

# Labor union loyalists turn out for annual parade

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PRINCETON, Ind. — Representatives from nearly 25 area labor unions cheered along with nearly 30,000 spectators Monday while parading along the two-and-a-half mile route of the annual Labor Day Association Parade.

The parade was as much a political event as it was a celebration, said Jim Manning, a parade participant and president of Local 181 of the International Union of Operating Engineers in Evansville. Manning said the parade, which ended at the Gibson County Fairgrounds, is one way to let people know the true meaning of Labor Day.

"It's gotten to the point in the last 40 years that people look at Labor Day as just another holiday," said Manning, who also is a Vanderburgh County Councilman. "But it should be a day to celebrate ourselves, unions and all working men and women."

Many of the participants said wooden yard signs along the parade route that read "United We Stand" and "Union You're an example of the support and respect unions should receive."

Dean Schmeltz, who represented Local 1893 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, said, "It's good to see us take a stand and show everyone we're still here."

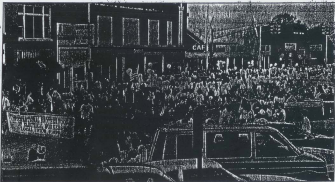
Schmeltz said that labor unions won the right to the 40-hour work week and other benefits that otherwise would not be available.

Many of the union members wore Clinton/Gore buttons and hats, including the parade's organizer, Bobby Joe Smith. Smith, of Local 104 of the Aluminum, Brick and Glass Workers International Union, said the number of labor members at the parade demonstrated

that "labor's not dead yet."  
"We're going to fight to the end," Smith said. He said it was time for a change because of the American jobs that have been lost to Mexico and Japan. "We recommend that everyone buy American."

There were plenty of things to spend that American money on at the fairgrounds, such as horse carriage rides, food vendors and amusement rides.

As Smith put it, "The working people were able to come out and enjoy a weekend that didn't cost a lot of money."



The Gibson County Labor Day parade Monday was bigger than ever with more than 100 units. Courier photo by DON GOODAKER