

July–September 2026

The Local Connection

This reading edition presents the text and meaningful visual information from all 12 pages of the original newsletter in a single-column format. Flyer text is transcribed, photographs are described, and QR codes have text links. Line-break hyphens and formatting have been normalized.

This is an archived issue, not a current event calendar. The original contains conflicting October meeting dates: October 22 on page 2, and October 29 on pages 11 and 12. Both are preserved below. Call 217-753-2600 to confirm a meeting before attending.

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President's message

While the kids may be on summer break, state employees are gearing up for our next contract. Like past contract negotiations, in order to be highly successful we must ensure our voices are heard! In order to ensure a strong voice at the table it is imperative we have every member ready and engaged to fight! Everything will be on the table this next negotiation from wage increases, to healthcare costs, as well as remote work protections. It is imperative that we are all in this fight TOGETHER! If you or a colleague are not already dues paying members the time is now to sign a card and strengthen our voice at the bargaining table. We need to be All In to Win a Fair Contract! Please see recent solidarity seed packet that was mailed out to members to sign up or email the local office at local2600@sbcglobal.net.

Yours in Solidarity,

Cherena Douglass

President

June 25 membership meeting door prize winners

- \$25.00: Cherena Douglass
- \$50.00: Kelly Guerrero

- \$100.00: Erica O’Neal

Labor Notes Conference, June 11–14

The newsletter shows several conference photographs: participants seated in meeting rooms, speakers near a Labor Notes banner, and attendees taking part in activities.

Executive Board listed in this issue

Cherena Douglass	President
Miranda Merriman	VP/PEOPLE
Yesenia Hamlin	VP/Executive Steward
Laszlo Acs	Secretary/Treasurer
Matthew Jochums	Recording Secretary
Nina Ricketts	Membership Chair
Gina D. Hopson–Harris	Communication Chair
Katie Farrance	Organizing Chair
Landon Page	Health & Safety Chair

Trustees listed in this issue

- Matt Bohan
- Joy Hodgson
- Angi Murphy

- Carol Terrell

Staff contacts

Staff Representative: Joseph Jay, 217-788-2800.

Office Manager: Dawn Ringenberg, 217-753-2600. The printed page gives the local number as 753-2600.

Membership meeting

Accommodations now include childcare. Childcare must be requested by the date on the meeting postcard.

The flyer says “4th Thursday of even months” and lists:

- August 27
- October 22
- December 10

Date clarification: Pages 11 and 12 instead list October 29. Contact the local to confirm the correct October date. The December 10 date is reproduced as printed.

- Dinner: 5:30 p.m.
- Meeting: 6:00 p.m.
- \$500 in door prizes at every meeting.
- In person: Hoogland Center, 420 S. 6th Street.
- Remote access via Zoom.

Zoom registration link from the flyer’s QR code. The flyer says participants must register by noon on the day of the meeting for access.

The childcare footnote is visible in the flyer image embedded in the source PDF, below the portion shown on the printed page.

2027 contract bargaining: we want your feedback

Please share proposals to amend the contract by emailing
issues@local2600.net.

Please note this email is not monitored for response.

Please include:

- Intent of proposal.
- Article and/or section number, if applicable.

2026 Labor Day events

AFSCME Local 2600 · September 4–September 7.

Scholarship celebration

Celebrating our scholarship recipients. Free food and fun!

- Friday, September 4, 5–7 p.m.
- The Railyard, 2242 S. 6th Street.

Springfield picnic

Trades and Labor sponsored picnic with free food, fun, and music!

- Saturday, September 5, noon–3 p.m.
- Chatham Community Park, 711 S. Park Ave., Chatham, Illinois.

Decatur parade & picnic

Caravanning to Decatur for their annual parade and picnic! Must register to travel.

- Monday, September 7, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.
- Fairview Park, 2095 Eldorado, Decatur.

Labor Day has been celebrated since the 1800s to acknowledge the contributions workers make to society.

Archived registration link from the flyer's QR code, or contact the local at 217-753-2600 or local2600@sbcglobal.net.

Local 2600 spotlight recognition: April Smith

IDHS Third Level Committee Member, AFSCME Council 31.

