THE 411 FORUM



A publication for the hardworking men and women of AFSCME 411

September 2007

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

It is getting harder and harder to be a worker. I hear it and see it every day. When budget cuts are needed, the first place to look is the wallet of the working man. From privatization to health care cuts to slashing retirement plans, all across this nation workers are feeling the wrath of corporate America. Is Macomb County going to join the party? Macomb County has been a union town. Traditionally, it has maintained union values and upheld working men and women. It would be easy to negotiate a contract that will guarantee our health care and our retirement but not for new hires. But, the new hires of tomorrow are your sons, daughters and grandchildren. One day, we will be gone and they will hold all the tomorrows. Do we want to leave the legacy to them of no future? Is that what was left for us by the likes of Walter Reuther? What will the United States look like in 30 years with no one having health care or retirement? Mexico? China? Will our children seek asylum in other countries for a better life for their children? I want a better life for my children and grandchildren. What about you?

NEGOTIATIONS - WAGES AND BENE-

As the negotiating team prepares to go to the bargaining table, the membership has been returning their completed bargaining surveys. From the preliminary surveys returned, it looks like wages and benefits are the major concerns of the membership. This does not come as a surprise. Holding onto our current health care coverage and maintaining the 70-point plan has been a concern since the last round of bargaining. There have been a lot of rumors, but no plan has been discussed with AFSCME 411 indicating there will be an end to the 70point plan or to the current health care coverage. When and if a proposal is given to the union, negotiations will occur, just as they always do. The job of the negotiating team is to negotiate the proposals that are put on the table by the employer. A proposal is not always necessarily what the employer, or the union believes will be an acceptable end result. That is why a proposal is not always discussed with the membership. If a proposal given to the team was discussed, many members would falsely believe this is what the final result would be. The union will also be putting their own proposals across the table to the

employer at the same time. Most of the proposals will be based on the bargain-

ing survey results but will also be based on issues that have surfaced over the past three years that have proven to be problems in the current bargaining agreement. Hopefully, enough will be resolved to end up with a contract we can all live with. The end result will be a contract the members will accept and ratify. Keeping our current benefits is not an issue that is unfamiliar to the rest of the country. More than 4 million Americans have lost their health care coverage since 2000. This adds to the cost of health care coverage for all of us. With 47 million people uninsured, the average cost to a family is \$922 yearly in premiums to pay for those who are uninsured. Healthcare coverage costs has been the center of every major contract AFSCME has negotiated over the past three years. Workers fall further and further behind. Healthcare reform needs to be your top voting issue in the next presidential election. There are a number of current bills in legislation AFSCME supports including the Medicare for All Bill, the Americare Health Care Bill and the SCHIP Reauthorization Bill. These bills offer a combination of private and public health care and take some of the burden off the back of the employer. The U.S. spends 15% of the gross national product on health care, while other developed coun-

You have 15 working days to file a grievance after occurrence of an incident. The first step MUST involve a Union Steward to be considered a formal grievance. Please meet this deadline. Make our job easier!!!

Don't forget to

attend the September 5th

Membership Meeting

Changes in Constitution Proposed

The Executive Board voted to change the language in the current constitution at a special meeting on August 7th. On August 22nd, the language was voted on and unanimously approved. It will be read to the membership at the meeting on September 5th and voted on at the October 3rd membership meeting. This is in compliance with the current language in our constitution. If approved, the new language will be sent to AFSCME Council 25 in Lansing and then forwarded to AFSCME International in Washington DC for final approval. The new language is as follows:

Article VI - Section 1

In addition, a union steward and an alternate will be elected from each district in compliance with the current labor agreement. All elections and nominations for union stewards will comply with the terms indicated in this Article for officers, except as indicated in Article XII, Section 3.

Article XII – Stewards, Section 3

Steward Elections – Stewards and alternate stewards for each district shall Delete: be appointed by the executive board be elected by the membership in their districts. All stewards shall be elected for a term of three (3) years, beginning June 2010. An initial election of stewards shall commence as soon as possible with partial terms ending June 2010. Terms will run concurrent with the terms of officers outlined in Article VI. A member in good standing from the identified district must be the nominating party. Members in good standing will be allowed to vote for union stewards in their own district. In the event of multiple candidates, the candidate who has the majority of votes from the district will be deemed the union steward. The second place candidate with the most votes will be deemed the alternate steward. The utilization of alternate

stewards will comply with the current labor agreement. Elections for union stewards will occur in their identified district.

Section 4 – Removal of Union Steward for Just Cause

All current language is removed and replaced by the following language:

A) Step I – The membership in a district are required to obtain a signed petition by 2/3 (two-thirds) of the members in good standing. The petition must contain: the name of the identified union steward and the specific reason they are seeking removal of the steward for just cause. Along with the petition, there must also be substantiated proof at the time the petition is presented to the executive board. This proof can include, but is not limited to: statements from witnesses and members.

B) Step 2 – The petition and proof must be submitted to the executive board. The executive board will follow the procedures outlined in the International Constitution, Article X, Section 1. through 22. Judicial Procedures, regarding the removal of union stewards.

Section 5 – Vacancies in office of Union Steward

Vacancies in the office of union steward will be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term by vote of the executive board. Vacancies shall be filled in accordance with the requirements prescribed in Article VI, Section 3.

Essentially, this change will enable the membership to elect their union stewards. The executive board was unanimous in their decision to present this change to the membership. We believe this will empower the membership and hopefully create more involvement. We hope you will come to both meetings and be involved in the discussion of this important issue. For a full copy of the AFSCME 411 Constitution, go to page 10 of our website at **www.afscme**

Council 25 Convention

The Council 25 Convention will be held October 5th, 6th and 7th at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Dearborn. Our local will be electing delegates at the September 5th meeting to attend this annual event. If you are interested, please attend. The local will pay the cost of your room, per diem and events you will attend while at the convention. This is a great opportunity for you to find out how big our union really is. There will be unions from all over the State of Michigan and lots of training opportunities. The PEOPLE Convention on Friday night is an chance to relax with local politicians. Training will include a variety of subjects that should prove interesting to all.

AFSCME Local 411 (586) 465-5292 7 N. Main, Suite 206 (586) 321-2380 Mt. Clemens, Mt. 48043 (586) 506-3302 President: Donna Cangemi Vice President: Jan Wilson Secretary: Cindy Donahue Treasurer: Karen Davenport

Union Stewards

Verkuillen, Emergency Services Joyce Compo – 469-5492 Sheriff Jan Wilson 321-2380 Downtown Mt. Clemens Bldgs. Jill Lezotte 469-5693 Martha T Berry

Vicki Porchia, 3A all shifts and ESW 469-5633 Carolyn Platt, Kitchen, Laundry 469-6351 Elaine Lipsey, 3B all shifts 469-5630 Kimberly Smith, 2A, 2B all shifts 469-5632



Facilities and Operations
Vacant 549-7788
Health Department
Joyce Compo, Adm. Bldg. 469-5492
Brenda Sanders, Warren, St. Clair Shores 573-2210
Community Mental Health
Jennifer Jozwiak 469-5773
Parks and Recreation. Pump Station
Kenneth Ahearn 772-3434

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