



# Teamsters South Sound

Members of Teamsters Local 117



Teamsters Local 117: 14675 Interurban Ave. S, Suite 307 • Tukwila, WA 98168 (206) 441-4860 • www.teamsters117.org

## CITY OF TACOMA PUTS JOBS, SERVICES AT RISK

Cuts would have devastating impact on city services



Teamsters at the Public Assembly Facilities.

Is our beloved T-Town headed toward the list of unlivable cities? It appears so, if City officials have their way.

Instead of dealing constructively with its budget deficit as other cities have by taking steps to close tax loopholes, the City is proposing slashing critical services and cutting jobs.

Last year, the City sent out 167 layoff notices to its employees, including 47 to fire department employees and 48 to police employees.

Members of Local 117 were spared during the first round of layoffs, but perhaps no longer. This summer, the City indicated that it is preparing to eliminate many more positions, including up to 65 Teamster jobs.

Layoffs would come at the Public Assembly Facilities (PAF), the Tacoma Public Library, and the Tacoma General

Unit. Some members have already received impact notices by mail; layoffs are expected in December, in the middle of the holiday season.

Eliminating more jobs would have a devastating impact on city services. In a recent survey, Tacoma voters identified basic street maintenance and public safety as its top priorities, yet proposed cuts would cripple the City's ability to maintain Tacoma's roads and keep roads safe during snow emergencies.

### FIGHTING TO SAVE JOBS & MAINTAIN SERVICES

In light of the crisis, your Local Union is working hard to save jobs and mitigate the impacts on members. We have been engaged in discussions with the City, and are in the process of developing cost-cutting proposals that could prevent some layoffs.

We have also been active in Olympia, working to beat back proposals that would have further drained city coffers by reducing the streamline sales tax mitigation.

**But we need your help. Contact Mayor Strickland and the City Council at 253-591-5100 and tell them to restore funding to public works.**

**The City of Tacoma is still a top flight city. Let's make sure it stays that way!**

## TACOMA JOINT LABOR HOLDING FIRM ON HEALTH CARE

City proposes degrading benefits

Teamsters Local 117, along with a number of South Sound unions, is currently involved in bargaining over members' health care benefits as a part of Tacoma Joint Labor.

Impacted Local 117 units include the City of Tacoma, the Public Assembly Facilities (PAF), the Tacoma City Library, and possibly the Law Enforcement Support Agency (LESA).

Bargaining thus far has been contentious. All of the proposals the City has presented have been concessionary in nature. If the City has its way, health care costs for members and their families will rise, and the quality of care will be reduced.

Tacoma Joint Labor is standing strong, fighting to protect benefits, and not take a step toward steady decline.

### LOOKING FOR CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

Labor negotiators do acknowledge the budget crisis at the City, however, and are exploring all options to trim costs, including the possibility of moving to a less expensive plan that would provide comparable benefits.

Your Union has requested demographic information on employees currently covered under the City's plan in order to compare it on the open market.

**If you have questions about the status of health care negotiations, please talk to your Business Representative.**

## In Our View

# PUBLIC EMPLOYEES, UNIONS KEY TO OUR ECONOMIC SUCCESS

## What the history of organized labor can teach us about economic recovery

**W**hy are unions, particularly public-sector unions, important to the overall socio-economic health of our nation?

This question came to us in an email from a committed union member employed at the City of Tacoma, and it is deserving of an answer.

After all, with less than 8% of private sector workers organized, public employees – nurses, counselors, correctional employees, bus drivers, librarians, maintenance workers, police officers, and others – constitute the bulk of unionized workers in this country.

They are the remainder of a shrinking middle class that has been under attack for the last 40 years.

If public employees do not recognize the value of unions to our economic stability and vote accordingly, organized labor will surely shrivel and die on the vine. The conditions for workers that will result will be dreadful, the American dream unattainable, and society at large will continue to decay.

So what is the value of unions to our economic prosperity and how can we keep from heading toward the abyss? To answer that question, we need to look no further than our country's own history, in a time before the rise of unions.

### LABOR HISTORY AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

In the early part of the 20th century, working people were living in misery and despair. Wealthy robber barons and their political stooges were blocking legislation that would provide a social safety net – unemployment insurance, affordable housing, social security, and an end of home and farm foreclosures. The wealthiest 1% was reaping 24% of the national income. The rich were living high on the hog, while the working poor and unemployed were standing in bread lines. In the mid-1930s, working people rose

up and demanded change. Through demonstrations, sit-ins, and general strikes, they won major reforms, including the right to organize, social security, unemployment insurance, public assistance, protection against foreclosures, regulation and controls over banks and financial institutions. It was a new day for America's working people and the poor.

