



# Teamsters South Sound

Spring 2014

For members of Teamsters 117 in Pierce and South King County

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

By Christopher Ott

## TEAMSTERS VOLUNTEER TO RESTORE HISTORIC STREET SPRINKLER

City employees showcase their proud heritage as Teamsters



Historic water wagon to appear in Teamsters Car Show on June 21.

Street sprinklers were invented in the 1850s as a means to suppress airborne dust on unpaved roads.

Street sprinkling was necessary because the accumulation of manure and horse urine, as well as other foul and vile contributions from overflowing cesspools and the like, was considered a health hazard by physicians. They feared tuberculosis, cholera, and even polio could be transmitted by breathing the offensive smelling dust coming off city streets. Of course, it was also a nuisance for business owners and shopkeepers as the dust settled on everything from desktops to farm fresh produce, sometimes making the latter completely worthless. Sprinkling the streets was absolutely necessary to keep the dust at bay.

Street sprinkling wagons were operated by **Teamsters** who filled the tanks from hydrants and traveled slowly up one side of the street and down the other, dampening the ground along the way. Some entrepreneurs operated their own

wagons and contracted for the service while larger cities usually assumed responsibility for protecting public health and safety. Such was the case at the **City of Tacoma**. They had several sprinkling wagons operating near the turn of the century.

Recently, one of these wagons was found hiding under a tarp in a maintenance yard out at Point Defiance Park. It's believed to be one of the wagons that

was operated by the **Street Maintenance Division of Public Works**. The assumption is that Street Maintenance, as it was then called, probably gave the street sprinkler to the fledgling Metropolitan Parks Department after the Division switched to motorized trucks and the City's streets were paved. The Parks Department used it to keep the dust down on Five Mile Drive in Point Defiance Park.

Metro Parks has returned the wagon to the City of Tacoma and City employees, many of whom are members of Teamsters Local 117, have volunteered to work on the wagon's restoration after hours without compensation. They're doing this to showcase their proud heritage as Teamsters and to shed light on the long history of Public Works in Tacoma.

When completed, the wagon may be used in parades or could be displayed at the **Western Washington Fair** in Puyallup and other events. It was featured at the

see **TEAMSTER WAGON**, Page 2

## LET'S HELP PAINT TACOMA BEAUTIFUL!

A call for Local 117 volunteers!



Make a difference in your community!

Since 2010, members of Teamsters 117 have helped paint the homes of elderly homeowners as a part of the **Paint Tacoma-Pierce Beautiful** program, and we are looking for volunteers again this year.

Founded in 1985, Paint Tacoma-Pierce Beautiful organizes volunteer crews to paint the exteriors of homes of low-income, elderly, and disabled homeowners in Tacoma, Lakewood, and communities throughout Pierce County. Since 1985, a total of 2,119 homes have been painted. In 2013, more than 500 volunteers helped paint 37 houses! Local 117 has painted 4 houses through the program.

This is a great way Teamsters can help build stronger communities. It's a lot of fun, hard and rewarding work, and it will provide you with an opportunity to get to know other members of the Local. You don't need previous experience as a painter to help out.

**To volunteer or for more information, contact Brenda Wiest at 206-441-4860 ext. 1256.**

By Maria Harvold

# A PLAN TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF WORKING PEOPLE

## Local 117 Rolls out its Strategic Plan for the next three years



Teamster-supported workers at ExtraCar

**G**iven the onslaught of attacks on labor, unions are far too often forced into a corner, dodging punches left and right. This forces us into a reactionary position, trying to stave off the next blow.

One of the ways that Local 117 avoids getting trapped into this cycle of reactivity is by engaging in a comprehensive strategic planning process every three years.

Last September, the Local began planning for a new three year cycle. After taking a long hard look at some of our internal strengths and weaknesses as well as our external threats and opportunities, we were able to develop a series of priorities and goals. For the 2014-2016 period, the Local has identified following four priorities and goals:

- **Membership Involvement.** Our goal is to make a fundamental shift in approaching representational work as a service-based organization to one that emphasizes internally strengthening our membership, actively pursuing and developing member leaders, and improving overall membership participation, without sacrificing representation.
- **Organizing/Growth.** Our goal is to build a foundation for engaging in successful external organizing.

