



Meet & Consult - Seat at the Table

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For the first time, thousands of employees from three state agencies will have a direct line of communication with management to improve working conditions as well as the services they provide.

A two-year pilot project to begin this month will allow employee representatives of certain divisions within the departments of Administration, Transportation, and Military Affairs and Public Safety, to “meet and consult” with agency heads to address issues such as staff shortages, efficiency in the delivery of services, wages and benefits.

West Virginia does not permit formal collective bargaining, so gaining this right is a landmark achievement for some 5,000 state workers covered by the agreement, announced April 11 by Gov. Joe Manchin III (D) during a press conference in Charleston.

Joining Manchin were dozens of employees represented by [AFSCME Council 77](#), the [Communications Workers of America](#) and the [United Mine Workers of America](#). Among them was Jeffrey Atkins of Charleston, a Division of



Highways equipment operator and a member of Local 3248 (Council 77). “West Virginia taxpayers expect safe roads, scenic drives and hassle-free commutes,” he says. “No one knows how to meet these expectations better than highway employees – and Governor Manchin’s reforms will help us do it with maximum efficiency for taxpayers.”

Council 77 Exec. Dir. Ed Hartman says this is the first time that state employees will have “a seat at the table” with managers. Specifically, employee representatives will be elected from each division of the participating departments. They will sit on the “meet and consult” committee, which will make recommendations to

cabinet secretaries who will then evaluate and forward to the Office of the Governor.

“What we hope to do,” adds Hartman, “is show success both in meeting the employees’ needs and concerns, as well as any that management may have. Hopefully, this process will then be expanded to other agencies, and strengthened to allow even more input from employees.” Council 77 represents about 3,300 workers in the Department of Transportation’s Division of Highways, which is included in the innovative program.

In addition to Highways, the “meet and consult” pilot program includes employees in two other state agencies.

Welcome State Hospital Employees



On behalf of AFSCME Council 77 members and Officers, we would like to welcome the over 1700 state employees employed by the six (6) acute care psychiatric and long term care hospitals in West Virginia.

William R Sharpe, Jr. Hospital, Mildred Mitchell-Bateman Hospital, Pincrest, Hopemont, Lakin and Welch Community Hospital all fall under the DHHR's Bureau of Behavioral Health & Health Facilities. These employees were previously represented by

SEIU District 1199 who asked AFSCME Council 77 to take over the representation of these employees as SEIU focused more on their private sector core members in WV.

An organizing effort by AFSCME has begun in two of the six hospitals with plans to expand to the others soon and create a state hospital coalition that allows the members to meet, train and compare notes from all six facilities.

Large groups of potential stewards at Mitchell-Bateman and

Hopemont have made plans to attend our steward training later this month with activists talking one-on-one with their coworkers about the undeniable *strength in numbers*.

Members from any of the hospitals who have questions or issues should e-mail us at Council77@aol.com or call 1-800-642-1983.

Again, welcome to our union and we look forward to meeting you all.



AFSCME Local 3252 representing state employees in Harrison & Doddridge counties. Left to Right: Frank Mano - Secretary Treasurer, Mike Angiulli - Trustee, Guy Oallano - Executive Board, Diana Somazze - Recording Secretary, Lynda Trippett - Executive Board, John Swiger - Vice President, Edward Farmer - President, Eddie Pigott - Trustee and Russell Wallace - Trustee all elected to new two year terms.

Congratulations Barb Spradling WV Labor Woman of the Year for 2007



Each year names of Women from around our State are submitted to the West Virginia Women's Commission to receive awards for their contributions to society and for being positive role models for others.

Barbara, widely known as Babs by her friends, is well known in her home town of Pinch, WV and around the State for her

many hours of selfless service to anyone that is in need of a volunteer, be that a UFO food bank drive or a door to door canvass for a labor endorsed candidate.

Barbara serves as President of AFSCME Local 3248 covering state workers in Kanawha, Putnam, Boone and Clay counties. She serves on the Executive Board of AFSCME WV

and as an active delegate to the Kanawha Valley Labor Council, AFL-CIO.

