

## December, 2009 SEIU Local 517M E-Former

### New SEIU Local 517M Executive Board Sworn In



On Friday, November 20<sup>th</sup> Judge Douglas Shapiro from the Michigan Court of Appeals administered the Oath of Office to the newly elected SEIU Local 517M Executive Board. This was the Board's first meeting since taking office on November 1, 2009. They will serve a three year term.

### State Employee Bargaining Teams Meet To Discuss Possible Contract Changes



The bargaining teams and boards of the three SEIU 517M state employee units met on November 23, 2009 in Lansing to discuss whether the three Collective Bargaining Agreements should be opened to allow for modification. The Office of the State Employer has notified all state employee unions that there will have to be an additional \$50 million cut from state employment for

this current fiscal year. If no agreements are reached with the state unions, these savings will have to be made through a series of measures including permanent layoffs. SEIU Local 517M leadership and bargaining teams have now proposed alternative plans for cost savings measures that will be presented to all three bargaining units for formal ratification. Voting will be conducted electronically. Those wishing to vote via paper ballot may also request one by calling toll-free 866.517.7348 ext. 2078 or 517.267.2078. Voting will take place from Thursday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> and the votes will be tallied on Tuesday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>. An e-mail will go out to the membership with the links to the proposed agreement, the voting ballot and the information to request a paper ballot if desired.

### Taylor School Unit Coat Drive

The Taylor School unit held their annual coat drive called "Keeping Families Warm" in November to help needy families in the Taylor area. The drive ran for two weeks out of the Taylor Union Hall. Coats and winter clothing were donated from the membership and the community. Over 200 coats were collected and distributed. Our members were just wonderful and kept the hall filled for 2 whole weeks. We were able to do it because of all the help we had from our members — we could never do it without you!!!  
Again, THANKS!

### 2010-11 SEIU Scholarship Program is Now Available

The SEIU 2010-11 Scholarship Program application period has now started. It is open to SEIU members with three or more years of membership and their children. The applications must be postmarked by March 1, 2010. Scholarship winners will be notified in the late spring of 2010. All of the awards will be announced on SEIU.org in the fall of 2010.

Applications and all related information is available on the SEIU International website at:  
<http://www.seiu.org/a/members/fulfill-your-college-goals-with-an-seiu-scholarship.php>

## **Technical Unit Update**

The Technical Division of 517M has 29 Grievances filed to date, eleven files which are active and another two heading for review by the grievance committee. We have conducted one arbitration since the last Board meeting and have two others scheduled.

**Legal Representation Arbitration-** A member was involved in a traffic accident while driving the Employers vehicle. The Employer refused to pay for or engage the services of an attorney when the member was sued as a result of the accident. The issue was arbitrated and the Employer must either furnish the member an attorney or pay for an attorney to represent the member.

**Chapter Meetings/Worksite visits-** We have been holding Chapter meetings across the State for the past two months. (From Baraga, Escanaba and Newberry in the U.P. to Kalamazoo and Lansing.) We are continually trying to improve member communication and Chapter meeting and worksite visits have been a productive tool in reaching our members.

**Layoff/Bumping** - The Technical Unit has received notice from the Department of Environmental Quality of its intent to conduct indefinite layoffs within the Department commencing January 2010. This is in addition to members on indefinite layoff in the Department of Agriculture and DEQ earlier this year. We expect further layoffs across the State given the States structural revenue deficit.

## **COPE Blitz In Full Swing**

One hundred seventy seven members contributed to COPE (Committee on Political Education) for the 1<sup>st</sup> time. The recent COPE Blitz that runs through December has raised the level of conversation between members about political decisions and their jobs. As a result, members are realizing the importance of electing the right candidates to school boards, city councils, county commissions, the State Legislature, and Congress. These tough economic times make it all the more important to elect candidates who support the work of public employees. Tough political decisions are being made at all levels of government to cut, furlough, reduce benefits, contract out or privatize to balance budgets. Although budget shortfalls result in inevitable changes, the impact on members can often be minimized with help from politicians who we have supported and help get elected. For example, proposed elimination of the State's Wetland program was reversed with help from Legislators who listened to our members during our Lobby Day, Press conferences, and Get Active letters to their offices. Annette Switzer from DEQ says: "I would be out of a job right now. I support my Union being involved in politics as it has a direct impact to all of our jobs." The goal is 350 new COPE contributors. Please consider signing up for your COPE contribution. Contact Steve Reck at [sreck@seiu517m.org](mailto:sreck@seiu517m.org) for more information.

## **E-Mail from UNITE/HERE**

UNITE/HERE received state employee e-mail addresses through a Freedom of Information Request. UNITE/HERE is very upset that about 160,000 of their former members left their union and shortly thereafter voted to join SEIU. The UNITE/HERE is sending this type of stuff out all across the country. Most of their information is false or very misleading. Actually, SEIU offered to either negotiate a fair settlement with them or to use an outside arbitrator to resolve these issues. UNITE would not agree to either approach. Hopefully this will get resolved soon at the national level. We suggest that you delete the E-mail and not open it. Apparently, UNITE/HERE is using these emails as a way to generate mailing lists.