



Union Industries Show Gone, Probably for Good

DETROIT – The three-day Union Industries Show made a return engagement to Cobo Center May 16-18, showcasing services and products by organized labor.

It was a bittersweet event: scores of displays showcased union-made cars, clothing, glasses, and the good work of union Hardhats. But the event – which has taken place every year since it began in Cincinnati in 1938 (except during World War II) – likely ended its run with its visit to the Motor City this year.

“The 2009 show has been postponed, and I sincerely doubt that it will come back,” Charlie Mercer, president of the AFL-CIO Union Label and Service Trades Department, told us on the show floor. “We have fewer exhibitors. So much of our work has gone offshore, and there have been so many mergers among unions. That has reduced the number of booths. Ending the show isn’t definite, but it seems as if our board is going to look at better ways to promote union products.”

Displays by building trades unions were a significant part of this year’s show, as virtually all the crafts had a presence. Visitors to the free show also saw displays for a diverse number of products and services, from union-made knives, to the U.S. Postal Service, to Harley-Davidson motorcycles, Kohler plumbing products, and SVS Vision.

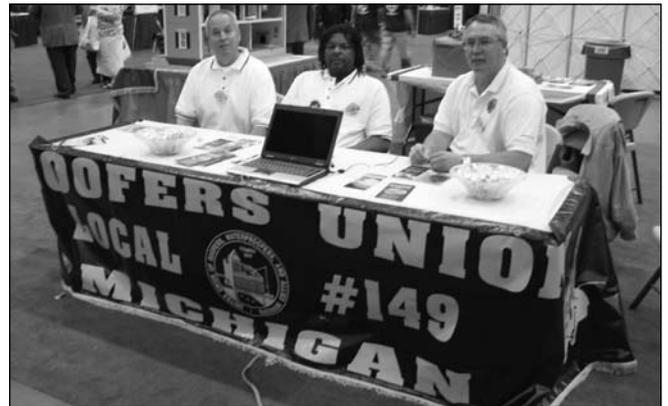
This show was significantly smaller than the last time it came to Detroit, in 1995, when an estimated 300,000 visitors walked through Cobo’s doors. Mercer said this show probably welcomed about 50,000 visitors, and featured about 125 vendors.

Mercer said the Executive Board which governs the show had some major beefs in 1995 with Cobo and its contractors over high costs associated with setting up the show – but not this time.

“Things have changed 180 degrees,” Mercer said. “Detroit has gone out of its way to help us. Today the International Union wouldn’t hesitate to consider Detroit for a convention. Everyone has gone out of their way to make sure it’s a success.”

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Roofers representatives from Local 149, Detroit, MI, man the booth at what may be the last Union Industries Show. From left, Local 149 Apprenticeship Coordinator Bob Drogosch, Local 149 Apprenticeship Trustee Hamidulla Ali, and Local 149 Business Manager and International Vice President Robert Peterson.



Vice President Hadel Thwarts Attempted Rapist

During an assignment to Washington, DC, in mid-August, International Vice President Jim Hadel was returning to his hotel in the central downtown district at 7:10 p.m. when he heard a scream. Upon investigation he found that a male assailant had grabbed a woman and forced her to the ground under the awning of an office building which houses several law firms on K Street. The man had ripped off some of the woman’s clothes and was molesting her, while covering her mouth. When the assailant tried to escape, Vice President Hadel chased him across the street where he was tackled with the assistance of two other civic-minded persons and held until Metropolitan Police arrived on the scene. Police said that the man fit the description of a person who had sexually assaulted two other women in the area that day. It was later reported that the two other victims positively identified the perpetrator as their attacker. Our hats are off to Vice President Hadel for having the courage to take decisive action to rescue a helpless citizen from a vicious attack.