

AFL-CIO points to gains in membership

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The national AFL-CIO's Organizing Department says workers are joining union ranks at the highest rate in two generations.

According to their report, between 2004 and 2006 the combined growth of AFL-CIO unions rose by 1.42 percent — a net gain of 136,000 members.

Using documents filed with the U.S. Department of Labor, the Organizing Department cited growth of several unions in net members, including AF-SCME, which gained more than 120,000 members, the largest gain in the union movement. Some 56,000 workers became members of the Postal Workers, another 37,000 employees joined the Machinists, and nearly 66,000 entertainment workers chose the Screen Actors Guild.

Ten unions grew by more than 10 percent between 2004 and 2006, and the largest private-sector union victory in recent years came in 2005 and 2006 when 20,000 workers at Cingular Wireless joined the Communications Workers of America.

The Organizing Department said 560 organizers have gone through the

AFL-CIO Organizing Institute training program this year. The department also is working with 15 affiliated unions to assist them in their "change to organize" programs, and the labor federation's Center for Strategic Research is assisting in nine major organizing campaigns.

To continue growing, the Organizing Department, according to its report, will focus on five goals:

- Recruiting and training the best possible organizers.
- Helping affiliate unions increase their organizing capacity through strategic planning, assessing resource allocation and developing the political will to change the union's culture through leadership training.
- Helping affiliates design and carry out large-scale campaigns.
- Changing the climate for organizing by passing the Employee Free Choice Act and other measures.
- Developing global strategies to provide the opportunity for more people to join unions, including hosting the first-ever global organizing summit in December.



Labor Roundtable award winners

The Labor Roundtable of Southwest Washington held its 17th annual awards banquet Sept. 28 at the Vancouver Hilton & Convention Center. Awards were presented to, from left to right: Glenn Shuck, executive director of Labor's Community Service Agency, Union Member of the Year; Dan Ogden, past chair of the Clark County Democrats, Community Service Award; John Rowand of Laborers Local 335 and recently retired from the Fair Contracting Foundation, Labor Leader of the Year; and Dave Ritchey, business manager of Laborers Local 335, Local Union of the Year. Jackie Straub, a retired member of Machinists Lodge 63 and past treasurer of the Labor Roundtable, received a Lifetime Achievement Award. She was unable to attend. Pictured with the award recipients are Labor Roundtable officers Harold Abbe (left), vice chair; Phillip Parker (second from left), chair; and Roy Jennings (far right), treasurer. Nearly 100 union members, politicians and friends attended the banquet. The guest speaker was Clark County Commissioner Steve Stuart.

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