MO Activists Gear Up for Legislative Session

Workshop takes on “right-to-work”, voting rights, TPP, paycheck deception

Both seasoned and newer activists in Missouri are gearing up for the 2015 legislative session with a workshop on ballot, electoral, and legislative issues. The training is currently in the pilot phase and rollout begins in September.

Some Missouri politicians and outside groups (notably ALEC* and the National Right to Work Committee) are pushing a dangerous agenda in the Missouri legislature that would hurt workers, families, and the entire middle class. They’re trying to take back gains unions have won over decades and to prevent us from increasing our voice in the political process and improving our standard of living.

The full-day workshop takes on “right-to-work” legislation, voting rights, the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal, paycheck deception, and prevailing wage laws, and will equip members with information to lobby legislators and educate co-workers and family.

*See the article on page 2 for more about ALEC, the American Legislative Exchange Council.

North & South Texas Locals Vet Candidates

CWA Local 6215 hosted its first candidate forum of the season for candidates running for the Texas House of Representatives: Susan Motley (TX House District 105), Carol Donovan (District 107), and Milton Whitley (District 113). In attendance were political boot campers from Local 6215, Local 6186 (TSEU), and Local 6201.

In this election season, CWA locals across sectors are working with each other like never before. “Our goal in the 2014 election cycle is to coordinate election work between locals in deeper way. The plan is coordinate together to build CWA’s power in Texas and leverage our influence to push elected official to support all CWA sectors, whether it’s telecom, state employees, flight attendants, or manufacturing,” said District 6 VP Claude Cummings.

Boot campers made calls and brought other CWA members to the forum. They asked the candidates questions on pensions, minimum wage increase, bargaining, education, call centers, keeping jobs in the U.S., and other

continued on following page
issues affecting Texas workers. Over 40 CWA members and retirees attended.

**Local 6215 Executive VP Nancy Hall** moderated the forum. A special thank you to all our Texas Boot Campers and the locals who participated.

Six hundred miles south, **Local 6137** hosted a forum for all of labor in Corpus Christi to meet Mike Collier, candidate for Texas State Comptroller. Collier is a strong friend of labor, says **Kristie Veit, president of Local 6137**. “Collier said he wouldn’t run without labor on his side. He’s our watchdog. Our members appreciate his meeting with labor face-to-face.”

---

**“Austin for All”: Better Jobs, More Local Investment**

*by Jason Peavler, EVP CWA Local 6132*

This past spring, the Austin, TX, Central Labor Council (CLC) participated in the Community Labor Leadership Institute hosted by the national AFL-CIO in San Antonio. The gathering brought together CLC leaders, affiliate leaders, and community partners from Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, Austin, the Rio Grande Valley, and other cities to create a learning community and network across Texas.

Over the last couple of months, the Austin CLC has teamed up with community and environmental organizations such as Workers Defense Project, Public Citizen, Sierra Club, ADAPT, Texas Campaign for the Environment, Austin Immigrants’ Rights Coalition, and Grassroots Leadership in the Austin. Together, we formed the “Austin for All” coalition.

One of the primary goals is to combat the so-called “race to the bottom.” Too often, economic development incentives are created to benefit capital without creating equal benefits for workers, neighborhoods, and communities. We see this coalition as a tool to connect governmental decision-making with the values of workers.

Our first order of business was to brief candidates for the upcoming Austin City Council elections. Our purpose was to educate future Council members on all of our organizations and aid candidates in preparation for their responsibilities on the key issues facing the Austin community.

Our coalition doesn’t believe that “any job is a good job.” We want more investment of public resources in projects that create high-quality jobs that lift urban workers out of poverty and spread the benefits of redevelopment broadly throughout the community.

---

**Happy Labor Day!**

Send photos of your Labor Day parades, picnics, and other activities to D6newsletter@cwa-union.org. Please include the location and your Local number!

