



Get Active: On-Line Opportunities That Build Union Power

In a time of economic insecurity and high unemployment, it's a good time to be a union member and to have a labor agreement in place.

As a Local 17 member, you also have the power of almost 9,000 members statewide to help give you a stronger voice in your workplace. But, at the same time, you are also one of those voices and the power of your union is only as good as the level of participation of its members. Besides the more visible ways of being active in your union, such as being a steward, chapter officer or serving in some other type of leadership position, there are other ways you can build union power.

Action Alerts: Be Ready and Participate

One easy way you can help your own voice and those of other members be heard is to participate in "Action Alerts," Local 17's on-line advocacy system, where you can send an email to key lawmakers and decision makers about specific issues at strategic times.

For example, right now, Governor Gregoire is writing her budget to submit to the legislature, which will convene in January. Her Supplemental Budget Proposal will set the tone for the 2010 budget discussions at the legislature.

Among other priorities for Local 17 is making sure funding for Public Health is included in the 2009-11 Biennial Budget and to secure the jobs of all Local 17 members by considering options that will provide continual income for members and their families.

By just going to the Local 17 website, www.ifpte17.org, you can quickly send an email with a pre-written message (or create your own) to Governor Gregoire. The current message asks the Governor to:

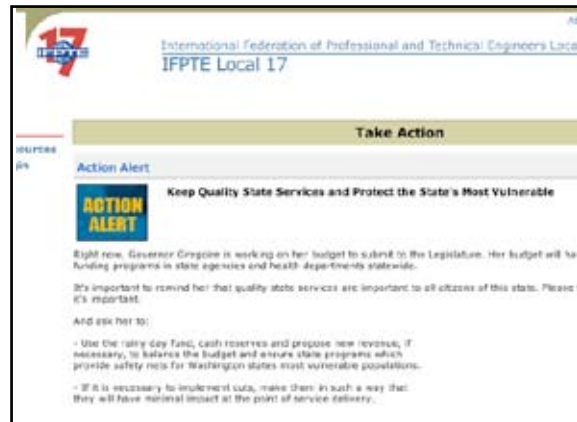
- Use the Rainy Day Fund, cash reserves and propose new revenue, if necessary, to balance the budget and ensure state programs which provide safety nets for Washington State's most vulnerable populations.
- If it is necessary to implement cuts, make them in such a way that they will have minimal impact at the point of service delivery.

While this message is somewhat general, the "Action Alert" campaigns change throughout the year. And even if you don't work in a state agency or for public health, your participation can help other members and the public who utilize the services Local 17 members provide. You can find information about the alerts in this publication; Local 17's magazine, InSight; the website: www.ifpte17.org; or through your own bargaining unit newsletter.

By being active in your union, whether you participate through on-line campaigns, serve in a leadership capacity (or both), you help build power within your own bargaining unit, your union and the labor movement as a whole.

So, what are you waiting for? Get active!

— By Taryn Gerhardt, Local 17 Communications Director



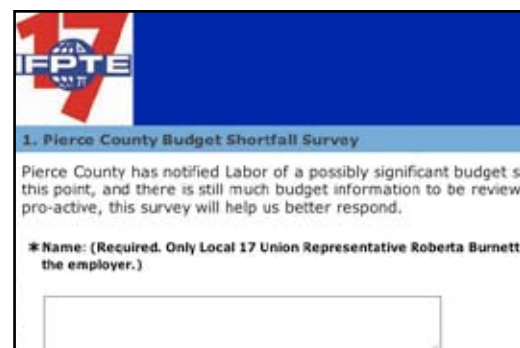
On-Line Surveys: Knowledge is Power!

Another way you can build union power in your bargaining unit is to make sure you fill out on-line surveys that are specific to your unit.

These Local 17 surveys usually solicit information on bargaining priorities or other issues such as health care benefits or work schedules. The information is electronically compiled at Local 17 and the union representative and negotiating committee analyze the results and use the information in their negotiations and discussions with management. The surveys are usually found on the Local 17 unit webpages.

For example, right now, Pierce County (www.ifpte17.org/units/county/pierce/) and the City of Tacoma (www.ifpte17.org/units/city/tacoma/) have surveys on their Local 17 website regarding preferences around possible budget shortfalls. If you are member of those units, your input is needed now.

Having good participation in the on-line surveys gives the truest reflection of what membership's preferences are and sends management a message that Local 17 members are actively engaged and care about the issues that affect them.



Please post and distribute at your workplace