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Keith: Welcome to the Unifor Local 88 podcast episode 2. Today's guests are Mike Van Boekel shop chair and Joe Graves, Local 88 president. Thank you guys for coming and welcome.

Thanks for having us.

Thank you.

So, I think we're going to start with Joe first. Joe is going to kind of give us a brief rundown of what's going on. Any issues that might face our local and then Mike will talk and then we'll kind of go through events and then we'll close up the podcast. So Joe, would you like to get us started?

Joe: Yeah. I'll first start with the addition that we're having to the hall. There was an addition that was previously going to go on the hall a few years ago. Then, we had to layoff, when we lost the Terrain. When I took office, it was still on the agenda to do. We're just waiting for things to change a little bit at Cami. And fortunately, we seem to be in a good position right now that we've initiated the addition to our hall. That addition is going to involve the demolition of the house, taking it down and adding an addition. The addition is going to incorporate 4 new offices, a board room and there's going to be an office for the UAT trainers as well as a UAT classroom for them to have their own separate area. There'll be additional washroom space, storage, as well as the bar area and we're going to have a committee library. Start project for this is approximately April 29th. For the last four to five months, we have been meeting with McGill construction and with the architects that work with McGill construction, Tillman Ruth & Robinson and we've had bi-weekly meetings almost and it's getting very close to the start date. It's unbelievable the amount of hoops you've got to go through for this and it's a lot of going through the city hall and they all get permits and they've got to do water testing and do land testing and the architectural plans as well.

Joe: We have gone over it three or four times and we have finally come down to a final plan for the hall. It is going to be quite large and as members drive by when the construction like I said starts April 29 it's going to hopefully be completed by near the end of August. Our hope right now is to have the hall completed by approximately a week or so before Labor Day. And if that does go there is no stoppage of work due to weather or some unforeseen inconvenience. We will hopefully be able to have a grand

opening of the hall on Labor Day weekend and we always have. Traditionally we always have Labor Day functions. We have a picnic and kids activities as well. We have a soapbox derby that takes place on the road. Unfortunately there wasn't enough participants last time. Hopefully this year we can get more participants and get this soapbox derby back on track. But if we can get this hall completed in time I think it's going to be a perfect opportunity to showcase the new hall as well as have our Labor Day picnic

Joe: And I think once the house is down there'll be a lot more additional parking. It'll be a big change for Local 88 to see the size of the hall that we're going to have and the facilities that will be available for both the members of the Executive and In-plant; everybody that can get usage of the hall. The hall rentals will still take place in the older part and they'll be some of the facilities available for the public as well. But we are going to hopefully change the facade of the building in the colors as well so that'll be very interesting as well when that it's all completed as well other updates.

I guess to speak on besides the hall would be we all have seen in the news about Oshawa while they are talking now. So, as you can see the campaign to target GM on their Mexican buying has been kind of put to a halt right now. Well Unifor National has been meeting with the GM upper management of Detroit. So things are a little quiet right now in regards to that. But I would hope within, you know, a couple of weeks we hear of some resolution and what comes of that we'll be sure to inform our entire membership about that.

Keith: Ok. Thank you Joe. And Mike do you want to give us a quick update on what you have.

Mike: Yeah there's a lot going on in the plant. There usually is. We just came off of a big grievance with a pension WIN that affected hundreds of people; that's a big one. We are still working out the details but that will put actually a few million dollars in people's pockets over the years. That's a big one. We actually just settled a very big grievance today that most people aren't even aware we filed it. It's pretty well every junior person with five years or seniority or less in the assembly shop they will be getting money we should have that worked out by next week. But we just got the company to finally agree to that today and there'll be details coming out on that. There's a lot of rumors going on

right now with packages, layoffs and I'm sure we'll go through that over/during the length of the podcast but there is a lot going on and I guess we'll just go through it as we go through these questions.

Keith: Joe, do you kind of want to talk about what the role of the president is in times such as the things that are going on for Oshawa. What kind of things have you been up to? What is your role, as you see it, as far as all this is concerned?