---

**2014 District 6 Arbitration Tracker**

61 cases approved for arbitration
41 cases settled by mutual agreement before arbitration hearing
20 cases went to arbitration
7 arbitrations won
“Reception Committee” Welcomes ALEC to Dallas

A “reception committee” of 500 labor and allied progressive Texans welcomed ALEC members to Dallas for their annual meeting. CWA Local 6215 said it was the “Largest, most passionate turnout to date! From community and religious organizations to political groups to labor unions - we should all be PROUD.”

What is ALEC?

“Through the corporate-funded American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), global corporations and state politicians vote behind closed doors to try to rewrite state laws that govern your rights. These so-called ‘model bills’ reach into almost every area of American life and often directly benefit huge corporations.” Learn more about the threats posed by ALEC at alexexposed.org.

AFA-CWA Fighting to Protect U.S. Union Jobs

AFA-CWA is making strides toward stopping Norwegian Air International (NAI) from severely undercutting our companies, threatening our jobs, and setting a harmful precedent that would undermine U.S. labor and safety rules.

Together with aviation workers from across the industry, we are demanding that the U.S. Department of Transportation stand up for our jobs by denying NAI’s application for a Foreign Air Carrier permit.

NAI is scheming to fly into the U.S., avoiding regulatory oversight and labor accountability. By gaming the system to take advantage of the lowest labor costs and to circumvent regulations, NAI would drive U.S. air carriers out of the competition and would profit at the expense of tens of thousands of U.S. airline jobs—and to our recovering economy as a whole.

Sign the petition to defend the U.S. aviation industry and our jobs, and spread the word on Twitter and Facebook.

**Action Item:** Tell the Obama Administration to defend U.S. airlines and U.S. airline workers by signing the petition at sos.alpa.org
It was in August of 1983 that CWA called a strike at AT&T nationwide and 675,000 Union Brothers and Sisters walked off the job in the battle for better wages, job security, pension plan changes and better health insurance. That was the last strike of the entire Bell System before the government ordered the break up of AT&T.

What strikes me about this is, first, that we had 675,000 Union members working in the Bell System at that time, and, second, that it appears that the battles we fought back then are still the battles we face today.

Many of us who worked for AT&T or a Bell System company remember 1983 as our last stand before we would bargain regional agreements and in some cases see our bargaining power diminished. I don’t believe anyone could have forecasted that AT&T would be put back together into the company we know it as today, but I honestly believe everyone who was on that picket line realized we would always have to continue the fight for decent wages, a retirement with dignity and health care in our retirement years.

What I believe we could not have anticipated was AT&T leadership’s staunch refusal to bargain for health care for existing retirees. Their position was made possible when the Supreme Court ruled in 1971 that companies are not required to bargain over or even discuss health care for existing retirees.

Through the remaining part of the twentieth century, AT&T did discuss retiree health care at the bargaining tables and we were able to maintain somewhat of a status quo for those who came before us and built our Union.

Although we heard rumblings from the company as well as threats in this District, we got to the 2009 contract before the door was shut on us. During our last bargaining session we could not get retiree health care on the table.

While AT&T on occasion has committed to taking care of their retirees, they will not engage in collective bargaining over retiree health care. So we come to today where we see over the last two years major premium increases for our AT&T retirees and now our Medicare-eligible retirees being moved to a private health care exchange being operated by AON Hewitt.

As your District Vice President, I can assure you we don’t take changes like this lightly. I am committed to make every effort I can to continue to secure a retirement with dignity for our members and retirees but it is not a job that I can do single handedly.

If we as a Union are to be successful and maintain good jobs, good pensions and good health care for our retirees not only at AT&T but every employer, we need everyone’s input and assistance. We need to build back our movement to include not only the active members but our retirees as well. Our CWA commitment cannot end at retirement. We all have too much invested to allow that. More than ever your union needs you to be the “U” in Union.

“We all have too much invested to let our CWA commitment end at retirement.”

Claude Commings

Claude Commings
Public, Healthcare & Education Workers Gather in San Antonio

The 2014 CWA Public, Healthcare & Education Workers (PHEW) Conference brought 110 public worker activists from District 6 and around the country to San Antonio for a weekend of organizing and movement building.

