

Talking UNION

CWA public, healthcare & education workers

Fall 2009

Thousands join UPTE picket lines, shut down UC campuses

On September 24, striking technical and research workers at the University of California (UC) systemwide received support from thousands of faculty, students and other staff who walked out of classes and work to join them in a day of action to save public education. It was the first time in decades that faculty, students and staff coordinated joint actions at UC.

The historic actions began at dawn on most campuses, with spirited picket lines widely honored by all sectors of the UC community, as well as contractors such as

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Battle in New York for Collective Bargaining Rights

CWA Local 1168 in Buffalo, New York, has represented RNs at St. Joseph Hospital in Cheektowaga, New York, since nurses organized there in 1992.

Over the years, Local 1168 has bargained six contracts and is currently negotiating a seventh with the employer. In the recent past (in 2006) the union and employer formed an alliance to protect the patients, employees and

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TSEU Wins Seat on Investment Board

On July 11, 2009, Yoli Griego was reelected to the Texas Employees Retirement System (ERS) Board, becoming one of six board members who control one of the largest retirement systems' investments in the country. This will be her second six-year term, and the fourth time a TSEU/CWA member has served on this board that makes decisions about state employee retirement plans. Griego is the Board's first minority member.

State employees vote to fill three Board positions and state appointments fill the other three. Griego received 16,382 votes to her opponent's 15,525 and won the majority of retiree votes in this election. The victory among retirees came because TSEU first proposed, then won legislation allowing retirees to vote. TSEU built the Retirees Organizing Committee as an active component, and now there more than 464 retiree activists throughout the state who have brought their wisdom and vitality to the union.

Twenty years ago TSEU made a strategic decision to run candidates for the ERS Board, focusing on two important goals. First was to empower state employees to have

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Unite and Mobilize to Win

Brooks Sunkett, VP, Public, Healthcare & Education Workers Department



Attacks on education, health and public workers are more intense now than any time in our lives, with pensions, healthcare, wages, and our very jobs on the line. Our entire union and all of our collective skills are critical to defend our standard of living. We need to bring young, talented leaders into our ranks and retain the experienced veterans who have been building CWA for the past 30 years. Years of tax cuts and the economic crisis have forced CWA Public, Healthcare, and Education Workers to fight like never before—we must build our organizational and political base as we expand our union.

The public sector is viewed as an opportunity for private companies to make profits while cutting services. Our pension funds are one of the largest pools of capital in the country and financial manipulators see it as a source for new, speculative ventures and bonuses. Our healthcare is being cut by increased co-payments, limits on coverage, and denials for essential medical needs.

Some co-workers think the best solution is to hang on until “I can retire,” and look for political deals to escape this crisis. A better option is to strengthen our union with a high level of involvement and organization of our members, build strong alliances with our clients and the citizens we serve, and create understanding in our union that we will win by fighting. The determination to win is what drove our organizing campaign 30 years ago.

As a New Jersey state worker at that time, I joined my co-workers in building this organization. I participated, helped, and supported the development of one of the country’s strongest public workers unions. Our New Jersey State Workers, along with the city, county healthcare and education workers throughout the state, suffered a major defeat with the election loss of John Corzine, who stood with us many times and wavered some. His defeat is a loss, no matter how we analyze the election.

Now is the time for New Jersey state workers to find ways to

defend the gains we have made. We should look to ourselves for lessons. CWA has supported creative organizing in the South and Southwest where members have faced hostile, budget cutting Governors and legislatures. The pension board victory in Texas (*article in this issue*) shows that we have to work not only on formal political races, but we must have our members on every retirement board and in city, county and state elected and appointed regulatory and administrative bodies.

In our collective bargaining states, we have to win hundreds of small victories before legislative committees and regulatory bodies by linking each decision they make, to the cuts in wages and benefits that results. We have to delay and defeat every push to privatize the services we provide, even though privatization is sweeping states in the Northeast, Midwest, and West.

By never accepting defeat, we will build our forces as we move forward. We won victories in Mississippi and Texas by overturning decisions to privatize public services that were passed by legislatures, signed by governors, and implemented by agencies. By refusing to accept defeat, our CWA locals won restored wages, pensions, and health care for thousands of public employees.

