

The Guardian

News from the Hardworking Men and Women of the Department of Corrections

Members of Teamsters Local 117

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Union Demands Answers Over Announced Layoffs at DOC



"Layoffs would have a profound impact on our members and their families, our communities, and the integrity of the institutions themselves."
- Tracey A. Thompson, Secretary-Treasurer Teamsters Local 117

Teamsters Local 117 has demanded that State negotiators fulfill their legal obligation and meet with the Union bargaining team to discuss the extent of proposed layoffs at DOC, explore alternative options and to mitigate their impact on its rank-and-file members.

"Before the State starts slashing jobs at DOC, it needs to think long and hard about the affect layoffs will have on the safety and welfare

of its employees, not to mention the integrity of the institutions themselves," said Teamsters Local 117 Secretary-Treasurer, Tracey A. Thompson.

The State says it is considering layoffs at DOC institutions across the State as a means of dealing with DOC's current biennium budget deficit as well as the State's \$6.7 billion 2009-2011 deficit.

Upon hearing of the State's

intention to layoff workers as early as February, Local 117 immediately responded with a demand to bargain. Meetings are scheduled for January 21 in Monroe, over proposed changes at the Monroe Correctional Complex (MCC), and January 27, over proposed changes at the Washington State Penitentiary (WSP).

Your Union team is committed to maximizing your negotiated rights

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Unfair Labor Practice Charges Over Contract Negotiations Move Forward

State Bargaining in “Bad Faith”

The parties are close to agreeing on dates for the hearing on the Unfair Labor Practice Charge that your Local Union has filed with the Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) over the State’s failure to bargain a 2009-2011 contract in good faith. The Hearing will most likely be conducted in March of this year. Once the hearing dates are finalized we will get them out to the members.

Teamsters Local 117 filed the charges back in early November when it became clear that the State was engaging in take-it-or-leave-it “pattern bargaining.” On November 19, your Union bargaining team came prepared to bargain a 2009-2011 labor agreement. But in that meeting, the State claimed that it was “limited to negotiating a one-year (2010-2011) contract,” yet came without a proposal of any kind, which we believe is further evidence of a pattern of bad faith bargaining.

“The November 19 meeting was a ruse,” said Teamsters Local 117 Secretary-Treasurer, Tracey A. Thompson. “They did not come to bargain. They offered no proposal and they continue to deal with us in bad faith.”

Since then, PERC has stated that your Local Union’s complaints may have merit and has demanded that the State respond.

The State has now been forced to respond to the Union’s charges and, in a conference call with the PERC and the Attorney General’s office, the two sides have agreed to the hearing dates in early February.

Before a hearing takes place, however, your Local Union is going to mediation with the State, a process which is being scheduled for the week of February 16, 2009. We will be calling on rank-and-file members of your contract bargaining team for involvement in the process. Stay informed by talking to your Business Representative and by continuing to monitor your Local Union’s website at www.teamsters117.org.

Layoffs

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and job security and to enforce those rights during the budget reduction process. As soon as your Local Union has more information regarding proposed layoffs, we will work quickly to make it available.

Comprehensive Legal Strategy in Place

In addition to issuing a demand to bargain, Local 117, through the work of both staff attorneys and outside legal counsel, has developed an aggressive state-wide legal strategy to oppose layoffs. The strategy will include time-sensitive actions that, to be most effective, will require both an element of surprise and high member involvement. Actions will take place shortly after they are announced.

For this reason, it is critical that all members make an effort to stay informed. Talk to your Business Representative and Shop Stewards, check your Union bulletin board, and follow the daily updates on the new DOC News Ticker at the Local 117 website at www.teamsters117.org.

For Regular Updates - Check the DOC News Ticker

For regular updates on bargaining, the State budget crisis, your Union’s Unfair Labor Practice Charge, and membership mobilization efforts, go to your Local Union’s website at www.teamsters117.org and become a registered user of the site by clicking on the link that says, [click here to sign up](#).

