

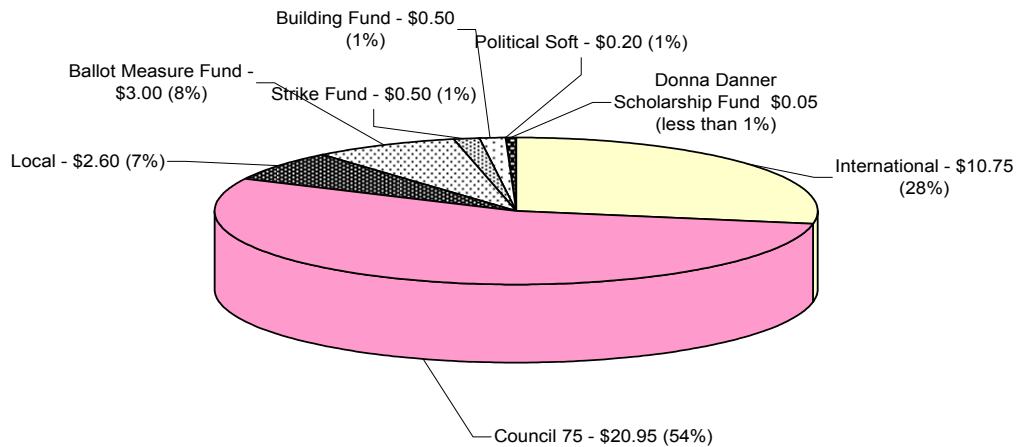


MAY 2007

YOUR DUES DOLLARS AT WORK...

**Distribution of AFSCME Council 75
Dues Money**

2007 Minimum Dues = \$38.55*



All unions are supported by dues paid by members. With most locals, you pay dues when a majority of members of your bargaining unit approve and ratify a first contract — which details the agreement between you and your co-workers and your employer on wages, benefits or other working conditions.

With AFSCME, workers have improved their jobs and the services they provide. AFSCME has negotiated more than 7,000 written agreements with better pay, benefits and working conditions. Employment standards vary from state to state and community to community, but AFSCME is familiar — and experienced — with all of them.

We have power at work by winning strong contracts and enforcing them through workplace actions and events. Our "collective bargaining" agreements cover pay, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment. By growing our membership, and participating in legislative and political action, we win stronger contracts.



*** YOUR HEALTH * YOUR SAFETY *
* YOUR UNION ***

The Bend office is currently on fire.” The email came through statewide one morning in late November. The electrical fire visibly damaged little more than ceiling tiles and a few file cabinets but in the days and weeks following, we learned lessons about the Agency’s emergency preparedness, Union-Management communications about health and safety, and both your Union’s and Agency Health and Safety resources. Since that time, we’ve been putting those lessons to positive use.

With the office cleaned of both the fires and the fire suppression’s effects, Bend staff returned to work. About twenty five percent of the Bend staff subsequently reported to the office steward, Steve Kirk, some kind of discomfort or health problem thought to be related to the fire or residue left behind after the first office cleaning. Your union, through Karen Williams Chief Steward, and Greg Aitken, deputy Chief Steward, requested air and surface sampling in the Bend office and that analytical results be shared with staff and your Union as soon as they were available. Bill Brown, former Local president, became our primary contact with Management. When the Agency did not produce the sampling results, bad feelings and suspicions emerged. We were not aware at the time that the Agency was considering breaking the lease for the Bend building and the Department of Justice had advised Agency Management not to discuss any evidence they might use to justify breaking the lease.

During this time, your Union made great use of AFSCME’s certified industrial hygienist (CIH), Denise Bowles, in Washington D.C. Only having our descriptions of the fire and cleaning to go on, she advised that no one work in the Bend office building until we had information on potential exposures and the office had been cleaned and sampled again. The Agency responded to your Union’s concerns, closed the office to staff, and set up temporary telecommuting arrangements so staff could work from their homes, other offices, or the emergency trailer brought to the parking lot.

