



## MAPE 101 Union Lines

October 2022

### Local 101 news

*By Dave Skovholt, MAPE Local 101 vice president*

It's October, which means Halloween is coming and we're getting closer to 2023. During this time, Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE) Local 101 members are continuing to do critical work supporting our state's natural resources, making sure workers and employers have equal rights and responsibilities and ensuring health care providers have the expertise to care for us. Our work really does impact the quality of life of all Minnesotans.

MAPE Local 101 is comprised of staff members from the St. Paul offices of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI), and Minnesota IT Services (MNIT). We also include staff members of various boards, including the Board of Behavioral Health, Chiropractors Board, Dentistry Board, Emergency Medical Services Board, Medical Practice Board, Nursing Home Administrative Board, Pharmacy Board, Physical Therapy Board, Psychology Board, Social Work Board and the Veterinary Medicine Board.

Though we all have different job duties, we must always hold our heads high with pride and know our contributions are substantial. We also deserve to be treated with respect -- mentally, physically and financially -- for what we do. That's why I am active in our union, because ensuring we receive respect is a constant struggle.

It's good to be your coworker. See you at the next union event.

### MAPE benefits

As part of [MAPE's anti-bullying toolkit](#), members have access to a Core Essentials awareness training authored by Dr. Gary Namie of the Workplace Bullying Institute that includes seven hours of online instruction and guided study. The training covers what workplace bullying is, what it isn't, what to do if

you're experiencing abuse and many other issues. You can equip yourself to better deal with workplace bullying if it happens to you or a co-worker and be a leader in the workplace.

If you're interested in this training, you can access the videos at [mape.org/coreessentials](https://mape.org/coreessentials).

## Get involved in your union

What's the latest MAPE Local 101 news? Join the next monthly MAPE Local 101 meeting from noon to 1 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 8. Add the meeting to your calendar: [mape.org/events/local-101-meeting](https://mape.org/events/local-101-meeting).

Join the MAPE Local 101 Facebook group! Visit [facebook.com/groups/mapelocal101](https://facebook.com/groups/mapelocal101).

## Contract corner

You might be missing out on vacation time you have a right to. In most cases, MAPE employees starting a job with the state earn vacation time equal to four working hours per pay period or 13 days per year. Not a lot, particularly if you have earned much more vacation in a prior public or private sector job.

Connie Stauffer, who works for DNR in fleet services, came to her state job in 2014 after working over 20 years for the federal government. She gave up weeks of vacation time and it hurt.

"It just seemed very painful," Stauffer said.

Under negotiated language in the MAPE collective bargaining agreements that took effect in 2018, eligible employees can increase their vacation accrual rate, thereby the number of vacation days they earn each year, based on prior work service in the private and public sectors.

While employees with public sector employment could already apply for the credit, the latest contract change made the vacation accrual credit available for an employee who previously worked in the private sector if the job was directly related to their new position in state government.

Each state agency has its own policy related to length of service credit. Some agencies put a cap on the number of years of credit you can receive while others do not cap the years. For instance, at DNR, eligible employees can receive up to five years of credit for prior public or private sector service work. At DLI, there is no cap on years of credit unless you are requesting credit for self-employment. In that case the credit cap is five years. MNIT has no cap.

To receive consideration and credit, eligible employees must provide to Human Resources documentation with details of the prior employment. The prior job must also have been vacation eligible. As part of the documentation of her prior position, Stauffer provided Human Resources a

redacted paystub from her former employer. Eligible employees should reach out to their respective Human Resources departments to find out about acceptable documentation.

Dave Skovholt, outreach coordinator at DLI and vice president of MAPE Local 101, said he received credit for prior employment when he started his state job.

"I am now at the 8- to 12-year accrual rate even though I've been here for only 4.5 years," he said. "This is one of the main things I highlight to new employees when doing the MAPE new employee orientations."

Stauffer, who also now explains this contract provision during employee orientations, applied for length of service credit as soon as it became available.

"I was so glad to apply for this benefit because it just hurt to lose all the vacation I had already earned," she said, adding she was able to accelerate her accrual rate to 7.5 hours per pay period, receiving 11 additional days of vacation days per year.

MAPE continues to push for improvements in the contract language related to the vacation accrual credit, according to Dan Engelhart, business agent for MAPE Local 101, including lifting the caps so employees receive full credit for all relevant professional experience.

"It's about recruitment and retention and keeping up with other public sector employers and private sector employers in terms of having work-life balance and meaningful paid leave," Engelhart said.

## Meet and confer report-outs

*By Jed Becher, MAPE Local 101 regional chief steward*

Many state agencies have a Meet and Confer committees. A Meet and Confer Committee's purpose is to work with the agency's senior management team to form a cooperative relationship to address workplace issues outside of the contract, without interfering with the collective bargaining process.

Duties include:

- Providing a system to present issues to management for workplace improvement via MAPE member suggestions and workplace issues
- Reaching out to current members to facilitate identifying workplace issues and elevating them to management
- Communicating with membership to promote member engagement

DNR's MAPE Meet and Confer Committee meets quarterly with management to talk about topics not covered by the contract. Minutes and members can be found on [DNR's page on MAPE's website](#).

Find Meet and Confer Committee meeting minutes and a listing of committee officers for other state agencies on the [MAPEs Meet and Confer committees page](#).

## **Steward update**

*By Jed Becher, MAPE Local 101 regional chief steward*

This month's topic: Investigations.