Joe: Well, when they announce the closure or the potential closure of the Oshawa plant it was a shock for everybody including us. We have tried to participate in a lot of the demonstrations they have. They have had the shop committee did go down as well as some retirees. They went down to Windsor. They did a demonstration down at GM headquarters. My kids and I and some other members have been going down there. Local 88 fully supports the Oshawa members and trying to find some type of resolution besides closure to that plant because we have a lot of friends and some people have family down there that are working in there. And if the roles were reversed we would hope Oshawa would support us as well. Right now we're not sure what is going on. It sounds kind of promising that the national fighting with the GM or negotiating with GM I should say it does sound like something's going to come. We haven't had the finer details of what is going to happen but we try and we hope at some point in time we do see some type of better resolution than the entire plant closure.

Keith: And Mike I know you've been in contact with the 2 2 2 and 1 9 9. Do you kind of briefly want to explain what your role has been in mitigating some of the negativity that's coming from that as well as what you're doing to help Oshawa and show that Local 88 is definitely supporting them still.

Mike: Well the ultimate goal for sure is to keep the plant open. Barring that, though we are trying to go for a worst case if something does happen if they do close the plant. We put together a package that we sent to - not sent too, We met with the heads of GM and we gave to the National which would include packages for our people. It would soft land the Oshawa workers with our plant at all three locations being Woodstock St. Catharines and Cami. It would open up but if you give the packages it would get our people to retire that would open up a lot of spots for the people from Oshawa that are

still looking to work that are they got a lot of people there that are 5 years,10 years they'll be looking to carry on and get to their pensions.

Mike: So we gave them that proposal. We're hoping to hear from it as well.

Joe: Can I just say one thing on the pension. Mike spoke on the 30 and out pension resolution that now enables all 30 and out individuals who retire under the age of 55. I just really want to give kudos to Mike Van Boekel his In-plant especially the benefits reps that were very instrumental in getting this established in getting it back Mike and I did meet on a couple occasions with the president of GM Canada and we did identify this as being a major issue in our plant. It is something that was totally unforeseen. I was a benefits rep for close to 28 years and I never saw this. The national rep who was last with us never saw it. There was a letter that was attached for the top up for these people. That was negotiated I think like in 1985. No 1985-1988 something like that even before we were established. So it was just something that was missed. We assumed that we had the same as GM but through tough negotiations basically we got it re-established and I just really want to give kudos to the individuals that were involved in getting it re-established.

Keith: Yeah we are fortunate to have the In-plant committee we do we know they all work hard and a lot of thankless hours. So definitely kudos to our In-plant committee for all the hard work they do in front of. I guess you'd say the cameras and also behind the scenes.

Keith: So I think what we'll do now is we'll dive into the members' questions. Thank you all so much for those that did submit questions. This will be a running thing from now on. So if you, by all means, hear anything on this that you are questioning or whatever. Feel free to fire us off an email. The form is on the Web site. You can also e-mail Unifor88.ca@gmail.com and we will try to get all those questions to Mike or whoever they're for. It's important that you guys have input on how this podcast runs as much as anybody else. So with that being said, we will start with the questions.

Keith: So the first question we'll start with is layoffs. When a member is recalled from layoffs are they entitled to past special payments? And Mike did touch on the five year thing, so go ahead.

Mike: No they are not. If you come back now in April you do not get the bonus payment that we got in December. So they'll get the next bonus payment as long as you're back working full time.

Keith: What about the signing bonus? Are they entitled to that on recal?

Mike: Everybody got it. They should have got it already. Even the people that were laid off, as long as they had worked that year they should already all have that money.

Keith: So the strike of 2017 restored pension funds for CAMI workers that have worked in Oshawa in the early 2000s. Who's dragging their feet on this issue. GM or the Canadian government? And by all means if whoever wants to answer that just jump in.

Joe: Ok I'll answer that. This is one of the last issues we got resolved and there was a fair amount of people that went to Ottawa to work, some worked less than two year Some worked more in two years. Some deferred the pension and some took their pension. So each circumstances was a little different for the question of who's dragging their feet. I'm going to say it's not a major issue GM but they do get there. They do get around to the issues that we've negotiated but what they have to do is they don't go through the Canadian government, they go through FISCO which is an Ontario body and it does take time similar to when we've made changes in the pension in the past. All changes have to go through FISCO. it's a government body so it does take a lot of time and you know I had to say one of the other I'd say FISCO drags their butts a bit on getting the resolution. But between the two of them it does take time. And that's the reason why sometimes the supplemental books which have all the benefits in it they're usually held back a lot longer than the collective agreements because we're waiting for FISCO to approve any pension increases that we did to it. So as far as dragging its the process of having to get GM to make application of FISCO, FISCO to review it make sure it's legal then get back to GM and then they get back to us. So both parties would be dragging it you could say they're dragging. But this does take time.

