



ACTION UPDATE

One Strong, United Voice for Minnesota Workers

Tuesday, December 8, 2015

afscmemn.org

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.

Locals Ratify Contracts

Hennepin County (Locals 34, 552, 1719, 2822, 2864 and the legal unit of 2938) approved a three-year contract. It maintains step increases for three years, and hikes the minimum base wage to \$15 an hour in 2016 for those working below that now. 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 two-year 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) ratified a contract that includes 2.5 percent the first year and 3 percent the second year; and a \$100 increase in the employer 403b match.

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; and doubles NCCU's 401k contribution.

Red Cross Workers Win Settlement

Workers with Local 3931 (National Central Blood Services) have reached a settlement against their employer, the American Red Cross. Fifty employees will get between \$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 others' health and well-being were targeted by gunmen. "We will not forget the contributions of those who died, and through our work, we will honor them."

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.

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.

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)

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 LynetteKalsnes@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.