

Local Motion

Baker County Local 596 settled a new two-year contract with a 4% wage increase in the first year and a 4% wage increase in the second year. The new contract has fully-paid medical for the duration of contract and longevity compensation is added.

The longevity bonus consists of \$100 for workers with 10 to 14 years of service; \$200 for 15 to 19 years; \$300 for 20 to 24 years, and \$400 for 25 or more years of service.

The contract includes an additional 2.5 days of vacation accrual after 25 years; new language in layoff article; new language regarding the removal of personnel records, and new employee orientation language.

There also is an increase in clothing allowance from \$120 to \$400 each fiscal year and more workers will get this allowance.

The City of The Dalles Local 910 settled a new contract with a 2% wage increase on July 1 of this year; a 2.25% increase on January 1, 2003; a 2% wage increase on July 1, 2003; a 2.25% increase on January 1, 2004; a 2% increase on July 1, 2004, and a 1.5% increase on January 1, 2005. That's a total of a 12% increase over the life of the contract.

Secretarial positions in both the municipal court and the public works department were changed to accounting clerk 2, which means the equivalent of an additional 12.5% over the cost-of-living increase all employees will receive.

Employee health insurance will be fully paid for the duration of the agreement.

The bargaining team also fought off takeaways on hours of work, the grievance procedure and sick leave. It won positive changes to bereavement leave to include stepchildren and stepparents. The local takes great pride in changing all references to "association" to "union" throughout the agreement.

CODA Local 963 won improvements in vacation language that allow for more accrual, a higher cap and improved usage language.

Wages were improved 2% each year of the contract, retroactive and paid as a flat dollar amount instead of a percentage. There were also increases to the employer's health insurance contribution. They won tighter reclassification language and new non-discrimination language and faster, simplified grievance language that allows us to strike quickly over a grievance.

Union Members "Dog" County Budget Hearings



At budget time, it seems that managers know the cost of everything and the value of nothing.

By the time the budget was set, Union members showed the value that they bring to the residents of county and kept their jobs. But, before the Union members took their action, the commissioners were ready to contract out of the custodians' jobs and the sheriff wanted to get rid of the animal control officers altogether.

Members and leaders of **MCEA Local 294** organized their workplaces, alerted the public, recruited groups into a coalition and "dogged" the county's budget hearings.

Regarding the animal control officers, Local leaders got officials from the Willamette Valley Humane Society to speak out on their behalf. The humane society was unprepared to pick up the work being done by the animal control officers. Just to bring the point home, members and supporters brought their dogs to rallies and received coverage in the county seat's newspaper, the Salem Statesman-Journal.

They "purpled-up" and attended and spoke at county budget hearings. They talked about efforts they had made over the years to control costs and improve services. They talked about how public safety would be

at risk, how they remove 150 dogs from the streets every month, dogs that otherwise would run wild through farms, highways, neighborhoods and school yards.

Regarding the custodians, county workers showed how contracted janitors would put confidentiality at risk in the sheriffs department, in the narcotics detail, in the health department, in juvenile and in the district attorney's office. Loss due to theft would become a problem throughout county offices. They gave examples of failed attempts to contract out custodial services in the City of Salem, Linn County and Western Oregon University.

The custodians are trusted Marion County employees, they said.



Evie Pech, MCEA Local President speaks to a reporter at a rally supporting county animal control workers.

Solidarity Brought Improved Contracts at COG

An extended round of negotiations at Cascades West Council of Governments, headquartered in Albany, produced not only a good contract, but a stronger, more organized **Cascades West Local 937**.

Members' bargaining goals included improvements in wages, time off, health insurance, working conditions, representation and employer policy issues. The local scored in every area.

In the area of health insurance, for example, the new contract creates a "consensus-based" insurance committee, to replace one that was employer-selected, employer-driven and operating off the employer's agenda. Now there is equal decision-making.

Workplace solidarity is always the strongest force at the bargaining table. Workers turned out for bargaining sessions, usually held in Albany. We signed petitions to the boss, we marched on the boss and we supported an unfair labor practice charge about the treatment of our bargaining team. We rallied and spoke out during the "public comment" period on the COG's board meeting agenda. In this way, we were able to reach the public and client groups about our concerns.

Still, it took the filing of an unfair labor practice complaint to make sure that our members' rights were respected. The job future of each of the six bargaining team members had been threatened by managers. For example, in an April letter resolving a portion of the ULP for one of the bargaining team members, the COG executive director wrote, "this Agency respects the rights of its employees to participate in negotiation as a member of the bargaining team" and "this Agency would not allow a supervisor or manager to use an employee's participation in such activities as a basis for making an employment decision." The memo went on to say that this worker's manager will no longer participate on any committee involved with the evaluation or selection of bargaining unit employees for promotion.

Because of the leadership of the local officers and bargaining team members and the solidarity of the local members, a contract was negotiated. Among its key provisions are:

- ◆ **WAGES** ~ Pay scales will be increased 5.3%, retroactive to October 2001. On October 1, 2003, wages will be adjusted based on a total compensation formula that will be negotiated this year (2002).
- ◆ **HOLIDAYS** ~ The Friday following Thanksgiving and a half day on the last working day prior to the December 25 holiday have been added.
- ◆ **WORKING CONDITIONS** ~ Improved language regarding notification of training opportunities and requiring a written explanation if a training request is denied; transfer and promotion language that is more specific; layoff and recall language that specifies no discredit on a worker for layoff, and expands notice time frames and sets specific bumping criteria.
- ◆ **REPRESENTATION** ~ There are improvements to grievance procedure language that adds mediation, clears up release time for stewards, and provides time for the Union to make a presentation to new employees.
- ◆ **EMPLOYER POLICY ISSUES** ~ In several cases, the settlement moved employer policies into the contract regarding outside work, limited duration employment and paid administrative leave and provision for a consensus-based insurance committee.

Kudos are due to the bargaining team from each of the locals whose contract settlements are described on this page. Their long hours, hard work and judgement improved our wages, hours and working conditions.