Keith: Just down the list here. I see the company not following our collective agreement on a daily basis. How frustrating is it for you and the In-plant to see this happening? How can our members fix it?

Mike: I'm all into this one. That's a pretty broad topic. And when they say that they don't see the company following the collective agreement I'd need more specific details obviously the reps are there to try and police the contract. It's pretty broad. I'm not exactly sure what they mean on that. It's extremely frustrating and just on a day to day basis more and how they interpret language. A lot of our language that they're going to say is ambiguous with two different meanings we don't agree with that whatsoever. They did it again today actually. They sat down with us about a benefit issue that was written in 2004 and now here we are 15 years later and they're trying to, they believe they have a different meaning of it. So that part is extremely frustrating. I hate going back to the well every time when you think you have an issue resolved and they think it means something different and we just keep on it's like Groundhog Day. That part is extremely frustrating now.

Keith: On the previous podcast we talked about the morale survey and the membership feedback on what GM and the union can do to help improve morale and make CAMI maybe a little bit more enjoyable to work for.. Mike has some follow ups on that. So Mike do you want to share.

Mike: Yeah. We sat down with Gary Duff. Actually, I sat down with them and we talked a lot about recognition and respect. Uh we believe those two things are big items of the people. A lot of people will say just pay me every week and don't screw up my vacation and most people are happy. But people like to be recognized for doing a good job. I know recently we just got to BIQ4 is an extremely important milestone for any GM plant. Um you will not get new product without it. We are now one of the few plants to get it. We got it early. We got it with the highest score GM ever awarded it. And I do not always go. You know they've ordered hockey jerseys for everybody. Um I do believe most of people will like them. I mean it's Canada. The jerseys kind of represent a team. They do like the team work that comes back from the old Japanese philosophy. I do believe he's just trying to I think Gary Duff is trying to reach out. He's an American. He knows most people in Canada seem to like hockey. I'm not a big fan of the color they look like trying Toronto Maple Leaf shirts. However, it is something they're trying to do I know some people aren't going to like it but I do like I like it. I think they're reaching out they're trying to do the right thing. Oh we've had a lot of talk about some other programs. I'm really I would believe we are very close to them bringing back the kids'

Christmas party that would be great especially for the young people we used to do that every year, let them skate get some presents and go down to London meet Santa Claus. So hopefully that will come into play. They are working on something different than it used to be for sure when we were a stand alone. There was more money for the members. Right now it's GM and as everyone knows they are extremely cheap. Detroit's calling the shots on the money and it is very tough. But we are working on trying to get some more people recognized and just hopefully try and boost morale a bit.

Keith: Mike, you mentioned before in the previous podcast about aligning our contract with St. Catharines to negotiate together? How would you do that? Shorten ours by 1 year or have them do just a 1 year deal on theirs or 4 years for them 3 for us? What if GM says no for length of contract knowing we're trying to align with them and obviously it dovetails into the other question is with the unfortunate situation in Oshawa will be in the best interest of Local 88. Bargaining earlier ratifying with St. Catharines and Woodstock?

Mike: Well I don't want to put the cart before the horse. I don't really want to make too many comments while they're still negotiating in Oshawa. Um I wouldn't do anything unless the membership backed it. That'll be the first thing but I'll be honest if the company ever came to us and said We'd like you guys to go in early or line up the contracts which would be one year early. Um I would think just on behalf of the membership. It costs nothing to sit and listen to him. There'd have to be reasons why we could then relay that to the membership on why, come up with the pros and cons and I'll be honest as we've proven in the past. We went into early bargaining two contracts ago. We walked away in March. We went back in September with a timeline and a strike or a strike facing us and we got a lot better deal. I have absolutely no problem going in bargaining early and walking away if it's not the best deal that we believe we can get at the time. But again it will be up to the members but in the bigger picture I have argued for years and years I'll say two decades that I believe we stand alone. I like the way our contract was separate. If Oshawa plant does close we would have about 2300 members. Woodstock has 80. St. Catharines has 1300. They are setting the bar. I all say every round with the Big 3 with Ford and Chrysler. We need to get to that table; we need to get our voices heard more and have an official count, an official vote there. I mean so every time I've gone it's always been with our president. So Joe Graves would be there this time. We do have voice. We do not get a vote.

