

CWA 7076 Action

COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA



Summer's
END
2010

The Alliance Progress

New Mexico Organic Commodity Commission First Agency of Many to Restructure

Members Asked to Take Action Your Agency Could Be Next

What is happening with Restructuring and the 3.2% budget cuts in your agency? If you don't know yet you should be asking someone. Does your agency VP and union stewards know the answer? Are they asking questions from their agency HR representatives? The story coming out of NMOCC is the reason we should all be asking these questions.

For a tiny agency with three FTE all Union members and one on probation, NMOCC's issues are way out of proportion. The Restructuring Task Force has recommended the merger of NMOCC and NMDA and negotiations are continuing for the anticipated move. NMOCC is an agency covered by our union contract and New Mexico Department of Agriculture [NMDA] is not a union agency.

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As the Rich Get Richer Working Class Wonders - What Happened to the Pensions and Health Benefits?

Does it feel like every day there is a story in the news blaming public workers for higher taxes, less services, and the like? The truth is that tax rates are lower than they have been in decades. The rich are paying less than their fair share.

Recently there have been many stories of the very rich attacking the middle class and more specifically, public employees. The billionaires who own the media empires are blaming everyone but their fellow billionaires for the country's economic crisis. They argue that taxes

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Public Service Workers:

Once Champions of The Public Good, Why We're Being Cast as The Demons of Government Waste in 2010



School children singing, Pie Town, New Mexico, October 1940. Reproduction from color slide. Photo by Russell Lee. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

Showdown over Budget Cuts and Defending Public Services

Say the words "Public Service Employees" today and you're not likely to hear flattering comments from an American society that has been poisoned about the work we do.

Some of the false accusations are: pensions are too generous, compensation too lucrative, performance is inadequate, and the work unnecessary; although our efforts include protecting the public health and safety, educating America's youth, and safeguarding lands held in public trust for our children and grandchildren. And, of course, anti-

government extremists claim there are simply too many of us serving our nation.

Nonpartisan research shows public service employees at local and state levels earn 12 percent less than private sector counterparts do and about 50 percent of us have earned college degrees compared to 23 percent in the private sector. Anti-government radicals believe a 25-30 percent staff vacancy rate in New Mexico state government is just the beginning and that tax revenues supporting these public services (currently

at lowest levels in about 60 years) should be further slashed.

CWA Union Stewards battling in the trenches increasingly report that staff shortages continue to create stress among employees and that animosity is growing in the workplace. Co-workers feel they are being pitted against one another as salary, benefits, and choice job assignments are extended unequally. The fact is that in 2010 there are fewer nurses traveling the state to provide healthcare to citizens, although the number of citizens in need continues

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Join this group of fearless folks who have stepped up to leaflet, door knock, and phone bank our members throughout the state. For state government, everything is at stake in the upcoming election, and we need to educate our members on the difference between the candidates!

State coordinators are reaching out! Members are encouraged to volunteer between now and election day to talk to union members: Thomas Espinosa, CWA 7076 Executive V.P., is contacting Northern N.M. Union Members, Congressional District 3. Glenda Winterheimer from Local 7011 leads the effort for the Albuquerque area (Congressional District 1).

CWA's core program (and one that's tried and true) reaches out to our members 10 different times between now and election day. In Santa Fe, phone banks and walks are being coordinated by Labor 2010, 1420 Cerrillos Rd. and in Albuquerque, CWA's phone banking night is Thursday from 4 to 8 at AFSCME Council 18, 1202 Pennsylvania NE.

Contact Thomas: 505-652-0013
Contact Glenda at 505-266-5876

are too high and they seem to attack the men and women who provide the services that keep our communities safe, teach our children, treat the uninsured, pave our streets and keep our water clean.

Let's be very clear. This crisis was not caused by our librarians, corrections officer, teachers, health care workers, museum workers, or any other working heroes. This short sighted assault on public employees appeals to some and this year it is very important that we not buy into this rhetoric. It has been a difficult time for all workers, public and private. The

last thing we need is for public workers to turn on private sector workers or vice versa. Right now, more than ever, is the time to stick together and vote for the candidates who have workers' best interests in mind.

The fact that public employees have decent health benefits and pensions, now scarce in the private sector, is genuine cause for alarm. We should be bringing workers together so that all of us have health care and pensions. The solution is not for these benefits to be taken away from public employees. Of course these billionaires who control most of

the media are doing well, but we can't buy into their games. We have done it before and it is never in workers' best interests.

I know that it has been difficult for the last 2 years and it is tempting to "throw the bums out" and get new bums. The question now is: Are the new bums better? Do your research and VOTE this November for the candidates who appreciate public employees, not the candidates who believe we are disposable.

