

UE LOCAL 170 NEWSLETTER

WEST VIRGINIA PUBLIC WORKERS UNION

August 2009

Congratulations! Local 170 Passes Goal of 1000 Members



Local 170 officers and members from the Hospitals, DOH, and DHHR Chapters attended the UE Eastern Regional Council Meeting in Monroeville Pa. At the meeting our members reported on the organizing in West Virginia.

In addition to the organizing report they also talked about the events we have had and the accomplishments we have made in the last six months. Reports were given on the President's Day Rally and how our members defeated the Furlough Bill.

Congratulations to Dawn Knight who was nominated and elected to be on the Regional Executive Board. She was also elected to sit on the National General Executive Board, our highest decision making body of our union.

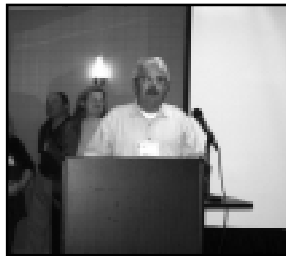
During the meeting we were presented with a cake to celebrate reaching our goal of 1000 members. Since that time we have organized more than 100 new members into our union. We are now the largest non-teaching public employee union in West Virginia.

Pictured above are Dawn Knight, John Buck, Nola Lilly, Colleen Triska, Bruce Dotson, Ernie Chafin, Steve Thompson, Butch Tritt, Maxine Pack and Nona Ringler. Pictured below are members who gave reports at the Regional Council Meeting.

Welcome New Members

Over the summer our membership has continued to grow and we would like to welcome all of our new members from the following counties and agencies.

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Hospitals | Hopemont
Lakin
Sharpe's |
| DOH | Lewis
Harrison
Kanawha
Marion
Mercer
Monongalia
Raleigh |
| DHHR | Boone
Lewis
Mason |



President, Bruce Dotson



VP, Nona Ringler



Colleen Triska



Butch Tritt



Steve Thompson



Welcome State Hospital Employees

UE Local 170 is proud to welcome state hospital employees into our union. Over the past year we have been organizing six acute care psychiatric and long term care hospitals. Our organizing began at Mildred Mitchell-Bateman Hospital and quickly progressed into a statewide campaign.

This campaign led to hundreds of new members in the hospitals and to the formation of our first hospital chapter. On June 6, 2009 workers from Mildred Bateman Hospital gathered to nominate and elect the officers of their newly formed chapter.

Our goal is to create a Statewide Hospital Council that allows members to meet and discuss issues and begin to work together to resolve those issues. We have scheduled our first meeting on August 15, 2009. Details will be sent to all hospital members.

In addition, dozens of hospital employees have already participated in the steward and leadership trainings and have been actively fighting and winning grievances.



Mildred Mitchell-Bateman Chapter receives their Charter. Pictured above (back row from left to right) are Chief Steward Jeff Watson, Secretary Treasurer/VP Cara Chapman, Trustee Vera Andrews, and President Jay Miser (front row) JoAnn Hedrick and Recording Secretary Keir Moorman.



UE Local 170 members, Mildred-Mitchell Bateman employees, and community activists protest low wages, forced overtime and understaffing at a rally in front of the hospital.

Members Mobilize And Defeat the Furlough Bill!



UE Local 170 Members and supporters mobilized and successfully defeated the Furlough Bill (Senate Bill 519) during the Legislative session. The bill would have given Governor, Joe Manchin the unprecedented power to unilaterally impose unpaid furloughs on state workers regardless of seniority and would have denied state workers the right to file a grievance over being furloughed. Our members collected thousands of signatures on petitions opposing the Furlough Bill. In addition Local 170 members made hundreds of phone calls and sent massive emails to their delegates, successfully killing the bill.

Delegate Bonnie Brown along with Delegates Margaret Staggers (D-Fayette), William Wooten (D-Raleigh), Nancy Guthrie (D-Kanawha), David Perry (D-Fayette), Samuel Caan (D-Harrison), and Richard Iaquina (D-Harrison) introduced the petitions into the official record of the House of Delegates.

Pictured above are UE Local 170 President Bruce Dotson and UE Local 170 Vice President Nona Ringler as they present Delegate Bonnie Brown (D-Kanawha) with our "Say No to the Furlough" Petitions.

Legislative Update

After our successful President's Day Rally, UE Local 170 encourages our members to continue to schedule meetings with their state legislators in their home districts. Prior to the legislative session many of our Chapters and members met with their legislators and it proved to be very beneficial for our union. Several of those Delegates sponsored our bills and petitions. One in particular, Dan Poling (D-Wood), sponsored two of our overtime bills during the session.