Mike: I believe maybe it's time we should lead it and get a lot more say than just going 1 year later and trying to change things as we found out with the strike. It is extremely tough but again that's a conversation maybe for a few months down the road right now. They do negotiate UAW this year September 2020 will be the Unifor Big 3. So we'll see what our members think and we'll just see uh see what's going on. Maybe Joe wants to add to that.

Joe: Yeah I'd like to add for negotiations. We had gone in early every time and we've always gone in either way with the support of the membership in it this would be no different if we were to go in early we would have a special meeting to get the approval of our membership meeting and again we walked out last time that we're in the early bargaining because we didn't feel we had the best deal that we could get. We will look at everything and if we believe that we should go in early with your approval the membership we would go in early and then again if we got a deal again it would be the approval of the membership that would ratify that contract so it'd be no different than it is a normal time but we would go in early. Now in saying that Mike did go on about negotiations and how it's always worked. I've been at most negotiations of Local 88 to date and we used to follow a pattern and then sometimes when we were just CAMI Automotive we usually get better than pattern at times. Ever since GM has come into the loop more so in the last three or four negotiations we get nothing but pattern and they set pattern a year before us. Like Mike said he and Dan Borthwick are at the last time they had voice but no vote. So we are taking whatever they negotiate a year later and as we saw from a five week strike no more no less. So if we were at the table and with our population I mean Mike would be there to be able to vote on what the contract would be. I think it'd be a lot more advantageous for us as a membership to be able to vote on what we're getting or not getting and that would be part of the deal if we did go in with them. So that will be determined by again our membership. If we were to do that.

Keith: Okay and what happens with our laid off members if we get sent Oshawa workers.

Mike: Our laid off workers will all be returning to work full time and recalled before we welcome any 222 members as new 88 members. So all of our members will be recalled first.

Joe: The pref higher language is very clear that that pref hire you cannot go into a pref hire facility if you have laid off members. Once the laid off members are all recalled then they can start up pref hires from Oshawa. I know some of our membership that's a real concern because I get calls in the office from laid off members asking this exact same question. So just to make it clear everyone has to be recalled before anyone can be pref hired into our facility.

Keith: Okay. It kind of dovetails into that a little bit with the impending layoffs at Oshawa and then fighting for jobs. To a lot of our members it makes sense that GM offers like a blanket buyout hopefully and enticing some of our members that are close to retirement to take it thus freeing up more spots for Oshawa to come into our plant. Is that being talked about? Can we talk about that right now?

Mike: Yeah for sure I did give him a proposal to the heads of Canada, GM states. and to Unifor National that included packages for our members. I have read some of the stuff on social media. The language is clear, If your plant closes or if you get a layoff you get packages. Our plant Woodstock and St. Catharines very fortunately are not going through this. So there is nothing in the book that says you get packages. The only reason Oshawa is getting them is because they are potentially closing. So we are trying to work around that. We are trying to get holes opened up at our plant to bring those people in here. It would be a win win. Some of our people could retire quicker. And in saying that it would bring the people down here. This is for skilled trades and production. I'm not sure where it's going to end up it's a couple of weeks I think before we hear and I'll be honest. The biggest thing to me isn't the money we are really pushing hard with National. To get a footprint in Canada defined right now so that if Oshawa does close potentially then GM will come forward and say we're going to have a footprint in Canada for a long long time.

Mike: And that would be a commitment to investment at the CAMI plant because that's obviously going to be the last plant left so, that to me is more important than anything else. We got a lot of people in our plant that are just getting recalled to work. We need investment. We need jobs. A paint shop would be awesome another vehicle would be awesome. A launch in 2023 we need things like that that ensure the livelihoods of all of our members.

Joe: Yeah. Just on that. I do get a lot of phone calls on this from some of the senior members because it's a hot topic like Mike said it's on social media. My understanding is they were going to lay a shift off in Oshawa June timeframe before shutdown. I believe it's been extended to September now. So what that's going to do is push - keep no layoffs till September and then the buyouts have got to be negotiated. So I've been telling people in the plant that even if we if it is a chance we do get buyouts. I would not say it trickles down to us till late fall maybe even take Christmas time frame so if there is not going to be buyouts in the next month or two.

Keith: Approximately how many members of 28 years or more do we have left. Kind of give the membership an idea of how many people could be retiring in the next say 1 to 3 years.

