It takes courage, dedication and determination to ride out the storms of economic turmoil and yet remain loyal union members whose faith in the spirit of solidarity is unshaken. Just such members make up the ranks of Local 396 in the Youngstown area.

Under the leadership of Business Manager Gary “Rabb” Marinelli and Business Agents Butch Taylor (and until recently, retired Business Manager Joe Mansky), with the help and support of International Representative Jerry O’Leary, Local 396 has remained strong and steadfast, despite the loss of thousands of manufacturing jobs and the erosion of the community’s once mighty industrial base.

But the community of Youngstown, Boardman, Warren and the other towns in Local 396’s jurisdiction are certain to see good times yet again, as they work together to organize and train for the future.
With help from Local 396 members, General Motors is getting ready to take on the world of the small automobile. The Chevrolet Cobalt, GM's new generation of small cars, will be built at its Lordstown, Ohio plant. UA members have been instrumental in the renovation and expansion of the existing assembly and stamping facilities.

GM is investing more than $500 million in the Lordstown complex, and Local 396 appreciates this commitment.

"We're proud to be part of this project," said retired Business Manager Joe Mansky. His feelings were echoed by Business Manager Gary "Rabb" Marinelli, who added "we're pleased that General Motors decided to keep this work here in our area, and we are determined to do our best in return."

Local 396 members worked for McCarl's and Suburban Piping for the phase of work known as the C.U.C. project. They worked for contractors John E. Green, Dunbar, and Hoyt, Brum and Link in the assembly and fabrication plant, where they installed the PSI car track and press systems.

The Cobalt is designed to compete aggressively in the small car sector of the automobile industry. According to Gary Cowger, president of GM North America, the Ohio plant will ensure that "GM's next generation of small cars is developed with world-class quality, exciting styling and great value for the customer."

UA members enthusiastically undertook the tasks of reconfiguring and retooling the general assembly area and body shop, along with constructing a new state-of-the-art paint shop. The stamping plant at the Lordstown facility will also be extensively refurbished.
Some of the members of the UA team at the General Motors plant, including Robert Collier, Mike Davis, Mike Frisina, Dan Fromel, Russ Adair, Marsha Plizga, Rich Durbin, Jason Sanderbeck, Chuck Day, Dan Bullen, Jim Poptic, and Ed Cupples.
This requires the skills of UA members who installed piping, instrumentation, circulating and hydraulic lines, air lines and related equipment as well as pollution control systems. They worked many thousands of manhours without a cost-time accident. General Motors' management team was justifiably proud of this outstanding safety record.

It is also exciting to be involved in the development of a brand new car. The Cobalt was unveiled at the Los Angeles Auto Show, and General Motors hopes the new car will not only draw in buyers who traditionally want less-expensive small cars, but younger buyers as well.

The Cobalt, GM hopes, will have special appeal because of many premium features, such as upgraded interiors and better seats. Chevrolet has set a goal of selling 230,000 to 250,000 Cobalts a year, with sales split evenly between a sedan model and a coupe.

"We're convinced Cobalt is the new standard in small cars," said Lori Queen, GM's small-car vehicle line executive.

Since the Cobalt is one of 10 new models Chevrolet is introducing in the next 20 months, Local 396 was determined to prove its members had the right stuff when it came time to upgrade the Lordstown facility.

"We want to keep this work here, especially since Ohio has lost so many manufacturing jobs over the past few years," said Business Agent Butch Taylor. "We feel we've shown GM the level of our commitment through this project, and we're looking forward to the future."
LOCAL 396 HONORS A GREAT LEADER

Joe Mansky, business manager of Local 396 for 13 years and an elected officer of the local in some capacity since 1966, was honored at a retirement dinner last summer.

Brother Mansky’s distinguished career began in 1961, when he was initiated into Local 87 (which later became Local 396). He was elected to the local’s examining board in 1966 and served on the joint apprenticeship committee from 1968 to 1974. He was elected to the Executive Board 1974-1977. He was elected vice president in 1977 and president in 1981. He served in that capacity until his election as business manager in 1991.

Brother Mansky inspired all those who worked with him. His sense of humor, his thoughtfulness and his personal dignity made him a natural leader. He was respected and admired by his fellow members, by other building trades leaders and by contractors, politicians and many others. He was chosen as Mahoning Valley Labor Man of the Year in 2002—an honor richly deserved.

Local 396 was proud to honor Brother Mansky with a well-attended and exciting dinner. Our congratulations go out to his wife, Barbara and his children, Judy, Cheryl and David as well. On behalf of all members of the UA, we wish Brother Mansky a long, happy and healthy retirement.
At the Youngstown State University, UA members are helping construct a $12.1 million recreation and wellness center, a facility that has been a decade in the making. It wasn’t an easy task to get the facility built, but YSU and the UA and building trades have worked together to make a dream come true for students and faculty alike.