The Celebrate Women Awards serves as a "Hall of Fame" for West Virginia Women and Barbara Spradling's name will be added to this very impressive list of West Virginia Women!

Congratulations Barbara!!

AFSCME Steward Training

The popular AFSCME Council 77 Steward Training has been scheduled and do to the high volume of calls requesting details and groups indicating attendance at this free Saturday training, we are asking members who desire to attend to please notify us in advance. The training facility seats approximately 50. While every effort will be made to find every member who shows up a seat, those who pre-register by notifying us, will be given preference.

The new WV State Employee Grievance process and the past years training success has both new and experienced stewards planning to attend. Instructor Robbie Massey of WVU's Labor Studies Institute will continue to provide excellent training to AFSCME activists from various state agencies and cities. Union attorneys and the current Executive Director of the WV State Grievance Board will assist in this day long program.

When: Saturday, June 30, 2007 9:30 AM till approx. 4:00 PM

Where: WV State Building Trades training/meeting room at 600 Leon Sullivan Way in Charleston. The Building Trades is next door to the Capitol Market and 3 blocks down from the back entrance of the WV Power ball park.

*Call the Council 77 office to have more detailed directions read or faxed to you.

After Registration and coffee, members will learn the new definition of what a 'grievance' is and how to know if a member really has one. The details of the new State process will be handed out and discussed in detail. The best techniques for investigating and researching a grievance and how to prepare and present the case at all 3 of the new levels will be taught. Ample time for questions and answers will be provided and a lunch of sandwiches, chips and soda will be provided at this completely free training for members who are willing to serve as AFSCME stewards...THE BACKBONE of our union.

AFSCME Grievance Wins

Congratulations to **Lloyd Webb**, Department of Highways, Transportation Worker 2, Equipment Operator, from Beckley Local 3226, for winning his grievance regarding DOH's discriminatory practices in awarding merit raises. Through the Union Mr. Webb established by a preponderance of the evidence that the DOH decision not to award him merit increases in 2003 was arbitrary and capricious and contrary to the state's policies.

The DOH was ordered to pay Mr. Webb a retro-active salary increase and was awarded back pay from the time his grievance was filed in 2003.

Congratulations to **Joseph Vance**, Transportation Worker 2, Equipment Operator, from Mingo Local 3243, who won his Level III Grievance Non-Selection case. His Union Steward, Pat Ramey, worked hard and proved that the se-

lection process was so significantly flawed that Mr. Vance may reasonably have been the successful applicant if the process had been conducted in a proper fashion. They also proved by a preponderance of the evidence that the selection for the Transportation Worker 3, Equipment Operator position was improperly made by the manipulation of the process for political reasons.



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Lloyd Webb, an AFSCME member for many years at recent meeting after his win.

HIGHWAYS Pay Grievance

On May 23rd and 25th, 2007, a Level IV Hearing was held in Charleston regarding wage disparity and the raise given to the Eastern Panhandle. AFSCME members were represented by two attorneys, who presented evidence and arguments in front of the Administrative Law Judge. AFSCME International also sent a Labor Economist from Washington D.C. to testify and help explain why the wage increases in only three counties was discriminatory and unjust. Non-union DOH employees present at this hearing had little to add or contribute. All exhib-

its and legal arguments were made by the AFSCME attorneys. Hopefully non-union will reconsider.

Please note this hearing was restricted to DOH District One, which includes Kanawha, Putnam, Mason, Clay, and Boone Counties. During the two day hearing, comparisons were made between District One and District Five -- something the DOH failed to do in creating the wage disparity proposal.

Due to the changes in the grievance procedure, it is unclear when the other

nine Districts will hold their Level IV Hearings. The ALJ has mentioned that she might not write the decision even though she presided over this hearing. Regardless of the Level IV outcome, it is possible for either the Union or the DOH, to appeal to the Circuit Court in Kanawha County.

Thank you for your patience and new information will be posted on our web site and available by calling the AFSCME Council 77 office.

DHHR Level Four Grievance

AFSCME Members are waiting for a decision from the Grievance Board for the DHHR Grievance regarding discrimination, reclassification of certain job titles, and a selective pay increase.