Joe: When I was in benefits and in for negotiations because this topic come up we're trying to get some buyouts and negotiations as well. The hiring mode that we hired, we hired a few hundred in '88 but it was close to a 1989,1990. So if you're if one of those people were to work continuously from 89 to 90 you're looking at two thousand people and a lot of those people a lot. But I got to see anywhere from 1500-1800 would be eligible for 30 and out doesn't mean they they're going to leave just means they're eligible for the 30 and out pension and then they would be eligible for buyouts so if there were buyouts it would entice a lot of people to go early and it would also help maybe relocate some of the people from Oshawa to continue working at CAMI

Keith: With the younger workforce. How do we encourage our younger junior workers to get involved more with the union to get more involved in the committees? Things like that.

Joe: I was going to say as far as getting involved with the In-plant or any In-plant issues usually people get involved once they get disciplined. Which is unfortunate. That's when they get a little more aggressive because they're pissed off at how they are treated and they want to get involved and know how to fight back and that sometimes makes a good union rep. I think it actually the chairperson beside me that's how he got involved. But yeah with other stuff and Rec stuff and that, I'm going to go on a little bit later but Julie Fenn has got our rec committee going up full blown. There's a couple events per month and that's a start for it. I think with this Saturday overtimes that had been stopped. We're

starting to see a lot more people different people show up to membership meetings showing up to Rec Committee Events, the golf tournament. I attended the golf tournament last year there was a I cannot say more than half of them were younger members or new members that were there which was great to see. We've had a couple events where we've had bands involved. Tennis hasn't been great but there's a lot of different people there so that's all we can do is we can now have hold the events promote the events and hopefully as the younger members see that we're having these events they show up.

Keith: And if you do want to get involved with a committee. if you go to our Website unifor88.ca click on the About Us tab there is a whole rundown of each committee who does what, what their roles are and also the chairs that are responsible for those committees. So by all means reach out to those people if you want to become involved. I don't think there is a cap on how many people can be involved in a committee. Obviously the more the merrier. Some of the other committees require more people more bodies. So by all means if you're interested reach out to those people.

Joe: One other area that I believe a lot of the younger members are getting involved with us is the PEL programs in Port Elgin as president one of the major duties is to do PEL selection every fall and spring. We are sending close to over 50 people per session and it's over a period of time. It entitles a week in Port Elgin where you pick a subject that you wanted to choose to take. And it's a great facility. It's world renowned as far as an education facility. It's up in Port Elgin Ontario. Your wages are paid for and your travel is paid for. It's something I can I can only stress I can't stress enough that if you're a younger member you want to get involved trying to apply for a PEL selection when it comes up ask a committee person when the time frame is fill out the PEL application if you want to come to a couple membership meetings and you know it looks like you're getting involved you'll likely get selected once you go up there you'll see what a facility it is and you'll want to get more involved.

Keith: A person from a personal experience I've been to Port Elgin twice now and it is a great great place. Phenomenal people. Phenomenal staff. I'm a great chance to meet other union members from all across Canada.

Keith: Next question. Why are we allowing the company to ask and gather private medical information. This actually might be a good question for Joe with his previous benefit experiences. Why are we allowing the company to ask and gather private medical information and threatening us with our jobs if we do not comply? So why do we know well in advance with these deadlines for their so-called medical when their so-called medical compliance are due. Then they do not allow adequate time for securing a doctor's appointment at our own medical doctor. They are crossing the line with our private and confidential information based on some global policy which violates our privacy rights. Here in Ontario at.

Keith: Mike's going to take it.

Mike: Yeah. It's a good question. This has really come to the forefront the last month especially with the trades people. So right now there's a there's a new policy. There's a bunch of policies that have come out quickly at GM. It's worldwide so it's not just CAMI and they are following these and every plant. Some of these are also legal now. The law for especially the Ministry of Labour has really come down. But there's I wish I had it in front of me. There's a lot of people will be doing every three years a test for various things and some people were doing it every year especially in the trades. But we also have one station at the assembly department that have isocyanate the Ministry of Labor is all over that. You have to be tested every year. We have taken the test. We've given it UNIFOR LEGAL. They have their own legal wing. All a bunch of lawyers. We give it to them. They had it for almost two months. They gave it back. They had to tweak some of it but Unifor has stamped off on it. They said there's nothing illegal about the questions that they're asking and also one of the biggest things that they noticed is they are going after people not going after and they want to know about your health not just for the person but for the people you're working around.

