Marquardt
Tracy Ehrler
Sue Cahill
Christina Blackcloud
Lonny Pulkrebek
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HD 73
Greenfield Senate

IOWA STATE HOUSE

David Jacoby  HD 74
Ruby Bodeker  HD 75
Sarah Smith  HD 76
Amy Nielsen  HD 77
Kimberly Davis  HD 78
Mary Gaskill  HD 81
Phil Miller  HD 82
Jeff Kurtz  HD 83
Jeff Fager  HD 84
Vicki Lensing  HD 85
Mary Mascher  HD 86
Dennis Cohoon  HD 87
Sandy Dockendorf  HD 88
Monica Kurth  HD 89
Cindy Winckler  HD 90
Kelsey Brackett  HD 91
Jennifer Kakerti  HD 92
Phyllis Thede  HD 93
Marie Gleason  HD 94
Christian Andrews  HD 95
Ryan Zeskey  HD 97
Mary Wolfe  HD 98
Lindsay James  HD 99
Chuck Isenhart  HD 100

IOWA STATE SENATE

CJ Petersen  SD 6
Steve Gorman  SD 8
Warren Varley  SD 10
Joey Norris  SD 12
Nate Boulton  SD 16
Janet Petersen  SD 18
Rhonda Martin  SD 20
NO ENDORSEMENT
Keith Puntenney  SD 22
Matt Tapscott  SD 24
Eric Giddens  SD 28
J.D. Scholten  SD 30

FEDERAL CANDIDATES

Theresa Greenfield
US SENATE
Abby Finkenauer
Congressional District 1
Rita Hart
Congressional District 2
Cindy Axne
Congressional District 3
J.D. Scholten
Congressional District 4

Chuck Isenhart
Iowa State House HD 100

Christina Blackcloud
Iowa State House HD 72

Vicki Lensing
Iowa State House HD 85

See page 6 for more endorsements. Area Labor Federations are still making endorsements but some were not made before the deadline to print. They will be included in the next two issues of the paper.
By Charlie Wishman, IFL President

The Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO publicly called on the Governor of Iowa to do the right thing by workers and take proactive measures to keep workers safe in all workplaces. If Iowa is ever going to get its economy up and running again, it needs to take the following steps, and should have already.

- **OSHA should set guidelines for worker safety and health that protects workers from contracting COVID-19.**

  Right now, OSHA in Iowa is operating from an outdated set of rules for this pandemic we find ourselves in. There are a number of other states that have taken it upon themselves to set these guidelines and enforce them. Iowa has not. Workers are dying and will continue to until employers are forced to ensure that worker safety is their top priority, not profits.

- **Any worker who is going to work to keep our economy running who contracts COVID-19 should be entitled to Worker’s Compensation.**

  We believe that if you are going to work during a pandemic, you are putting your life on the line. All work has dignity and value, but much of it cannot be done remotely and is what we now call “essential.” If your work is essential, your health is too. Making COVID-19 infected employees eligible for workers compensation means that employers will take better precautions to protect employees, as well as ensure that no costs for recovery or other damages that come from COVID-19 fall on the workers.

- **Any employer that shuts down due to a COVID-19 outbreak must continue to pay employees as well as continue their health insurance coverage.**

  If there is an outbreak in a workplace, it needs to be shut down so it can be cleaned and made safe for humans to operate in again. While that is going on, no one should lose their house, not be able to pay rent, go hungry, face utility disconnects, or face other financial hardships because of the failure of employers to keep the work environment safe. Further, even if the entire workplace does not shut down, someone going into a quarantine situation should not have to worry about that, on top of having contracted a deadly disease.

- **Iowa should be ramping up testing for essential workers, especially in places like packinghouses and factories so that outbreaks like we have seen already do not further spread to our communities and workplaces.**

  Everything that we do know about this virus tells us that you can transmit it when you are not showing symptoms. In fact, you may be the most contagious at that time. Given that knowledge, if you are thinking you are able to stop the virus from coming in by doing symptom questionnaires and temperature checks, you are dead wrong. We need to test, test, test, until we can stop the virus from even entering the workplace and send those who test positive for proper medical care.

  If Governor Reynolds does not act through putting in place some emergency rules, the legislature must act. If neither of them acts, we need to replace them with a new legislature, as well as a new Governor in 2022. Not putting these measures in place, especially setting an OSHA standard and enforcing it, is nothing but a dereliction of their duties.

By Scott Punteney, Western Iowa Labor Federation President

Greetings from the Western Iowa Labor Federation.