- **Coalition Building and Community Strength.** Our goal is to continue to strengthen our relationship with present and future coalition partners and to assess our various community connections to determine how to best leverage them to impact meaningful change for our members and working class people.
- **Politics/Legislation.** Our goal is to improve the overall structure and focus of our political program and increase participation at all levels of the political/legislative process.

Although accomplishing some of these short and long-terms goals will be targeted towards the specific priority, they are all connected. For example, successful external organizing can only be furthered when members are actively involved and when we have coalition partners and friends in the community and/or the right piece of legislation or legislator to advocate on behalf of unorganized workers. In fact, it is the overlap among the priorities where our true power in planning lies because we are able to approach all of this work in the context of our broader vision: **To lead the resurgence of the labor movement in the Pacific Northwest.**

In some ways, it is essential that we do have the kind of flexibility to respond quickly, ready to defend against the latest unjust termination, threat of lockout, or bogus piece of legislation. Our ability to react makes us a formidable opponent, yet in strategic planning, we have the unique opportunity to plan ahead, set big goals, and ensure that they don't get lost along the way. Now, the real challenge lies ahead – making the plan come to life and putting "action" into words.

**Are you ready to step up and be involved?** ●

## TEAMSTER WAGON

Cont. from page 1

American Public Works Association of Washington (APWA-WA) Spring Conference in Tacoma in April and is scheduled to appear at the **Teamsters Car & Bike Show** in Tukwila on June 21.

**The Local 117 Executive Board authorized a contribution to the water wagon restoration. If you would like to volunteer or contribute funding for the restoration, please contact Chris Ott at [cott@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:cott@cityoftacoma.org) or 253-591-5929.** ●

## DON'T WORK OFF THE CLOCK!

Be sure you get your statutorily-required meal and rest breaks



**I**f you are an hourly employee and you're not on the clock, you shouldn't be working. It's as simple as

that. It doesn't matter how much you have to get done. Starting early or working through your lunch is not an option. It sets a bad precedent for your work group, and it could even lead to discipline.

Some managers have stopped turning a blind eye to the practice and have started cracking down on people who are not reporting time worked. If your supervisor tries to make you work off the clock, he or she is in violation of Washington State wage and hour laws, and you should report it to your Business Representative immediately. ●

*In Our View*

# OUR PUBLIC SERVANTS DESERVE RECOGNITION

*By Tracey A. Thompsen, Local 117 Secretary-Treasurer  
Published in the Everett Herald - May 23, 2013*

**May 4-10 was Public Service Recognition Week. In recognition of our public sector members, Local 117 Secretary-Treasurer Tracey Thompsen published the following guest editorial in the Everett Herald on May 5 drawing attention to the heroic work our members perform in serving our communities.**



**W**hen the magnitude of the Oso mudslide tragedy became apparent, a group of State correctional officers, of their own volition, answered the call for volunteers to help in the disaster relief effort.

Sergeant Jimmy Fletcher of the Monroe Correctional Complex wrote about his experience:

*"The physical demands were the hardest I have been involved with in my life. Just for my team to go a hundred yards took 45 minutes because we were constantly doing self-rescues on our own teammates. A good number of volunteer search teams were off-duty first responders such as medics, fire fighters, police,*

*corrections, and the military. The dedication of the volunteers was very comforting. Each one was flying some form of insignia from their own department to show support and respect for the families of the victims and of course the victims themselves."*

The Oso mudslide cut short the lives of at least 41 people, but it didn't quell the spirit of those afflicted by the disaster. It made a close-knit community even closer – neighbors, families, friends, and co-workers came to each other's aid. Everyone pitched in to help out. It also called into action thousands of our country's finest – men and women who make their careers serving the public. In all, 211 agencies – local, county, federal, tribal, charitable organizations, as well as the business community - were involved in the relief effort.

