

Parkrose, Hermiston, Hood River school workers want training, contract protection, political action

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for the district and its children.

The speakers described their jobs as educational assistants, bus drivers, custodial and maintenance staff, food service workers, and clerical workers.

Their message was clear: We're valuable and cost-effective. We're proud of our work. We care about children of the district. We deserve respect.

Speaking that night were **Karen Archuleta, Jim Burke, Mike Creswell, Diane Gritzmacher, Mary Langley, Karen Nulph, Pat Stapleton, and Judy Yost.**

Though more than 73% of the workers signed authorization cards calling for a representation election, the school employees association has filed an objection with the Employment Relations Board to delay a democratic election from being held. However, the school employees association has refused to debate the workers' issues or even to appear at a joint meeting.

Classified school employees in the **Hermiston School District** have also said they want a union that will represent them vigorously, provide them the training they need to enforce the contract, and the strength of a statewide organization with adequate resources.

Issues at this 122-worker unit, reports Member Organizer (MOC) **Mike Pageler**, include cuts in hours affecting 22 workers, and a proposal to contract out the entire food service operation. In addition, just cause for discipline and progressive discipline are not included in the workers' current contract.

"I soon found out that I could not file a grievance because we had no protection in the contract," said **Cloydette Caudell** of the Highland Hills School. "Our contract is full of loopholes and gray areas. With OPEU we will be better trained and prepared to bargain for job security, wages, and fair treatment that we deserve. With OPEU, we'll get respect."

Cher Silvani of the Rocky Heights School expresses another concern: Contracting out. "Con-

tracting out our jobs is a real concern for Hermiston workers," she said. "We have seen what happened to food service. Too little, too late. The custodians could be next. I support OPEU because they have negotiated strong contracting out language in their contracts. We will need to be strong to get good language and be able to fight for hours. I'm with OPEU for a change."

"We are facing difficult times with Measure 5 reductions, the contracting out of food service, and the attack on our PERS retirement," said **Ginger Linkel** of the High School. "In the past, the association has excluded us when it comes to bargaining and making decisions. I am changing to OPEU to show that our classified union is responsive to Hermiston workers. This will be our union in our community working with kids."

Meeting the needs of workers who work other than daytime shifts, who have second jobs, and other responsibilities is another concern of workers in Hermiston.

"Night shift workers have been kept in the dark with our present association," said **Roy Issel** of the Highland Hills School. "It feels like your opinion doesn't count or isn't really wanted. Working to change to OPEU has shown me what it means when workers say 'We are the union,' because we are."

"I'm tired of being penalized for not being able to attend association meetings," said **Anita McGraw** of Highland Hills School. "Many of us have second jobs and loads of other responsibilities. OPEU bends over backwards to encourage participation at meetings and through the use of mail ballots to make decisions. That's real democracy."

Like at Parkrose, the school employees association has moved to delay the election among classified school employees at the **Hood River School District.**

A majority of workers signed cards for an election and energy still is high. More than 80 workers recently met a large number of OPEU officers, local activists, and staff at a picnic.

Local government contracts settle

Linn County settles 5-year agreement

A five year agreement with a total compensation reopener following a 3.6% cost of living increase effective July 1, 1994, was reached between Linn County and **OPEU Local 390.**

Effective July 1, 1995, 1996, and 1997, workers will receive a total compensation (wages and benefits) increase equal to the Cost-of-Living Index (with a minimum of 2% and a maximum of 4%) plus 1%.

In July 1, 1998, the workers get to choose as a Union whether to take the total compensation increase or to spend part of the benefit increase to enhance health care options.

Also effective the third year of the agreement, July 1996, employees will "resume" paying the employee contribution to PERS and will receive a salary increase equal to the amount that would have been paid which the employer will, if legal, shelter under IRS regulations.

Elsewhere in the new contract, a labor/management committee has been formed to revise or replace the current employee evaluation system effective July 1995.

A separate labor/management committee will be formed to annually recommend changes in health, dental, and vision insurance plans.

Additional protection from contracting out has been added. Also, through a unit clarification that was part of the bargaining process, 39 additional employees are now represented.

Bargaining team members are **John Ramirez, Lynn Cochrane, Gene Johnston, Teresa DeRush, John Hawkins,** and Organizers **Joe Woodard and Greg Schneider.**

Springfield tackles overtime issue

Salary increases totaling more than 7%, a provision to address the excessive overtime worked by exempt employees, and medical coverage for part-time employees are part of a new three-year agreement between **OPEU Local 995** and the City of Springfield.

Workers will receive a cost-of-living adjustment on July 1, 1994, on January 1, 1995, on July 1, 1995, and January 1, 1996, and a 3.22% increase on January 1, 1997.

Pro rata family medical coverage for part-time employees was one of the significant victories for these workers, who before had none. The issue of excessive overtime worked by employees who are exempt from time and a half will be addressed by a joint Employee Relations Committee.

Also, the standard for granting a flexible schedule was improved and the new agreement requires the city to respond to written requests for a flex schedule within 30 days.

New reclassification language streamlines the reclassification process and provides for retroactive pay when a reclass is approved.

Bargaining team members are **Paula Guthrie, Cheryl Williams, Lydia Neill, Mike Koivula, Kim Krebs, Barbara Thompson,** and Organizer **Tony Corcoran.**

Oywhew enters mediation, plan sticker days

Members will be wearing stickers saying "Fair contract" and "No takebacks" in support of their bargaining team who will be taking a number of difficult issues to mediation beginning June 8.

Bargaining team members are **Rick Uhlman, Minard Harte, Wayne Lattin, Wilfred Acree,** and Organizer **Alison Hamway.**

Deschutes DAs win ULP award

The Union won an unfair labor practice award handed down by the Employment Relations Board that the employer had unlawfully unilaterally changed working hours. Mediation starts June 16.

Bargaining team members are **Sterling Williver, Melissa Lande,** and Organizer **Alison Hamway.**