Congratulations to IFL President Ken Sagar on his recent retirement.

The Delegates and Affiliated Locals of the Western Iowa Labor Federation want to acknowledge and thank President Sagar for his dedication and commitment to making Iowa a better place for working families. Thank you President Sagar, your leadership will be missed.

The Western Iowa Labor Federation endorses Tim Kacena for Woodbury County Supervisor. Throughout his career as a Sioux City Fireman, President of IAFF local # 7, and as a State Representative, Tim has shown the leadership, character, and integrity that is needed on the Woodbury County Board of Supervisors. We also endorse Chad Sheehan in the Republican primary race for Woodbury County Sheriff. The Western Iowa Labor Federation is confident that Tim and Chad are the right choices for working families. Please support these candidates that support you!

The Western Iowa Labor Federation is excited to announce our newest affiliates: IUPAT DC # 81, CWA # 7108 and LiUNA # 1140! Welcome Brothers and Sisters!

Remember to request your ballots by mail and make your voice heard!

In Solidarity.
The CARES Act: Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act

During a crisis, we look to our leadership for answers and we should all be grateful for having Iowa Democrats in Congress. There is no doubt, we wouldn’t have many of the provisions of the CARES Act for workers without our friends at the table. This could not have happened without everyone’s hard work in 2018 to get Representatives Axne, Finkenauer and Loeb- sack elected. Their support of working-class Iowans will be incredibly helpful during this crisis.

The CARES Act biggest benefit to unemployed and part-time workers will be the unemployment insurance expansion. In an unprecedented situation, workers on unemployment will be receiving a $600 weekly increase of unemployment benefit. We all know that the normal unemployment insurance benefit is far below what people normally earn. On top of that, direct payments up to $1200 per person will be sent out to working class families.

Some items in the CARES Act may not be getting the attention deserved. While much of the media remains focused on daily briefings, worker and transparency protections were put in place on government loans. There will be restrictions on any increases to executive compensation and stock buybacks or dividends will be allowed for the length of the loan plus one year. Payroll payments for airline workers were provided and that the airline companies are under the same stock buybacks and dividend protections as other loans. Another point that should make everyone happy is that businesses controlled by the President, Vice-President, workers and Congress and executive department heads will not be eligible for these loans. A new congressional oversight commission was created as well as a special inspector general.

Although these recent achievements are worthy of being proud, so much more can be done for the working class. Programs like OSHA have hard working people doing the best they can but have been severely underfunded and without strong leadership. It is infuriating to think that the Department of Labor is being run by a union busting attorney. The NLRB is disenfranchising workers who wish to be in a union and siding with employers at every turn. Representative Axne and Finkenauer will need our help to win re-election and get the right team to work with. We must elect Rita Hart and JD Scholten to Congress. We must do everything we can and put Theresa Greenfield in Iowa’s Senate seat. And most of all, we must work our tails off for our endorsed candidate for President of the United States and get them elected. The labor movement has fought through these terrible times, managed to hold our heads above water and stood our ground. Now, we will take back the democracy we deserve.

Voting by Mail in the June 2nd Primary Election

By Julianne Frosolone, IFL Political Director

Sisters and brothers, voting by mail is the best way to have your voice heard in the June 2nd Primary Election. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, election officials across the state are encouraging Iowa voters to vote from home to ensure the health and safety of both voters and poll workers.

**HOW DO I VOTE BY MAIL?**

The Secretary of State’s office has mailed every registered Iowa voter an absentee ballot request form. If you have not received a request form, you can download one on the Iowa Secretary of State’s website. Regardless, your completed absentee ballot request form must arrive at your County Auditor’s office no later than 5:00 pm on May 22nd. County Auditors began mailing Primary Election Ballots on April 23rd.

Once you receive your ballot, be sure to vote for union-endorsed candidates like Theresa Greenfield in the U.S. Senate Primary. For a comprehensive list of Iowa AFL-CIO endorsed candidates, check pages 4-5. Your ballot must arrive at your County Auditor’s office by no later than 9:00 pm on Election Day, June 2nd, so it’s best to mail it back as soon as possible.

**WHAT IF I'M NOT REGISTERED TO VOTE?**

No worries! You can still register to vote and participate in the June 2nd Primary Election. You can download a Voter Registration form on the Iowa Secretary of State’s website or register on their online form. The “Worry Free Postmark Date” for mailing your completed registration form is Monday, May 18th. Like your absentee ballot request form, it must arrive at your County Auditor’s office by 5:00 pm on May 22nd. To vote by mail, include a completed absentee ballot request form along with your completed voter registration form.