What makes this project so unique is that YSU successfully sought funding exclusively from private sources. The facility will be a 65,000 square-foot wellness center featuring a cardiovascular fitness area, a climbing wall, aerobics room, 1/8 mile indoor jogging track, multi-purpose sports forum, spiritual meditation room and more.

Known as the Andrews Recreation and Wellness Center, the facility will also provide students with campus-based social venues. A private campaign was undertaken to raise the $12 million needed to build the facility. Nearly three dozen businesses, individuals or foundations contributed $100,000 or more. The John S. and Doris M. Andrews Trust led pledges with a $2 million gift.

By early summer 2004, most of the funding had been secured. The Kresge Foundation then stepped in, offering significant financial support, challenging the YSU community to raise $1.2 million, with the foundation providing an additional $600,000 to complete the fundraising campaign.

UA members played an important role in this project. They installed comfort heating and air conditioning, and plumbing fixtures in the locker rooms, as well as piping to serve offices and staff rooms, refrigeration and related systems in the concession areas, and more. They worked for York Mahoning, Western Reserve Mechanical and Komar. This work was all part of YSU’s commitment to serving its growing student population, many of whom are sons and daughters of Local 396 members.

Elsewhere on the YSU campus, UA members were also involved in building a much-needed student facility. This time is was construction of two four-story dormitories known as the University Courtyards.

The contractor on this project was Western Reserve Mechanical, which was contracted to provide a "design-build" turn-key project. UA members helped design and install the sanitary waste and vent system, the domestic cold and hot water system, AutoCAD drawings for both design of the plumbing and plotting of all underground sanitary lines and drains, and installation of plumbing lines and fixtures.

John Lesch, owner of Western Reserve, and its President of Operations Mark Leger both acknowledge the excellent work of the UA on this project. The plumbing portion of the job was completed in just over 10 months. The two dormitories required the roughing in of over 100 sanitary stacks and more than 500 sanitary stub-ups. Not one stack or stub-up was mis-located, but that was no surprise to the leadership of Local 396.

"We know what a good job these skilled tradespeople do," said Business Manager Rabb Marinelli. He also noted that the members achieved this record of excellence through careful development of a plot plan of base lines and control hubs and the creation of laminated AutoCAD plot drawings.

More than 100 bathroom groups were prefabricated in Western Reserve’s shop. Construction Manager/Designer Tony Nolfi said he takes great pride in the precise work of the UA members on the job. He’s always ready to share his extensive knowledge with his fellow UA members (please see accompanying article).
"Because of their skills, YSU now has two beautiful new dormitories that students will really appreciate," said Brother Nolfi.

Regional Chamber of Commerce President Tom Humphries added his own vote of thanks to the UA team, noting the strong partnership that exists in this part of Ohio. "We find we accomplish more working together than we do apart. It's a relationship we value and we believe in," he said.

The Regional Chamber and Local 396 have a strong and unique relationship that is rare to find between two such entities.

"We work together for the betterment of the Mahoning Valley, its businesses and its people," said Business Agent Butch Taylor. He added that Local 396 has participated in the Chamber's Grow Mahoning Valley, an award-winning business/government/labor partnership that promotes funding of roads, water and sewer projects.

Local 396 members also support the Chamber's Pride in Progress campaign, a five-year initiative that aims to improve support of education and other programs designed to assist with training.

BETTER SCHOOLS = BETTER FUTURES

That's one equation UA members understand perhaps better than most. Local 396 is rightfully proud of its own training facility, but the members and officers know that Ohio's children deserve the best education possible. This means top-notch schools that include modern facilities with reliable heating, air conditioning, water and sewer systems, all operating efficiently and smoothly.

All across Mahoning County, UA members have been busy renovating or building schools for every age group. Many new schools are planned. UA members have been working for several months for Western Reserve Mechanical, Komar, Conti Corporation and AA Samuels. The Youngstown School District states that its 2000 Master Plan calls for the replacement, renovating or expansion of 16 existing schools, as well as four new elementary schools, one new middle school and one new high school. These are ambitious plans for any school district, and United Association members have proven their dedication to building schools for the future in the Youngstown area.

The work performed by UA members on the various schools includes underground plumbing and piping, water lines, mechanical piping, overhead plumbing lines, installation of bathroom fixtures, HVAC systems installation, and gas lines. This work will continue well into this year, and beyond. Local 396 members are to be commended for the quality of their work and for the contribution they are making to the school children of the Youngstown region.