Mike: If we have a material handler down there someone could be on Tylenol 3s and have not much of an effect because let's say your shoulder hurts and you can take. You can take a couple Tylenol 3s and keep driving whereas the next person could take a couple Tylenol 3s and be dizzy. We don't want people hurting other people it's not just about themselves it's about the people they're working with. So there is a lot there is those issues as well. But we did get it. We did get clearance from legal and so right now the other thing we're doing the health center. I thought the health center was really

screwing this up. They check everybody's medical they've got people on a three year schedule now depending if you post. We just had a young guy just posted to the isocyanates that team in assembly. They took him, tested them. He failed the test. So it's actually for his benefit because he can't work there. Some people just with their skin and that just it doesn't work. So a lot of the trades guys have to go every year. It depends on the job you're doing. It depends on your trade. I know the trades guys. Every year they have to do the fit for the respirators. It has to seal if there's a guy working alone or in a tight spot and the other guys got to get in and get him. He's got to make sure he can get them. We're dealing with people's safety. Um so we have gone through it so the health center is putting your name and your testing date on a computer. They do not put any personal information. Nobody.

Mike: This is important. Nobody can get your personal information not ER not HR. It stays in the medical center file. That's it. They can't test for drugs they can't do urine samples stuff like that. They're going to ask you if you're taking any drugs that they should know about. If you're, if you take Viagra or Flintstones they don't need to know that they don't need to know the vitamins but if you're taking some medication. I mean if you obviously if you're on some certain things on the floor and you pass out they can't speak. They've got to know what's in you because that could happen. We do get the Ambulance in there a couple times a month. That's important to know. Any thing the health center puts that on a computer where we're having a problem right now.

Mike: Paint department is the worst. We have training scheduled for Monday. They're bringing all the assistant managers in and they're going to drive from the top down. They expect the Bulls the business managers to check that every three months every month every it's supposed to look to three months in advance and they rotate. So looks like what you call it. It just keeps going the counter just keeps ticking so every month you keep looking three months in advance. They will tap someone on the shoulder and say hey in 90 days you need your hearing tested or whatever test do. If you'd like to go to your doctor that's absolutely you're right you go to your doctor bring the test back and you have to provide the medical if you want to do it. Cami which ninety nine percent of the people do because it's free and let's be honest you're off the line to do it. So you'll do it there. But right now it's at all the GM plants they've just implemented over the last year and now it will be a three year cycle depending on your test. Some of them are

what every year. But we are trying to make sure people are safe and that when they walk into the plant they walk back out at the end of the day all right.

Keith: So another question. Is it mandatory to give 60 days notice that you're planning to retire.

Joe: They like 60 days planning it's for scheduling for manpower. So usually that's the norm 60 days. When I was in the benefits office I actually had a guy retire the day he came in he was just fed up of working there. He's missing a lot of time. So I went to HR and said that this guy wants to retire. You guys got a problem with. They said no. The 60 days as well will enable the company to have a replacement for you through posting you will enable them to have everything set up for you so when you do go out the door. And as far as finances and now it still takes time. Whether you go 60 days or 30 days but 60 days is the norm. But it's not mandatory.

Mike: I just like to repeat that it's not mandatory. You can reach retiree with one day's notice but you're really going to bugger up your finances. It's going to take a while.

Mike: So that's the biggest that's the biggest issue.

Keith: Should we be concerned about suffering the same fate as Oshawa. Especially the fact that we only produced one vehicle that 2 two plants other plants?

Mike: Yeah I think we should be concerned that I'm not here to scare people but I do believe we should be concerned until the government gets more involved both federally and provincially. We could have been Oshawa or vice versa. Its Oshawa but I mean look at the Ford plant. Uh for the younger people that weren't here (Talbotville right down the road) they they're eliminating the car plants one at a time about every five or six years. And I do believe it's a major concern in saying that. Kudos to our membership. It's world wide how well our plant is known at the GM chain and other plants. We are number one in pretty well every matrix that they measure. I firmly believe we are here for a long time. I believe there is going to be an investment announced shortly or in the near future about two thousand twenty three. We just do everything right. And that's just on the backs of our members more than anything else.

