



SEANC members got a first hand look at how SEIU 503 operates during a visit to Oregon this winter.

North Carolina Employees Set SEIU Affiliation Vote

When members of the State Employees Association of North Carolina began discussing the possibility of affiliating with SEIU, they decided their ideal role model mentor would be Local 503.

A contingent of SEANC members and officers visited Oregon in the spring of 2007. Two 503 delegates spent time in North Carolina later that year and another group of SEANC folks visited Oregon this winter to see and hear firsthand how one of the nation's premier statewide public employee locals operates. They met with local union members, visited worksites and attended a CAPE session for aspiring legislative candidates.

SEANC past president and executive committee officer Cliff Brown expressed appreciation for the information and guidance from SEIU 503 members and noted that affiliation will be another step on the road to worker rights in a state with an entrenched anti-labor bias.

"We learned a great deal about collective bargaining from 503 in Oregon," Brown said. "We're even using your state worker contract as a template for our own goals. Now, we just have to overturn the

legislative ban on collective bargaining in North Carolina!"

The North Carolinians were obviously impressed. The SEANC Board of Directors scheduled a convention in early May to ratify a proposal to affiliate with SEIU, adding about 55,000 new members to the International Union.

Quick Work Earns Results!

Talk about getting off to a good start!

Soon after Scott Baker was elected steward at the Division of Human Services in March, he overheard some workers say they had been notified they owed the state significant amounts of money because of inadvertent overpayments related to reclassifications.

Baker decided to investigate. Working with another relatively new steward, Tonjia Doeden, as well as SEIU 503 internal organizer DJ King, Baker ascertained that eight members had been told to cough up a total of nearly \$6,000. It just did not seem right — and it wasn't. Following a session with union representatives, DHS officials agreed to reduce amounts owed by two of

those affected by more than 80 percent and decided that three others who had been dunned by the state were actually owed money! One worker, told she would have to pay \$435, will receive \$1099.40 instead!

"Not only is this a great win as this money would have been collected from these members without Scott's keen eye and quick work," King said, "we were able to work with HR so that the system can be changed to avoid future problems."

Baker often double-checked contract language and had become something of a go-to guy for fellow members on labor-management issues even before he ran. "They already thought I was a steward," says Baker, who works in the IT department at DHS, "so I thought I ought to run. Somebody has to do it!"

New Local Officer Training in June

Hundreds of newly elected sub-local officers will have the chance to receive two days of training in June at either of two locations.

The training is designed to give new officers a clear understanding of their role, provide them with the skills and information to succeed and to meet other officers throughout the state. Sessions have been scheduled at the SEIU 503 field office in Portland June 21-22 and the Red Lion hotel in Bend June 28-29.

Topics include sessions on how the union is structured and administered and the role local officers can play in implementing the newly adopted strategic plan as it relates to such issues as member communication, effective leadership, strength in the workplace and political power.

New officers should register for either of the weekend sessions by June 6. Contact Christy Walker at 503-408-4090 or 800-527-9374, ext. 469 in Portland. Overnight lodging is available for those who are a distance from either site.

When it Comes to Contracts, First Time Can Be Hardest

First contracts rarely come easily, as two SEIU bargaining committees are discovering this spring.

Adult Foster Care Providers throughout the state are bargaining with State DHS representatives and workers at the Rosemont School in Portland, the largest secure residential treatment center for troubled teen girls in the Pacific Northwest, are negotiating with representatives of Morrison Child and Family Services — each group moving toward that always-challenging initial agreement.

But both teams are benefiting from some pioneering SEIU 503 members who have come before them—homecare and childcare worker who have contracts with DHS and members at Parry Center, who went through a historic two-month

strike in 2004-05 for gains that established standard improvements that were a starting point at Rosemont.

Then there are the 51 workers at Avamere King City, a nursing home outside of

Portland, who joined SEIU 503 by signing cards earlier this year — and reached accord on a contract that brought them many gains in just two days. Theirs is the 23rd nursing home organized by the union—up from only one five years ago!



Adult Foster Care bargaining committee prepares to face State DHS negotiators at SEIU 503 headquarters in Salem.