

Insight

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17
PTE

An Information Pipeline for Members and

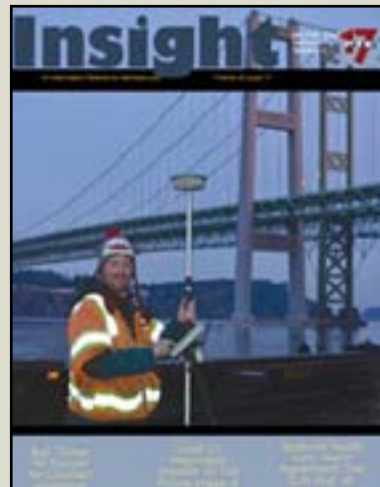
Friends of Local 17



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No Excuse
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Violations**

**Local 17
Negotiates
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**Spokane Health
Gets Health
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Local 17 helped save the jobs, at least for now, of 11 City of Tacoma Surveyors. Surveyors are detectives and historians. See pages 12 -13.

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Remembering Don Briscoe



Joe McGee, Local 17 Executive Director

I can't remember ever dedicating my column to one person but it is with a deep sense of reverence and a profound feeling of loss that I devote this space and these inadequate words to my recently deceased friend and colleague, Don Briscoe.

Don served Local 17 with distinction for nearly twenty-one years. He was a highly capable and effective union representative who became our union's first Legislative Director. He put his heart and soul into that position where he earned the respect and attention of many key policy makers. Because of his passion, professionalism and hard work, Don brought much credit to Local 17 and he accomplished much for the public employees we represent.



Don's advocacy for working people was a flame that burned hot and bright. For him, his work was a labor of love and it was a true honor to serve alongside such a principled and persistent believer in the struggle to preserve and enhance the middle class.

Don retired from Local 17 last July. He richly deserved a change of pace. He had big plans for world travel, community service, and new chapters to add to the story of his life. In a brutally unfair twist of fate, he found out that he had stage four lung cancer in November. He managed to squeeze in one last international trip and cruise with his beloved wife, Margaret, before he was swept up in the whirlwind of treatments and procedures that go with the terrible diagnosis he got. He passed away on January 30, 2012, just one month after he celebrated his 71st birthday. He was surrounded by his family and their love.

I had the privilege of speaking at Don's memorial service (go to www.ptel7.org/briscoe.php to view the text) and I quoted a progressive labor leader from the past, Walter Reuther, who said: "There is no greater calling than to serve your fellow man. There is no greater satisfaction than to have done it well."

Happily, Don got that satisfaction. We spoke shortly before he passed and he knew he had done important and good work. He knew he had been successful and appreciated. He felt great pride, both in the job he had done and where and for whom he had done it: for Local 17 and its members.

We mourn Don Briscoe. We salute him and the meaningful life he lived in the service of others. We will keep his passion and his values alive in the work we do at Local 17.

In unity,

Handwritten signature of Joe McGee.

Photo: Don Briscoe at his retirement lunch, July 2011. For info. on how you can make a contribution to Don's charity of choice, see page 4.



Local 17 Website Full of Resources for Members



Don't forget, the Local 17 webpage has more than just bargaining unit news. It has many helpful resources. Some of these include: negotiating team forms, Steward resources, contract interpretation documents, and grievance forms and information. Also, if you have

a Facebook account, make sure you go to the Local 17 Facebook page (accessed through www.pte17.org) and click "like" button. The Facebook page has interesting articles and event announcements.

Governor Makes Transportation a Priority in her State of the State Address

In Governor Gregoire's annual State of the State address in mid-January, she announced a \$3.6 billion, 10-year package to create about 5,500 jobs a year maintaining the state transportation infrastructure. Funding would be raised through small fee increases, including a \$1.50 fee on each barrel of oil produced in Washington state.

"Our oil companies are getting all the profit and leaving us with the bill," Gregoire said. "We can do better. We can't wait until roads, bridges and ferries are falling apart to fix them. We can't kick the can down the road and saddle our future generations with the repairs we failed to make. This is our year to act and approve a jobs package and invest in our future."

Gregoire said that the Connecting Washington Task Force identified \$21 billion in road improvements and projects, and implored lawmakers to work closely with their constituents to develop funding solutions.

Local 17 Mourns the Loss of Don Briscoe

Former Legislative Director and Union Representative Don Briscoe passed away after a short bout with cancer on Jan. 30, 2012.

His memorial services were held on Sat., Feb. 4 at Mt. Zion Church, in Seattle.

Some of his accomplishments included:

- Initiated and helped create the Washington State Dept. of Transportation Joint Apprenticeship program to train young people to be Engineering Technicians.
- Advocated for PTE Local 17 members both as a Union Representative and Legislative Director for 20 years.
- Fought for social and economic justice his whole life.

"Our transportation system is the lifeblood of our economy," Gregoire said. "It moves people to work and goods to market, and supports our tourism industry. If we don't maintain and grow, we come to a standstill."

To learn more about Gregoire's transportation and jobs package, visit: <http://www.governor.wa.gov/priorities/transportation/criticalneeds.pdf> and <http://www.governor.wa.gov/priorities/transportation/connectwa.pdf>.



- Mentored young men in urban high schools in the Seattle area through his work with the Breakfast Group.

- Attended the first non-segregated high school in St. Joseph, Missouri

Donations can be made in lieu of flowers to the Donald Briscoe Legacy Scholarship fund. You can download the form at the Local 17 website: www.pte17.org.

Don't Forget to Support Union Workers and Good Jobs!
Buy Union Made Products and Services
 Go to: www.unionlabel.org for a list of union made products!