The percentage of unionized workers leapt from 14% to 28% between 1936 and 1938 alone. In the ensuing decades, the percentage of organized workers would rise even higher, and unions would help



build a strong middle class. Working families could afford to buy a home, save for retirement, and send their kids to college. America became an economic powerhouse of middle-class prosperity.

### THE ATTACK ON ORGANIZED LABOR

Then, starting in the mid-seventies, things began to unravel. Corporations began to challenge workers' right to organize, and they started using new tactics to crush unions. Over the next forty years, union density would decline from 35% at its height to less than 12% today.

It is not surprising that the decline in union density correlates to a rise in the poverty rate, stagnating wages for workers, and the bankrupting of the middle class.

History is repeating itself. Just as they did in the 1920s, the wealthiest 1% now consumes nearly 25% of the national income. Many of the same economic conditions – income inequality,

deregulation, corrupt financial institutions – that led to the Great Depression in the 1930s precipitated the Great Recession of the last few years.

We are now at a crossroads.

Corporate billionaires, like the Koch brothers, together with their political cronies, are waging an all-out war on unions. They have made public employees the scapegoat for our economic woes.

They want to slash your wages and benefits, and take away your right to bargain collectively over wages, hours, and working conditions. They launched their anti-worker crusade in Wisconsin and have moved from state to state, around the country. Indeed, they are on our doorstep, right here in Washington State.

(Make no mistake - if the wrong candidates are elected this November, public employees will see a vicious assault on their rights as union members.)

### WORKERS ARE FIGHTING BACK

While these modern day robber barons have had some limited success in curtailing workers' rights, they could not have anticipated the tremendous backlash that would occur.

Workers, both in the private and public sector, have begun to fight back, by organizing, demonstrating, and flexing their muscle at the ballot box in an effort to elect candidates whose values are aligned with those of working families.

Recently, at Local 117, Teamsters at Davis Wire, Waste Management, United Natural Foods Inc., the Department of Corrections, and workers at many of our cities and counties have taken a stand and fought back against powerful interests intent on destroying labor and the middle class.

If we as union members are going to stem the anti-worker tide so that we can recover economically and return to a time of more equitable, shared prosperity, we must band together and join them in their fight.

*\* Credit goes to Mark McDermott for the research on which this article is based.*

# MEMBERS AT CITY OF KENT TO VOTE ON PENSION INCREASE

## Another step toward a secure retirement



Local 117 members at the City of Kent will have a safety net in the Teamsters Pension when they retire.

**A**fter voting in the Teamsters pension earlier this year, members at the City of Kent have another opportunity to strengthen their retirement security.

On October 11, members will take a new vote on whether to boost their pension contributions by 25 cents, which would effectively double their contribution rate.

"I think it's something the majority of the guys want to do," said Paul Johnson, a Shop Steward and 13-year city employee.

"For me, it's a no-brainer. There's nothing like it on the market, especially with the 2 for 1."

The 2 for 1 program was set up by the Western Conference of Teamsters Pension Trust to encourage new groups into the pension. It provides that, for every one year of vesting service, a member receives two years of past service for a maximum of ten years.

The program will allow many long-term employees to triple their benefit over the first five years.

"I tell the guys, 'We want to put in as much as we can now so that we can maximize the 2 for 1 benefit,'" Johnson said. "It's another step toward a secure retirement, another check in the mail. And who knows if Social Security is going to be around when we retire?"

### PENSION PRESENTATIONS AVAILABLE

If other Teamsters in the South Sound are interested, your Local Union can set up a presentation with a professional representative to answer your questions about the pension.

*Information about the pension is also available at [www.wctpension.org](http://www.wctpension.org) or by talking to your Business Representative.*

# TURMOIL AT THE CITY OF PACIFIC

## Mayor's antics leave City employees flummoxed and fuming

**I**t's been a rocky ride for Teamsters at the City of Pacific ever since Mayor Cy Sun catapulted into office after winning a write-in campaign by 64 votes. Since taking office, the mayor has errantly fired department heads, forced others to resign, and put the City in danger of losing its insurance.

In early September, City Attorney Kenyon Luce petitioned for a court mandate to require Sun to fill vacant staff positions. A Pierce County judge recently ordered the mayor to fill eight key positions.

In July, Sun was arrested by his own police force - members of Teamsters Local 117 - for illegally attempting to gain entrance into the city clerk's office, where he had allegedly destroyed public records.

The Mayor's conduct has spurred a recall effort, and a vote of no confidence by the City Council and Union members alike. It has also required vigilant, aggressive representation by Teamster Business Representatives and support from the Local 117 Legal Department.

"If there was ever a reason to have strong Union representation as a public employee, look no further than the City of Pacific," said Tracey A. Thompson, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 117

Local 117 represents public works, clerical and uniformed employees at the City.

