



ACTION UPDATE

One Strong, United Voice for Minnesota Workers

Minnesota's budget surplus continues

The state's forecasting a budget surplus of \$1.87 billion, and lawmakers are split over what to do with that money. AFSCME is calling on lawmakers to build prosperity for everyone, rather than give tax breaks to big business and billionaires.

"Our future will be brighter than our past if we continue to invest in smarter kids, healthier families, and safer communities," said Executive Director Eliot Seide. "That's the fairest way to help everyone benefit from our growing economy.

"The Legislature shouldn't raid workers' wallets to give unneeded tax breaks to billionaires and big businesses. Those tax giveaways create income inequality, budget deficits, and government shutdowns. Hardworking Minnesotans can't afford to return to the failed policies of the past."

That's especially true now, when Minnesota is ranked the nation's [fifth best-run state](#). Seide said Gov. Dayton is showing the nation what real progress looks like when everyone pays their fair share and plays by the same rules.

Locals Ratify Contracts

Local 34 (Hennepin County) approved a three-year contract that maintains step increases and hikes the minimum base wage to \$15 an hour in 2016. It includes a general wage increase (COLA) of 2.5 percent a year for those at the top of the range. Workers in the range will get 1.5 percent in 2016 and 2017, and 2.5 percent in 2018.

Unit 8 (Corrections) approved a contract that includes raises of 2.5 percent a year and five additional shift exchanges a year.

Local 66 (City of Grand Marais) ratified a contract that includes a 3 percent increase in 2016 and 2 percent in 2017; plus paid time off for seasonal workers who have worked a set amount of hours.

Local 66 (Proctor School District Basic Unit) passed a contract with 2.5 percent the first year and 3 percent the second year; and an increased 403b match.

Justice for Walker Workers

Workers at Walker Methodist Health Center battled management for years to get their union, and now management is trying to take it away. The vote is Dec. 21. Walker Methodist has been repeatedly found guilty of violating labor law. With \$3.6 million coming from the state, Walker should focus more on paying workers a fair wage and less on trying to break their union. Show solidarity by calling Walker CEO Scott Riddle at 612-827-8380. If you live in Minneapolis, put up a "Justice for Walker Workers" sign in your yard. Get a sign by emailing Andy.Hamerlinck@afscmemn.org or calling him at 651-402-7328.

Red Cross Workers Win Settlement

Workers with Local 3931 (National Central Blood Services of the American Red Cross) have reached a settlement against their employer. That means 50 workers will get anywhere from about \$140 to \$15,000 in back pay plus interest. The Red Cross also agreed not to change wage scales, steps and other terms of employment without notice or bargaining.

Standing With San Bernardino Workers

AFSCME President Lee Saunders said it is unconscionable that workers dedicated to a community's health and well-being were targeted by gunmen, who killed 14 and injured 21 more at a holiday party.

"Our hearts are heavy with the senseless loss of life suffered in San Bernardino," Saunders said. "It is unconscionable that some of our most vulnerable citizens and public service workers dedicated to the health and well-being of their communities would be targeted this way.

"We will not forget the contributions of those who died, and through our work, we will honor them."

[If you would like to sign an online condolence card for the victims and their loved ones you can do so here.](#)



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More Contracts Approved

Local 3558 (Northern Communities Credit Union) ratified a three-year contract that includes a 1 percent raise the first year, 1.75 percent in 2017 and 1.75 percent in 2018; the doubling of the employer's 401k contribution; plus changes in sick leave.

Safety Conference Coming Jan. 20

Injuries are rising for AFSCME members who work in human services and health care. Meanwhile, management is giving us lip service. Attend our Safety Conference to learn about your rights and how to be safer on the job. What's "imminent danger" and when can you defend yourself? What does "person-centered care" really mean? How can we work with OSHA to record and report injuries?

Details: The AFSCME Safety Conference takes place on Wednesday, **Jan. 20** from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Ramada Mall of America in Bloomington (2300 East American Boulevard). The training is free to AFSCME members who work in health care and human services. Lunch will be provided. Participants are responsible for the cost of lodging. Book a room at the Ramada at 952-854-3411.

To RSVP: Contact Melinda Pearson at Melinda.Pearson@afscmemn.org or 651-287-0524, or search for "[Safe Staffing MN](#)" on Facebook.

Historic labor images featured

"Labor Through the Ages: A Visual Celebration of Collective Bargaining" runs through **Dec. 24** at the [Hennepin Gallery](#) in the Hennepin County Government Center. The images date back to 1895. AFSCME Locals 34, 552, 1719, 2822, 2864 and 2938 helped organize the exhibit.

AFSCME Scholarship Deadline Nears

AFSCME International is still accepting applications for its annual Family Scholarship. The renewable, \$2,000 scholarship is for current high school seniors in AFSCME families who will graduate in 2016. There are only a few weeks left to apply.

The deadline is Dec. 31. Get application materials and eligibility requirements at www.afscme.org.

Bridges crumble, unions silenced?

AFSCME field representative Bart Andersen published a powerful [op-ed](#) in the "Duluth News Tribune" about what happens when infrastructure deteriorates and unions are silenced.

Claymation takes on exploitation

"Chicken Run" is more than a Claymation feature about chickens trying to fly the coop – literally. This multi-level comedy includes plenty of metaphors about the exploitation of workers – and what happens when they band together. It starts at 6 p.m. **Friday, Dec. 18** at the United Labor Centre, 312 Central Ave. SE., Minneapolis.

Get in on the Action

Action Update publishes twice a month for locals and activists in AFSCME Council 5. If you have an event people should know about, email Lynette Kalsnes at Lynette.Kalsnes@afscmemn.org.

For the most current AFSCME news and events, and to download and print a copy of Action Update to distribute or post on your bulletin board, visit www.afscmemn.org.

Keep Your Calendar Up to Date

Labor Movie Night: "Chicken Run," Dec. 18, 6 p.m. Minneapolis (United Labor Centre)

AFSCME Council 5 Safety Conference: Jan. 20, 2016, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Bloomington (Airport Ramada)

AFSCME Council 5 Day on the Hill: April 5, 2016, St. Paul (RiverCentre)

Council 5 Retirees United Convention: April 19, 2016

SEPC Spring Conference: April 29, 2016