The three-day conference also included a community forum on the flawed Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal led by CWA President Larry Cohen; Hal Suter, chair of the Lone Star Sierra Club; and longtime populist activist Jim Hightower.

American Agents Have Best Chance Yet Win Their Union

by Mike LoVuolo, CWA Special Assignment Organizer

After 21 years that have included dedication, strong committees, a non-majority union, and lots of hard work, the agents from American Airlines will hopefully soon have a real voice on the job.

Passenger service agents trying to organize at American have faced one setback after another: Cutbacks reducing a group of 21,000 workers before September 11 to 8,500 today; outsourcing; bankruptcy; archaic election rules; and lawsuits fighting their right to a fair election.

Fighting On, No Matter What

After losing an election in 1998, American agents continued work with CWA, building their own organization to have to chance to vote again and gain collective bargaining rights. Instead of giving up, these agents formed their own non-majority union, CWA/Association of Passenger Service Agents (APSA) in 2003.

During bankruptcy at American, agents voted and came up 150 votes short. This after fighting the company in District Court and the District Court of Appeals for their right to vote while the company outsourced, froze pensions, and continued to chop away.

At one point, the 300 members of the APSA worked with unionized and non-unionized employees to make changes to their careers through legislation and other means. Working with passenger services agents at three other airlines, they passed the Airport Rage bill. They worked hard to change the archaic union election rules to a standard yes/no vote instead of counting anyone who didn’t vote as a vote against representation. (Union elections in airlines are overseen by the National Mediation Board (NMB). Until a rule change in 2011, anyone who didn’t vote at all was counted as a vote against union representation.)

Another Chance for a Real Voice

American Airlines will soon merge with US Airways to become the largest airline in the world. The 6,500 agents at US Airways

continued on following page
are represented by CWA and they wish to keep their representation. US Airways agents faced many of the same challenges and won representation with CWA back in 1997. Now US Airways agents from around the country are working with American agents to prepare for their upcoming election.

The combined group at American and US Airways started voting on August 15th in the representation election. Vote results will be released on September 16th.

(To make things even more complicated, agents will actually be voting on representation by the CWA/IBT (Teamsters) Association formed as a result of earlier airline bankruptcies and mergers.)

With over 3,000 of 15,000 agents living in District 6, over 100 activists are working with Sandy Josephson (Local 6001 Vice President), Arnise Porter (Local 6201), Kevin Kujawa (Local 6300), Blake Poindexter (T-Mobile Workers United), Special Assignment Organizers Mike LoVuolo and Yolanda Anderson, and District 6 Organizing Coordinator Mike Gross to ensure that the world’s largest customer service group has representation on the job.

**ACTION ITEM:** If you are traveling on American or US Airways this month, please stop and let agents at the check-in counters and gates know that we are eager to welcome them to CWA. Remind them to vote as soon as they receive their voting instructions. Share with them what you know about how union jobs are the key to rebuilding the middle class and saving jobs with decent pay and benefits.

---

**German Wireless Workers Visit Springfield, MO**

*New ver.di/CWA Partnership is Formed*

*by Blake Poindexter, T-Mobile Workers United Organizer*

Local 6301 recently hosted a very unique action-packed week-long organizing event. Goals were to increase T-Mobile Workers United (TU) membership at the Springfield T-Mobile call center, raise community awareness of T-Mobile’s growing record of poor treatment of their employees, and to strengthen the partnership between the Springfield call center and the Deutsche Telekom call center in Bruhl, Germany. (Deutsche Telekom is T-Mobile’s parent company.)

Our ver.di brothers and sisters could not fathom the things they saw, the stories they heard, and the fear level they too could feel from T-Mobile management’s continuous stance on silencing their workers and disciplining employees for organizing their workplace.

The highlight of the week was the rally that was held directly across the street from the call center. Despite scorching temperatures, 80 protesters joined TU and ver.di members in demanding change from the company.

Local unions and community groups along with local politicians built the crowd and spoke at the rally. CWA Local 6301 President Kendra Dame and Local 6313 President Kevin Kollmeyer were eager to assist in these efforts. Local 6301 organizers Jim Lee, Jamie Mesey and Frankie Missey worked hard to prepare and were joined by twelve Local 6313 stewards for leafleting and house calls during the week.