-- Jana Smith-Carr



L to R: Labor Endorsed Candidate for Governor Diane D Denish speaks with SFPS Student Quincy Conway while visiting CWA 7076 Union Hall to receive a check from the CWA Committee on Political Education Fund and the Local's Official Endorsement; Addressing students, faculty and staff of Central New Mexico Community College (CNM), a CWA 7076 represented facility

Candidates for Governor: Side by Side, On Union Family Issues

Denish vs. Martinez

Supports protecting public employees from layoffs, furloughs and wage cuts.

YES.
Diane won't layoff, furlough or cut wages of union workers.

NO.
Susana Martinez believes it's "acceptable" to have "draconian" layoffs, furloughs & wage cuts.

Pledges not to privatize public services.

YES.
Diane understands contracting -out costs more & delivers less.

NO.
Following the lead of Sarah Palin & other Republican governors, Susana Martinez will privatize public jobs & services.

Supports protecting your pensions.

YES.
Diane believes you should receive the pension you worked hard to earn.

NO.
Republican Susana Martinez says the state budget is "bloated by 50%." Large cuts will put pensions at risk

Private school vouchers and tuition tax credits hurt public schools.

YES.
Diane will use public money only for public schools.

NO.
Susana Martinez wants to give tax money to wealthy private schools and has said she supports "vouchers."

Student test scores should not be the sole criteria for teacher salary and retention.

YES.
Diane wants teachers evaluated on total classroom performance.

NO.
Susana Martinez wants to test several times a year and use tests alone for evaluation, salary and retention

Public education should be fully funded.

YES.
Diane knows we have to find the funds to invest in our children's future from pre-school through graduation.

NO.
Republican Susana Martinez says the state budget is "bloated by 50%," meaning large education cuts.

NM Office of State Engineers: *Twenty-Five Years Later!*

For the past eight months, inside committee members and other employees of New Mexico's Office of the State Engineer (OSE) have been organizing their workplace with the help of The State Employees Alliance—CWA Local 7076. Their efforts have met with growing success as many workers now support having a union and have put their signatures on the line to prove it. In Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and Las Cruces a majority of workers support the Union, which will be our continuing focus in all locations.



OSE Organizing Leaders!: Left to Right: Joe Montoya--Engineer Tech, Gary Storm--Attorney, Diana Hardy--IT and Susan Hoines--Hydrologist Advanced

As we close in on the magic number needed to achieve a majority, our committee looks at past aborted attempts to achieve a seemingly impossible goal stretching back 25 years and more recent attempts in 2004-05. Some committee members and supporters have participated in earlier campaigns. Others have increased their participation gradually, feeding off one another's enthusiasm but also being careful not to get euphoric with false hope.

Our organizing method has been simple: develop a strategy and be prepared to change or adjust it at a moment's notice. The first step was to find leaders who would form the foundation of the campaign. The next was to form an inside committee - which consists of workers from a wide range of disciplines such as technical, clerical, IT, legal, and engineering. We knew that unless our committee contained members from the whole spectrum of workers, we could hardly expect broad support across the state.

Despite the wide array of disciplines in OSE, many issues and concerns that workers confront are very similar. All workers want a voice at work and to be treated fairly and equitably by their supervisors. Subjective or irrelevant evaluations and reprimands without merit are just two examples of actions a Union can address.

Many OSE employees feel unappreciated, exploited, and most of all underpaid. They are tired of disparate treatment, favoritism, being passed over for promotions and pay increases, and the continued use of contractors even when classified workers could do the work. Many are expected to perform the work of 2-3 jobs after employees leave that will probably not be replaced. Workers are looking forward to exercising their rights under a Union contract, which would address the issue of working out of scope through contract language that can trigger desk audits.

State Personnel Rules are one thing, but backing them up with a

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ORGANIC Commodity cont. from page 1

All indications from LFC and DFA are that whether the move takes place or not, the only anticipated funding to be provided from General Fund to NMOCC in FY12 will be around \$23K. This \$23K figure includes the recent 3.2% cut as well as NMOCC's 37% reduction this fiscal year. This 37% reduction was the result of a number of small agencies having General Fund cut to \$25K regardless of size or need. It appears there was no financial analysis on the budgets. Now we are faced with the strong possibility that NMOCC will run out of funds before the end of the current calendar year.

According to Ricardo Gonzales from NMDA who is helping to make the move, NMDA cannot take on NMOCC without additional funding since, like everyone else, their own budgets were cut. However, NMDA was told by DFA that they cannot submit a new budget that includes NMOCC. DFA's reasoning, the legislative change necessary to incorporate NMOCC into NMDA has not occurred, so legally they have no right to include NMOCC in their fiscal plans. \$23K is not sufficient for NMOCC to remain independent or to be absorbed by NMDA but both NMOCC and NMDA are being instructed by LFC not to ask for more funds! Will this be the same process and instruction from the Legislature for other State Agencies being considered for restructuring? What does that mean for State Employee jobs?