Mike: We provide a quality vehicle with lean lean hours. Everyone knows that. And I just believe we're going to be here for a long time but it absolutely is a concern when we put memos to the floor and ask people to contact the local governments. We really hope they do. Most people I'll be honest don't really seem to care until it's their plant or the pink slip's in their hand. But we've had enough of our members that have gone through layoffs we have 15 year people in there who've gone through layoffs they know what it's like you lose your job your whole life changes your hope everything changes. So should they be concerned. Absolutely it's an auto industry. It goes up and down.

Keith: What can the government do to make our plants more competitive and more viably optional for General Motors and the other big three?

Joe: One of the things that I was fortunate to take part of was we had a lobbying exercise down in Toronto me and Mike Van Boekel attended and we had the opportunity to speak with each group had a two MPPS (I think the lobbying could be with the MPS) as well but an AUTO PACT. I went in and I spoke about the elimination of the College of trades the elimination of that within Ontario. Doug Ford did that and that was a trades issue but the other thing I spoke to both MPPs about was with NAFTA gone We need an auto pact. We need some type of auto pact that you where you sell them you build them. So basically we need something put in place and which would likely be put in place from the federal. But this was provincial. But I think some hard lobbying has to go towards an auto pact of some type to keep the facilities that we do have here now.

Keith: Lay off weeks. There are tons of rumors in our plant about a layoff week we've heard April we've heard April we've heard an extension into July possibly to replace some tanks in paint. Lots of rumours. Mike can you update us on any of that?

Mike: Yeah for sure. So last year and 2018 around the late spring I was told we're going to go down for three weeks in 2018. one in the fall, two right before Christmas. We do not put that information on the floor because it can change dramatically and all we do is upset the apple cart. As the year wore on they got rid of one week then they got rid of two weeks and eventually they canceled all three. We will try and give the members a minimum as much notice as much as you possibly can at least hopefully a couple of months. So when we came back out for Christmas they told us that there was gonna be

a week in April again. They told us to keep it quiet but it's looking like it's going to be I don't know the second or third week of April as February came, orders really took off in the States. So they canceled that week. And I know they are looking at the last week of June right before a shutdown. However they want to announce that March 1st. And now we're in mid-March and now they're telling us that they're not going to know until the end of April or early May. I honestly don't think they're going to have a down week right now. The sales are extremely strong. I know they're worried about the new truck that just got launched. That's built in Mexico at the same plant that builds Equinox. The new, you know the blazer it looks fantastic. They're a little bit worried about it cannibalizing some of our trucks. It is quite a bit higher cost. So hopefully it doesn't. But the same plant that builds up is also one that builds Equinox so I think we're picking up some of their volume so they can concentrate more on the Blazer but we will see, again they don't have to give any notice they can give a week's notice but we'll probably get at least a month But right now I honestly don't think there's going to be a down week if there is we'll cross that bridge. But I hope there isn't.

Keith: So now I think what we'll do is we'll get into a new segment we want to call. Down the line which basically is just about events upcoming. Basically save the calendar or you know check your calendars save the date kind of thing. Joe is going to actually talk about that.

Joe: Sure. I'd like to talk about our recreation committee chairperson Julie Fenn. I mentioned her already. She has taken this committee and she's done a great job on re-initiating a lot of the events that we used to have. I already mentioned the Saturday mandatory Saturdays have been eliminated has now opened it up for the opportunity for the rec committees to flourish. The one we just had a little while ago is run by the youth committee was an ax throwing an ax throwing event. And it was in London Ontario well attended by a lot of members of 88. We have Big Brothers Big Sisters bowling as well. April 6 we have an event that involves darts and chili. The name they've come up with is farts and darts. So it starts at 11:00. It's April 6 11:00 till 4:00. So if you're in the area please come out. You can have some chili and a beverage and I've been asked to and I believe Mike has been asked with a couple chefs and Ingersoll here to judge the chili so I'll be eating lots of chili that day and maybe have a few beers. April 13th she has scheduled the committee has scheduled falls views casino as well. There's another bus trip that there's a play in Toronto. Come away. I think it's the events of the Gander

experience when 9/11 happened, but that was sold out immediately within a week or so. I know and looking at the posting she is she has inquired about starting a volleyball league as well as we have a beach volleyball with the youth committee I think organizes a beach volleyball event in Port Stanley every summer and that's coming up I believe in June as well May 25th is our local's golf tournament.