I learned much from my involvement with the New Jersey State Workers. I learned more as Vice President of the Public Workers, helping our non collective bargaining locals win fights in extremely hostile environments. Potentially, we have a very important ally with President Obama in the White House, as he can play a critical role at important crossroads. While we can get help from those in Washington and others, the road to victory lies in our own organization’s determination and strength. Let’s unite to push back the attacks we face as healthcare workers, education workers, and public workers across the United States. No one is going to win our fight for us—we must depend on ourselves to win our battles. ●

Talking UNION

Brooks Sunkett
Vice President

Chris Kennedy
Assistant to the Vice President

Danny Fetonte
Editor

Torree Wade
Administrative Secretary

501 Third Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-434-1255
www.cwapublicandhealthcare.org



TSEU’s Griego Elected to Board

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a real say about protecting and improving their pensions and health care. The second was to build unity with woman, African Americans, and Mexican Americans who had been routinely excluded from the Board. Social justice concerns gave enthusiasm and energy to the fight around economic issues and because of this, hundreds were inspired to campaign on behalf of TSEU candidates for the retirement board, strengthening the union.

TSEU/CWA’s first representative on the board, Janice Zittleman, cast the deciding vote to stop investment in the Texas Growth Fund, an investment

plan dominated by realtors who wanted to rid themselves of risky real estate property. Political appointees to the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) board forced investment in the Fund and subsequently lost billions of dollars. Zittleman also won a ban on gifts from investment companies to board members, and expanded health care for state workers.

TSEU has been fighting for elected seats to the other major retirement board, the TRS, that makes decisions on university workers’ pensions. As a result of TSEU’s work, the union now has one member seated on the TRS board. ●

Historic actions at UC campuses

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building trades workers and bus drivers. Coordinated actions like rallies and teach-ins continued all day at the ten campuses.

The 9,000 technical and research workers, represented by University Professional and Technical Employees (UPTE-CWA Local 9119), held a one-day unfair labor practice strike to protest how UC president Mark Yudof and the regents have mishandled reductions in state funding. Faculty and students called their own walkouts and coordinated the date with the union.

The University of California Students Association, the representative body of UC's 220,000 undergraduates, as well as organizations of graduate students, endorsed the strike/walkout. The Coalition of University Employees, representing clerical workers at UC, declared its members would refuse to cross UPTE-CWA's picket lines, as did members of several other UC unions.

"Our unfair labor practice strike is aimed at Yudof's illegal, unilateral cuts to the university's core research and educational functions. He is legally obligated to bargain with us, but refuses to discuss his plans in good faith at the table," said Jelger Kalmijn, UPTE-CWA's systemwide president and a staff research associate at UC San Diego. Yudof has advocated student fee increases, and cuts to education, research and essential public services,

all the while granting UC's executives generous stipends and perks.

Yudof's actions have provoked widespread outrage among staff, faculty and students. "Our decades of hard work have helped make UC the jewel of California's higher education," said Lisa Kermish, an administrative analyst at UC Berkeley and vice president of UPTE-CWA. "We won't stand by and watch it be destroyed. This institution belongs to the people of California, not to a small group of unaccountable executives who think they can do what they like, ignoring public input and budget transparency."

Executives Still Raking It In

Meanwhile, more UC executives were given higher salaries at the September regents' meeting after discussion in closed session, the minutes of which were posted a few days before the strike. Some received increases of up to 30%, to salaries in the \$200,000 to \$400,000 range.

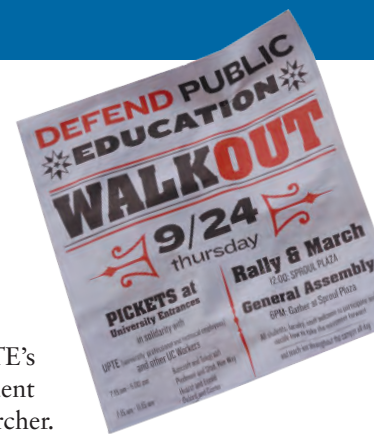
"For Yudof and the regents to do

this yet again is mind-boggling," said Carolan

Buckmaster, UPTE's San Diego president and a staff researcher. "With one hand, they furlough frontline employees who provide essential services, and with the other, they grant UC's top officials lavish pay raises. It's unconscionable."

In late July, a similar series of pay increases was widely criticized. Shortly afterwards, the state legislature passed Senate Bill 86 prohibiting UC executive pay raises during bad budget years. That bill, which UC officials lobbied heavily against, is currently on the governor's desk awaiting his signature or veto.