Today, we proudly shine a spotlight on an exceptional union member whose dedication, integrity, and unwavering commitment embody the true spirit of solidarity.

Your willingness to step up, support your fellow members, and advocate for fairness has made a meaningful impact on our union. Whether volunteering your time, sharing your knowledge, or standing together in support of our collective goals, your efforts have not gone unnoticed.

Thank you for your hard work, positive attitude, and steadfast commitment to making our union strongest. Your leadership and service inspire others to get involved and remind us that the strength of our union lies in the dedication of its members.

On behalf of AFSCME Local 2600, we sincerely thank you for your outstanding contributions. We are proud to recognize you as an Outstanding Union Member and celebrate the difference you continue to make.

Congratulations, and thank you for your service, commitment, and solidarity!

Members of AFSCME Local 2600

A portrait beside the recognition shows the featured member wearing glasses and an AFSCME shirt.

Volunteer for the quarterly spotlight

Members: I encourage members to step forward and volunteer to be featured as our Quarterly Spotlight candidate. This is a great opportunity to recognize your dedication, share your experiences, and highlight the important contributions you make to our union.

If interested, please contact the Local Union office at local2600@sbcglobal.net or Gina Hopson-Harris, Communications Chair, at communications@local2600.net.

Greeting from the Communication Chair of Local 2600

Welcome Summer! As we continue to move forward together, I want to thank each of you for your dedication, hard work, and commitment to our union. Your involvement is what makes our local stronger and ensures that every member has a voice.

This newsletter is designed to keep you informed about important updates, upcoming events, trainings, and opportunities to get involved. Staying informed is one of the best ways we can stand united and advocate for one another.

I encourage you to take a few moments to read through this edition, participate in our activities, and share your ideas for future newsletters. Your feedback and engagement help us grow and better serve our membership.

Together, we can continue building a stronger, more informed, and more united Local 2600.

Getting members motivated and excited about the newsletter continues to be a challenge, but the chance to win a prize by solving the puzzle or uncovering the hidden keyword makes it fun and rewarding. In the April–June 2026 edition of the Newsletter, I had a

TRIVIA game for members to figure out and win a prize. In this edition, the game is a FILL IN THE BLANK question. The winners of both games will be announced at the August membership meeting. Whomever answer the following question correctly will be put in a drawing to win a prize.

Fill in the blank

Blank 1 is the landmark Supreme Court labor case which originated from the Blank 2 in Blank 3 Blank 4 that effected Unions across the United States.

“Blank 1” through “Blank 4” replace the printed answer lines. The question’s wording is retained from the original.

In addition, we’re excited to launch another incentive designed to help members stay informed about what’s happening in Local 2600 —while giving you a chance to win an extra prize! The first 25 members to correctly answer the question below and email their response to local2600@sbcglobal.net will receive a prize. It’s a fun and easy way to stay engaged, test your knowledge, and keep up with the latest Local news. Good luck and happy reading.

Newsletter question

Who was the first President of Local 2600?

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Communication Committee, please email the Local at local2600@sbcglobal.net. Remember, our union thrives when members are engaged! I'm looking forward to making this another excellent year!

Yours in Solidarity,
Gina D. Hopson-Harris
Communication Chair

A small portrait of the Communication Chair appears beside the opening greeting.

Three scholarship winners

- Saxonina Ricketts
- Tyler Cass
- Kyle Weatherford

Greetings from the desk of the Vice President/PEOPLE Chair

Happy Summer!

I hope everyone is working hard to stay cool in this sweltering summer weather! Remember to hydrate and take frequent breaks if you need to be outside during the warmer days. I have spent the last couple of days working on the membership blitz with Council 31, and I have to say that ice-cold water and keeping to the shade when you can are both amazing ways to beat the heat.

Your 2600 PEOPLE team has been hard at work meeting with area legislators, assisting with New Employee Orientations, and keeping an eye on the horizon when it comes to state and federal legislation. We know the Tier 2 fight is far from over, and we know we are going to be fighting effects from the federal budget in the coming years.