Joe: If anyone's interested that is Golf tournament at Tamarack just near the Putnam's wage scales. If anyone's interested in that the information will be on our website all the information for the rec committees are posted on our website as well as on the posting boards. We have the national hockey tournament that we do send three or four teams to that there's a national pool tournament.

Joe: Some of the other things I like to speak about was our social justice fund as well. We've had three events I don't know that we spoke at the last podcast only it was but we we've donated to the Ingersoll town twenty five thousand dollars towards its board and clock that will go right on the main street that will have GM and you know for 88 sponsorship on it and it's going to be to display news events coming up in Ingersoll. We've also had an event with the Big Brothers Big Sisters at Tillsonburg where we made a surprise donation at the auction there as well as Handbags for Hospice. The Social Justice Fund came. We negotiated one hundred thousand to go towards these events and the response that we have gotten from these events and the exposure of locally has been immense. It's been super. And I'd like to give Mike Murphy and Mike Vanboekel kudos for this EP negotiations coming up with this idea yeah.

Keith: I think the last viral video received almost ninety thousand views a thousand shares so that is a great recognition for our local for what we do. And more importantly for the charities that we support and I too want to thank Mike Murphy. Mike Murphy does a lot of things behind the scenes that a lot of people don't see. So kudos to Mike Murphy and the hard work that he does that a lot of times doesn't get noticed.

Keith: All right. Is there anything else that you guys want to touch on or loose ends that you want to wrap up.

Mike: Yeah I wouldn't mind saying a few things. We've done a lot of work in the last month for the deaf members. I've learned quite a bit. They're not hearing impaired. They

like to be referred to as deaf. That's one thing I've learned. We have eleven deaf members in our plant, two with recall rights that were laid off. They're both getting recalled. They actually both turned down the recall, one's actually in St. Catharines working for GM there he took a pref hire. So he's very happy there. A lot of family down there. So we will actually have eleven deaf members going forward. We are going to put a memo what we hope next week that we've been working on. We are trying to do quite a few changes in our plant. They do take time because it takes money but we are trying to change quite a few things. And I'm almost embarrassed to say I've been there almost 30 years. And to sit with some of the deaf members and hear some of their complaints that they're telling us it's almost embarrassing that we haven't thought of some of this stuff. Some of the projects we've done we've put almost like we've put like a picture page together laminated that we've given to every nurse at the health center and every E.R.T member in the plant. So if a deaf member went down and got hurt bad.

Mike: The E.R.T would respond they'd have a picture thing there and it shows all the body parts different things and they can just point to it just as help speed it up. The company has ordered three laptops. One's going to the health center one's going to the benefits office and one's going to In-plant office. So when they come into the office they can sit and write very fast. They can type extremely quickly. That's their nature. And it will just speed a lot of things up but we're trying to get the communication opened up a lot better so that they feel like they're more involved. We are going to put a memo. We hope everybody reads it. It's just how to communicate with them better. They think have made a lot of neat points. So we're going to run that past the managers next week and then try and drive that from the top down to hopefully be more inclusive and just some numbers. We recalled twenty five people on March 4th. It took us 38 recalls to get to twenty five and twenty five more coming back April 1st which is great news. It took 31 people to get to twenty five. So we're down to two hundred and thirty four I believe left to be recalled.

Mike: And the last thing um I like there's just a big kudos out to Alex McCoy and Jeff for the mental health work Jeff Ramackers. We've got a good mental health committee going right now. We are trying to make a lot of changes in the plant. A lot of it starts with management. They do have two people on the joint committee so there's four of them all together. It's working very well they're going and talking on these Team Leader boot camps that are 40 hours long. They go in every Wednesday and talk to the team

leaders for half an hour just to tell them more or less to be aware of it. Most of it is just to raise awareness. There's a video that's getting played. It's about 17 minutes long. It's extremely good. A lot of people have seen it by now. It's an extremely touching video. All the statements come from members on the shop floor and you read with some of the stuff that people go through. You know you just never know what. What goes on in people's homes when they go home at night. Yeah. Some of the stuff's just uh. It's unbelievable what you read but we do remain busy. Obviously it's always busy in there but there's a lot of stuff going on but hopefully a lot of good stuff and hopefully people start seeing that spring has come and the weather is warming up so it's got to get better

Keith: I just want to thank Mike and Joe for coming, for giving us this time especially on our Friday at 4 o'clock. It very much appreciated. We will see you next time!