

The Union Times



United Way Sets Up Laid-Off Workers Fund

United Way of the Plains has set up a Laid-Off Workers Fund to assist laid-off individuals who worked or live in Sedgwick County. Due to the large number of recent layoffs, United Way is setting up the fund to handle the increasing needs that go beyond United Way's annual funding of assistance programs.

"One of United Way's ongoing focus areas is family financial stability," said Patrick J. Hanrahan, president of United Way of the Plains. "So, helping those affected by the large numbers of layoffs is what United Way is all about. We want to be there for individuals in these times."

For those who qualify, financial assistance will include support for a mortgage (or rent) and utilities. Clients must be interviewed by a case worker, have written documentation of both layoff status and financial need, and agree to attend seminars on household budget planning. No funds will go directly to individuals; bills will be paid on the person's behalf directly to a landlord, mortgage company or utility company.

The Laid-Off Workers Fund will assist individuals through a Laid-Off Workers Center which is targeted to open by the first of June. At the request of Mayor Carl Brewer, United Way agreed to lead the coordination efforts of the center. The first priority

remains to secure a facility. Until the center opens, laid-off workers can find local services to assist them by calling United Way's 24-hour information line: dial 2-1-1. United Way's 2-1-1 call specialists have information about financial counseling, food assistance, job training, mental health services and more from numerous local nonprofits and government agencies.

Individuals wishing to donate to the fund can make checks payable to:

United Way Laid-Off Workers Fund

245 N. Water,

Wichita, KS 67202

CONTACT: Delane Butler

Vice President of Marketing 267-1321.

Work Related Injuries

Recent economic problems have resulted in many workers receiving layoff notices. Many of these workers have valid work-related injuries but fail to protect their rights. Kansas law requires that an injured employee give notice to their employer within 10 days of any work related injury.



Many workers, especially those with hand and arm problems, have not reported their injuries to their employers out of fear of being medically laid off. When these same workers are laid off in a general economic layoff, they must report their injuries within 10 days of their last day of work.

(continued on page 2)

Union Meeting
March 21, 2008
10:00 am

3830 S. Meridian
Wichita, KS 67217



Plant Chair Reports

Tammy Hourigan

Some questions to be answered about the layoffs.

Can I keep my life insurance with the Union while I am laid off?

You can keep your life insurance by paying out of work stamps. The cost is \$3.69 a month. This will keep your insurance and all voting rights. You should also attend the monthly meetings to find out what is going on and when the Company will begin recalling.

Insurance you currently have through the Union EBS can be taken with you. You will need to contact EBS and have the billing sent to your home. The number is 1-888-521-2900.

If there is anything we can help with during these troubled times, please feel free to call the office.

517-6455



Work Related Injuries

(continued from page 1)

Many of the aircraft employers in this area perform a pre-employment physical, including a hand and arm electrical test, on new employees.

Workers who have had previous hand and arm problems will not pass these tests and will not obtain employment. These same workers will not be able to make a claim against their previous employer unless they have reported their work related problems within ten days of their last day worked.

If you receive notice you are being laid off, report any physical problems you think are caused by or made worse by work to your employer with a witness. The reporting of any injury should not affect call back rights.

If you are being laid off and have physical problems; hands, arms, neck, back, etc., call our Union attorneys Hammond, Zongker & Farris, at 262-6800 for free legal advice and a free legal consultation.

Don't let your employer cause you more economic harm than they already have.

MNPL National News

By Martin Eddy

I attended the Machinists Non-Partisan Political League Organizing Committee meeting in Phoenix the second week of March. As it was my first meeting, I took an oath, rather, its termed an obligation, one phrase of which (printed in full at the MNPL web page) really caught my attention. *"To stimulate the political education of the members to understand their political rights and use the ballot intelligently, to the end that the government may be used as a tool to further the end(s) of combinations of capital for its own aggrandizement."* I should think we've had enough of various combinations of capital used simply to gain ever more grand accommodations on Wall Street. I know I have.

First things first, how cool is it to have a former community organizer in the White House!

One who knows, understands and supports the importance of organizing labor. The first piece of legislation signed by President Obama was the Lillie Ledbetter Act, or equal pay for equal work for women. A labor issue that the Supreme Court couldn't get right.



I have three points that I want to touch in this article.



As you may know, President Obama has appointed Hilda Solis (pronounced suh-lease) as the new Secretary of Labor. Her father was a Teamster and a union steward. Her mother worked for Mattel and lost her job as a result of bad trade policies. She has personal experience with what we are fighting. The IAM supported her in her second term campaign and she won. There is a new Sheriff in town.

Second, Allison Beck has been the General Counsel and Head of the Legal Department for the IAM for 30+ years. She is campaigning to be appointed the Director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, or FMCS. The FMCS is the part of the Labor Department

that goes into alert when we negotiate a new contract. Like last year the Federal Mediator for the Boeing strike was from the FMCS, except of course at that time was more of a corporate flunky. In the last eight years the mediators have been Republican appointees. Imagine what it will be like to have someone intimately familiar with the problems of and the effects on working families during strike disputes. This directly affects every union in the United States!!!

So we are encouraging members to write George Miller, Chair of the House Labor committee to approve Allison Beck.

george.miller@mail.house.gov

And to write Ted Kennedy, Chair of the Health, Education, LABOR and Pensions committee.