Gonzales tells us at the fall LFC hearings, NMDA will be pushing for emergency legislation to transition by January 1, 2011. This is really the only way it can work since NMOCC's services are tied to the calendar year of farmers and not the fiscal year. Because these services are provided to clients twelve months of the year, professionally NMOCC can't accept fees from clients in early 2011 if it's uncertain NMOCC will be funded after July 1. Not only is this good customer service and a courtesy to clients (who are all NM taxpayers) but will protect the State from lawsuits for taking fees for services not rendered.

Staff is caught in the middle. Besides the possible problems in moving from PERA to ERA (loss of accrued benefits; increase in years of service necessary before retirement, etc) there is no guarantee of job retention.

A SPO representative contends that FTE staff must be laid off, then reapply to NMDA for the exact same jobs each has had for over ten years. The question arises for NMOCC employees, "If there are no funds, how do we know the positions will not be eliminated once moved into NMDA?" In addition, it's become clear that the services of NMOCC's CFO (a 17 year employee) will not be required by NMDA because NMDA has their own financial staff, but no one will come right out and say so.

We will continue to report on the situation with NMOCC as we learn more. We encourage all state employees to find out what is happening in your agency before it's too late to fight back.

**Log on to SEA-CWA.org,
Click the **ACTION ALERT****

Support The Organic Commodities Union Workers

With OVER 40 YEARS of combined service!

**Voice your opinion at the next Government
Restructuring Task Force September 16th and 17th**

***Public Employees Pay Taxes, We are Citizens of
New Mexico and We Vote!***

Contract really means something more. Because the State of New Mexico has signed the Contract jointly with the Union, the legitimate and legally enforceable rights and responsibilities of OSE employees will be protected against capricious actions.

Four of our OSE committee members offer their perspective on a unionized OSE: Diana Hardy says, "I want a union to represent and advocate for employees rights and to give us a voice for better working conditions." Susan Hoines adds that she "wants greater than zero influence on decisions about her professional life such as furloughs, layoffs." Joe Montoya believes that "having a union means feeling supported and not being alone without any backing."

Other workers share similar viewpoints voicing hopes that the Union contract offers a way to deal effectively with unfair managers, who are often backed up by HR, and with disciplines that fail to follow correct procedures without adequate evidence and notice. Most workers want an end to bullying, mobbing, and lack of respect for their dedication and hard work.

In the final phase of the OSE campaign, we are also receiving help from our Local's union brothers and sisters in the Department of Health and Environment Department.

Twenty five years is a long time to wait!

— Mark Esrig

to grow. Museums and cultural facilities must seek authorization to dip into reserves simply to pay the bills and keep doors open. Environmental inspectors suffer such serious staff shortages (especially in rural areas) that vital inspection of food and water, as well as septic and waste disposal systems, are dangerously behind. Paid holiday and fiesta leave either are under attack or have been eliminated.

Union brothers and sisters in the service of the public, we are in the fight of our professional careers to simply perform our assigned – and necessary – duties in the face of irrational under-staffing and decreasing critical resources. Yet each of us is to be applauded for continuing to hold our heads high while dodging eggs and vitriolic rhetoric thrown by the conservative right and blue dog centrists.

We may be called upon to absorb yet another THREE PLUS PERCENT cut in agency budgets, pay, and benefits. Union members must take the offensive now by standing up for ourselves and the quality

work we do. Public Service Employees are the reason the United States of America remains a first rather than third-world nation. Without your sacrifice, our streets would return to the lawless, wild west; food and water supplies would be unfit for human consumption; our children would be unable to aspire to achieving their American dreams; and, our environment would be further exploited in a race to the bottom dictated by greed and profit taking.

**THE TIME IS NOW
TO STAND OUR GROUND!**

Our opponents are relentless. Their activities know no rest. Simply stated, if you do not remain vigilant and get involved, we lose. Start NOW by going to the union website, read CWA 7076's talking points and begin to voice your opinion by writing your local newspaper and contacting your elected representatives by letter, e-mail, phone calls, and best of all, in person.

Remember there are over 25,000 Public Service Employees – and WE VOTE!

— M.D. Conway and S. Goold



CWA 7076
Representing 4,300 N.M.
Public Service Employees
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The Gulf is Back! Louisiana Shrimp Boil and Phone Bank

September 22, 5:00pm to 8:00pm
Center for Progress and Justice
1420 Cerrillos Rd., Santa Fe, NM

Make BP Spend it all, Ben Ray!
If you liked the Walk & Roll phone Bank
You'll LOVE the Shrimp boil!
Make Calls for Your Favorite Candidate!
Keep blowin up them Cellies!
Prizes for Completed Calls
Great Food!

DEMISE COLON LUJAN
LABOR 2010
EL NORTE'S TEAM