## Congratulations!

# LOCAL 117 MEMBERS: WELCOME TO LABOR COUNCIL!

### NEW PCCLC DELEGATES

**Robert Bruner**, Davis Wire

**DeWayne Collins**, SCS

**Alfredo Espino**, Simon Metals

**Debra Gibson**, Workforce Central

**Carolyn Goolsby**, Tacoma Public Library

**Cody Harris**, Fred Meyer

**Aaron Jones**, City of Fife

**T**eamsters Local 117 is proud to be sending a whole host of members to serve as new delegates on the Pierce County Central Labor Council (PCCLC). The PCCLC is a vibrant organization dedicated to uniting all local unions throughout Pierce County. Delegates attend monthly meetings every second Wednesday of the month and serve on one of four work groups: community, political, education, and special events. The PCCLC's signature event is Solidarity Day, which takes place at the Point Defiance Zoo in August every year. One delegate position is still currently available. If you are interested in becoming a delegate on the PCCLC, please contact Local 117 Contract Campaign Coordinator Brenda Wiest at 206-441-4860.



# ELECTION 2012

## Stand with the American Middle Class



Local 117 member, Robert Bruner

**W**orking families and middle class jobs are under attack all across the country. From the attack on collective bargaining rights in Wisconsin to the squeeze on municipal employees, recycle drivers, and workers at Davis Wire right here in Washington State.

One of the most important ways to stand up and confront these attacks is through the ballot box.

"If we let Wall Street banks and private insurance companies rig the system, how will the next generation of Americans pay their mortgages and take care of their families?"

asks former Army Sergeant Robert Bruner.

For 15 years Sgt. Bruner put up with dangerous working conditions at his job at Davis Wire in Kent.

"No lunch breaks, 10-12 hour shifts without stopping for weeks in a row, fingers cut off, arms twisted like twizzle sticks."

So Sgt. Bruner and 83 of his coworkers went on strike, taking on Davis Wire's owner, billionaire Michael Heisley.

"My future, the future of America's middle class, is on the line. That's why I'm voting for candidates who stand up for hard working middle class folks like us."

Stand with Robert Bruner and cast your vote for candidates who have pledged to defend the middle class and make the wealthiest 1% pay their fair change.

### NOT REGISTERED? REGISTER ONLINE!

To register to vote online, go to Washington's Secretary of State's website at <http://www.sos.wa.gov/>.

Visit your Local Union's website at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org) and learn about who your Local Union is endorsing to stand with Sgt Bruner and defend the middle class.

To volunteer for voter registration drives, phonebanking, or get-out-the-vote activities, contact Local 117's Legislative Affairs Department at 206-441-4860.

## Local 117 Political Endorsements

### LOCAL ENDORSEMENTS:

PIERCE COUNTY COUNCIL - POS. 6  
Ann Dasch

PIERCE COUNTY ASSESSOR  
Billie O'Brien (Local 117 member!)

### JUDICIAL ENDORSEMENTS:

STATE SUPREME COURT POS. 9  
Sheryl Gordon-McCloud

### STATEWIDE ENDORSEMENTS:

GOVERNOR  
Jay Inslee

STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
Bob Ferguson

STATE INSURANCE COMMISSIONER  
Mike Kreidler

SECRETARY OF STATE (DUEL)  
Kathleen Drew  
Greg Nickels

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVE, WA  
1ST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Suzan DelBene

10TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Denny Heck

### STATE LEGISLATURE

STATE SENATOR, DISTRICT 2  
Bruce L. Lachney

STATE REPRESENTATIVE, DISTRICT 25  
Bill Hilton  
Dawn Morrell

STATE REPRESENTATIVE, DISTRICT 26  
Karin Ashabraner

STATE REPRESENTATIVE, DISTRICT 27  
Laurie A. Jinkins  
Jacob C. Fey

STATE SENATOR, DISTRICT 27  
Jeannie L. Darneille

STATE REPRESENTATIVE, DISTRICT 28  
Tami J. Green  
Eric C. Choiniere

STATE REPRESENTATIVE, DISTRICT 29  
David Sawyer

STATE REPRESENTATIVE, DISTRICT 31  
Christopher Hurst

STATE REPRESENTATIVE, DISTRICT 33  
Tina Orwall  
David Uptegrove

STATE REPRESENTATIVE, DISTRICT 47  
Bud Sizemore  
Patrick Sullivan

## LOCAL 117 EVENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**October 8, 2012** - Last day to register to vote

**November 6, 2012** - Election Day

**November 17, 2012** - Local 117 Blood Drive

**December 20, 2012** - Holiday Membership Meeting

### FOLLOW YOUR LOCAL UNION ON THE WEB!



Join your Union's Facebook page, follow us on Twitter @teamsters117 and watch Local 117 videos on YouTube!

For more Teamsters news, visit the Local 117 website at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org). Connect with Local 117 members on Facebook or follow your Union on Twitter at @teamsters117.