

"Dream Big, Build Power" Theme of 2008 General Council in August

2008 General Council will convene at Lane Community College in Eugene, August 20-23. The theme of the local's biennial convention, chosen by a member planning committee, is "Dream Big, Build Power."

General Council is the supreme governing body of SEIU Local 503, OPEU. It is composed of current and newly elected members of the Board of Directors and Assistant Directors, active past presidents and a total of 282 delegates elected by sub-locals.

General Council has three major roles:

- taking a closer look at the goals and objectives of the union to gauge progress made toward accomplishing prior goals and objectives and charting a united course of action for the future;
- acting as the union's legislative body, considering new or revised policies

proposed by the membership through a resolution process and

- providing a forum for statewide officer candidates to campaign in the fall election.



While voting delegates are elected, there are many volunteer opportunities that allow the members to participate in General Council in such roles as pages and sergeants-at-arms.

"Volunteers serve a really critical role in helping us get our work done at General Council," said Lea Spencer, who serves on the member planning committee, "and they get a chance to see union democracy in action first hand. I'd really encourage members to volunteer. It's a very worthwhile experience."

Members interested in volunteering should contact the General Council staff coordinator, Maureen Crawford, on extension 123 at union headquarters in Salem (503-581-1505 or 800-452-2146) or email her at crawfordm@opeuseiu.org.

A complete guide to General Council is online at www.seiu503.org

Union Member Rights Under the LMRDA

The Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) guarantees certain rights to union members and imposes certain responsibilities on union officers. The Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS) enforces many LMRDA provisions while other provisions, such as the bill of rights, may only be enforced by union members through private suit in federal court.

Bill of Rights - Union members have:

- ~equal rights to participate in union activities
- ~freedom of speech and assembly
- ~voice in setting rates of dues, fees, and assessments
- ~protection of the right to sue
- ~safeguards against improper discipline

Copies of Collective Bargaining Agreements - Union members and nonunion employees have the right to receive or inspect copies of collective bargaining agreements.

Reports - Unions are required to file an initial information report (Form LM-1), copies of constitutions and bylaws, and an annual financial report (Form LM-2/3/4) with OLMS. Unions must make the reports available to members and permit members to examine supporting records for just cause. The reports are public information and copies are available from the OLMS Internet Public Disclosure Room at www.union-reports.dol.gov.

Officer Elections - Union members have the right to:

- ~nominate candidates for office
- ~run for office
- ~cast a secret ballot
- ~protest the conduct of an election

Officer Removal - Local union members have the right to an adequate procedure for the removal of an elected officer guilty of serious misconduct. Trusteeships - Unions may only be placed in trusteeship by a parent body for the reasons specified in the LMRDA.

Prohibition Against Certain Discipline - A union or any of its officials may not fine, expel, or otherwise discipline a member for exercising any LMRDA right.

Prohibition Against Violence - No one may use or threaten to use force or violence to interfere with a union member in the exercise of LMRDA rights.

Union Officer Responsibilities

Financial Safeguards - Union officers have a duty to manage the funds and property of the union solely for the benefit of the union and its members in accordance with the union's constitution and bylaws. Union officers or employees who embezzle or steal union funds or other assets commit a Federal crime punishable by a fine and/or imprisonment.

Bonding - Union officers or employees who handle union funds or property must be bonded to provide protection against losses if their union has property and annual financial receipts which exceed \$5,000.

Labor Organization Reports - Union officers must:

- ~file an initial information report (Form LM-1) and annual financial reports (Forms LM-2/3/4) with OLMS.
- ~retain the records necessary to verify the reports for at least five years.

Officer Reports - Union officers and employees must file reports concerning any loans and benefits received from, or certain financial interests in, employers whose employees their unions represent and businesses that deal with their unions.

Officer Elections - Unions must:

- ~hold elections of officers of local unions by secret ballot at least every three years
- ~conduct regular elections in accordance with their constitution and bylaws and preserve all records for one year
- ~mail a notice of election to every member at least 15 days prior to the election
- ~comply with a candidate's request to distribute campaign material
- ~not use union funds or resources to promote any candidate (nor may employer funds or resources be used)
- ~permit candidates to have election observers
- ~allow candidates to inspect the union's membership list once within 30 days prior to the election

Restrictions on Holding Office - A person convicted of certain crimes may not serve as a union officer, employee, or other representative of a union for up to 13 years.

Loans - A union may not have outstanding loans to any one officer or employee that in total exceed \$2,000 at any time.

Fines - A union may not pay the fine of any officer or employee convicted of any willful violation of the LMRDA.

State Health Fund Board Seeks Input

The Oregon Health Fund Board is holding public hearings from 7-9 p.m. at sites around the state seeking input as it formulates recommendations to the Legislature as part of a plan to provide access to guaranteed and affordable health care for all Oregonians. Call 503-373-1538 or go to www.oregon.gov/OHPPR/HFB/ for more information.

These are the remaining dates and locations:

Astoria - Thurs., May 8, Grace Episcopal Church, 1545 Franklin Ave.

Klamath Falls - Wed., May 14, Klamath Community College, 7390 S. 6th St.

Medford - Thurs., May 15, Jackson County Library, 205 S. Central Ave.

Washington County - Tues., May 20, Sunset Presbyterian Church, 14986 NW Cornell Rd.

La Grande - Wed., May 28 - First Presbyterian Church, 1308 Washington Ave.

Ontario - Thurs., May 29 - First Church of the Nazarene, 1131 Alameda Dr.

Coos Bay - Tues., June 3 - Southwestern Oregon C.C., 1988 Newmark Ave.

Eugene - Wed., June 4 - Lane C.C., 4000 East 30th Ave., Bldg. 19

Bend - Thurs. June 5 - Bend Armory, 75 SW Simpson Ave.

Portland - Tues., June 10, Ainsworth United Church of Christ, 2941 NE Ainsworth St.

Salem - Wed., June 11, First Congregational United Church of Christ, 700 Marion St. NE

**OREGON NEEDS
ELECTED OFFICIALS
WHO FIGHT FOR
WORKING FAMILIES!**

**Ben Westlund
for State Treasurer**



As a State Senator, Ben Westlund was a champion for affordable health care and led the fight to protect home buyers from predatory mortgage lenders.

As State Treasurer, Ben Westlund will make sure our tax and pension dollars are invested wisely.

**John Kroger
for Attorney General**

John Kroger is an experienced prosecutor who will stand up for working families.

As a US Attorney, he prosecuted Enron. As Oregon's attorney, John Kroger will:

Hold polluters accountable when they break our environmental laws.

Tackle Oregon's meth crisis with tougher enforcement and a plan for drug treatment.

Stand up to corporations who rip-off consumers and price-gouge patients.

**Kate Brown
for Secretary of State**

Kate Brown has dedicated her career to standing up for working families and passing laws that meant real change for real people.

As Secretary of State, Kate Brown will be a tough watchdog of the initiative process, and will work with front-line employees to focus the offices' audit powers to improve the quality of state services.