UC officials claim executives must be compensated for "the assumption of additional duties." "Nearly all UC employees are taking on additional duties without extra compensation during this time of cutbacks and layoffs of colleagues," notes Lynn Kessler, PhD, a UCLA researcher and UPTE activist. "We do it because we are committed to providing quality education and research to the people of California, not to make a personal profit." ●



IN MEMORIAM

Debra A. Noble

March 22, 1958-April 23, 2009



In 1978, Debra began working for Bell South and joined CWA. Within months, she became a steward. Two years later she was elected Secretary-Treasurer of Local 3511.

Active in community and political activities, Debra often served as a poll worker for elections and conducted voter registration drives. She was a member of the NAACP, the Mississippi State AFL-CIO Executive Board, Vice President of the Jackson Mississippi Central Labor Council, the SCLC and the A. Philip Randolph Institute. She was also a Legislative Chair of CWA Local 3511 and a Special Assignment Organizer for CWA District 3.

Among her many achievements, she was the recipient of the CWA Norma Powell Award, served two years as a Teaching Fellow for the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute, was Zone Coordinator for the Mississippi Labor 2007 Political Mobilization Plan, and the recipient of the 2008 Mississippi AFL-CIO Organizing Award.

A key organizer for Mississippi public workers, Debra organized state workers and city workers in Jackson. Debra was a wonderful person and a great organizer—she will be missed.

Standing Up for Bargaining Rights —continued from page 1

the community from the disastrous findings of the Commission on Health Care Facilities in the 21st Century (aka, Berger Commission). The Commission's recommendations were to close St.



Joseph Hospital, as well as other facilities in the area.

Throughout 2006 and 2007, the union and the employer initiated campaigns—"Walk to Rescue NY Hospitals" and "We Believe"—in which both participated wholeheartedly. The activities included standing together at candlelight vigils in an effort to save the hospital, attending public and not-so-public hearings, and lobbying the state and federal legislatures simultaneously.

Imagine union members' surprise when this same employer, Catholic Health, went to great lengths to prevent the service employees at the hospital

from organizing in 2008 and 2009. An 18-month battle ensued at St Joseph Hospital—now known as Sisters of Charity Hospital, St Joseph Campus—part of Catholic Health, employer of more than 8,200 workers and part of the only non-union hospital employer in Buffalo—Sisters of Charity.

The Battle

Because of CWA's long-standing presence at St Joe's, service employees approached representatives and asked for information on how to organize and join the union. The employees formed an organizing committee, assisted in distributing assignments, and the momentum grew. The employer noticed the building of solidarity and waged an anti-union campaign.

The employer quickly turned to union busting activities. Managers subjected employees to one-on-one meetings, questioning them about union activity. And, the employer distributed anti-union literature, filled with myths and misleading information. However, the efforts of Catholic Health could not break the solidarity forming on the St. Joseph campus.

The Yea's have it!

On April 22, 2009, the service employees of St Joseph Hospital won



a victory and took the first step in obtaining a contract—they won the right to collective bargaining following a NLRB vote. The 1168 Executive Board, St Joe's RN Bargaining Unit, the WNY CWA District 1 Office, as well as other area CWA Locals brought in reinforcements for the win.

As a first step, workers elected a bargaining committee as their voice. Three representatives will be at the table with seasoned negotiators Sharon Schultz, Vice President CWA Local 1168 and Debora Hayes, Staff Representative CWA District 1. Both Sharon and Debora served on the organizing committee in 1980 while organizing the RNs at then Buffalo General Hospital.

John Klein, CWA Local 1168 president, reflected on the current situation. "Based on the anti-union stance of the new administration at the St. Joseph Campus, we are very cautious as to how negotiations will play out. We have concerns that the employer will impede negotiations for a year then attempt to decertify the union. Once again; we need passage of the Employee Free Choice Act." The bargaining committee is currently caucusing and preparing for bargaining sessions. The service employees of St. Joe's want a union and deserve a fair contract. ●

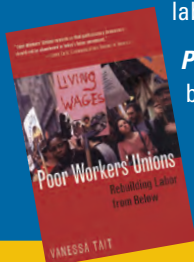
Recommended Labor Reading

From the Telegraph to the Internet by Morty Bahr. The development of the information age through the eyes and story of Morty Bahr, CWA president from 1986-2005.