Late in the legislative session, UE Local 170 members mobilized to defeat the Furlough Bill and, with the help of one Senator and several Delegates, we were successful in killing the bill in the House. Forging relationships with our elected officials is critical. We need to continue to educate our lawmakers about the issues and problems we face as public workers. By communicating with our legislators, we can help keep them from adopting laws that work against us.

In addition to the above, our union will continue to push for the Grievance Board to be moved to the judicial branch of state government. We will continue to fight to stop the privatization of state jobs and ask the Legislature to investigate the high cost of privatization in this state. We will continue to fight to defeat any attempts by this administration to balance the budget on the backs of West Virginia state workers and we will not stop fighting for collective bargaining until public workers in West Virginia have a fair collective bargaining process.

For regular legislative updates, visit the Local 170 website at www.uelocal170.org

A billboard advertisement for UE Local 170 Public Workers Union. On the left is a circular logo with a hand pointing up, containing the text 'WEST VIRGINIA', 'UE LOCAL 170', and 'PUBLIC WORKERS UNION' with the website 'www.uelocal170.org'. To the right of the logo is a large banner that reads 'We're Working for YOU!'. Below the banner are four small images: a woman working at a desk, a woman with a child, a large truck on a road, and a gas station. At the bottom of the billboard is the website 'www.UELOCAL170.org' and a small note 'Paid for by UE Local 170 WY Public Workers Union'.

UE Local 170 purchased this billboard to remind the public about all the services that our members provide throughout the state. The billboard, located near exit 100 going south on I-77 in Charleston, a short distance from the Capitol, was put up to coincide with the opening of the WV Legislative Session. Butch Tritt (DOH) worked with the ad company to design the billboard. Thanks Butch for all your hard work and time you contributed.

UE Local 170 Members Rally on President's Day



UE Local 170 President, Bruce Dotson, second from left along with Delegates Dan Poling, Carrie Webster, House Speaker Rick Thompson and Majority Leader Brent Boggs.

State workers rallied in the lower rotunda of the State Capitol on President's Day. We wanted to let the public know how the Governor's wage freeze has undermined the quality of public service.

UE Local 170 called for legislative measures including a minimum \$10.00 per hour living wage, automatic annual cost of living adjustments for state workers and retirees to offset inflation and insurance, and pay increases to reward seniority.

Our Union also demanded fair treatment and staffing levels at all state agencies, an end to the privatization of state workers jobs, and for collective bargaining rights for public workers in West Virginia



CNN National News Coverage

After our President's Day rally we were contacted by CNN. They wanted to do a follow-up story to our rally. Our union exposed the Governor on national news for giving himself a 58% wage increase and his staff a 12% increase while state employees received no increase at all. Before the story aired on CNN the Governor had planned a huge party for the Senators and Delegates. He had mailed over 3000 invitations. After the coverage on CNN he cancelled the party due to the budget.

UE Local 170 Opposes PEIA Benefit Cuts

UE Local 170 members attended the PEIA (Public Employees' Insurance Agency) Finance Board's public hearings around the state in June and July, voicing strong opposition to their plan to eliminate retiree health care benefits for new hires. PEIA has continually eroded state workers' health care benefits over the years and now wants to eliminate them entirely for new hires when they retire. The PEIA Finance Board is scheduled to vote on this plan at their meeting on July 30th.

Members' Petition Sent to State Senators and Delegates

(Below is the text of a petition sent by hundreds of UE Local 170 members to State Senators and Delegates to advance the local's program.)

Dear West Virginia State Lawmaker,

As a concerned citizen and one of your constituents I am in agreement with hard working state employees and the many proud members of UE Local 170, West Virginia's Public Workers Union on some important issues. I am concerned regarding some of the issues facing the working people of West Virginia. It's time for members of the West Virginia Legislature to address the serious problems of state workers. I pledge to vote for a candidate that supports these issues. A good start would be for lawmakers to;

- * PROVIDE STATE EMPLOYEES WITH A LIVING WAGE;
- * IMPROVE STAFF LEVELS AND TREATMENT AT DHHR, STATE HOSPITALS, AND ALL STATE AGENCIES;
- * SHUT DOWN WASTEFUL PRIVATIZATION SCHEMES;
- * PROVIDE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RIGHTS FOR PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS.

Grievance Update

Several features resulting from 2007 grievance procedure reforms have proven useful for public workers. The right of employees to representation by a steward, although still contested by some state agencies, has helped to curb the arbitrary imposition of discipline. As a result, management has been forced to become more accountable for its actions. In addition, UE Local 170 stewards are now successfully negotiating workplace disputes — such as unfair work assignments — before it is necessary to file a written grievance.