"The heart of these people is incredible – they're not giving up," said Stephanie Shook, a records specialist at the City of Pacific Police Department who was dispatched to the scene in her capacity as a public information officer. After several days of exhausting work, Shook volunteered to redeploy over the Easter holiday weekend to escort the local and national media who were

covering the incident. She willingly signed up to return, even after she had fallen into a sinkhole the week earlier and had to be rescued by the National Guard.

Like the other brave men and women who responded to the call, she risked her life to aid the families stricken by the disaster.

Shook and Fletcher are no strangers to service. As public safety professionals, they have made a career of putting their lives on the line to protect our communities. For them, serving the public is second nature. When disaster strikes, as it did in Oso, they answer the call of duty, in their official capacity, or as volunteers, making personal sacrifices to the benefit the greater good.

The first week of May is Public Service Recognition Week (PSRW). The theme for PSRW 2014 is Proud to Serve. Public servants deserve our deep gratitude for the work they do in providing vital services to our communities. They clear our streets during snow emergencies, maintain our roads, clean up our parks, and keep our communities safe.

Too often public employees are the target of unwarranted criticism, but when disaster strikes they are the first to respond. We need to honor them. ●



# TEAMSTERS VOLUNTEER AT EMERGENCY FOOD NETWORK

*Stepping up to help feed hungry families in our community*



*Teamster volunteers repack donated grain for Pierce County families.*

**Y**our Union is about bringing people together and creating a strong unified voice for working families. Teamsters 117 is also committed to building stronger communities. In that spirit, a group of 14 Teamsters volunteered for several hours on April 16 as a part of the **Emergency Food Network's** (EFN) Volunteer Repack Project.

Together, 117 members repacked 5,400 pounds of oats. This equates to approximately 4,320 meals that are now ready for distribution to Pierce County food banks, meal sites, and shelters.

This is the second time this year that Teamsters 117 has organized a crew to help with the repack. On January 4, a team of **Food Services of America** Shop Stewards participated in the program.

EFN is the primary food distributor to more

than 60 emergency food sites in Pierce County. To get this food distributed to the individuals and families in need, EFN enlists volunteers to help repackage fresh, frozen, and dry bulk foods into smaller, family-sized portions.

Our third Emergency Food Network volunteer day is scheduled for Saturday June 28, 2014 from 12 P.M. to 3 P.M.

***We are looking for volunteers who would like to help out! If you are interested in joining us, give us a call at 206-441-4860 or talk to your Business Rep. ●***

## *2nd Annual Teamsters* **CAR SHOW**

**June 21 @ 9:30**

Teamsters Hall - Tukwila



**F**ire up your engines! It's time for the 2nd annual **Teamsters Car & Bike Show**. We will have prizes, goodie bags, grub, and a bouncy house for kids. The restored historic Teamsters water wagon (featured on p. 1) will be on display as well.

- Pre-registration: \$15;
- Day of the event: \$20;
- Retirees: \$10.

You can access a pre-registration form at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org). If you live in or around Tacoma, a group of Teamster bikers will be riding to the show from the Local 313 Union hall at 220 S. 27th St. The group will meet at 9 A.M. for a continental breakfast, with kickstands up at 10 A.M.

***This event is sponsored by the Teamsters caucuses to benefit the caucuses and the Local 117 Solidarity Scholarship for continuing education. ●***

**CONTRACT NEWS:** *Bargaining is currently underway for South Sounders at the City of Tacoma, Pierce County, and the Tacoma Public Library. Negotiations are led by Business Representative Jeff Clark. Jeff can be reached at 206-441-4860 ext. 1239 or [jeff.clark@teamsters117.org](mailto:jeff.clark@teamsters117.org). Health care bargaining for the City of Kent and Tacoma is also ongoing. The Kent health Care board is scheduled to meet bi-monthly and Tacoma Health care bargaining is scheduled to meet weekly through 2014.*

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**June 19, 2014 - General Membership Meeting**

**June 21, 2014 - Teamsters Car Show in Tukwila**

**June 29, 2014 - Seattle Pride Parade**

**July/August - Paint Tacoma-Pierce Beautiful**

**September 13 - Local 117 Soccer Tournament**

## 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](https://twitter.com/teamsters117).