Ms. Bowles could not visit Oregon until March, and by then we knew DEQ would not return to the former Bend office. But we put her expertise

to work with the visits to the Salem and Eugene offices where your Union was aware of indoor Air quality concerns. Union-Management communication about sampling and testing in Eugene is setting up to be a great model, thanks, in large part, to office steward Greg Aitken. On behalf of staff, Greg requested more staff input to the sampling plan and that the Agency respond to Denise Bowles’ recommendations from her visit. That collaborative work continues.

Through these experiences, your Union learned more about the importance of building leases and landlord response to our members’ health and safety. Bill Brown arranged a meeting with the DAS lease manager, your Union, Denise Bowles (via phone from D.C.), and Agency Management to review ways your Union and Agency Management can communicate better about leases as they relate to health and safety. Denise offered numerous suggestions for evaluating health and safety concerns before moving in to a building and putting certain standards (e.g. cleaning schedule for heating and air circulation systems) in lease agreements.

While some criticism of your Union’s handling of these health and safety issues emerged from both Staff and Management, we feel that these early 2007 experiences reminded us, once again, of how important frequent and clear communication and transparent decision making can be.

Karen Williams, Chief Steward

*** LABOR NEWS ***

We are in the midst of negotiating a new contract. Among all of the issues, among those most dear is salary and compensation. At Central Table, where most economic issues affecting all AFSCME represented state agencies are negotiated, we are requesting a six percent increase in the first year of the contract and a cost of living no less than 3% in the second year and a 10th step to take effect for everyone on July 1, 2007. We are awaiting the state’s response at this point. However this request is ultimately negotiated, we also bargain, beginning at our Local Table, for salary increases among selected classifications, "selectives".... in some classifications the salary posted in the schedule is out of sync with the marketplace for similar jobs or retention and recruitment issues have resulted in problems with hiring or keeping positions filled.

UPDATE...May 15, 2007

...At our last Central Table bargaining session, DAS came back with a modified proposal. This time they have offered a 2% salary increase but beginning on January 1, 2008 and another 2% increase but beginning on January 1, 2009. As with the last proposal, health insurance coverage would be picked up in the first year but only in the second year if costs did not increase more than 8%.

While this may sound like they have doubled their offer, from 1 to 2 percent, by moving the effective date to later in the year the net benefit to you from this apparent generosity is markedly reduced. More of the feedback I am getting is that a cost of living ought to actually reflect cost of living as well as the hits to compensation that we have taken over the past few years, e.g., PERS, freezes and despite fully paid health care, a weakening of health plan benefits. In light of all this the Local's Executive Board approved the formation of a strike committee, of which I am the chair.

This does not mean we are going on strike. It does mean that we are making the preparations to be able to go out on strike and be effective. It means that we will be taking steps in the meantime to show that we are serious about securing a good contract. It means that we will be developing strategies and actions to reach out to our fellow state employees. It means that we will be developing plans to help out those of us that will be hardest hit by a work stoppage. We have done parts of this before when we have done events like the Food Drive and all the special, inventive, creative and playful activities associated with that, but also the blood drives, the charitable giving and all the other heartfelt giving and service that always amazes and impresses me about my fellow workers.

It is scary but if we don't get organized our position will not be taken seriously and we will only be left with complaining. I need your help. We need your help. Please let me know if you are interested in being part of the strike committee.

responding with your private email address so that we can stay in touch through multiple means. We will also be communicating through the Member Action Team, the Local 3336 employee message board at <http://www.moovinup.com/> and phone trees

when needed. It would be helpful to have multiple avenues of contact.

Thank you for your support in the past. I will do my best for you. I really could use your help too.