Labor History: Bread and Roses Strike

One hundred years ago on Jan. 12, 1912, thousands of workers at a textile mill in Lawrence, Mas., shut down their looms and walked off the job. Half of the workers were girls between the ages of 14 and 18.



They were getting \$8.76 a week, when a new state law that reduced the workweek for women and children from 56 to 54 hours went into effect, resulting in a pay cut. This meant that workers could afford even less bread than before. The strike quickly spread to mills across the city. By the end of the week, more than 20,000 textile workers were participating in the strike.

The workers organized across ethnicities to take concerted action. They persisted despite violent strike-breaking by management and the state. After two months on strike, the workers won their demands of a 15 percent pay raise, double pay for overtime, and no discrimination for strike activity. To avoid similar confrontations, textile companies throughout New England followed suit by granting similar concessions. Later, the strike was coined the Bread and Roses Strike, referencing a 1911 poem by James Oppenheim, which originated the now-famous words: "Yes, it is bread we fight for—but we fight for roses, too!"

Today the production of textiles is a more automated industry, but the sewing of garments remains nearly as labor-intensive as 100 years ago. Today's working conditions in the global garment industry are all too similar to then. And, workers continue to organize. Most workers in the globalized garment industry are far from having the dignity and respect that roses represent. ■ - Source International Labor Rights Forum <http://www.laborrights.org/>.

Race for the Cure: Join the Cause

Consider joining PTE Local 17 on Sun., June 3, 2012 in Seattle, to raise money to find a cure for breast cancer.

Contact Roberta Burnett (roberta@pte17.org), if you would like to join, buy a team t-shirt or contribute to our Unions United Against Breast Cancer team participation in this year's Komen Puget Sound Annual Race for the Cure®. It's a great family event you can walk, roll, stroll or run for the cure and there is always the option of sleeping in for the cure.



Last year, Race for the Cure, raised over \$1.6 million with over 14,000 participants. The Unions United team not only met our goal of raising \$10,000—we surpassed it by raising \$12,300 and by setting a new team member record with 91 members we were again recognized as the

Largest Team in the Community and Nonprofit Division.

If you don't live in the Seattle area, you can join the race in a community near you.

The Susan G. Komen Fund has invested over \$23 million locally to serve the breast health needs of women in our community. While controversy has recently surrounded the national Komen Foundation regarding its decision to pull its grant from Planned Parenthood (and then its subsequent reinstatement of it), the local branch of the foundation has made it known that it was not in agreement with the national's initial decision. Most of the money raised from this race goes to the local branch. PTE Local 17 will continue to monitor the situation. ■



Why Unions? . . . because unions work to protect and save money on health care.

Spokane Regional Health District ratified an agreement in December of 2011 that drastically reduced their out-of-pocket health care expenses. See story on page 11. ■

Seattle City Council Moves Forward to Bring Local 17 Work Back In-house

IN THE CITY OF SEATTLE, PTE LOCAL 17 HAS BEEN WORKING DILIGENTLY TO EDUCATE THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL ON THE WASTE OF MONEY AND THE PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERNS ABOUT UTILIZING CONTRACTORS/CONSULTANTS, RATHER THAN IN-HOUSE CITY EMPLOYEES.

In 2007, Local 17 conducted a study on the use of contractors/consultants in the Washington State Department of Transportation. Local 17 Research Director, Elliot Levin, showed that it costs 20 to 30 percent more to contract out work than staffing to perform the work in-house.

In 2010, City of Seattle Local 17 members voted to extend the Collective Bargaining Agreements to Dec. 31, 2013. With this extension, members agreed to reduce the COLA floor to zero percent and eliminate the ceiling. Members also agreed to change the contracting out language which allowed Local 17 to file grievances when contracting out occurs that did not result in a layoff.

With the change in contract language there have been several grievances filed primarily in the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) regarding the high utilization of contractors/consultants. Local 17 can challenge the question of how staffing is authorized and whether outside expertise is a legitimate reason.

As there continues to be General Fund and Gas Tax shortfalls in the City of Seattle, cuts have been made to several departments, including SDOT. Local 17 has requested that the mayor and council cut contractors and consultants as a way to save money. For the past two years, there has been little evidence that this had been done during the budget cycle process.

With the adoption of the most recent 2012 Budget, which contains cuts and job losses, the City Council took the initiative to add seven new engineering positions (pockets) which reduced the need for contracted work. When possible, these pockets are also utilized to save jobs for those employees identified for layoffs.

As a result of these new positions, a Labor Management Leadership Subcommittee (LMLC) was launched to identify immediate areas of need that could assist in saving jobs and keeping work in-house. Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) identified some positions that would prevent the contracting out of work and avoid layoffs.

These positions were offered city-wide and there were several applicants. Unfortunately, SDOT (where the layoffs in engineering were to occur) failed to allow SPU to hire their employees, which resulted in layoffs of Local 17 members.

“Local 17 applauds the leadership of the City Council. This is the right direction to create budget savings and eliminates the need to layoff more city employees. The immediate efforts made by SPU deserve credit to utilize the positions as intended and save jobs. It is disappointing that SDOT did not take the same initiative to bring work back in-house. Instead, it allowed employees to be laid off when it is clear money exists in the budget to save the jobs. There continues to be a high volume of work being contracted out within SDOT,” said Adrienne Thompson, Local 17 Union Representative.

Local 17 intends to move forward on the contracting out grievances as well as grievances of those employees laid off in SDOT. The union will also continue pushing the Departments to utilize these positions as they were intended. ■

Local 17 Argues Against City Department Merger

LOCAL 17 WAS RECENTLY SUCCESSFUL IN WORKING WITH THE SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL IN BLOCKING THE REQUEST FROM MAYOR MCGINN’S OFFICE TO MERGE TWO CITY DEPARTMENTS, THE OFFICE OF HOUSING AND THE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

While the Mayor saw a \$4,000 savings in the merger, he couldn’t identify any other benefits to merging the departments. Local 17 argued that the merger would not only cause a substantial loss in positions and autonomy for the Office of Housing, but it would also be a detriment for the community.

