



AFSCME 36 HOT SHEET

News for AFSCME District Council #36 Locals and their leaders
August 2009 Number 59

Working together Coalition of LA City Unions prevent lay offs and furloughs

The break-through agreement on bridging the budget gap was crafted by a coalition of city unions that demonstrated again that in unity there is strength. The Coalition consisted of unions that represent the bulk of the City's non-sworn workforce and was chaired by Council 36 Executive Director Cheryl Parisi. The six unions were AFSCME District Council 36, SEIU Local 721, Operating Engineers, LIUNA Local 777, Teamsters Local 901 and Los Angeles/Orange County Building & Construction Trades Council.

This was the second time the coalition unions bargained together to achieve contract goals that some felt were out of our reach. The first instance was negotiating the last contract that included raises of 22% over five years. So naturally, the Coalition was the best vehicle to negotiate the agreement with the city regarding the \$500 million budget shortfall. But, this historic agreement did not occur in a vacuum or simply through the cleverness of the Coalition negotiators, though they are pretty clever. The real heroes of this agreement are the members who attended rallies and participated in the effort to press the Mayor and Council to look at the budget gap from a new perspective.

(The complete story of how it happened on page 3)

L2076 members ratify 3 year deal

After a year in which a contract was imposed, deep cuts that resulted in layoffs and an attempt to privatize the entire department, Orange County Eligibility workers in Local 2076 ratified a new three-year contract. The new MOU will hold the line on raises this year while providing wage re-openers in years 2 and 3.

Former Jewish center employees finally win severance dispute

Local 800 members who formerly worked at Valley Cities Jewish Community Center in Van Nuys finally prevailed in their legal action against Devco, the contracted operating company. After 56 years of service to the community Valley Cities JCC closed their door in June 2009. Under the terms of the agreement negotiated by AFSCME, Devco will pay the 15 laid off employees as much as \$18,000 based on seniority and years of service. The total amount pledged is \$116,109.

Time to get ready for convention

The Council 36 Executive Board, issued its official convention call to local unions affiliated with Council 36 in accordance with the Constitution and By-laws. Locals should conduct an election of delegates as soon as possible. Please check in with your Local President for more information on the delegate selection process.

Date: Saturday, October 17 and Sunday, October 18, 2009

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Place: Hilton San Diego Resort & Spa
1775 East Mission Bay Drive
San Diego, California 92109

On the day before the Convention formally starts, Friday October 16 there will be special workshops offered and a welcoming reception.

The major points on the agenda will be the election of District Council officers and Executive Board and consideration of the 2010 three year strategic plan. Our business meeting will convene on Saturday, October 17, 2009, at 9:00 a.m. and is scheduled to adjourn 12:00 noon on Sunday, October 18, 2009.

Local 3061 members step up to help family in need

Until last week, the Ringle family was in quite a bind. The roof of their carport had collapsed and crushed the family car. They couldn't even get into the house. The City of Ontario notified them the debris had to be cleaned up. So what was a couple in their 80's, one wheelchair bound, to do?

When Solid Waste Supervisor, Danny Avelenda came to determine where to put the big trash bin, he asked when the contractor was coming to help? "We don't have a contractor. We could barely afford the bin..." said Mrs. Ringle.

So Danny acted fast and called upon AFSCME Local 3061 Union members and other co-workers to help. That Saturday, about 10 AFSCME members and other City employees came to the rescue! In less than an hour they had the debris removed and went the extra mile to mow the lawn and trim the bushes.

The Ringle family was touched with the generosity and care shown to them, and thanked everyone who helped.

L 1734-0 rejects decertification bid

The members of AFSCME Local 1734-0, representing the 20 workers at the Midway Sanitation District voted overwhelmingly to stick with AFSCME and District Council 36 as their union. Robin Nahan, the owner of a private for-profit company that coaxes unsuspecting bargaining units to abandon their union in favor of limited service and unable to provide the resources that AFSCME provides, instigated the decertification.

Healthcare activists take it to streets

Nearly 300 people came out on Saturday morning, July 11 to demonstrate their support for H.R. 676, the single payer healthcare proposal by Rep. John Conyers. Lay participants donned hospital gowns and doctors and nurses in attendance wore White coats or scrubs.

The event was held outside the office of Congress member Henry Waxman, who has supported "single-payer" in the past, is considered to be one of the experts in the healthcare debate. Demonstrators asked Waxman to request the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) to analyze and rank the proposed system contained in H.R. 676 and compare it with other proposed health plans.

The event was sponsored by AFSCME District Council 36, Progressive Democrats of American, California Nurses Association, Health Care for All, Labor Task Force for Universal Healthcare, California Physicians Alliance/PNHP and the California School Employees Association.

After a brief press conference demonstrators armed themselves with materials and fanned out to parks and local stores as well as going door to door, urging residents and shoppers to call Waxman's office and request the analysis be done and to urge Congress member Waxman to co-sponsor H.R. 676.

For more on H.R. 676 and the health care debate, check out www.healthcareforall.org

Calling on Senator Feinstein

Then on July 30 AFSCME participated in a celebration of the 44th anniversary of Medicare sponsored by the California Alliance of Retired Americans (CARA). They used the occasion to remind voters that there is already a single payer health care program for people over 65, called Medicare, which works very well. CARA is pushing for Medicare to be opened up to younger individuals. In addition CARA is strongly pushing for the so-called "State Option," which means that

States will not be pre-empted by federal law from adopting healthcare policies that exceed federal standards. Eight CARA members including Lenny Potash and Michelle Krug of the Retiree chapter went to Feinstein's 9th floor office and refused to leave until they spoke personally with the Senator about healthcare. After sitting-in for 5 hours the "Medicare 8" were arrested and removed from the office.