In other cases, the mere filing of a grievance has forced a fair resolution even before a Level One hearing can be scheduled. Recently, UE Local 170 highway workers forced the removal of illegal surveillance cameras in break rooms, and UE members forced DHHR to stop the practice of blocking the union website on the agency's workplace computers.

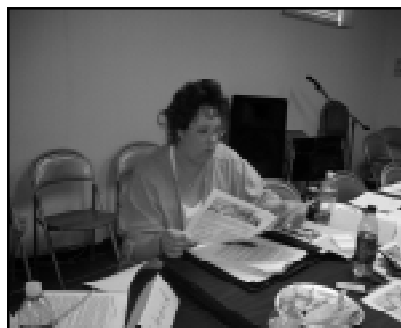
Despite initial resistance by several agencies, mandated mediation at Level Two, which was required under the 2007 grievance reform, has allowed our union to negotiate favorable grievance settlements for members in several agencies, including DHHR, DMV, DOH, Parkways, and Cultural & History. As a result, in this year alone, inaccurate evaluations have been corrected, unfair work assignments eliminated, leave time restored, and many unfair disciplinary actions — including two terminations in Highways — were reversed.

The benefits of aggressive grievance work is continually in evidence. All shop stewards and members are encouraged to participate in our steward training classes. Please call the UE Local 170 office — 304-699-4401 — to schedule a session in your area, and plan to attend future statewide Stewards Councils and seminars whenever they occur.

UE Public Sector Leadership Training Certificate Program

More than 100 UE Local 170 members from fourteen different work places across West Virginia have taken the latest class in the UE Public Sector Leadership Training Certificate Program: Organizing Your Workplace. Nearly all of the training classes have been conducted at the worksites. In this class, members learn how to more effectively organize their members in their workplace and Chapter.

During this workshop, we develop an action plan to organize each workplace in order to build a stronger union both at work and throughout the state. Additional classes are being scheduled in the coming months. If you would like to schedule a class at your workplace contact UE Field Organizer John Thompson at 304-699-4401.



Hundreds of state employees from many different counties and agencies have already participated in the steward and leadership trainings. Pictured here are members who participated in UE Local 170's statewide Steward Council Seminar. Dr. Dave Cormier, from the WVU Institute of Labor Studies and Research, conducted the training.

Chapter Reports

Parkways

The Parkways Chapter has been actively assisting and representing our members who have filed grievances against the state. These grievances include the vehicle policy, discrimination, drug testing and travel reimbursement to attend grievance hearings. We have also been holding workplace meetings with our members to keep them updated and to hear their concerns. With the end of the winter ice and snow removal schedule, we have resumed holding regular monthly membership meetings. Membership meetings are held on the last Monday of each month. They begin at 4:30 p.m. and are held at the Travel Plaza in Beckley. All members are encouraged to attend in order to have input in the Chapter's plans and activities. The next meeting will be on Monday, July 27. In addition the Chapter will be holding its annual election of officers during the August 31, 2009 membership meeting. Additional information will be sent to all members prior to the meeting.

Department of Highways

DOH members have had several recent victories including, forcing the agency to remove illegal surveillance cameras in break rooms and at more than one garage we have won the restoration of jobs for workers who were unjustly fired by their supervisors. Several grievances have also been filed by the mechanics in several different counties protesting the fact that they have been excluded from the uniform program that the agency has developed for many other highway workers.

DOH Chapter 1 will be holding annual election of officers at their meeting on August 13 at the United Methodist Church in Evans at 6:30 p.m. A notice will be sent to chapter members prior to the meeting.

DOH Chapter 2 recently voted to include as part of their chapter, members who work in the Division of Rehabilitation Services in Harrison County. Last month they nominated and elected their new officers. They are pictured below.

DOH Chapter 3 will be holding annual nominations and elections of officers at their meeting on August 20 at the UE Local 170 Union statewide office in Charleston at 6:30 p.m.

DHHR

The DHHR Chapter has been very active during the last six months, hosting lunchtime "meet & greet" sessions at agency offices throughout the state. To date we have held them at 18 county agencies. Our member participation made all "meet & greets" a great success. UE members brought out their co-workers and many of them joined the union. We now have hundreds of DHHR members in over twenty counties throughout the state. DHHR members have also been participating in the UE Public Sector Training Certificate Program. Additional classes are being scheduled. UE members from several different counties attended our Steward Council Seminar in May. Trainings and greater awareness of workers' rights have resulted in increasingly favorable grievance settlements during recent months. The Chapter will conduct its annual election of officers at a chapter membership meeting on Saturday, August 22 at 11:00 a.m. at the UE Local 170 statewide office in Charleston. All members are encouraged to attend this meeting. Members who car pool from outside of Kanawha County will receive travel reimbursements. Refreshments will be served.