Solidarity Divided: The Crisis in Organized Labor and a New Path in Social Justice by Bill Fletcher and Fernando Gapasin. A critical examination of labor's current situation and a plan for a bold new way forward into the 21st century. Published by University of California Press.

State of the Union: A Century of American Labor by Nelson Lichtenstein. A compelling matrix of ideas, stories, strikes, laws, and people in a streamlined narrative of work and labor in the 20th century. Published by Princeton University Press.

Poor Workers' Unions: Rebuilding the Labor Movement from Below by Vanessa Tait. Presents the community/labor partnerships, workers' centers, and independent caucuses that are revitalizing labor for the 21st century. Published by South End Press.



CWA Activist for Mayor of Santa Fe

David Coss, a CWA activist and current Mayor of Santa Fe, is running for re-election. He says, "A city that works for all can only be realized by a community that works together—un lugar para todos." Check out Coss' website, www.reelectmayorcoss.com, and get involved.

Organizing the South

In his talk at the PHEW conference, labor activist and author Bill Fletcher described the importance of organizing the South. He noted there are only a few unions with long-term commitments in the region, mentioning some of the work of the United Food and Commercial Workers. But, as far as crucial and creative organizing, no other union has come close to CWA and no other has provided as high a level of support, he said.

Fletcher complimented CWA for its long-term and critical campaigns in Tennessee, Mississippi and Texas. The union has supported organizing in Texas for 30 years, Mississippi for 20 and Tennessee for eight. Each of these campaigns began without collective bargaining and without payroll deduction and were built with the steadfast support of President Cohen and Vice President Sunkett.

In President Cohen's speech to the conference, he stated that CWA will stand with workers who stand up for themselves, no matter how long it takes to win. This commitment has been proven over time and comes from a clear understanding that workers' rights cannot exist when isolated in one part of the country.



CWA Everyday Hero: Norm Howard, CWA Local 6012

Norm Howard didn't hesitate for a moment when he saw smoke about 50 feet away from his city water department truck in a Stillwater, Okla., neighborhood. He backed up, spotted flames coming from a single-story home, called in the fire and ran toward it.

"I walked around the house trying to see anybody, hear anybody," said Howard, who recently helped organize his water utility department in Stillwater with support from CWA Local 6012. "I was calling out and beating on doors and windows, then I heard the victim."

A 55-year old man was near the back door, overcome by the thick, dark smoke. Howard broke open the door and found the man burned on his face and arms, gasping for air. He tried to lift him to safety outside, but the victim was too badly injured for Howard to move him without help.

Howard got him as close to the door and fresh air as he could, then got a hand from his co-worker, Steve Cunningham, also a new member of Local 6012.

Cunningham had been working on water meters on a street nearby and heard the fire call. "Steve was there within a couple of minutes," Howard said. "It seemed like a real long time, but I know it really wasn't."

Firefighters arrived just a couple of minutes later, finding the two utility workers with the burn victim in the yard. They checked Howard and Cunningham for smoke inhalation, but both were fine. Unfortunately, the man died of burn injuries three days later.

Howard is part of the bargaining committee negotiating a first contract for 250 newly organized city workers, including 25 water utility workers.

"None of us who know Norm were surprised by his courageous, selfless response to the situation he found himself in," said CWA District 6 Staff Representative Judy Graves. "He is a leader in the truest sense of the word—in his workplace and his community."

OKLAHOMA

"OK, Left Behind In 2009!"

CWA/OSWU members are developing a three-year plan to move state workers out of poverty to prosperity. Members in state agencies have met with legislators during this and previous legislative sessions and have been told "we wish we could," "we support you," and "if only the money were there." All state workers have been experiencing "Economic Crisis" or "Recession" during multiple years without pay increases and rising health care costs. Regardless of Oklahoma's ability to pay, state worker salaries continue to be inadequate to support our families.

Building CWA/OSWU'S Plan of Action

A leadership group of CWA/OSWU members from across the state and across agency lines is reviewing how this happened—\$720 million in tax cuts, or the \$100 million "gift" the state gave to companies like Chesapeake, thanking them for political contributions. These actions leave the dedicated, underpaid and overworked state worker out in the "rain," not shielded from washout by the full-to-capacity "Rainy Day Fund."

CWA members know that no one can or will build a boat to weather the storm; state workers must do this themselves, together.