**DO I HAVE TO PICK A POLITICAL PARTY?**

Yes. Primary elections are closed to members of individual political parties, so when you request your absentee ballot, you will need to choose a party. Your voter registration will be updated to whichever party you choose to receive a ballot for.

**IMPORTANT PRIMARY ELECTION DATES**

- **Thursday, April 23rd** – First Day of Absentee Voting by mail for the Primary Election
- **Monday, May 18th** – Worry Free Postmark Date for Voter Registration Forms
- **Friday, May 22nd** – Deadline to request an Absentee Ballot by mail
- **Pre-registration Deadline for the Primary Election**
- **Tuesday, June 2nd** – Primary Election Day

**WHO CAN I CONTACT IF I HAVE A QUESTION?**

Please feel free to reach out to Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO Political Director, Julianne Frosolone, at julianne@iowaaflcio.org with any questions.
Wishman, Hird Appointed by IFL

Charlie Wishman and Peter Hird were appointed by the IFL Executive Board at a special meeting on April 30, as President and Secretary/Treasurer. They both will officially take office May 1, 2020.

Charlie Wishman became Secretary/Treasurer of the Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO in January of 2012. Charlie is a member of AFT Local 716, and has also previously been a member of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAMAW) as well as the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). He worked as the Community Liaison for the Food Bank of Iowa from 2003-2006, and then became a union member when he became an organizer for Iowa Citizen Action Network in 2006. In 2009 he became a staff member of AFSCME Council 61 as a Communications Specialist. In the fall of 2011 Charlie came to work at the Federation as Communications Director before stepping into the role as Secretary/Treasurer in 2012.

“I’m excited to take on this new role and its challenges, however fighting for workers’ rights and safe workplaces have been what I’ve always done. The team at the IFL is second to none, the unions that make up the Iowa Federation of Labor make us proud every day, and I’m excited about what we will be able to accomplish together. The Federation was first formed in 1894, and we’re excited to continue this work that’s been going on for over 125 years.”

Peter Hird is from the Dubuque area, where he worked as an inside lineman electrician with International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Union Local 704. He received an Associate’s degree in electronics (2002). He served on the local apprenticeship committee. He was a trustee for pension and health & Welfare, on the executive board and Vice President. From 2014 thru 2020 he was a union organizer for the local, with two successful organizing drives with Dubuque hotels.

“Being an organizer gave me the opportunity to give people a path into a union workplace,” said Hird. Peter recently moved to Des Moines with his wife Jess and his 1 year old son, Lucas.

Using Data to Make Good Decisions in the COVID-19 Crisis

By Mike Owen

These days the numbers seem to come in waves from the COVID-19 crisis. Sometimes they tell a story; sometimes they don’t. Sometimes they offer insights; sometimes only noise.

The pandemic tests not just our leaders, but all Iowans for our ability to make forward-thinking decisions while dealing with an immediate crisis. That means we all need to be careful with data. Which numbers deserve attention? Which will help us decide it is time to return life to normal?

Governor Kim Reynolds thinks we are there already, not two months into the crisis. That means we all are dealing with an immediate emergency. And the data are telling the last six weeks are far heavier, with over 260,700 claims. So, as we consider when to expect people to go back to work in a responsible timeframe, consider the numbers and their context.

New unemployment claims jump over last six weeks

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<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Great Recession</th>
<th>COVID-19 crisis</th>
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<td>Claims</td>
<td>64,194</td>
<td>55,965</td>
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<td>Source</td>
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From the numbers, we know that by the end of April, less than 2 percent of Iowans had been tested for a highly contagious virus that has claimed at least 162 lives and infected over 7,100.

What will these numbers and this emergency policy making process teach us for the future, for good decision making? These are always questions for policy making, but in the spring of 2020, all Iowans may have a better appreciation of it. This is not about politics, but about governing. If this governor or a future governor makes good decisions with data in an emergency, lives are saved.

Because of the strong support of Iowa labor unions and individuals, IPP researchers have helped Iowans understand the numbers and to offer context for the making, and evaluation, of decisions. We will continue to do this work. We hope you will consider a substantial contribution in 2020, from your union organization and — if you can — personally as well.

Contact me at mikeowen@iowapolicyproject.org for more information about our work.

Mike Owen is executive director of the nonpartisan Iowa Policy Project in Iowa City.