Capitol Complex

The Capitol Chapter continues to grow and reach out to our members through our "meet and greet" lunches and on-site shop meetings conducted by stewards. Thank you to everyone who has participated and made these events successful. Also, welcome aboard to the new members who have joined and helped make us the fastest growing public workers union in West Virginia. Contact any Capitol Chapter officer to schedule a shop meeting for your building today.

Hospitals

UE members been holding lunch time meet and greets at all of the State Hospitals. Hospital union membership has continued to grow at a rapid pace. We formed our first Hospital Chapter at Mildred Mitchell Bateman and are on target to form new chapters at several hospitals by this Fall. UE hospital members participated in steward and leadership trainings and have been actively fighting and winning grievances throughout the state. A first Statewide Hospital Council Meeting will be held on August 15 in the UE Local 170 office in Charleston. All members will be sent additional information prior to the meeting. Please plan on attending.



Pictured to the left are the new Local 170 Chapter 2 officers. President Frank Tate, Secretary-Treasurer/VP Donna Morgan, Recording Secretary Teresa Conley, Chief Steward Dana Hill, trustees Craig Monroe, Bob Ruckman and Sean Murphy. Thanks to everyone who stepped up and ran for an office.

UE National News

Freedom To Organize Campaign

UE Local 170 members across West Virginia participated in our National UE's "Freedom to Organize Campaign," a nationwide effort to press Congress to pass the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA). Passage of EFCA will make it easier and safer for employees to organize unions in private-sector workplaces. Our members signed and collected over 800 postcards urging our states two U.S. Senators, Robert Byrd and Jay Rockefeller to support Employee Free Choice. A delegation from our national union delivered UE Local 170's postcards to both Senators' Washington D.C. offices. Local 170 members also met with their staff here in Charleston. Senators Byrd and Rockefeller have made public commitments to vote for Employee Free Choice when it is introduced in the U.S Senate later this year.

As part of the Freedom To Organize Campaign, four UE Local 170 members from the Hospitals and DOH garages took time off from work to leaflet and to meet with non-union state employees at worksites in several counties, including Sharpe Hospital in Lewis County. Nearly 50 new members joined our union during these organizing activities. Thanks to all members who made this campaign a success. Pictured below are volunteers from Harrison County DOH and Pinecrest Hospital.



Teresa Conley—DOH



Craig Monroe—DOH



Nola Lilly—Pinecrest



Pictured here to the left and right are community allies and UE members protesting at a seminar on "How to Keep Your Workplace Union Free in the Age of the Employee Free Choice Act." The seminar was hosted by the Spillman-Thomas Law firm.



Justice at Quad City Die Casting



UE Local 170 members picket in front of the Wells Fargo office in Charleston

On June 23, UE Local 170 members and community allies picketed outside of the Wells Fargo office in Charleston as part of a National Day of Action in support of our brothers and sisters employed by Quad City Die Casting, a locally-owned factory in Moline, Illinois. Similar protests also took place in more than twenty cities across the country from Boston to Los Angeles.

Wells Fargo, one of the largest banks in the United States, received a \$25 billion taxpayer bailout to save jobs and put our nation on the road to economic recovery. Instead of using the bailout money to save jobs, Wells Fargo is cutting off credit to Quad City Die Casting, forcing the company to announce that the factory will close, leaving nearly 100 workers jobless.

Wells Fargo, acting as a "third party administrator" for West Virginia's Public Employee Insurance Agency (PEIA), has also billed state taxpayers for more than \$23 million in fiscal year 2009 alone. This at a time when PEIA is planning on cutting retiree health care benefits for public employees in addition to increasing the premiums.

UE Local 170 Calendar of Events

- August 4 Capitol Complex Membership Meeting
5:30 p.m. - UE Local 170 Union Hall
- August 6 Chapter 2 Membership Meeting
4:30 p.m. - 400 W. Pike Street Clarksburg
- August 9 Mildred Bateman Membership Meeting
Hospital Pavillion Area
- August 13 DOH Chapter 1 Membership Meeting
6:30 p.m. - United Methodist Church - Evans
- August 15 Statewide Hospital Council Meeting
1:00 p.m. - UE Local 170 Union Hall
- August 18 Executive Board Committee Meeting
6:30 p.m. - UE Local 170 Union Hall
- August 20 DOH Chapter 3 Membership Meeting
6:30 p.m. - UE Local 170 Union Hall
- August 22 DHHR Membership Meeting
11:00 a.m. - UE Local 170 Union Hall
- August 31 Parkways Membership Meeting
4:30 p.m. - Tamarack Travel Plaza, Beckley



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