OSWU Action Plan

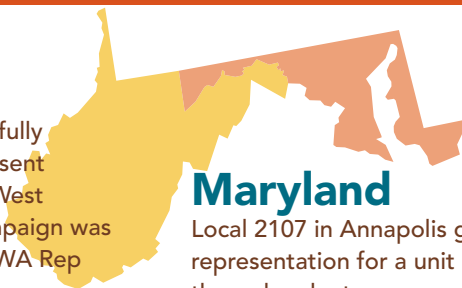
- 1 **JOIN CWA/OSWU**—the only union for workers that introduces legislation that active employees request and does not simply support positions of legislators, the Governor, or OPM!
- 2 **ASK FIVE OF YOUR CO-WORKERS TO JOIN** so that all can share in prosperity instead of financial despair.
- 3 **JOIN CWA'S COPE PROGRAM** to build dollar power to elect legislators who support state workers.
- 4 **BECOME ACTIVE IN WORK-PLACE EVENTS**, and serve on the Organizing Committee.
- 5 **COMMIT TO ATTEND CWA** monthly meetings.
- 6 **BE A PART OF THE SOLUTION** not a spectator. Change occurs when people make it happen.

CWA/OSWU at 1-800-292-6798. ●

Organizing Shorts

West Virginia

CWA Local 2001 has successfully completed an effort to represent enforcement officers at the West Virginia ABC board. This campaign was led by Local 2001 and WV CWA Rep Elaine Harris. Unit size 30.



Maryland

Local 2107 in Annapolis gained representation for a unit of three through voluntary recognition at Cox Photography. Local organizer Lynette Snell and president Denise Burns led the campaign.

Nevada

CWA Local 9413 reached a tentative first contract covering 540 workers at St. Mary's Regional Medical Center in Reno. The four-year agreement includes many improvements, including a first-ever wage scale and wage progression that provides for yearly pay. Over the term of the agreement, the average wage increase will be 18.1 percent.

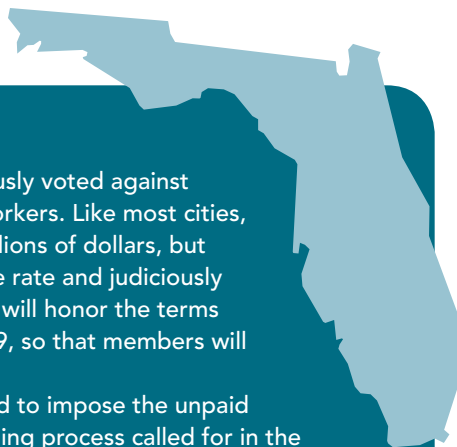
One of members' biggest bargaining achievements was winning sick leave—workers had been required to use their vacation time for any illness or medical condition. Other gains included job security provisions, a grievance process, seniority and retiree health care.

The agreement covers certified nursing assistants, emergency medical technicians, transport workers, kitchen and laundry workers, phlebotomists, and others.

New Mexico

A card check agreement with the State of New Mexico resulted in a win at New Mexico's Sequoia Adolescent Treatment Center. The unit is made up of 101 workers employed by the state. The facility operates 24/7 and the majority of workers are psych techs, nurses, therapists, and teachers' aides. The internal organizing committee of seven people, led by Tim Baca, signed up their coworkers by pointing out that having a voice in the workplace was important for patient and worker safety.

Local 7076 President Robin Gould and local organizer Mark Esrig reported on the win.



Florida

The Largo, Florida, City Commission unanimously voted against imposing nine unpaid furlough days on city workers. Like most cities, Largo is experiencing revenue shortfalls of millions of dollars, but unlike most cities Largo has raised the mileage rate and judiciously used reserves to balance the budget. The city will honor the terms of the third year of its contract with Local 3179, so that members will receive a scheduled 4% wage increase.

Previously, the same City Commission voted to impose the unpaid furlough days even though the impact bargaining process called for in the contract and by state statute was ongoing. Commissioner Robert Murray was the first to change the tide, saying he had issues with not honoring contracts and with risking public safety. "But in looking at it [the furlough proposal], we are pitting one department against the other," said Murray, who added that it was important to keep morale up.

Local 3179's win bucks the national trend where hundreds of state and local governments are taking back wages and benefits. The hard work by members under the leadership of Vice President Dawn Smolowitz made the victory possible.

New Jersey

Local 1031 won certification through NJ PERC to represent 15 professionals and non-professionals at the Glen Rock Library. René Garzón and Phyllis Haefner worked on this campaign.