“The current process for awarding funds to organizations who build and manage housing has been extremely successful. The proposed merger would put that process in the hands of departments which have no experience doing this,” said Guadalupe Perez, Local 17 Union Representative.

Local community organizations that use the Office of Housing resources also argued to keep the Departments separate to maintain funding flow to the community.

Ultimately, the City Council agreed with arguments made by both Local 17 and the community and the merger was not signed in the last budget cycle.

“Local 17 was able to save multiple positions by keeping the departments separate. The community will continue to benefit from its resources as they have in the past,” Perez concluded. ■

Budgets Submitted: Union Negotiated the Process

BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEES (BACs) THROUGHOUT THE CITY OF PORTLAND HAVE BEEN ACTIVELY MEETING SINCE NOVEMBER AND WRAPPED UP IN LATE JANUARY.

Budget proposals were submitted to Mayor Adams at the end of January, with final Council ratification expected in May 2012.

COPPEA members and Union Representative, Behnaz Nelson, have been attending and participating in the various BACs. Together with community interest groups, other labor organizations and the business community, the BACs have been ranking priorities and exploring opportunities to achieve efficiencies without subjecting employees to layoffs.

Nelson has proactively coordinated a subcommittee of the Portland Bureau of Transportation’s BAC to explore and advocate for stable funding sources. “PBOT’s (Portland Bureau of Transportation) current \$16 million deficit will have ongoing ramifications due to the ever-decreasing gas tax revenue. It’s vital to the success of PBOT



COPPEA Welcomes New Stewards

MANY THANKS TO ALL COPPEA MEMBERS WHO HAVE STEPPED UP TO SHARE IN THE LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES. OFFICERS AND STEWARDS ARE THE CORE STRENGTH OF THE UNION AND WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE QUALITY GUIDANCE AND DIRECTION FOR COPPEA.

The newly elected and reelected COPPEA Stewards and Officers are as follows:

Officers

President: Gerry Verhoef, Parks
 Vice-President: Rachel Whiteside, BDS
 Secretary: Shannon Rivas, Water Bureau
 Treasurer: Paul Cone, PBOT
 Past President: Mark Bello, BDS

Stewards

BES: Patrick Torres; Victoria Busch; Karyn Hanson; Angie Tomlinson
 BTS: Larry Frey; Dat Nguyen; Anika Curry
 PBOT: Ruthanne Bennett; John Wilson; John Wood
 BDS: Kathleen Stokes; Priscilla Partch; Mark Walhood
 BPS: Tyler Bump
 Water Bureau: Jamie Wilde; David Argast
 Shared Bureaus: Jerry Eckstrom
 Parks & Recreation: Steve Lower ■



Cone



Verhoef

to generate sustainable funding to both offset future loss and ensure continued growth.”

Following submission of the budget to the Mayor at the end of January, COPPEA members will be called upon to reach out to City Commissioners to remind them that with job cuts come service reductions. COPPEA will testify before Council, request meetings with individual Commissioners and coalition with other labor unions and like-minded organizations to preserve jobs,

identify efficiencies and highlight additional untapped revenue sources.

It is expected that layoff notices will be given towards the end of January, however, it is important to note that these are simply projected cuts which could drastically change by the end of the fiscal year.

“Vigorous lobbying efforts by COPPEA will be the key to making sure that what’s projected to be cut in January is certain to be saved in June,” Nelson said. ■

King County 17A Reaches Tentative Agreement

IN DECEMBER, 17A, A KING COUNTY BARGAINING UNIT COVERING OVER 400 MEMBERS IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION, PARKS & NATURAL RESOURCES, FACILITIES AND DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, REACHED A TENTATIVE AGREEMENT ON CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS.

There were some financial gains and no take-aways, which is fairly significant during these tough economic times. The County will now pay the cost (initial and renewals) of a professional license for positions which require the license, plus, the County will also pay the costs of any required continuing education to maintaining the license. Additionally, the bargaining team was successful in pushing out the timeline to return to County service and reinstate vacation accrual rates from two years to five years. Since the economy has taken a toll on hiring, employees can now be away from County service for three additional years yet still be credited all their accruals upon return. Most importantly, the contract was TA'd, however, the bargaining teams agreed to put Article 15, Reduction in Force, through a LEAN process to find ways to make the layoff process predictable and fair. The LEAN process will take place in January or early February and will involve select 17A bargaining team members, management, Human Resources and Labor Relations/ Union Representatives. Due to the fact that Article 15 was considered the most important article needing attention, the TA will not be voted on until the LEAN process has been completed.

"The 17A bargaining team has worked tirelessly for over one year and should be proud of the achievements made. There is still major work to be done on Article 15 and the Union will remain steadfast in our commitment to create a layoff process that is transparent and equitable," said Union Representative Behnaz Nelson.

News & Features

King County Public Health Reaches Agreement

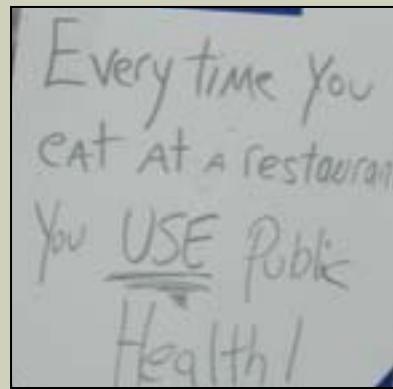
FOLLOWING FOUR-MONTHS OF BARGAINING, LOCAL 17 AND SEATTLE & KING COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH HAVE REACHED A TENTATIVE AGREEMENT ON A SUCCESSOR CONTRACT.

