

THE 411 FORUM



A publication for the hardworking men and women of AFSCME 411

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New Contract Ratified by Membership

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Now that the contract is ratified and we can all heave a sigh of relief for a short two years before we start this process all over again, I have to take the time to recognize the great job the members of the negotiating team have endured for the past 13 months. This has been a very difficult contract. Some of the members on the team have had to tolerate some anger and abuse from a small minority of the membership. The vast majority of the membership have been supportive and understanding, but those few have caused havoc. I want to publicly acknowledge the great job the negotiating team has done during a very difficulty and trying contract. In the end, the members of the team recognized the need to put the welfare of the retirees of AFSCME 411 as well as its 900 members before any personal needs. I am proud to have been a member of the 2005 negotiating team with Dorothy Bursey, Joyce Compo, Steve Corbett, Patrick Militello, Jan Wilson, Carol Monroe, Vicki Porchia, Dana Smith, Elaine Lipse, Kim Smith and Carolyn Platt. I don't think members realize the commitment and the amount of time and effort these people have expended over the past year. I don't know if the team realized how much of a commitment it would be at the time they decided to join the negotiating team, but all of them stepped up to the plate for you. A special thank you to Macomb County Treasurer Ted Wahby, for his patience and understanding over the past 13 months with the absence of two of his employees during this long and grueling process. The next time you see a negotiating team member, instead of complaining about something in the contract, say thanks. They deserve it, Big Time!!!!

By a vote of 470 "yes" to 153 "no" votes, a three-year contract beginning January 1, 2005 through December 31, 2007 was ratified by the membership on November 30, 2005. Six Hundred and Forty members voted out of approximately 800 eligible to vote. Fifteen votes were ruled ineligible to vote and 2 votes were voided. The contract was ratified by a 73% margin, with 80% of the eligible membership voting. The Macomb County Board of Commissioners has scheduled a special Full Board Meeting for December 7, 2005 at 9:00 am to present the agreement to the full board for ratification by the board. After the agreement is ratified by the board, the process is finalized. The DROP program, which was offered to all AFSCME 411 members in this new contract, will be available to members after January 1, 2006. Open enrollment for all medical

benefit plans will be extended. Please check on the Human Resource website to update you on the dates and times. The Human Resource Department is also offering on-site enrollment and answering questions in regards to the mail order program. Please call the department to request dates and times. If you are experiencing difficulty with the mail order program, please do not hesitate to ask for help. Someone is available to answer you needs or questions. Call the office if you need assistance at 465-5292. Some of the other changes in the contract include: a 2.5% raise each year, internal postings for all AFSCME 411 jobs for 10 business day, part-time seniority and bumping rights and ability to buy into group insurance plans, changes in sick leave language regarding doctor's excuses, the addition of grandchildren to the three days off with pay in bereavement and the ability to use all banks for bereavement.

Years for Spouse Ins

A number of members believed you must work 10 years to receive health care coverage for your spouse when you retire. This is not true. The number of years you must work to receive health care for your spouse is the very same number of years you must work to receive health care when you retire – eight years. Current employees must have 70 points with a minimum age of 50. Employees hired after January 1, 2006 must work 15 years.

From the Officers and
Executive Board of
AFSCME 411
Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year



Clarifications Re: Macomb Daily

In the November 20th Macomb Daily, the paper found it necessary to print an editorial, written by themselves, commenting on a tentative agreement that, at the time, was slated to be voted on by the membership of AFSCME 411. That agreement is the internal posting of all but entry-level positions in our local. In the editorial, AFSCME 411 was cited by name with the statement that "all job openings should be posted publicly and the public should have the opportunity to apply and be interviewed for them." The Macomb Daily alleges the county is, "telling its residents . . . Don't bother applying for a job here, someone on the inside has the edge." The same day, I responded with a editorial which was printed on November 22nd. For those of you who have not had an opportunity to see either one of these articles, I will try to put them on the website, www.afscme411.org. In the meantime, I would like to clarify the position of our local. From the beginning of the implementation of hiring changes, AFSCME 411 has been consistent and very clear in our message. That message is – at no time will seniority be compromised for any reason or any cause. The membership of AFSCME 411 have worked for this county too long and too hard to give up this precious right. My response in the Macomb Daily, as well as my first-hand knowledge, echoes this sentiment. If any member has any questions or concerns as to the position of AFSCME 411 in this matter, please call the union office. When a member reads anything of concern in the newspaper, please call the union office for clarification. Do not read what the newspaper publishes and believe it to be the truth. Please call if you have a question or concern. During the same week, the Macomb Daily also published a second editorial, this one from a D.A. Jones, a purported member of our local. D.A. Jones is not, nor ever was a member of AFSCME 411. The editorial discussed part-time benefits for AFSCME 411 members. It was printed on November 29th, the day before our contract ratification vote. Whoever D.A. Jones may be, he/she obviously did not have access to facts the negotiating team members had access to. First of all, this negotiating team is the first to successfully negotiate any benefits at all for part-time workers. For D.A. Jones to choose now to go to the papers and complain about a negotiating team appears to be a

case of bad timing. Why didn't D.A. Jones write a letter in previous negotiation years when the part-timers received no benefits at all? D.A. states he/she finds it hard to swallow that Donna Cangemi and her officers would be appalled about unfair treatment regarding internal postings but not about part-timers not receiving benefits. If Donna Cangemi and her officers, as well as the negotiating team, had not been, to use the writer's words "appalled" there would have been no attempt to get any benefits for part-timers in this contract. Apparently this writer's expectation was that in a year when all employees statewide were taking hits in health care, the negotiating team would successfully be able to obtain medical benefits for part-time employees. D.A. obviously does not realize what he/she did get. Part-timers now have seniority. They are considered before any other employees in the county or before any outside applicants. If they meet the requirements for the job and have the seniority over other AFSCME 411 applicants, they get the job. The editorial claims the contrary. D.A. also claims "the negotiating team had a real opportunity to right some unfair inequities pertaining to part-timers, seniority rights being at the top of my list, having our part-time years of service pro-rated into full-time years. . . ." That is exactly what did happen. Obviously D.A. didn't read the proposals. Lastly, the writer claims there was only one voice on the negotiating team speaking for him/her, the part-timer. That is a blatant lie. There is no way this writer would have knowledge of that. The part-timer on the team, as well as all the full-time employees, agreed with the part-time proposal. All the negotiating team agreed, after bringing numerous proposals before the employer, this was the best we could do in this contract for part-time benefits. The entire team, including the part-time member on the team, agreed this was a good start in getting benefits for part-time employees. All the team fought hard for part-time employees and, contrary to this writer's contention, felt it was very important to fight for as much as the team could get for them. I called the Macomb Daily after this editorial was printed and demanded a retraction be printed on the day of our ratification. I do not feel it is fair to print an editorial from someone who is not a member of AFSCME 411 but is claiming to be. Vice President Joyce Compo also wrote a response that has not been printed. The editor of the Macomb Daily stated he would call me back. I am still waiting. So

DISCOUNTS

Union members can save an average of \$360 on auto insurance. The Union Plus Auto Insurance Program from AIG, a world leader in insurance, is available to participating union members and their families. You can get a quote online at <http://www.unionprivilege.org/benefits/auto/insurance.cfm>. You can get a FREE credit counseling session, budget analysis and advice to get back on the road to financial recovery by calling 877-833-1745. For other discounts check out the AFSCME 411 website at www.afscme411.org. You will also find

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