



NEWS FROM **Teamsters Local Union 117**

14675 Interurban Ave., S., Suite 307, Tukwila, WA 98168
LU 117 - (206) 441-4860 FAX (206) 441-3153

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Contact:
Paul Zilly (206) 794-6673
Teamsters Local Union 117

TEAMSTERS VOW TO WORK WITH COUNTY TO CONTAIN COSTS, SOLVE STRUCTURAL MESS

(Seattle, WA) – Teamsters Local 117, a labor organization that represents approximately 1500 employees at King County, responded to King County Executive Dow Constantine’s announced wage freeze for his staff for 2011 by saying that the Union is prepared to work with the County to contain costs and help solve the County’s ongoing structural problem.

“We understand the gravity of the County’s budget crisis and, as we have done in the past, we are prepared to work with the County to help contain costs, but we are also committed to negotiating a fair contract for our members,” said Teamsters Local 117 Secretary-Treasurer, Tracey A. Thompson.

In 2009, County employees agreed to pay more for their health care, a gesture that will save the County \$37 million over the next three years. County employees also agreed to take 10 furlough days in 2009, which amounted to a pay cut for thousands of County workers. Several County programs were eliminated entirely in 2009 and many employees lost their jobs. “To suggest, as the Seattle Times has done in numerous editorials over the past several months, that County employees have not made significant sacrifices during this economic downturn is simply untrue,” Thompson said.

The Teamsters say they are also committed to solving the ongoing structural problem at King County that has led to expenditures outpacing revenues over the last several years. “County employees did not cause this problem, as the media and some politicians incorrectly suggest,” Thompson said. Thompson pointed to an increased demand for services, misguided Eyman-style voter initiatives, and State law that hamstring the County from implementing progressive tax reform as the core issues.

A first step in solving the underlying problem, the Teamsters say, would be passage of the sales tax measure that has been proposed by the County Executive and endorsed by law enforcement advocates, such as King County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Satterberg and others. “Instead of pointing fingers, we need to work together to find equitable solutions that include both cost containment and structural reform,” Thompson said.