The agreement, a two-year contract, includes some significant revisions to layoff/recall language, special duty and the grievance process.

The County presented wage data at the table regarding some classifications that were over market by a significant amount. The Union was successful in bargaining a reopener to deal with these issues for early 2012.

"The main reason for the reopener is to give us time to do some market analysis of our own regarding the classifications identified as over market. Since we had the coalition COLA agreement in place we had not made any wage proposals but when the county brought this data we quickly realized we needed our own compensation study to verify or refute the county's data," said Janet Parks, Union Representative and Chief Negotiator, "Our own members and our Research Director will be assisting to gather and analyze market comparables for the identified classifications."

The Union and the County will meet again in mid April and early May to bargain the wages and methodology used to address any over or under market issues. The intent is to agree on the comparables to the extent possible and then to determine



a fair and equitable way to manage those wages without loss to current members. Methodologies such as Y-rating (a process of freezing wages with no step increases or cola adjustments and creating a new wage range for incoming employees in that classification) will be negotiated to address the issue.

"It isn't the intent of this Union or any other to create and expect our governments to sustain wages that are massively above the market. It is also not in our interest to degrade wages and benefits such that the middle class is abolished. Finding the 'sweet spot' on this delicate edge will be our challenge," said negotiating team member Sid Forman, "We also want to push on the Management and Non-Represented classifications to do their fair share to sustain our government's viability too." ■

" We were able to make some gains and we were successful in holding the line on any take-aways."

difficult economic climate," said bargaining team member Fred White. ■

News & Features

Bad Economic Times No Excuse for Contract Violations: Members Must Look Out for One Another

Staff Perspective:

By Diana Douglas,
PTE 17 Union Representative

THE YEAR 2012 HAS JUST BEGUN. WHILE THE ECONOMY HAS STARTED TO PICK UP IN SOME AREAS (MORE PEOPLE ARE BUYING NEW CARS NEWSCASTERS ARE SAYING), THE REALITY FOR MOST OF US IS WE ARE STILL IN A RECESSION.

We most likely have friends or family members who are unemployed, we know property values are not increasing, and we are aware of the stress levels at home and work. There seem to be more disciplinary actions happening in every work place where Local 17 has members.

Why? If you were to ask management, the answer would no doubt be "employees are acting out, these employees should be grateful they have jobs." Management will concede stresses are high, but employees are "responsible for their own actions."

However, Local 17 Staff see a different picture. When an open position is advertised, there are upwards of 200 applicants for every full time job opening—more in some cases. Management is in the unique position (due to the down economy) of being able to pick what it perceives to be the "cream of the crop."

The other side of the equation is management is becoming less tolerant of personnel or disciplinary issues with current employees in the workplace. Something as minor as being a few minutes late twice in one week used to be easy to have a conversation about. Now it could result in a coaching and counseling memo.

If two employees in an office had an argument two years ago, chances are management would encourage them to cool down, talk the situation over or make an appointment with the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Office. Now, it is not unusual for an "investigation or

fact finding" to be held resulting in an oral or written warning being given to one or both employees.

When unemployment is high, management automatically raises the bar for performance and lowers the bar for discipline because they know there are at least 100 unemployed individuals for every position who would "jump at the chance to have a good paying job with benefits."

It would be easy to fend for yourself and stay under the radar in the work place, but it would be the wrong thing to do. More than ever, Local 17 needs its members to care about each other and care about their contractual rights. If you hear of a situation you think is a contract violation, ask a Steward about it or call your Local 17 Union Representative.

Recently, a City of Seattle member (who is not a steward) overheard a conversation, asked a couple of questions and called to report what he thought might be a violation; it was because of his diligence that a grievance was filed and the union prevailed. We should all be alert to these situations. Just because management thinks they can get 100 takers for every job, does not give them ability or right to violate the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Contract rights should not get diminished or disappear during a recession.

Caring about each other is harder to quantify than a contract violation. Workers joined unions to improve wages, hours and working conditions. It was a hard fought battle that took years and exacted huge sacrifices from the men and women who would not settle for less. In the process, relationships were formed. People of different genders, religions, races and backgrounds realized they were a force to be reckoned with when they stood together.

The phrase "Union Brothers and Sisters" encompassed not only their contracts but

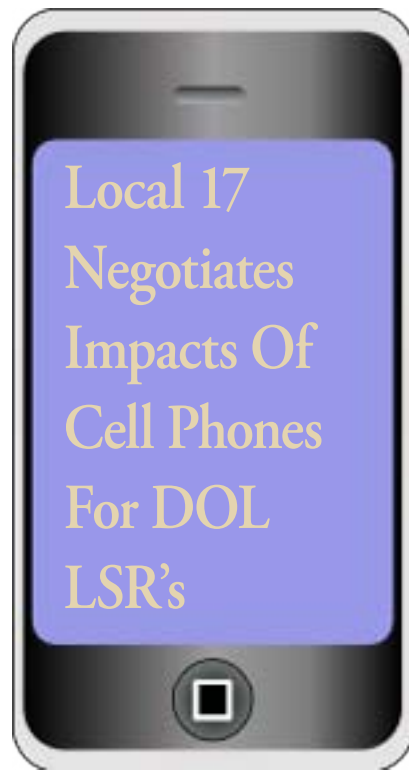


" Caring about each other is harder to quantify than a contract violation. Workers joined unions to improve wages, hours and working conditions. It was a hard fought battle that took years and exacted huge sacrifices from the men and women who would not settle for less. In the process, relationships were formed. "

also their interactions with each other on a daily basis.