Local 1032 was certified by the NJ PERC to represent 29 dispatchers and fare collectors employed by NJ Transit. This was done through majority sign up. Organizer Mikki Santiago worked on this campaign.

In January, NJ PERC certified Local 1039 as the bargaining representative for 12 adult education, night school teachers employed by Rankokas Valley Schools. Recognition came through majority sign-up. 1039 Staff Rep Lionel Leach worked on the campaign, with assistance from Manager/Staff Rep Cheryl Palermo and Rep Serena Teel.

State workers in New Jersey overwhelmingly ratified an agreement that provides a no-layoff guarantee for 18 months and creates a seven-day paid leave bank to offset 10 furlough days. The agreement will help save as many as 7,000 jobs at risk because of the state's budget shortfall. The contract covers members of CWA Locals 1031, 1032, 1033, 1034, 1037, 1039 and 1040.

NYC, SF, LA & WDC

Through the card check process, Local 1180 won certification to represent 70 Amnesty International employees in New York City, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Washington, DC.

An anti-union campaign stopped CWA's previous attempt to organize Amnesty. This time, the new Director agreed to honor card check, and remained neutral. Amnesty International is one of the premier human rights groups in the country.

75-25 Organizer Erin Mahoney worked on this campaign, as did Amy Young in the CWA Legal Dept.



Taking Back Our Future

CWA's Public Healthcare and Education Workers (PHEW) held its conference, "Taking Back Our Future," from September 11-14 in San Diego, California.

CWA President Larry Cohen highlighted attacks on the public sector budgets. He pointed out that now, when the need is at an all time high for healthcare and public services, Governors and Mayors, state legislators and hospital administrators, city councils, and police chiefs are using the economic crisis to cut back on wages, benefits, and staffing.

President Cohen's speech set the stage for the speakers and workshops that followed, describing how the U.S. tax system puts the largest burden on those who have the least. Therefore, state governments are looking to raid public employee pension funds as a way to balance budgets. During this fiscal crisis, Administrators have refused to rethink the mantra of "cut taxes, cut services, and squeeze the life out of vital public services."

Many politicians coming of age during the Reagan years, have shied away from any tax increases. However,

closing corporate tax holes, raising taxes on the wealthiest Americans, and incurring some responsible debt, are all better solutions to this financial crisis than attacking public employees.

Politicians are being creative in redefining pay cuts by furloughing workers and raising premiums and co-pays on health care. Regina Markey, Jon Shure, and Tony Harrison conducted workshops that emphasized the depth of the problems we face. Then, Carrie Biggs-Adams, Beth Allen, Booker Lester, Sandy Rusher, and John Doran led workshops focusing on what to do during these difficult times.

Brooks Sunkett, PHEW Vice President, and Bill Fletcher, Director of Field Services from American Federation of Government Employees, articulated the key theme of many workshops, urging members, accompanied by allies, to stand up and resist the cuts. Vast segments of America have been under-served consistently, in social services, law enforcement protection, or available health care services. Our union must build alliances with these populations to win funding for adequate services.

Politicians make real choices about who to tax and who to serve, determining how money is spent in state budgets. When millions of dollars are needed to build new football stadiums or new jet fighters, or provide bonuses to Wall Street executives, there is no problem finding funding. After World War II, the wealthiest Americans paid taxes at a 90% rate. Even during the Reagan years, the wealthiest paid at a 50% rate. PHEW/CWA must demand funding for the vital services our members provide.

Real tax fairness and closed tax loopholes can properly fund the hospitals, social services, law enforcement, and higher education that America needs to develop a vibrant economy.

The conferees left San Diego with the knowledge and enthusiasm to return to their communities and build social justice unions that stand up to the budget-cutters and work with the Obama administration in trying to move America forward. We can win during these tough times by standing together and uniting with the citizens and clients we serve. ●



PHEARN/ President's Meeting

January 22-24, 2010
Austin, Texas

Clarion Inn
2200 S I H 35
Austin, TX 78704
(512) 444-4297
www.austexhotel.com

For additional information, call
Torree Wade at 202-434-1349.

AZCOPS, local groups save jobs in Oro Valley, Flagstaff

When word reached leaders of the Oro Valley Police Officers Association (OVPOA) that the town manager was considering cutting six patrol officer positions in order to save money, the association called AZCOPS, and the two groups went to work to save jobs.