Multiple Level IV DHHR Hearings were held in early 2007 in Charleston and AFSCME Members were represented by the

firm of Carbone & Blaydes. Attorneys on all sides have already submitted their Proposed Findings of Fact & Conclusions of Law to the Administrative Law Judge.

The Judge will have time to review the lower records, evidence, and post-hearing briefs before she makes a decision.

Thank you for your pa-

tience and continued support. We will post any new information as soon as it becomes available.

These Level IV decisions are past due and could be received any time.

We understand the frustration with waiting such a long time for these decisions. Unfortunately, nothing can be done about this delay.

2007 Lobby Day at the Capitol

“For 15 consecutive years, members of Council 77 have gathered for Lobby Day, held on the President’s Day holiday, at the state capitol in Charleston. Over the last few months, the council’s members lobbied for a long-sought wage increase. Their sustained grassroots campaign, which culminated on Lobby Day, resulted in the Legislature

approving across-the-board pay raises for all of West Virginia’s state workers.

AFSCME members continued to make big strides in April as Gov. Joe Manchin III (D) announced a two-year pilot project allowing some 5,000 workers from different state agencies to “meet and consult” with manage-

ment to address issues such as staffing, wages and benefits. Since West Virginia does not permit formal collective bargaining, this initiative marks a landmark gain for Council 77 members, granting them a voice to improve working conditions and the services they provide.



AFSCME WV members in the 'overflow' room at the Capitol listen to Lobby Day speakers such as House Majority Leader Joe DeLong Whip Mike Caputo and Senate Finance Chair Walt Helmick.

WV Rehabilitation Center Closing?

The following is an excerpt of an article written by Delegate Nancy Guthrie who is working closely with the employees of the Rehab Center.

The planned closing of the Rehabilitation Center in Institute is a perfect example of our ignoring the need to invest in market demands that are real. The market that needs to be supplied and served is the disability community, which numbers over 400,000 people in West Virginia. Add to that number those troops who will return home disabled. It’s unlikely the Veterans Administration will be able to treat them all. And of course, add to those numbers the exploding population in Kanawha County of autistic children and their families who have no place to receive comprehensive training in West Virginia. Those market demand figures are real, too.

But when the Rehabilitation Center in Institute is shuttered at the end of June, West Virginia will have shut down a vital supply line to serve this very real market and its needs. In the community-based setting disabled citizens may receive only spotty treatment if they are lucky enough to find transportation to get to the community-based program at all.

The Rehab Center is one of only nine others in the country. Over its 50-year history, it has provided comprehensive job training and rehabilitation so that disabled West Virginians could earn paychecks instead of welfare checks. Over 60,000 West Virginians have been served.

Rethinking Rehab in this man-

ner may be counter to the prevailing conventional economic wisdom we’ve been chasing. But I question how successful conventional wisdom has been in satisfying market demands that are real and being unmet in the present tense. It’s going to take several villages, and the state to stay this execution of the Rehab Center in Institute, and the state to stay this execution of the Rehab Center in Institute, but I’m of the opinion these jobs are every bit as important as those we may create in gaming or energy. I think we ought to try our best to save them and create more.

Guthrie is a delegate from Kanawha County’s 30th District.

For more information on the Rehab Center, please contact Local 3248 through the Council 77 office.

“I think we ought to try our best to save them and create more.”

Federation unveiled new 2007 Executive PayWatch Website (www.paywatch.org) which details “how a flawed executive compensation system allowed CEOs in 2006 to collect excessive severance packages,” announced the AFL-CIO.

Information also provided in-depth look at ongoing stock options backdating scandal.

Through six case studies, 2007 AFL-CIO PayWatch site showed how executives benefited from large severance packages and stock options backdating at the expense of companies and their shareholders. For example,

Apple’s Steve Jobs’ \$1 salary was inflated by past equity awards, including backdated stock options, to one billion

dollars. “CEOs have rigged the rules of the game to enable rich paydays, regardless of their performance or even if they broke the law,” said AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka. “This year’s PayWatch is designed

to arm working people with the information and tools they need to demand real reform.”



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For a complete list of AFSCME Advantage benefits, go to this site on the web: <http://afscme.org/members/71.cfm>

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