The same holds true today. If you see someone struggling in the workplace, you do not have to be a Steward or Union Representative to smile and ask how is it going? If a coworker who normally is easy to work with snaps at you, can you let it go this time? If a coworker just needs to vent about a situation, could you suggest meeting for coffee and giving them an audience that is safe and be willing to listen?

None of us individually can change the economy or environment, but together we can make a difference. ■



THE DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING HAS BEEN IN THE PROCESS OF UPDATING AND RE-VISING THE LICENSING SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES MANUAL, WHICH SETS FORTH POLICY AND PROCEDURES PERTAINING TO LSR'S.

As a result of those revisions Local 17 made a request to bargain the effects/ impacts of the proposed policy. The DOL was proposing new language pertaining to the use of personal cellular phones. If the employers policy were to have been implemented without bargaining, it would have prohibited personal cell phones to be used, carried, or kept in the work area during work time.

Through the bargaining process Local 17 negotiated a change in the policy which now allows LSR's to monitor incoming calls, text messages, and other electronic messaging in the work area provided that the cellular phone be kept on silent and/ or vibrate and be out of the sight of the customer. Additionally outgoing calls will be made away from the work area and limited to breaks and lunch unless it is an emergency situation and the supervisor has been notified.

While the Department of Licensing was resistant to the proposal recommended by the union they ultimately agreed to the changes. This was a positive outcome that will allow the Licensing Service Representatives to access their cell phone while at work. ■

Unions Challenge Gain Sharing Legislation

PERS update: Gainsharing and Early Retirement Factors

ON JAN. 30, KING COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE RICHARD EADIE RULED THAT EARLY RETIREMENT FACTORS (ERFs) MAY END IF GAINSHARING IS ULTIMATELY RESTORED (AFTER ALL APPEALS HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED).

This ruling came as the second phase of a lawsuit brought by the Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE) and Washington Education Association (WEA). In the first phase of the lawsuit, Judge Richard Eadie found the 2007 legislative repeal of gainsharing to be invalid.

Background

In 2007, the Washington State legislature repealed the statutory gainsharing provisions for PERS and TRS Plans 1 and 3 and SERS Plan 3 members. Gainsharing allows such members to share in "extraordinary investment returns in certain conditions."

Also in 2007, the legislature enacted ERFs, which allow PERS, TRS and SERS 2 and 3 members with at least 30 years of service to retire at age 62 (instead of age 65), without any actuarial benefit reduction. Such ERFs also allow such members to retire before age 62 with less of a benefit reduction than what was previously in place.

A "poison pill" provision in the legislation stated that if anyone ever filed suit and a final court decision re-instated gainsharing for PERS 1 and 3, that would eliminate ERFs.

On Sept., 9, 2010, Judge Eadie found that the repeal of gainsharing was invalid. He relied upon legal arguments that any modification of pension benefits must be based upon maintaining the integrity and flexibility of the retirement system, and that any disadvantage to the employee be "replaced by comparable new advantages."

On Jan. 21, 2011, the judge ruled that the State could reserve its right to appeal his Sept. 9 decision on gainsharing until after the second phase of the litigation on ERFs is complete at the Superior Court level.

According to the Department of Retirement Systems: "The contingent benefits [ERFs] will remain in place until there is legal certainty regarding all issues of the case. Legal certainty is not reached until the expiration of all opportunities for review by the Court of Appeals and/or the Supreme Court."

Local 17 will not know the ultimate status of any of this until the parties to the litigation make decisions regarding the appeal of Judge Eadie's rulings on gainsharing and ERFs.

This article provides general information only. If you have questions about how this litigation impacts your individual retirement situation, please contact the Department of Retirement Systems directly (phone: 360-664-7000 or 800-547-6657, www.dr.s.wa.gov). ■

Spokane County Gets Agreement

SPOKANE COUNTY'S LOCAL 17 NEGOTIATING TEAM RECENTLY COMPLETED NEGOTIATIONS, DEFEATING MANY OF THE EMPLOYER'S UNFAVORABLE PROPOSALS.

The employer started negotiations with several negative proposals including the ability for management, at its discretion, to demote an employee; reduce an employee's FTE (status) and furloughing employees for any amount of time and at any time as long as they did so equitably.

Management also proposed: no cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), increasing employees' out-of-pocket health care expenses (both at point of service and in the form of increased premium shares), giving management the ability to convert full time work to seasonal, and reverting back to the FLSA overtime standard which would have eradicated significant historical overtime gains.

"During my first day of negotiations with the team, the employer laid off 14 percent of the regular membership as well as all of the seasonal employees. The employees had already, at that time, agreed to increased health care premiums and no COLA, but the employer still wanted more," said Local 17 Union Representative Blackwood. "It was a 'kick them while they are down' mentality and even though the overtime issue cost management almost nothing, the elected officials went for the jugular."

This approach has cost the elected leaders and the community much more in the loss of morale. In the final days of negotiations, the employer tried to regressively bargain by back-peddling on previous agreements to maintain the health care plan structure in an apparent attempt to derail agreement in order to push their agenda of unilateral implementation of their initial contract proposals. A mediator was brought in and in the end, agreement was reached.

Membership is re-grouping and preparing for health care and COLA negotiations in 2012. Led by Blackwood, the team included: Mike McCollam, Tim McIntyre, Kurt Farnsworth and Colin Depner. ■

Spokane Regional Health District Gets Health Agreement That Cuts Out-of-Pocket Health Costs

SPOKANE REGIONAL HEALTH DISTRICT RATIFIED AN AGREEMENT IN DECEMBER OF 2011 THAT DRASTICALLY REDUCED THEIR OUT-OF-POCKET HEALTH CARE EXPENSES. After facing unaffordable health care increases for 2011, members decided to move into the state-sponsored PEBB health care plan. When bargaining for 2012 health care began, members were still in an adjustment period from the recent changes. Additionally, the Negotiating Committee knew that more changes were necessary to make the state plan affordable for members with families.