<http://kennedy.senate.gov>

Thirdly, last not least, the battle over the Employee Free Choice Act, or EFCA. One of the delegates from Canada couldn't understand the fuss, in Canada if you want a union you just sign up and if you get over 50% you get one, like starting a YMCA or something.

In fact, every other industrialized nation has some form of card sign up to start a union. They are considered a social good, to be encouraged. The CEO's of Starbucks, Home Depot and Whole Foods among others have pledged an estimated \$200 million to fight us on this simple right. One should consider why am I shopping here or drinking this overpriced coffee? More on this latter.

For myself, the most humorous part came when the IAM Director of Communications, Rick Sloan, explained that the IAM is updating the website in the fall such that it will be better able to interact with the "social networking" sites, i.e. Facebook, MySpace etc. and explained Twitter to this audience, of well, mostly guys in their 50's, like me. You could almost feel the collective groan sweep through the crowd as he explained a Facebook wall, and how we should expect to be encouraged to communicate using these technologies in the future.... And we will.



Point the Finger Higher

I was recently reading a story about CEO compensation and it lit a fire in my soul. I remember just recently America was blaming the greedy unions for the collapse of the American economy. Well I disagree because I like so many of us have a family to support, mortgage to pay, car payment, utilities, and the unexpected that may come along. The union makes life easier and keeps the middle-class what it is.

Not to mention, Have you ever enjoyed a nice weekend with your family? Thank the union for that. Have you ever been paid overtime? Chalk another one up for the union. Not to mention have you ever enjoyed Labor Day? Well this day was fought for and won by the labor movement that non-union as well as union get to enjoy. (A little piece of history) It's these little things that the labor movement of the 20th century has afforded us.

I see anger, jealousy, and hatred toward union members, but for what? Asking a company for honest pay for an honest day? Health care for our families? A little time off to enjoy with our families and those little things we work so hard for? Now ask yourself is this where the finger should be pointed?

The answer is no. The finger should be pointed higher.

CEO's and executives have been taking multi-million dollar bonuses on top of regular salaries. Executives get all the perks that we as union members can only dream of. I read of one local CEO's bonus which was more than the gross income including benefits of the entire factory workforce. That company announced a lower than expected profit for the first quarter. Makes you think doesn't it? Is the finger really being pointed where it belongs?



Isn't it time the CEO's and the executive give concessions and sacrifice their extravagant way of life? The answer is yes. It is time we as Americans stand together and point the finger higher. It is up to you which finger you use. I know which one I will use!

Eddie Wheelock

Dept. 163

Extending Cobra for Laid-off Workers

Dow Jones Newswires reporter Victoria E. Knight writes about the financial implications of health-care issues. WSJ.com

The financial pain of paying for health insurance could soon ease for the newly jobless.

Included in the final version of the stimulus bill nearing a final vote in Congress, and expected to be signed into law by President Obama, are provisions that would slash 60% off the price tag for health insurance for many laid-off workers seeking to extend coverage through their former employers. Coverage would be subsidized for up to nine months.

Workers are already guaranteed the right to extend their job-related health coverage for up to 18 months under the federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, or Cobra. The law applies to companies with 20 or more workers that are continuing to offer a group health plan.

About two-thirds of working adults are eligible for Cobra, but only 9% of the unemployed elect it, according to a study by the Commonwealth Fund of data from 2007. The reason: the program's steep cost.

Active workers on average pay about 25% of the total health insurance premium, with employers picking up the rest. But laid-off workers who get Cobra have to pay 100% of the cost, plus a 2% administrative fee.

Last year, for example, a laid-off worker could expect to pay \$373 a month for individual coverage and \$1,009 a month for a family, excluding administrative fees, according to a survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Health Research & Educational Trust. The 65% federal subsidy would slash the tab to about \$130 a month for single coverage and \$350 a month for a family, based on the figures in the Kaiser/HRET study.

Not everyone will be eligible for the subsidy, though. To qualify, workers must have been laid off between Sept. 1, 2008, and Dec. 31, 2009, and their annual income in the year they receive the subsidy can't exceed \$125,000 for single people or \$250,000 for couples.

Workers laid off from last September onwards who declined Cobra

will be given a second chance to enroll. Jobless workers in states that have enacted Cobra-like laws that apply to smaller employers will also qualify for the subsidy.

While the changes may still not make Cobra affordable for everyone, it's likely to bring coverage within the financial reach of workers laid off from relatively well-paid jobs. Such workers probably have the savings or other resources to pay the premiums, says Alwyn Cassil, a spokeswoman for the Center for Studying Health System Change.



"The 65% federal subsidy would slash the tab to about \$130 a month for single coverage and \$350 a month for a family"

Questions



With the upcoming 'reductions' we are facing, there will be a lot of questions. We have set up an e-mail so you can send those in, and we will try to get an answer for you.

You can e-mail your question to:
QUESTIONS@LL774.ORG.

The Union Times

A publication of Local Lodge 774
Elected Officers

Martin Eddy _____ President
Brian Alexander _____ Vice President
Lynne Strickland _____ Recording Secretary
Susan Thompson _____ Secretary-Treasurer
Rick Harvey _____ Conductor-Sentinel
Pete Carroll Jr. _____ Trustee
Juan Eldridge _____ Trustee
Sami Harris _____ Trustee