



ACTION UPDATE

One Strong, United Voice for Minnesota Workers

Wednesday, August 28, 2013

www.afscmemn.org

St. Louis County Workers to Vote

More than 1,000 St. Louis County workers in Local 66 will vote Sept. 12 on a proposed contract through 2014, which the county offered three days before the Aug. 30 strike deadline set by workers.

AFSCME members in the "basic" and "merit" units make up 62 percent of the county workforce. They have worked under an expired contract since 2011, and authorized a strike after rejecting a county offer that would have divided their ranks and busted their union.

In that proposal, the county wanted to give some workers better benefits than it gave other workers. In the end, the county conceded to the union's solution, and shelved its own divisive, two-tier plan.

We're Raising the Wage!

Add your name to the thousands of signatures we're collecting at the State Fair, urging legislators to raise the state's minimum wage to \$9.50 by 2015. Nobody can live on Minnesota's current minimum of \$6.15 an hour, which is the third-worst in the nation.

Volunteer members are there from 9 a.m.-7:30 p.m. through Labor Day. You'll find us at the AFL-CIO Labor Pavilion, at Cooper St. and Dan Patch Ave.

Next Wavers Throw a Shindig

You can't build a strong union without good old-fashioned fun. At least that's how Council 5's Next Wave sees it, which is why they are hosting "Labor Ball."

The event takes place Sept. 6, at 8 p.m., at Wabasha Street Caves in St. Paul. The evening is open to all union members and supporters.

It features free admission, free food, a cash bar, a DJ, dancing, relaxing, socializing, and more.

Redesigned Website is Easier to Use

Council 5 has renovated its website with an easier-to-navigate structure and a cleaner, photo-driven design. Take a look at www.afscmemn.org

Make Opportunity a Reality

America's middle class cannot thrive when the state's and nation's laws create second-class workers – workers without a wage they can live on, without rights on the job, or without a chance to become full citizens. That's why AFSCME is fighting to raise the minimum wage, to expand collective bargaining, and for true immigration reform with a path to citizenship.

The U.S. Senate passed a bipartisan immigration plan in June. But a small group of Republicans is blocking a vote in the House – and House leaders are letting them get away with it.

Especially this Labor Day, we need to remind Congress that America must remain a land of opportunity for all workers.

Sign AFSCME's petition: Go to <http://bit.ly/14o20HS>; tell House Speaker John Boehner: "Let the House vote."

Convention Deadlines Get Closer

The official call for Council 5's annual convention has been sent to all locals. Here's a rundown on deadlines:

Hotel reservations: Room blocks are being held until Sept. 2 at the Radisson and Holiday Inn in downtown Duluth.

Resolutions: Must be received at Council 5's South St. Paul office by Sept. 13.

Delegate credentials: Must be mailed and postmarked no later than Sept. 23.

Child care: Requests must be submitted by Sept. 23.

Special accommodations: Requests must be submitted by Sept. 23.

The convention takes place Oct. 3-5 at the Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center. Delegate check-in takes place Oct. 2 from 6-9 p.m., Oct. 3 from 7 a.m.-2 p.m., and Oct. 4 from 7-9 a.m.

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Looking for Good Ideas

Gov. Dayton put out a call this month to all state employees. He's looking for ideas to "revolutionize how your department operates" or common-sense changes in how we provide public services.

AFSCME is a firm believer that the best way to improve public service is to ask the people who actually do the work. That's us. That's why we are cooperating with the governor's search.

How to participate: If you've got a positive idea, don't forget to share it with your Local AFSCME leadership. Council 5 will compile all the ideas, then work with locals and members to submit the most promising ideas and turn them into success.

Locals Ratify Contracts

Benedictine Health Center. Members in this unit of Local 3558 ratified a three-year contract through Sept. 30, 2015. The agreement includes a 1 percent across-the-board raise effectively immediately; a 2.18 percent raise effective the first pay period of September; and a 1 percent longevity increase, beginning in October, for wage steps 10, 15, and 20.

There is also a wage reopener in 2014 if the Legislature increases compensation funding.

Aramark. Members of Local 1934 at Bemidji State University ratified a two-year contract through June 30, 2015. The agreement raises wages 25 cents per hour this year and in 2014, and improves bereavement leave and probation language.

Get Federal Paperwork Right

The U.S. Department of Labor is offering a free seminar Sept. 10 in St. Paul to help union officers understand how to fill out the LM-2 and other required federal forms, keep proper records, and run local elections.

The seminar takes place at the Minnesota Nurses Association, 345 Randolph Ave., Suite 300.

To register: Call 414-297-1501.

Women's Conference Takes Shape

AFSCME's 2013 National Women's Conference takes place Sept. 20-22 in Denver. The conference includes opportunities for networking, issues education, skill-building, and leadership development.

More information: For registration, hotel, and travel details, go to www.afscme.org; click the link on the "Upcoming Events" section of the home page.

LES Offers Union Skills Courses

Labor Education Service at the University of Minnesota is offering "nuts and bolts" skills courses for union activists. The first course, "Advanced Arbitration Techniques," takes place Sept. 21 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Other classes later in the year include "Unions for All Generations," "The Law and Social Media," "Intro to the Labor Movement," "Union Administration," and "Basic Steward Training."

All classes are non-credit, and cost \$50. Depending on the topic, classes are held either online or on the West Bank of the Twin Cities campus.

More information: For complete schedules and class descriptions, go to www.carlsonschool.umn.edu/labor-education-service.

State Opens Diabetes Option

State employees enrolled in the Minnesota Advantage Health Plan now have the option to join a diabetes medication therapy management program.

Members who participate become eligible for reduced co-pays on diabetes-related care, and for other financial incentives.

Enrollment is now open for members in Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington Counties, and in the Brainerd, Duluth, Mankato, Moorhead, Rochester, and St. Cloud areas.

Enrollment in the rest of the state opens Oct. 1.

More information: Go to www.mmb.state.mn.us/mtm.