Carrie Blackwood, Local 17 Union Representative, observed: "There was a lot of concern expressed about moving to the PEBB state plan for 2011. Even after the move to PEBB, employees were still facing unaffordable health care costs."

For 2011, the employer was paying \$674 per employee, per month for health care regardless of the PEBB plan chosen. This is far below the market and resulted in employees paying as much as \$791 a month out-of-pocket to cover their family.

With the rates going up for 2012, if the employer's contribution stayed the same, employees would be paying more than \$800 a month to cover a family— making health care for a family unaffordable for most members.

"The irony was not lost on members who work for the Health District but could not afford health care. With the new agreement, this all changed," Blackwood said.

The Negotiating Team achieved significant increases in the health care benefit for 2012. The new rates require the employer to pay, regardless of the state PEBB plan chosen, \$518.60 for employee only, \$826.14 for employee/child, \$833 for employee/ spouse, and \$1131.18 for families. This means that members who were paying close to \$800 a month to cover a family would now be able to pay \$282 to cover their family.

"This is not where the employer needs to be, but it is a lot closer and a step in the right direction," Blackwood said.

Members could choose to vote for one of two proposal options. One proposal made the cost of health care cheaper for employee only members, but more expensive for employee/ child. The other proposal made the cost more expensive for employee only, but cheaper for employee/child. Even though there are more "employee onlys," the unit ratified the higher rate for employee onlys in order to reduce the cost for employee/ child. This meant that a significant number of members voted altruistically against their own personal interests.

"I think this speaks to the compassion members have for one another. Members did not just think about themselves, but instead about the whole. Our members place value in the needs of the community," said Tammy McCauley (Chapter President, Steward, Negotiating Team Member and REC Delegate).

SRHD suffered substantial layoffs again during the negotiations process. The team worked very hard during difficult times to secure health care. The rest of the contract issues remain open for negotiations and the team hopes to settle in early 2012. The Negotiating Team members include, Colleen Gorman, Tammy McCauley, Linda Swendig, Liz Wallace (who was laid off Dec. 31), Katie Murray, and Deanna Quinn. ■





Tacoma Surveyors; Sitting (left to right), John Anderson, Alfonso (Butch) Manalo, Steve Greenawalt. Back row: (left to right) Dean Paschich, Mike Lovitt, Jeff Webster, Gary Glidden, Tom Ginsburg, Dan Stillwell, Tom McMillen, Scott Haydon, David Hudson (behind Union Representative Roberta Burnett), and Kerry Harper.

Local 17 Helps Save City of Tacoma Surveyors' Jobs

BECAUSE OF A SIGNIFICANT SHORTFALL IN THE CITY OF TACOMA'S 2011-2012 BIENNIAL BUDGET RELEASED IN DECEMBER 2011, TEN LOCAL 17 MEMBERS RECEIVED LAYOFF NOTICES.

However, the good news is that Local 17 intervened and was able to save their jobs—at least for now.

In the first round of layoffs, nine of the positions were in Public Works and one was in the Community and Economic Development Department (CED). In the second round, one Local 17 member received a layoff notice, but was able to bump into a former position.

"With helpful information and proactive steps from several members in the bargaining unit, we learned that there were at least one year if not, two years, worth of work available in Environmental Services. By assigning nine of the survey positions to Environmental Services, we were able to

retain their jobs for one to two years," said Local 17 Union Representative Roberta Burnett.

Burnett argued that the work that surveyors perform is less expensive than their private sector counterparts and the City retains qualified, knowledgeable individuals that have a vested interest in success. She added that Public Works Director Richard McKinley did everything he could to ensure that as many employees retained their jobs as possible and really worked hard with us to find answers.

Additionally, there is no need for duplicate oversight work. Evidence across the country has shown that contracting out core government services leads to inefficient use of tax money. An important point to remember is that there is accountability and reliability problems with contracting out work, not to mention cost over-runs that tend to be up for interpretation on who is responsible for the bill.

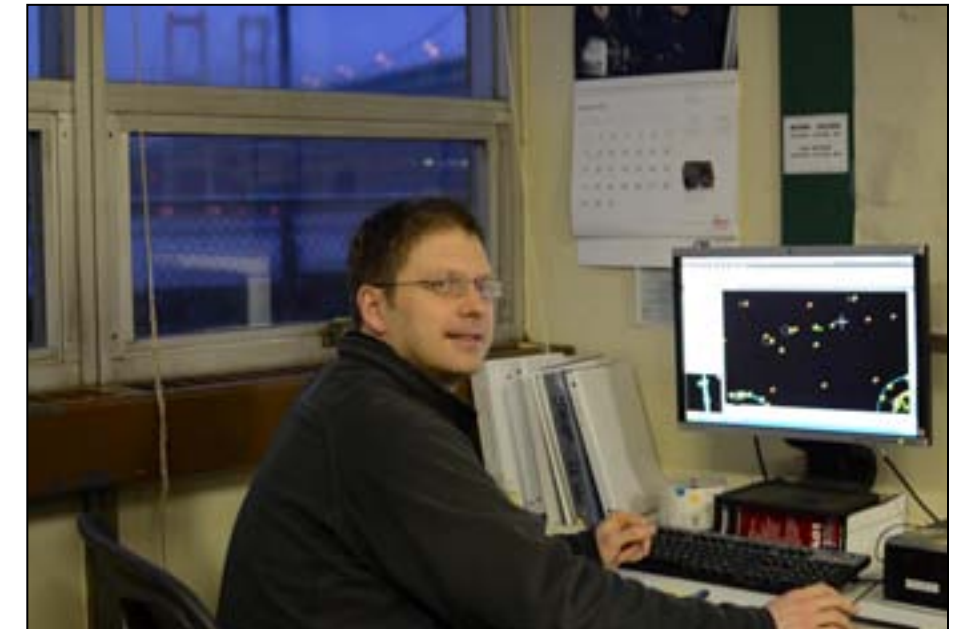
"With helpful information and proactive steps from several members in the bargaining unit, we learned that they was at least one year, if not two years, worth of work . . ."

