

SEIU Local 517M

Michigan Public Employees



SEIU Local 517M E-Former

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Lead, Unite, Fight – Win For the 99%!

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Notice of Layoff Received in Corrections

On July 23, 2013 SEIU received a notice of layoff for health care members in the Department of Corrections. This notice was done in accordance with the notice provisions set forth in the Scientific and Engineering and Technical bargaining unit contracts. Layoffs were projected to commence no earlier than August 23, 2013. Individual employees affected by the layoff will be receiving notices 14 days prior to implementation of the layoff. SEIU will be meeting in the near future to discuss the impact these layoffs will have on bargaining unit members.

Public Inspection of Tunnels Vital to Protecting Public Safety

The Federal Highway Administration, in fulfilling a key requirement of the current transportation authorization (MAP-21), recently released a Notice of Proposed Rule on National Tunnel Inspection Standards. The notice discusses the need for national tunnel inspection standards to ensure the safety of traveling public and lists tunnel disasters that could have been prevented if adequate inspections were performed. One of the projects mentioned was the infamous Central Artery/Tunnel Project in Boston, commonly referred to as the "Big Dig," which was designed, built and inspected by private companies. Shortly after the completion of the Big Dig Tunnel, five three-ton ceiling tiles collapsed, crashing down on a car killing a passenger and severely injuring the driver.

According to the resulting investigation, Bechtel/Parsons Brinckerhoff, the private corporation that was charged with inspecting the construction, failed to correct loose epoxy bolts designed to hold up the ceiling panels. After installation, Bechtel/Parsons Brinckerhoff tested the integrity of only 187 out of 1,000 bolts. Although 10 percent of those failed testing requirements, Bechtel/Parsons Brinckerhoff stopped further testing of the remaining bolts, including on the section of the ceiling that would eventually collapse.

In the coming weeks, NASHTU will draft public comments on the proposed National Tunnel Inspection Standards. FHWA's proposed standards include a requirement that state and federal agencies inspect or cause to be inspected all tunnels that are fully or partially located within their jurisdiction. NASHTU's comments will cover the need for inspection to be performed by public servants who are loyal to the public. Inspectors are the eyes, ears and voice of the public. Inspectors ensure that construction standards are met, that projects meet safety requirements and that the materials used will stand the test of time. They are there to ensure

that the motoring public gets what they pay for and public safety and the public interest are protected.

When the construction inspection function is outsourced to a private company, there is no longer a representative of the public on the job site. David M. Walker, the former Comptroller General of the United States from 1998 to 2008, described the issue in a *New York Times* article: **“There’s something civil servants have that the private sector doesn’t, and that is the duty of loyalty to the greater good – the duty of loyalty to the collective best interest of all rather than the interest of a few. Companies have duties of loyalty to their shareholders, not to the country.”**

Public comments on the notice are due September 30, 2013.

[Click here to read the entire Notice of Proposed Rule on National Tunnel Inspection Standards.](#)

State Employee Unit Specific Bargaining to Commence

The three state employee bargaining units will begin negotiating with the State over unit specific issues starting with a kick-off meeting on August 8th. These negotiations handle the topics of the contract that are not covered under the spectrum of economic issues such as wages and benefits. Economic bargaining is covered under separate bargaining sessions which, in the past, have been done in coalition with the other state employee unions. There is no timetable on the start of those negotiations.



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