A "FORUM" FOR GOOD HEALTH

At Beeghly Center, part of the Forum Health medical park, UA members are helping expand an essential component in the region's outstanding health care facilities. UA members, employed by Conti Corporation, are working in the boiler room where they are installing two large Bryan boilers and two Trane chillers and related piping at the women's medical center. This major expansion continues a tradition at Beeghly of being one of the best health care facilities in the nation. Beeghly is part of Forum's Northside Medical Center, which recently earned high marks in six categories: abdominal aortic aneurysm repair, neck artery surgery, hip replacement surgery, colon surgery, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and pneumonia.

Local 396 members have helped keep all of Forum's facilities at the top of the list, thanks to their excellent medical gas installation skills, their commitment to quality and their determination to work safely and efficiently.

When WCI Steel needed to perform a blast furnace shutdown, the company turned to Local 396 to get the job done. Working for Graycor and McCarl's, UA members were involved in the project to reline the WCI blast furnace at the Warren, Ohio, plant. The oxygen furnace and continuous slab caster were also renovated as part of the shutdown.

This project was the first major relining at the Warren plant since 1988, but the work was completed more than 30 days faster than the last such project. Local 396 members helped their contractors and WCI reach this important milestone.

The massive WCI project is a landmark in this area of Ohio. The mill looms above the green countryside, and it has employed UA members and other workers for many years. The plant has facilities that consist of two pickling lines, an acid regeneration plant, a cold reduction mill, batch annealing and hydrogen annealing units and two temper mills. The pickling lines have a combined annual capacity of 865,000 tons of steel. One line is used for high-carbon, alloy and silicon steels and the other produces low-carbon steels.

The systems that produce the steel involve complex processes employing nitrogen and hydrogen, operating in high-temperature, high-convention bases with three gas-fire furnaces and related process control equipment. The temper mills which roll steel according to each customer's specifications can produce 600,000 tons each year.

The blast furnace uses a precise mixture of coke, iron ore and limestone to create molten iron—the basic building block of steel. WCI's blast furnace produces an average of 4,000 tons of molten iron a day. The oxygen furnace is comprised of two 180-ton vessels that can produce up to 160,000 tons of steel a month. Molten iron arrives at the blast furnace and is processed through a desulfurization facility. The raw material is composed of 75 percent hot metal and 25 percent scrap metal. It is transformed through a process that incorporates oxygen blown into the top of the metal at a speed of 16,000 cubic feet per minute. The oxygen is a critical element since it combines with carbon and other materials to reduce impurities and convert the molten metal into clean, high-quality liquid steel.

The continuous slab caster, built with the help of Local 396 members in 1991, was the cornerstone of WCI's modernization program. The caster has a capacity of 160,000 tons a month, operating at a maximum speed of five feet a minute for nine-inch thick slabs. Liquid steel flows from a ladle over the caster into tanks that distribute the steel into one of two casting molds. As the steel travels the casting length, it gradually cools and solidifies into the slab form. The steel is cooled and then cut before being transported to the hot strip mill.
Steelmaking in this area of North America has a long and proud history. Local 396 members and all of the United Association are proud to have played a role in building this industry and to now have an opportunity to revitalize a mill that continues to have such importance in this area of Ohio.

From schools to steel, Local 396 members are on the job. They are working hard during this busy time to prove that they have the training, skills and dedication to serve the citizens of the Youngstown region. The officers and members of the local should be proud of all that they have accomplished.
TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE


Instructor Kirk Sergent and International Representative Jerry O'Leary

Instructor Bob Semko

R.J. Adair, Apprentice Mike Swick, Apprentice Brian Ripple, and Apprentice Joe Longo

Apprentices Tim Morrison, Dave Polito, Brent Kelley, Nick Nolfi, Frank Lucido, Patty Kestelic, Instructor Don Viano and Apprentice Matt Chapel

Apprentices Steve Dull and Mike Sajnowsky

Apprentice Matt Bierdeman, and Bill Sturm

Apprentice Bill Gathier

Apprentice Mike Altano

Apprentice Matt Chapel

Apprentice Tim Morrison

Apprentice Tim Pogonak

Welding Instructor Tim Glancy
LOCAL 396 MEMBER CREATES HELPFUL GUIDE

Tony Nolfi, an instructor and hardworking journeyman with Local 396, has created an effective and excellent guide to assist UA tradespeople in their work. Entitled "Plumbers Guide to the Underground," the booklet covers all aspects of underground plumbing, from roughing in to sizing to offsets. It includes many illustrations and has proven to be very popular. For UA members interested in this book, Tony Nolfi can be contacted at tony@wrmech.com.