The City is currently in the process of reviewing its budget with the new City Manager and plans to announce at the end of February or early March if additional layoffs will be necessary.

Currently, 10 of the 11 Local 17 members remain employed in Local 17 jobs, the 11th has been hired in another division outside of Local 17, but remains employed.

"Much appreciation to the diligent work of the stewards, especially Tim Peters and Mike Lovitt, and bargaining unit members for their invaluable services that helped turn this situation around," Burnett concluded. ■

The Tacoma Surveyor Job: Part Historian, Part Detective



SURVEYORS AT THE CITY OF TACOMA ARE NOT ONLY EFFICIENT, GOOD WITH MATH, AND CAN HANDLE WORKING OUTSIDE IN ALL WEATHER CONDITIONS, BUT THEY ARE ALSO GOOD DETECTIVES AND HISTORIANS.

That's because the job of a surveyor is multi-faceted, including working with maps (both on paper and the computer), collecting data with surveying equipment and coordinating with other departments at the City of Tacoma.

"This group of people has real pride in the work they do and in their city. We work as a team with the inspectors and engineers," said surveyor, Jeff Webster.

The detective and historian parts of the job come in when they are surveying a project and they need to find features such as trees, a wall, or manhole covers that other surveyors have mapped before, but are not easily detectable now.

"It's almost like a treasure hunt," said Mike Lovitt, who has been working for the City for 12 years.

In fact, at the surveyors' office, which sits near the base of the Narrows Bridge, houses survey (field) books dating back to the 1800s.

"In the early 1800's survey markers were set for the plats. All the roads are based on

what was done before," said surveyor Gary Glidden. "Back in the old days, a mile didn't always measure at 5,280 feet. It was where the surveyor put it. There were no roads then, just mountains. You have to follow in the footsteps of the original surveyor."

Some surveyors remember an instance when they had to stop work on their project because they found some Native American artifacts. Others have found interesting items such as gold coins. Sometimes it's just an old survey marker that they find, but it's still exciting.

"It's always interesting when you are able to uncover one of the old survey markers that hasn't been recovered in 80 years," said Webster. ■



"This group of people has real pride in the work they do and in their city. We work as a team with the inspectors and engineers."

Legislature Past Mid-Point: Many Bills Affect Members

AS THE LEGISLATURE NEARS THE HALFWAY POINT IN THE 60-DAY SESSION, THERE ARE MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS REGARDING MANY ISSUES AFFECTING LOCAL 17 MEMBERS.

General Fund Deficit

Governor Gregoire's proposals to deal with the projected \$1.5 billion state revenue deficit is still awaiting legislative action. State employees were spared from further cuts in her proposal as they have already taken a three percent pay cut in the current budget cycle. However, Local 17 members in cities, counties, public health and human services are waiting to see what cuts will be made.

The Governor's proposed budget released in November 2011 included several cuts. Local 17 members in cities and counties would be affected because it would reduce the liquor profit share by 50 percent and eliminate the liquor sales tax share going into their general funds. Members in public



Gregoire

health could face a reduction in funding to several programs. For members working in Human Services, these proposed cuts would reduce services for clients with developmental disabilities and long-term care clients receiving personal care services.

Local 17 expects action to begin in earnest on this issue when the next state revenue forecast is released in mid-February. Local 17 has been working with other labor unions and community organizations to find budget solutions through increasing revenue and closing tax loopholes.

Transportation System Preservation

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING IS BEING DEBATED AS GOVERNOR GREGOIRE HAS CHALLENGED THE LEGISLATURE TO APPROVE HER 10-YEAR, \$3.7 BILLION FUNDING PACKAGE (HB 2660/SB 6455) FOR TRANSPORTATION MAINTENANCE AND PRESERVATION. THE PACKAGE WOULD INCLUDE:

- \$2.67 billion for ferry and highway operations and maintenance;
- \$310 million in grants for cities and counties to maintain roads and bridges;
- \$150 million in grants to offset transit service cuts;
- \$200 million for the Washington State Patrol; and
- \$100 million to preserve passenger rail service.



The Columbia River Crossing Project

It would also give city and county councils the authority to raise additional new revenues on their own with their choice of either a vehicle-license fee of up to \$40 or a passenger-vehicle excise tax of up to one percent.

Funding for the package would come from a wide array of fees that would be subject to a simple majority vote in the legislature. The core fee consists of a \$1.50 per barrel fee on transportation petroleum products (gas, oil for asphalt, etc.) produced in the state. Revenue from this source is estimated at \$2.75 billion over the 10-year plan. Additional fees include a \$100 fee on electric vehicles, a 15-percent increase in license fees for heavy commercial vehicles, and a \$15 weight fee on passenger vehicles.

"We can't wait until roads, bridges and ferries are falling apart to fix them. We can't kick the can down the road and saddle our future generations with the repairs we failed to make," Gregoire said. "Our transportation system is the lifeblood of our economy. It moves people to work and goods to market, and supports our tourism industry. If we don't maintain and grow, we come to a standstill."