Transit Security Lieutenants and Sergeants accrete into Local 3634

Welcome MTA security Lieutenants and Sergeants into AFSCME Local 3634. The 12 unrepresented officers joined through accretion and have just ratified their first contract with the transit agency. Some of the positive benefits they will enjoy when their first contract is ratified are the payment of a uniform allowance of \$900. In addition, they will be entitled to a \$250 Safety Shoe Allowance.

The new members will also get an improvement of IOD (Injured On Duty) pay. In the event a Lieutenant or Sergeant is physically injured in the line of duty, that individual shall be compensated 100% of time lost from work for 30 days. If that police officer is shot, the IOD benefits last six months.

**Check out AFSCME36 group
on Face Book**

The Mess in Sacramento

If it were not so tragic, it might be humorous. Due to archaic laws, a small minority of legislators are engaged in a game of brinksmanship in which they have the power to block the enactment of a budget. The Governor, who is virtually unable to persuade legislators to break the deadlock started issuing IOUs instead of paychecks, leaving millions of Californians falling through holes in the safety net.

It is said, there are no friends in politics, only contacts. It is growing increasingly unclear who is on who's side. There was some indication that Democratic negotiators might agree with the Governor's proposal to privatize CalWorks Eligibility work. Council 36 sent a blistering letter to Assembly Speaker Karen Bass and State Senate President Darrell Steinberg that described support of this proposal a "major breach of faith with working and middle class families."

Courts are closing as workers there face mandatory furloughs while the AOC hoards money for a lavish computer system. Local governments are bracing for the political home invasion robbery of their revenue by the state. Both left and right are circulating initiatives calling for major reform including a state constitutional convention. There are marches and demonstrations nearly every day.

The Budget that finally passed last week was unsatisfactory for nearly everyone and opposed by AFSCME. The Anti-tax forces won a major victory and those that favor and desire more and better public services lost. The anti-government advocates stood firm and those who claim to be for educational opportunity, a social safety net, and properly funded local government rolled over.

Next year, at election time more than a handful of legislators and statewide elected officials may be singing the Marx Brother's "Hello, I must be going."

“A Better Way for LA,” the story behind the agreement

One didn't need a crystal ball to see the growing structural deficit in the City's budget. Revenues were shrinking and despite a standing hiring freeze the City workforce grew by 4,000 employees. Shortly after the first of the year, Mayor Villaraigosa indicated that revenue shortfalls may necessitate layoffs and furloughs. The Coalition began talking with the Union about ways to reduce costs in the city. In April, the Coalition Unions collected dozens of suggestions from city employees who perform the city services and submitted these ideas to the Mayor and Council.



The severity of the recession turned the city's financial situation bad to worse and the relationship between the Coalition Unions and the City grew chilly. In May, the Mayor asked the Council to declare a fiscal emergency, granting the Mayor the authority to begin the process leading up to possible layoffs. The City Council instructed the Personnel Department to start preparing lists, based on seniority and bumping rights of potential targets for layoffs. The Mayor inexplicably withdrew the City's offer that included an Early Retirement Incentive Program (ERIP).

In response Coalition activist members mounted a sustained campaign to apply pressure on the Mayor to get the city back to the bargaining table.

Dogging the Mayor

The Coalition took to the streets to make their point. It started on May 18, with a massive rally on Main Street where five hundred city workers along with several of the City's big trucks turned out to show their unity and commitment.

Our strategy was to be constantly in the Mayor's face. Teams of activists nicknamed the Dog Team dogged the Mayor, showing up at his public appearances to leaflet the audiences. One Saturday about thirty members of Coalition unions picketed the Mayor's Mansion in Hancock Park.

AFSMCE members collected over 500 postcards from Rec. and Parks facilities warning patrons of pending cuts in recreational programs, which were delivered to the Mayor.

The public campaign culminated on June 9th in a massive march to City Hall by an estimated 1000 city employees that filled the Council chambers and the areas designed to handle

the overflow. Those who were able to get into the chambers testified on the of services that will be lost and the impact the layoffs and furloughs on their lives. By this time the City was back at the negotiating table.

No Layoffs, No Furloughs

In late May the bargaining teams from all of the member unions of the Coalition met in Friendship Auditorium. At that meeting, those in attendance voted to reaffirm the Coalition's bottom line, no layoffs and no furloughs. Prior to the vote the activists listened to a presentation on the Coalition's strategy for solving the budget crisis. The plan provided for a retirement incentive to encourage older, long term employees to retire, creating budgetary room for younger employees. This approach has many advantages. Instead of adding to the unemployment rolls, it keeps families with a paycheck to spend in their community, while the new retirees remain economically secure. (A link to the final agreement can be found on the afscme36.org website.)



3090 members count ratification ballots

The appropriate slogan that resonated was “A better way for LA”. And on June 28th, just a few days before the first furlough and layoffs were to occur the coalition and union negotiators reached a tentative agreement. The negotiating teams of the coalition member unions unanimously endorsed the settlement.



L 2626 Librarians were dogging the Mayor

Local negotiations team members conducted over 100 work-site meetings to explain the costs and benefits package. The ballots were counted on July 21st. Each local and bargaining unit, as well as each coalition partner was required to run separate ratification elections. When the votes were finished being counted, every bargaining unit in the Coalition ratified the agreement.