In the labor history corner, I would like to draw your attention to one of the most horrific stories in labor history that spurred workplace safety laws across the country. In the early evening hours, a basket of clothing scraps caught fire on the 8th floor of an industrial building in Greenwich Village. The likely cause was something like a match or a cigarette butt that was not properly extinguished coupled with at

least 2 months' of scraps that had yet to be disposed of. The top 3 floors of the 10-story building were occupied by a garment factory that mostly employed women and girls. It was common practice at the time for factory doors to be locked during shifts to deter both theft and breaks from work.

Within minutes, the fire alarms were rang. Unfortunately, the doors were still locked with no safety mechanisms to open them from the inside. Trapped inside the burning building, some workers resorted to jumping out of windows instead of burning alive while the owners ran out onto the roof to be rescued. All told, 146 people died, many of whom were women and girls as young as 14. In the aftermath, the factory owners were found liable in a civil wrongful death suit, but they escaped criminal charges. In the end, they paid less than a fifth of the insurance settlement to the victims' families.

Labor activists fought to ensure that a tragedy of this magnitude never happened again. Some of the regulations that were put in place as a direct result of this fire include better ventilation in factories, automatic sprinklers, and improved sanitation standards in the workplace.

I will have a piece of candy at the next membership meeting for any member who can tell me the name of the factory.

In Solidarity,
Your PEOPLE Chair
Miranda Merriman

Lunchtime Huddles

Every fifth Friday, 2025–2026, 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

- In person, Zoom and Facebook.
- Please only attend on lunch break.
- Huddles start at 11 a.m. and noon.
- Lunch provided for in-person meeting, as available.
- Friday, July 31: DHS, Harris Building.
- Friday, October 30: location to be announced.

Email the local to register: local2600@sbcglobal.net.

The flyer shows several people gathered around a table with lunches; some wear high-visibility vests and AFSCME clothing.

AFSCME After 5

MVP PEOPLE networking event. Organizing, networking and solidarity.

AFSCME After 5 is a Local 2600 membership engagement series that allows for networking and active civic engagement. Participants are sometimes asked to bring donations for local members and communities in need.

- Free to Local 2600 members.
- Free to AFSCME MVP PEOPLE members and one guest.
- Friday, July 31, 5–7 p.m.
- Blue Margarita, 3151 Horizon Drive, Springfield, IL 62703.

Please bring items for the Springfield APL.

The Springfield Animal Protection League was badly damaged by recent storms. They are working on restoring the property, and they are in need of monetary donations. The local will match donations up to \$2,000 made at this event. If you would like to make a donation and are unable to attend, please contact the local.

Questions? Contact the local at local2600@sbcglobal.net.

Pictures of members at various conferences, meetings and events



Members at conferences, meetings and events. Individual names and dates are not supplied in the original collage.

2026 Executive Board and membership meetings

Executive Board

The printed time for each Executive Board meeting is “12:00 to 5:00”; a.m. or p.m. is not specified on the schedule.

- July 22, 2026
- August 26, 2026
- September 23, 2026
- October 28, 2026
- November 18, 2026
- December 9, 2026

Membership meetings at Hoogland

- August 27 at 5:30
- October 29 at 5:30
- December 10 at 5:30

Other pages describe 5:30 p.m. as dinner time and 6:00 p.m. as meeting time. Page 2 lists October 22 instead of October 29; contact the local to resolve that conflict.

Stay involved and informed

Look for us on Facebook: [AFSCME Local 2600 on Facebook, as listed in the newsletter.](#)

Stay involved, informed and up to date by attending membership meetings, checking Local 2600 page on Facebook and reading this newsletter and other periodicals from AFSCME.

Go to [AFSCME31.org](#) and sign up for mobile updates.

Upcoming membership meetings as printed

- August 27 at 6:00 p.m., Hoogland Center for the Arts. Dinner served at 5:30 p.m.
- October 29 at 6:00 p.m., Hoogland Center for the Arts. Dinner served at 5:30 p.m.

All Wednesdays: wear green to show your support and solidarity with AFSCME. Stay alert and informed.

Like our Local 2600 Facebook page to stay up to date with news and events.

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