Other transportation-related proposals include a variety of subjects such as: tolling on the Alaska Way tunnel (HB 2675 and SB 6444) and the proposed Columbia River Crossing project (HB 2676 and SB 6445); expanding the use of facial-recognition technology (HB 2433 and SB 6150) for the issuance of a driver's license to comply with the federal Real ID law; and expansion on the use of Design/Build at the state DOT (SB 5250). ■

Bills Affecting Public Employees

A NUMBER OF BILLS AFFECTING PUBLIC EMPLOYEES ARE ALSO IN PLAY. One proposal (HB 2490/SB 6176) that would have an impact on Local 17 members working in City of Seattle and City of Tacoma is to shift the Business & Occupational (B&O) Tax administration to the state. This could cost up to \$43 million to the Seattle's General Fund and a similar amount to Tacoma. (If you work for the City of Seattle or Tacoma, please do the action alert on the Local 17 webpage, www.ptel7publicaffairs.org).

Two proposals would affect the public employees retirement system for new hires. Senate Bill 6378 would require new employees to be enrolled in PERS 3 ending new membership in PERS 2, while SB 6543 would bar the use of overtime to be used in pension calculations for new hires.

A few other bills we are actively working on include an anti-state employee bill (HB 2484) that would bar collective bargaining on so-called "Y-rate" salary settings such as those in downward reallocations or during a RIF; and a measure (HB1900) that would require Professional Engineers to receive continuing education credits annually.

All these issues and more are discussed on the Local 17 Public Affairs blog: www.ptel7publicaffairs.org The blog is the primary legislative information site and is updated frequently during session. Once there, members can sign up to get all blog entries sent directly to email.



Sign up for updates at: www.ptel7publicaffairs.org

Help Support More Success! Donate to the PAC!

Now you can donate through payroll deduction or by using your credit card or a check. Simply fill out one of the forms and send it to Local 17's Political Action Fund.

By using Form 1, you can set up a monthly contribution or make a one-time donation with your credit card or check. By using Form 2, you authorize a monthly deduction from your paycheck.

Local 17 members voluntarily contribute to the PAC fund. No dues money goes to the PAC. The PAC contributes to political candidates who support working family and Local 17 issues. Send the form with a check, your credit card information or payroll withholding authorization to this address: Local 17 PAC, 2900 Eastlake Ave. East, Suite 300, Seattle, WA 98102.

Help Support More Success! Donate to the PAC!

Now you can donate through payroll deduction or by using your credit card. Simply fill out one of the forms below and send it to Local 17's Political Action Fund. Using Form 1, you can set up a monthly contribution or make a one-time donation with your credit card or check. Local 17 members voluntarily contribute to the PAC fund. The PAC contributes to political candidates who support working family and Local 17 issues.

Form 1 Political Contribution Check or Credit Card Authorization Form

Printed Card Holders Name _____

Please charge \$_____ to my credit card to be contributed to the PTE Local 17 PAC of Seattle, Washington.

Card Type (circle one): Master Card VISA

Billing Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature of cardholder _____ Date _____

Check here if you would like the above contribution billed to your credit card each month. You may revoke this authorization at any time by notifying Local 17 in writing in advance.

Form 2 Political Contribution Payroll Withholding Authorization Form

Printed Member Name _____

Please withhold \$_____ per month from my paychecks to be contributed to the PTE Local 17 PAC of Seattle, WA.

Effective Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____
This authorization remains in effect until revoked in writing by me. Contributions or gifts to the Local 17 PAC are not tax deductible.

Please return completed form to:

2900 Eastlake Avenue East, Suite #300
Seattle, Washington 98102
FAX (206)328-7402
(206) 328-7321 1-800-783-0017

No employer or union may discriminate against you for contributing or not contributing to a political committee, or supporting or opposing a candidate, ballot measure or political party.

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Local 17



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Executive Board Point of View

Sean Simmons
Local 17 Secretary-Treasurer

Happy 2012! How quickly a year has passed by. This year represents the first full year that Local 17 Professional and Technical Employees (PTE) is an independent union. However our goal at the Local remains the same as it always has been: to provide you with the best possible representation and advocacy at the lowest cost.

The Washington, D.C. based International union (IFPTE) we had been affiliated with was supposed to provide help with training, organizing, legislative programs, and more. But it did not serve our members well in any of those capacities and was demanding more money from Local 17 at a time when sending more to D.C. would severely hurt this organization. As a result, the leadership of Local 17 at every level decided we could better serve our members locally. Over the past year we have been actively transitioning to our new status and taking steps to ramp up our capacity in critical areas such as our communications program. We created our own scholarship program which guarantees that a Local 17 member's child will benefit each year. We expanded our legislative program and added a second Legislative Director to increase the emphasis on state employee issues and the other jurisdictions represented by Local 17. We are also beginning a new focus to address

issues that affect our members at the federal level. In the coming year we will continue to reconfigure our union and implement changes to improve our internal and external organizing capacities. We will strengthen our ability to be an effective voice for our public employee members in an era in which they face unprecedented challenges.

Former Executive Board member/trustee Charlie Hampton was known to say "good things happen at Local 17 and they don't happen by accident." We work hard at Local 17 to make sure that we are ready for the future. Every staffer and every officer knows that they will someday have to turn the reins over to the next generation of union leaders. To that end we try to make sure our efforts leave the union a better place. Staying with the status quo would have meant cuts to our local's budget and reduced service for our members. Because of bold, forward looking action, we now have the opportunity to create a stronger union for present and future members and to provide improved fundamental services while maintaining the lowest union dues in the state and enduring the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

I hope you look forward to 2012 as much as I do as we continue to make PTE Local 17 more dynamic and innovative and engage you, as a member, more actively in union activities. ■

In Unity,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sean F. Simmons".