Kevin Downing, AFSCME 3336 President

*** CONVENTION NEWS ***

The biennial convention for AFSCME Council 75, was held in not quite sunny Bend. **Bill Brown, Ben Maynard, Karen Williams, Jack Herbert** were in attendance. We learned about the "Next Wave", an exciting effort to engage young people (remember when we were?) in supporting and growing the union. We also helped move Council 75 to a progressive, rather than regressive, dues structure. And the most exciting part of the weekend was long-shot **Jack Herbert** coming through, defeating the incumbent, and being elected to the AFSCME Council 75 Executive Committee. Luckily for him, there were no babies to kiss but there was a lot of campaigning and schmoozing and Jack did a great job. He was able to convince people of his dedication, passion and commitment to working families, the environment and justice, something we have known about Jack for some time.

Not only that, but **Bill Brown** and **Ben Maynard** were also elected to positions on the Executive Board. These are continuing roles for these two on the Board and kudos to them that folks understand and appreciate the ongoing and continuing contributions they have made to the Council.

Oh, **Karen Williams** and I made our contributions to the efforts too but in less dramatic ways.

I am especially proud of our AFSCME members in their willingness to contribute to the common good in the workplace and elsewhere. Take a chance to thank your colleagues when you see them for their service.

Kevin Downing, AFSCME 3336 President



Get to know your bargaining members:

Greg Aitken – Western Region - Eugene
Sylvia Herrley- NW Region - Portland
Wes Risher – HQ
Terry Salinas – VI - Scappoose
Karen Williams – NW Region – Portland



View Points...Bus Operator Fired After Speaking Up on Organizing Rights

Less than a month after testifying at the State Capitol on the Oregon AFL-CIO's Freedom to Organize bills, and just nine days after asking the Bend City Council to urge his employer to recognize the union that a majority of employees voted for in January, **Bend Area Transit bus driver Russ Evans** was fired last week by the out-of-state contractor that runs Bend's transit operation.

Evans, a popular bus driver with a perfect driving record and elected leader of the BAT Unit of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757, was fired after driving an unfamiliar route at the direction of **Paratransit Operations Supervisor Ronnie Burnett**. The supervisor, who has previously singled out other pro-union drivers for disciplinary action, then rode on board the bus taking notes.

"When Russ traveled from Bend to Salem last month to testify in support of our Restoring the Freedom to organize package, he showed himself to be a great advocate for the rights of all Oregon workers, and a professional bus operator who was very proud of being able to help people through his work," said **Tom Chamberlain, President of the Oregon AFL-CIO**. "Nationwide, a third of employers facing union organizing drives will fire workers to scare the others. That's a shocking statistic, but it's more shocking when you look at just one great guy like Russ."

Evans acknowledged that he made some errors in judgment while driving on April 11, with Burnett on board the bus, but Evans and other drivers say that he did nothing illegal, nor damaged BAT property, nor compromised the safety of any passengers, but merely made a few poor choices under intense pressure. Other drivers have had accidents that they were at fault on, and made considerably worse errors than Evans did without

being fired, and at times weren't even disciplined. For more of this story, see [our web site](#).



Subject: Un-Perc Your Dry Cleaning

Anyone who has taken clothes to a dry cleaner has experienced it: that chemical smell when you remove the clothes from the plastic wrapping. Many of us wonder: Does that smell indicate we're being exposed to something harmful?

In fact, the chemical we smell is likely perchloroethylene (PCE or "perc"), which is bad for the environment, a health hazard for those who work at dry cleaning facilities, and for the communities where dry cleaners are located. Perc has been classified as a probable problem human carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer. More than 80% of all dry cleaners in the U.S. use perc.

As part of the City-County Sustainable Procurement Strategy, a group of fellow employees put together an educational flyer to help you find alternatives to perc-based dry cleaning. Whether cleaning your City uniforms or personal clothing items, we encourage you to explore alternatives to perc.
<http://www.portlandonline.com/shared/cfm/image.cfm?id=145790>



Jan Coomler, Editor
Kevin Downing, President
Jay Collins, Second Vice President
Karen Font Williams, Chief Steward
Josh Weber, Secretary
William Brown, Treasurer
At Large:
Jan Coomler Teresa Danovich, Dick DeZeeuw,
Jack Herbert, Terry Salinas