### **What is an investigation? If I'm the subject of one, does it mean I'm going to get fired?**

Being notified that you are the subject of an investigation or are requested to provide information for an investigation can be scary. Often the state agency is doing due diligence in investigating a complaint of some kind, but they can be more serious in nature. If you are notified that you are the subject of an investigation, be sure to take the investigator up on the offer of MAPE representation, which you are entitled to per the contract.

### **Will I know what the investigation is about?**

You will likely know based on the explanation in the investigation letter you receive. The MAPE steward will have a vague idea based on the letter but you as the subject of the investigation should be able to have an educated guess what it is about. Have a conversation with your MAPE representative prior to the investigation to prepare for the types of questions they might ask.

### **Do I need to answer all the questions that are asked?**

No, you do not need to answer the questions, but management might make their own assumptions about what took place. Offer any witnesses that support your side of the story. You cannot talk to them about the investigation but can give their name to the investigator.

State agency investigations are often conducted and recorded via Teams. That is normal. You will also be asked to sign a Tennessean warning statement which means that you have been informed of your rights.

Investigations usually take at least an hour. A complicated case can last multiple hours. Your supervisor nor anyone from your division will be at the investigation. Your supervisor will likely be interviewed by the investigator if they have knowledge of the situation. You can offer the investigator additional information after the investigation concludes. It is best to get them anything else you remember as soon as you can.

## What happens after the investigation?

There may be a significant amount of time that passes after an investigation concludes before you hear anything from anyone. It may be as simple as a letter that says the investigation has concluded and the state agency doesn't plan to take any action. The other result is that the state agency and your division or region have decided to issue some form of discipline. Discipline can range from an oral reprimand to termination. Often, lower levels of discipline can be a written reprimand or a one-day suspension. Termination is much rarer.

Members usually decide to file a grievance about the discipline they have received. To prepare for the grievance process, MAPE will request the recording of the investigation and a copy of the investigative report that was prepared by the state agency. This will outline the state agency's case as to why they issued the discipline. It is then up to the member, the MAPE steward and the MAPE business agent to put together a case as to why the discipline was unjust, incorrect or too severe.

We will talk about the grievance process in a future newsletter update as grievances can be filed for other topics.

## Members, mutts, and meows

### Tom Klein, member, DNR



Tom plays the Irish pipes at the St. Paul Farmer's Market as Opal calmly surveys the scene.

**About:** I am a Minnesotan from a pre-statehood family: my great-grandfather, Jean (John) Klein emigrated from Luxembourg to St. Paul in 1856. The State capitol now sits on the site of his home and prairie pasture. In 1884, as a boy, my grandfather George witnessed the last great flock of passenger pigeons sweep through downtown St. Paul. I maintain the family status as a Klein of St. Paul and live in a neighborhood perched above the Mississippi. My wife Adele is a middle-school science teacher. Our daughter, Flora, is in graduate school at Harvard pursuing a master's degree in landscape architecture. She hopes to design for livable spaces and communities in the face of climate change.

I was always an outdoor kid. When I was little, there was still plenty of wild, open space – and even working farms – nearby in Ramsey and Dakota counties where we lived. I spent a lot of time in swamps. Before I could even read, I had devoured every birding field guide published. As a pre-teen, I became dismayed at the plight of America's dwindling natural heritage but was enraptured with the hope that the passage of The

Endangered Species Act brought. I guess it's no surprise that I went on to a career (Information Officer, DNR) in the rare natural resources field.

**My favorite part of being in MAPE:** Time and time again, I am so impressed by the focus, integrity, hard work and persistence of its members and leadership!

**Fun fact:** I am a blue-ribbon winner in the Minnesota State Fair Crop Art competition.

**Mutt:** Meet Opal! She is a rescue of an unknown mix of (probably) beagle, dachshund...and something inert, like a brick or a coaster. She's extremely mellow. Plus, she's a working dog: for eight of her nine years she has been my faithful sidekick as I pursue a side-hustle as a street musician. We split the tips 60 (her) /40 (me). She's on Instagram: #opalsfanclub

## Local 101 newcomers

A big welcome to our new Local 101 folks. If you work with them, ask them if they have [joined the union](#) and help them get involved.

Taylor Joy, DNR	Caitlin Noseworthy, DNR	Julie Johnson, MNIT (DNR)
Wade Miller, DNR	Michaela Sanford, DNR	Anne Espeset, DNR
Rachel Beise, DNR	Todd Cipala, DLI	Kelly Affeldt, DNR
Clara Brown, DNR	Lisl Zamora, DLI	Kenneth Roberts, DNR
Nicholas Budde, DNR	Steven Moe, DLI	Nicole Biagi, DNR
Mitchell Wollin, Med Board	Patric Tillery-Lamarque, DNR	Molly Coddling, DNR
Isabella Johnson, DNR		

We are glad you are here!

## About MAPE

MAPE members work in all segments of state of Minnesota service and are significant contributors to the high quality of life that is enjoyed by all Minnesotans. Find more information about MAPE at [mape.org](http://mape.org).

MAPE's website also has frequently asked questions for employees new to state government and MAPE at [mape.org/our-union/faq-professionals-new-union-representation](http://mape.org/our-union/faq-professionals-new-union-representation).

## What do you think?

What would you like to see featured? Do you have news to share? Any feedback welcome. Please email your ideas to [mapelocal0101@gmail.com](mailto:mapelocal0101@gmail.com).