

SEIU Local 517M E-Former – May 2010

Retirement Bills Proposed for School and State Employees

Legislation has been introduced that proposes changes to retirement system for both school and state employees. On Tuesday, April 27th the House passed the bill for school employees. At the time of this writing, no action has occurred on the state employee bill. A summary and the actual bill language can be accessed at:

http://www.seiu517m.org/Early_Retirement_Bills_for_State_and_School_Employees.aspx

Saginaw City Members Fight for Efficiency

SEIU Local 517M Region 1 Divisional Vice President Andy Johnson and City of Saginaw Chapter Leaders continue to demand meetings with city leaders to discount the flawed recommendations of Plante Moran and the city manager. These recommendations cut city positions and don't save the city money. Follow the story and read the recent Saginaw News Article about our struggle against misguided cost cutting measures at:

http://www.seiu517m.org/slg/region1/City_of_Saginaw_Members_Fight_For_Efficiency.aspx

Technical Unit Leadership Changes



Technical Unit President Jerry Ketchum resigned his post as Technical Unit President at the Technical Unit Board meeting on April 15, 2010. Vice President George Heath was elevated to President at that meeting and Kim Grezeszak takes over for Heath as Technical Unit Vice President. A special thank you goes out to Jerry for all his years of service to the union. (Picture L-R: Former President Jerry Ketchum passes the gavel to President

George Heath)

Technical Unit Education and Development Fund

There still is money available for technicians to take advantage of the Fund for training opportunities. Click here for more information:

<http://www.seiu517m.org/Admin/Assets/AssetContent/87657323-d468-4ff7-a068-4d93028fed5f/546bfa9e-94e2-495f-9d30-54cc81f55e47/ad96de16-1fa1-418a-a746-3f2c1f5f9379/1/TechEDTform111708.pdf>

Lobby Day to Be Held on May 6th

The Annual SEIU Local 517M Lobby Day at the Capitol will be held on May 6th. This is your chance to meet with your legislator and tell them your issues and thank those who voted for us on various issues including the state employee pay raise and retirement legislation. For more information, contact Steve Reck at sreck@seiu517m.org.

Human Services Support Unit Holds Flint Member Meeting

The HSS Division of SEIU 51M held a general membership meeting on Thursday, April 8, 2010 in Flint at the Michigan Works office. The agenda items discussed were: retention of 3% wage increase, FY 11, pending arbitration, the proposed reform of the retirement system and the

relocation of the fire door. More of the story at:
http://www.seiu517m.org/state/hss/HSS_Member_Meeting_in_Flint.aspx

State Retirees Regain Dependent Care Coverage

At the State Employees Retirement System Board meeting on April 15th the Board voted to reverse the decision made two years ago that eliminated health care benefits for certain dependents (Step-children, minors that retiree has guardianship for, students over the age of 23). The Board believed they were not given the correct information at the time they adopted federal dependency guidelines. The Board, after several meetings/discussion voted unanimously to reverse their 2008 decision. The Office of Retirement Services was told that they should be contacting those retirees who had been denied dependent coverage.

Golf Outing Registration is Now Open

The SEIU Local 517M 2010 Golf Outing will be held on Thursday, August 5th at Wheatfield Valley Golf Course in Williamston. More information available at:
http://www.seiu517m.org/SEIU_517M_2010_Golf_Outing.aspx

SEIU Local 517M Member Wins Wildlife Conservation Award



The 2009 Reeff Memorial Award winner is Shannon Hanna. Shannon is a Wildlife Biologist in the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment. The award is given to someone under the age of 35 for "outstanding services in the conservation of fish and wildlife resources." She regulates privately-owned elk and deer farms and worked very hard in 2008 to keep an outbreak of Chronic Wasting Disease from infecting the wild deer and elk populations. Congratulations to Shannon on her award and thank you for all your hard work protecting the natural resources of Michigan!

Scientific and Engineering Unit Layoffs

Four employees with high seniority were laid off in the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE). They worked in the Laboratory and were not permitted to bump employees with less seniority due to, "selective certification." Departments can determine that a position requires certain qualifications and request that the Department of Civil Service selectively certify that position. That means that any applicant, or in this case anyone involved in a reduction of force, must possess the specific qualifications to do that job in order to bump into it. It was determined that the four did not have those specific qualifications. The Union also questioned the claim of lack of funds. There was funding for specific positions but the Lab could show an overall decrease in funding. Unfortunately, the Employer has the right to determine which positions are eliminated and another arbitration award reinforced this right. It determined that all the Employer has to show is overall lack of funding and then it is their right to choose which positions they want to eliminate. That was the situation here. Grievances were filed but were not pursued to arbitration due to the lack of a contract violation. Selective certification is a classification issue and cannot be bargained or grieved and the Employer has the right to determine which positions to eliminate in a reduction of force as long as it isn't in a discriminatory manner. The Union has been notified of additional layoffs coming in the Office of Land and Facilities in the DNRE. Lengthy notification was given in the hopes that the employees can obtain employment in other areas prior to the actual layoff.