---

continued on following page
ver.di Chapter President Thomas Königshausen helped kick off the event by calling on T-Mobile workers to demand a living wage and better working conditions. He decried efforts by management to block the formation of the union through one-on-one interviews and said ver.di had a good working relationship with Deutsche Telekom.

Thomas’s colleagues Bettina Hassel and Petra Baltes-Host joined him on the visit to Springfield and all three of them offered support to courageous TU members, especially Gigi Richardson and Paul Rose who are leading the organizing effort inside the call center. The week was a success as union members from both sides of the Atlantic came together to support one cause and build enthusiastic solidarity.

Who do you know in non-union telecommunications work?

They belong in CWA!

Let’s work together to help them and their co-workers organize.
Contact Judy Graves at 512-705-8181 or jgraves@cwa-union.org

District 6 Retiree Outreach Program
by Kevin Kujawa, District 6 Retiree Outreach Coordinator

A little more than two years ago, District 6 Vice President Claude Cummings and his Assistant Sylvia Ramos approached me with a concept to engage more of our retirees back into the CWA movement.

These retirees were the architects who built this union and are responsible for the collective bargaining agreements our members enjoy today. Often these retirees leave and we never hear from them or they never hear from CWA again and we believed that to be a problem that needed to be corrected. Thus the genesis of the District 6 Retiree Outreach Program.

While I believe we all recognize the fine work that is being done by the District 6 Retired Members Council (RMC) and the Local Chapters, the fact is there are a lot of retirees who for whatever reason choose not to join or do not have chapters in their areas.

The basic concept of the Outreach Program is, first, to give our retirees access to a Benefit Representative to give answers to questions about their benefit plans. Also, the District would provide a page on their website to post information for retirees. A newsletter was established and goes out electronically to retirees who want to keep up on the information a CWA Retiree needs to know which includes a monthly article from the District Vice President.

The next phase of the program was to divide the District into zones and have a Retiree Activist in each zone work phone banks to let our retirees know about the program and ask them to join an RMC chapter, to consider being an activist in our movement and, as always, to continue their support of the union. As we all know there is strength in numbers and what better numbers to add than our own retirees?

continued on following page
Over 700 retirees turned out in Dallas to protest AT&T’s attacks on retiree health care. Buses came from St. Louis, Kansas City, Wichita, Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Beaumont, Houston, Ft. Worth, Austin, and San Antonio.

As anybody who has ever done phone banking of our retirees during the political season knows, one of the biggest things we would get is “How come the only time I hear from CWA is when you ask me to vote a certain way?”

While we all believe the best method for retirees to stay engaged with CWA is through the RMC and the Local Chapters the fact are there is a large segment that doesn’t who we still need in our cause. After a longer-than-anticipated build out, the program is up and running. There are Zone Coordinators in place or in the works in most areas. Retiree activists now working for the program are

Angela Guillory, Bessie Mansfield, Mary Reyes, Nancy Hill, Mark Tedford, Linda Nesler, Mary Ann Hopkins, and Leola Beard. We still have a few more spots in the process of being filled.

District 6 Retiree Outreach Snapshot

- Benefit representative desk averages 30 calls per month
- Over 3,500 e-mail subscriptions to our newsletter
- Facebook group adding about 25 members a month: CWAD6RetireeOutreach

The cornerstone of the program is open honest two way communication with our Retirees and so far the results have been promising. Our program is gaining momentum every day and we certainly are identifying a number of retirees who will be happy to support their union when called upon and keep CWA strong.

If you would like to contact the program our e-mail is D6retirees@gmail.com and the Benefit Representative Desk recorded line is 314-965-9024.

Get the News, Make the News with the CWA App!

Get news in real time. • Be the first to know about events and opportunities for action in your area and breaking news. • Earn points by taking action, checking in to events, and sharing information on Facebook and Twitter. • Send photos easily from your phone to CWA.

**Action Item:** Download the CWA Movement Builder app through the App Store or Google Play, or text APP to 69866.