Most Public Employees Free of Political Restrictions

With the fall political campaign beginning to warm up, OSEA headquarters has received questions from some members regarding their political rights.

The 1967 Legislature passed a law removing all restrictions against political activity by public employees.

The law prohibits candidates from coercing or requiring public employees to contribute campaign funds or services.

Employees are prohibited from participating in political activities during working hours.

Employees who are paid in full or in part from federal funds, however, still are under the restrictions of the Federal Hatch Act.

The Hatch Act, of course, permits public employees to register, vote and express their opinions.

It allows employees to attend political rallies and conventions to which the general public is admitted.

Voluntary contributions to political organizations, display of political pictures in homes, display of political badges or buttons or stickers to private automobiles are all permitted under the federal law.

Among other things, however, the Hatch Act prohibits employees from:

*Serving on any political committee or serving as a delegate to a caucus or party convention.

*Soliciting or handling political contributions.

*Distributing campaign literature or material.

*Becoming a candidate for nomination or election to office.

*Writing for publication or publishing any letter or article, signed or unsighed, soliciting votes in favor or against any political party or candidate.

*Engaging in activity at the polls, such as soliciting votes, or helping to get out the voters on election day.

*Initiating or circulating partisan political nominating petitions.

*Serving as an officer of a political club, as a member or an officer of any of its committee , addressing such a club on any partisan political matter, or being active in organizing it.

Employees of education institutions are exempt from the restrictions of the Hatch Act.

Changes Sought In Awards Program

The board that administers the Employee Suggestion Awards Program, a program that has been out of business for the past 15 months, would like to get it back into business but under some different rules.

The program has been in limbo since July 1, 1967, because the 1967 Legislature didn't give it any money to operate during the current biennium.

Critics of the program questioned the validity of the savings claimed by approved suggestions and criticized the inadequate publicity regarding the program, and the red tape, delays and time consumed in processing suggestions.

The Employee Suggestion Awards Board, which administers the program, was instructed to study it and submit a recommendation to the 1969 Legislature.

The study has been made and recommendations sent to Leander Quiring, director of the Department of Finance, by Lloyd A. Griffiths, chairman of the Awards Board.

Briefly, the board's recommendations ask:

(1) That legislation be enacted to authorize each agency to establish its own awards program under guidelines to be set forth in civil service rules;

(2) That each agency be authorized to make cash awards from its own budgeted funds;

(3) That a full-time manager be employed by administer, promote and publicize the program;

(4) That the Employee Suggestion Awards Board be abolished.

"In our opinion these recommendations, if adopted, would enable those progressive agencies who wish to do so to motivate and stimulate their employees to participate in developing very worhwhile money saving or other intangible ideas," Griffiths said.

Hospital Aides Get New Jobs

Two psychiatric aide 3 positions were established at Columbia Park Hospital and Training Center and ten aide 1's were reclassified to aide 2's as the result of action by OSEA.

The Collective Bargaining Council at the hospital contacted staff member Donald A. Beninger about the staffing problem earlier this year.

He talked to C. W. Palmateer, superintendent, who agreed to ask the Civil Service Commission to conduct a study.

Civil service staff member Mike Dale looked into the matter. As a result the new positions were established and ten aides reclassified.

Nationwide to Offer Multi-Car Insurance

The Nationwide Insurance Company, endorsed by OSEA, has made three key changes in its automobile insurance program in Oregon.

Effective Oct. 1, the company will:

(1) Offer multi-car insurance policies;

(2) Give customers the choice of paying premiums monthly, quarterly, or annually;

(3) Institute annual handling charges for either monthly or quarterly premium payment plans.

The multi-car policy, as the name indicates, is a policy that provides insurance protection for two or more cars owned by the same person. Thus, instead of several policies to be paid for separately, the multi-car owner now needs only one policy. And he needs to pay only one premium.

The option of monthly, quarterly, or annual premium pay plans will allow policyholders to select the method that best suits their individual needs and budgets.

Until now, Nationwide's car insurance payments have come due only on a monthly basis.

A. M. Burdge, resident vice-president of Nationwide's Western States region, said the multi-car policy and optional premium pay plans will provide greater convenience for Oregon policyholders.

He said the multi-car policy also will help the company to hold down operating expenses because of the paper work that the multi-car policy would eliminate.

The handling charge is $3 per year for monthly payment programs. It's $2 annually for quarterly payments. This annual fee is charged only once, regardless of the number of cars insured under one policy. There will be no handling fee for the annual premium pay plan.

Commenting on the handling charges, Burdge noted that "for more than ten years Nationwide has been one of the few companies to offer a convenient monthly payment program. And it's been the only leading company that provided this extra service free. But increasing processing costs now force us to charge for this service.

Before their yearly renewal date, every policyholder will receive a letter explaining these changes in greater detail.