First, they appealed to the manager and the Town Council, warning that cutting officers' jobs risked public safety. They suggested town leaders look for other ways to save money, but it wasn't until they took their message to the public that elected officials came around.

"We would have lost our officers if we hadn't done it," said Chris DeSoto. She knew to call on AZCOPS for help because she was raised in a family of police union activists. Today, she is OVPOA's Vice President.

AZCOPS President Larry A. Lopez, who also serves as President of the Tucson Police Officers Association, went to Oro Valley to speak to the Town Council. He reminded them and the public that six months earlier, the Town Manager had received a \$21,000 raise—pointing out that it wasn't right for the Manager to receive a huge raise while six officers' jobs were on the line. The public took notice.

"When we began educating people about these things, we saw a wave of support in our favor," DeSoto said. The union, which now represents 73 of the department's 94 sworn officers, bought time on local radio stations to rally the public behind their efforts to save jobs.

It worked. After two months of public education, the Council voted to preserve the officers' positions through fiscal 2010 choosing instead to cut back in other areas.

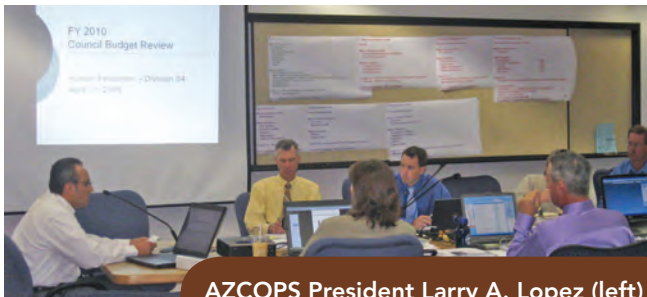
While DeSoto and other union leaders were extremely pleased, she remains on high alert anticipating the possibility that politicians could make

other decisions that would hurt officers. Some have discussed the possibility of cuts in pay—a proposal that would hurt police families.

"I think this struggle will be ongoing," she said. "We intend to keep the pressure on."

Flagstaff

North of Oro Valley in Flagstaff, Patrol Officer Daryl Thuline called on AZCOPS when leaders in his city started talking about cutting police jobs.



AZCOPS President Larry A. Lopez (left) speaks to the Flagstaff City Council about the dangers of laying off police officers. Lopez and Flagstaff Police Association President Daryl Thuline persuaded officials not to lay off officers.

Thuline, an Iraq War veteran whose father was a police union leader in Olympia, Washington, knew the only way to protect six patrol positions from budget cuts was to organize a union and bring it into AZCOPS. After being in the department only four years, he wanted to build a union for the purpose



AZCOPS President Larry A. Lopez urges Oro Valley Town Council members to reconsider their proposal to cut six patrol positions. AZCOPS and Oro Valley POA worked together to educate the community about the public safety risk of the Town's proposal.

of protecting jobs and helping improve officer pay and benefits.

Thuline said the Council and the Manager backed off the proposal to layoff officers when

AZCOPS' President Lopez traveled to Flagstaff to encourage city leaders to listen to its police.

"When the Manager (Kevin Burke) made reference to saving these jobs, he spoke about Larry Lopez' address to the Council," Thuline said. "We pushed them over the edge without having to run a big public campaign. Larry's work here made the difference."

Today, Thuline is President of the Flagstaff Police Officers Association, which has grown quickly to 46 members, representing almost half of the department.

Thuline researched other police unions before choosing to affiliate with AZCOPS. He was especially impressed with the union's responsiveness—AZCOPS Chief of Staff Tim Clark quickly responded to his inquiry. Within days of their phone conversation, Clark, Lopez and AZCOPS General Council Martin Bihn arrived in Flagstaff to meet with officers.

"We are very pleased with what AZCOPS has been able to do so far. Things are going well," Thuline said. ●

CWA Member Wins Reelection to Detroit City Council

Brenda Jones, a member of CWA Local 4004, was re-elected to the Detroit City Council. The former local union president has been a strong advocate for working families in the city since she was first elected to the post in 2005.

Union leaders and members from CWA Locals 4100 and 4004 provided strong support for her re-election bid, especially at rallies and in get-out-the-vote actions on Election Day. Jones also had strong backing from CWA's Minority Caucus, members of the United Auto Workers and AFSCME, and the Detroit AFL-CIO.