



ACTION UPDATE

One Strong, United Voice for Minnesota Workers

Wednesday, December 26, 2012

www.afscmemn.org

Generosity by the Ladle

Local 66 members at Western Lake Superior Sanitary District raised \$683 this year at their annual chili feed. The lunchtime fundraiser, held Dec. 13, pays tribute to the union's 2002 strike, when kettles of chili sustained strikers and solidarity through the December cold. In addition, the workers have a clause in their contract in which proceeds from lunchroom vending machines also go toward the fundraiser. Combined, it means the workers are donating more than \$940 to AFL-CIO Community Services in Duluth, and to Union Gospel Mission, where members have served a monthly meal for 10 years.

Generosity by the Armful

For the tenth straight year, members of St. Cloud State University Local 753 adopted a local family in need for the holiday season. The family – a working mother with three children – received toys, household needs, clothing, monetary gifts, and a decorated tree. Local 753 members also volunteered to ring bells for the Salvation Army's Red Kettle campaign, and made fleece blankets for the Warm Blanket Project, which stockpiles blankets for emergency personnel to use with adults and children in crisis.

Local 4001 Celebrates King's Legacy

MnSCU Local 4001 is celebrating the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by sponsoring a march and observance on Jan. 19. Events kick off with a community march at 4 p.m. that Saturday. The march goes from KMOJ Radio, 2123 W. Broadway Ave., Minneapolis, to the Urban League, 2100 N. Plymouth Ave. There, a program begins at 5 p.m. It features praise dance, artists, and speakers (including Gary Armstead, of Hennepin County Human Services Local 34). Admission is free, but free-will offerings will be accepted. All donations go to the Nellie Stone Johnson Scholarship Program. Seating is limited; for a reservation, contact Local 4001's Grace Jones at 952-686-1088 or jazzygej@yahoo.com.

Plan B – or Plan BS?

Republicans in Congress are trying to pull a fast one. They think we'll swallow a plan that gives most of its tax benefits to millionaires – but raises taxes on anyone who has a job, and includes spending cuts that destroy jobs, not create them. The latest scheme, which House Speaker John Boehner calls "Plan B," puts vital programs like Social Security, Medicare, and education on the chopping block. But it manipulates tax brackets to make sure the richest 2 percent still won't pay their fair share in taxes.

Tell your Congressional representatives: We're not buying it. Go to www.afscme.org/boehnerville and voice your opinion.

Local 637 President Ron Madson Dies

Ronald Madson – president and chief steward of Bemidji MnDOT Local 637, member of the Highway Employee Policy Committee, and former board member of Council 5 – died Dec. 12 after a battle with cancer. He was 59.

Ron is survived by his mother, Ruby; his wife, Pamela; a daughter; two sons; two grandchildren; a sister; two brothers; and other relatives. Ron's funeral was Dec. 17 in Bemidji.

Council 5 Changes Manager Roles

Executive director Eliot Seide announced the following management changes at Council 5, effective Jan. 1:

- Organizing director Eric Lehto becomes chief of staff.
- Jo Pels, who has been filling the double role of associate director and state director, will be the full-time state director.
- Public affairs director Jennifer Munt expands her responsibilities to include public policy.
- Accountant Deb Cassidy becomes benefits manager.

Lead organizer Jeff Sabin will fill in as organizing director.

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New Year Brings New Contracts

City of Apple Valley: Members of Local 479 ratified a one-year contract for 2013. It includes pay raises of 35 cents an hour on Jan. 1, plus 2 percent more on April 1. Also, because of work backlogs caused by short-staffing, the city also agrees to schedule \$93,000 of overtime in 2013.

The contract adds a floating holiday, creates guidelines and bonus pay of up to four hours for on-call duty, and increases the city's health insurance contribution. Those contributions increase by \$10 a month for a co-pay plan, and \$40 a month for a high-deductible plan.

Town of Rice Lake: Members of this Local 66 unit ratified a two-year contract through 2014. It includes pay raises of 2 percent each year, with no changes in health insurance.

City of Savage: Members of Local 3378 ratified a two-year contract through 2014. It includes pay raises of 2 percent in January 2013 and in January 2014; counts all comp time as regular hours for accrual and other purposes; and allows employees to cash out vacation twice a year. It also eliminates the annual clothing allowance of \$300 a year, but adds 25 cents an hour to base pay, which is worth \$520 a year for full-time workers.

Putting Their Stamp on History

Retired Hennepin County librarian Sandy Berman has launched a campaign urging the U.S. Postal Service to issue postage stamps honoring pioneering labor leaders Eugene V. Debs and Mary Harris "Mother" Jones.

What you can do: Individuals and locals can send a letter, postcard or resolution urging creation of the commemorative stamps. Send your request to: Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee, c/o Stamp Development, U.S. Postal Service, 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Room 3300, Washington, DC 20260-3501.

For a video on the campaign, see www.youtube.com/user/AFSCMECouncil5.

Council Seeks Education Coordinator

Council 5 is accepting applications for an education coordinator to succeed Judy Carlson, who is retiring. Applications must be received by 4 p.m. Jan. 18. For a job description and requirements, see the posting at www.afscmemn.org; click "Work for AFSCME."

Scholarship Deadline is Dec. 31

Dec. 31 is the deadline to apply for the AFSCME Family Scholarship, which provides \$2,000 for up to four years for full-time students. Applicants must be graduating high-school seniors who have a parent, legal guardian, or financially responsible grandparent who is a full, dues-paying AFSCME member. For information, see www.afscme.org/family.

Learn All About 'Nellie'

The world premiere of a play about Minnesota union and civil rights activist Nellie Stone Johnson takes place Jan. 26-Feb. 17 at the History Theatre in St. Paul. Special "labor parties" for union members take place at 12:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Feb. 1, and at 6:30 p.m. Feb. 9. On those days, \$5 of every ticket will be donated to the Nellie Stone Johnson Scholarship Program, which provides financial aid to students of color in the MnSCU system.

"Nellie," written by Kim Hines, tells of the race and gender barriers that Johnson broke in fighting for equality at work, on campus, and in the political arena. Delegates to Council 5's 2012 Convention saw staged readings of scenes from the play.

Details: For show times, ticket information, and other activities related to the play, see www.historytheatre.com; click "Shows," then click the "Nellie" link.

Save the Dates

- **Feb. 4:** Council 5 State Negotiations Assembly, Bloomington
- **Feb. 8:** Local Presidents Meeting, South St. Paul
- **Feb. 26:** Council 5 Day on the Hill, St. Paul